






# GUIDELINES FOR CREATING ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS AND EVENTS



It is the policy of the State of Colorado that all public meetings and events hosted by or permitted through a state agency are physically and programmatically accessible for all. These guidelines provide organizers with a brief overview of how to plan and stage accessible, inclusive events.



People with disabilities include those with physical, sensory, intellectual, perceptual, and mental health conditions and may require special accommodations to fully participate in public events. People who are older, pregnant, ill, or fatigued may also have accessibility needs. As accommodations may include items not described in these guidelines, organizers may need to do additional research.

## STEP 1: PLAN FOR ACCESSIBILITY

- Designate one person as Disability Coordinator for the event.
- Strive to include people with disabilities in logistical and program planning.
- Budget for accommodations, such as certified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, stage lifts or ramps, and signage and materials in alternative formats.

## STEP 2: CHOOSE AN ACCESSIBLE LOCATION

- Assess potential facilities in person and check all areas for accessibility—parking, pathways, entrances, elevators, registration areas, stages, seating, and restrooms.
- Lifting and carrying any individual does not constitute accessibility!
- Features of an accessible location include:
  - stage or speaker's platform at grade or accessible by elevator, ramp, or lift;
  - public transportation to site within 200 yards;
  - one accessible parking space and one van accessible parking space per 25 participants;
  - sidewalks to facility at least 36" wide;
  - no routes or pathways with grass, gravel, or a rise more than 1/2";
  - passenger drop off and pick up at entrance;
  - accessible building entrance, preferably main entrance used by everyone; and
  - doors at least 32" wide and open to 90° angle.

## STEP 3: CREATE ACCESSIBLE ANNOUNCEMENTS

- All notices and announcements for the event or meeting must include a contact person (name, phone number, and email) to request disability accommodations.
- Include a paragraph detailing accessible meeting information as part of each notice, including meeting agendas, emails, and website postings.
- Always include the physical address, as it is required by transportation providers.
- If a map is included, indicate bus or transit stops (if applicable) and accessible parking, seating, toilets, etc.
- If posted on a website or via email, notices must be screen reader compatible. When posting as an attachment, use a word document or "smart pdf" or include all pertinent information in the body of the email message.

## STEP 4: CREATE AN ACCESSIBLE EVENT SPACE

- The stage or speaker's platform must be at grade or accessible by elevator, ramp, or lift.
- Use directional and reserved seating signage with international disability symbols.
- Find temporary signage online by searching for "temporary accessibility signs."
- Cover any wires and cords that run along the floor with tape or ramps.
- For large crowds, provide a quiet space for those who need it.
- Provide printed programs and other materials in alternative formats, upon request.
- Accommodations for people with mobility limitations include:
  - accessible microphones for speakers or presenters;
  - pathways of at least 36";
  - reserved/marked wheelchair and companion seating near front or interspersed in audience;
  - one empty wheelchair space plus one companion chair per 25 participants; and
  - reserved extra chairs for those who may require seating (e.g., those who cannot stand for long periods of time).
- Accommodations for people who are deaf or hard of hearing include:
  - one or more ASL interpreters for every 100 participants or upon request;
  - reserved seating or standing area with a direct sight line to interpreter;
  - interpreter positioned near speaker with adequate lighting and in full view of camera; and
  - for large events, a dedicated camera may be needed to project the interpreter on screen.

## STEP 5: ASK FOR HELP

- If you have questions, you can reach out to your agency's ADA Coordinator, the Rocky Mountain ADA Center, or the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition.