UCLA Center for Accessible Education

Planning an Accessible Event at UCLA

Does my Program or Event have to be accessible?

Every type of program, meeting, tour, or event, whether held for the UCLA community or open to the public, must consider the accessibility for persons with disabilities. There is also an obligation to ensure accessibility to events that are sponsored by an outside person or organization that is held at a UCLA facility. If you are involved with coordinating the use of UCLA facilities with outside groups, you should discuss whose responsibility it will be to ensure a fully accessible event. Agreements for utilizing UCLA facilities should clearly specify which party will assume responsibility for these obligations at the event.

Who is responsible for disability access to an event?

Program planning committees and event planners are responsible for planning and providing for the accessibility needs of participants with disabilities at any event sponsored on behalf of the University. Advance planning for accessibility will maximize the opportunity for all to participate and minimize the need for last minute and perhaps costly changes.

Who is responsible for any expenses associated with providing disability access?

The costs associated with disability access are considered part of the overall expense of the program or event. Event planners should include the expense of any anticipated accommodations as a budget item in the event planning. Most accommodations can be made at little or no cost, such as choosing a wheelchair accessible venue for the event. Accommodations such as CART captioning or sign language interpreting will incur a cost. Event planners who think the cost of the accommodations cannot be supported by the event should discuss alternative funding sources with their supervisor or advisor. Before denying any accommodation requests, event planners should consult with a member of

the ADA/504 office, the Center for Accessible Education, or Insurance and Risk Management for guidance.

Advice for Planning Accessible Events & Programs

The following suggestions will help you plan an accessible event and be prepared for requests for disability access and modifications. The ADA/504 office, the Center for Accessible Education, and Insurance and Risk Management are available to answer questions you may have about access or an individual's request for accommodations.

Publicity and Pre-Registration

The key to making events accessible and meeting compliance obligations is to communicate well about access before the event. Include a disability access statement that invites participants with disabilities to make their access needs known in advance of the event in all pre-event publicity and registration materials. This will allow the event planner to make arrangements in advance.

The disability access statement should provide an event contact email and phone number. Sample statement:

"In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, UCLA will honor requests for reasonable accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. Requests can be fulfilled more effectively if notice is provided at least 10 days before the event. Direct accommodation requests to＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿."

Sample Registration Access Checklist

I will need the following in order to fully participate in your event:

- o ASL Interpreter
- o Communication Access in Real Time (CART services)
- o Large print
- o Braille

- o Wheelchair access
- o Assistive Listening Device
- o An Assistant will accompany me
- o Closed captioned videos

Pre-registration for an event provides an opportunity for event planners to give more detail about their event. A comprehensive description of the event, including location, environmental conditions, services available, etc. will provide for the most effective planning. Information that is helpful to know is the distance to parking areas, the availability of transportation services, whether the venue is air-conditioned, if hearing assistive devices are available, scooter or wheelchair availability, and the availability of food options for persons with food allergies.

If an event includes overnight lodging, the event planner should investigate the accessibility features of the lodging. For example, an overnight guest with a mobility disability may request ADA-compliant housing during their stay or placement in a room that is closer to campus.

Responding to Requests for Accommodations

Focus on the access issue and needed accommodation, not the disability of the participant. When a participant requests an accommodation, respond back as quickly as possible. It may take several communications to work through the details of a particular request. In some circumstances, several options may be available to address an access need. The option preferred by the participant should be given primary consideration. If that option proves difficult to provide or if you have a question about whether it is a reasonable accommodation, consult with the ADA/504 office.

Choosing a Physically Accessible Location

Schedule your event in wheelchair accessible buildings and rooms. Conduct an on-site visit to evaluate the facility. Wheelchair access must be available in all portions of the venue that participants will be using, including the speaker's area. An accessible restroom should

be within 200 feet of the event location. Braille and tactile signage should be available for directional assistance. Survey the location for accessible parking and an accessible path of travel from the parking area. If the event is held in a location with no close available parking, identify a method of transportation that will assist attendees with getting to the event location.

If you must host your meeting in an inaccessible location or one in which access is not easily achievable, communicate the access plan for participants with disabilities in your pre-event publicity. Be sure to include a contact number for questions about access to the venue.

Accessible Room Set-Up

Once an accessible site is selected, the meeting room furniture must be arranged so that people who use mobility devices (e.g., wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, crutches, canes) can maneuver throughout and use the amenities independently; people who are blind or have low vision can navigate easily and safely; people who are deaf or hard of hearing can use assistive listening systems and see speakers, interpreters, and captioning; and all participants feel comfortable and ready to be engaged in the program or event.

Accessible Presentation of Meeting Content

Presenters at your event may also require accommodations. As the Event Planner, you should ask presenters if they have any access needs. You should also request that presenters design their program for a diverse audience. If a presentation includes visual content (e.g., Powerpoint presentation, video, or printed charts and graphics), it will be necessary to have the visual content prepared in an alternate format (electronic format, Braille, large print) for people who are blind or have low vision. If presentation materials are provided to participants in print, the handouts must also be accessible in alternate formats, if requested. It is also necessary to have the narration of any films or videos captioned or interpreted for guests who are deaf or hard of hearing. If the video is not captioned, sign language interpreters or real-time captioners may be needed for access to video content of the meeting.

Addressing Communication Access Needs

Attendees who require communication access often cannot use the telephone and are able to convey their needs more effectively by email. Not all persons who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing know sign language and many will prefer to have the event captioned by a CART captioner. Attendees should be asked for their preference of communication access and every attempt should be made to meet that request. Attendees who are Hard of Hearing may benefit from the use of an assistive listening device which amplifies the voice of the speaker.

If using the services of a sign language interpreter:

- Provide reserved seating in the front of the event for the attendee and companions.
- Sign language interpreters should be situated in the front of the room proximate to the speaker and within the sight line of the Deaf attendee so that both the interpreter and speaker can be viewed simultaneously.
- A spotlight should be on the interpreter if the lighting in the room is dimmed.
- Provide an advance copy of presentation so that the interpreter will be well prepared to sign any specialized vocabulary and names.

If using the services of a CART captioner:

- CART reporters will require some space for equipment set-up.
- Reporters using projection equipment should be situated in close proximity to the projection unit.
- Provide an advance copy of presentation to CART reporter to prepare him/her for any specialized vocabulary and names used during the presentation.

Consider reserved parking for sign language interpreters and CART captioners so they are able to arrive to your event without having to worry about not being able to find parking—which may be impacted by your event.

If a visitor is using an Assistive Listening Device, the amplification will only come for the microphone of the speaker. If there is a question/answer session, the speaker should repeat the questions for the audience.

Staff Awareness and Sensitivity

Being prepared can help you handle unexpected requests. Despite all possible efforts to create an accessible event, some participants may request accommodations on the day of the event. UCLA is obligated to make its best effort (but not extraordinary effort) to provide access if the request is reasonable and can be readily accomplished. Staff awareness and sensitivity are essential to successfully complying with this obligation.

Be conversant with the terms used to convey positive communication with persons with disabilities. Terms such as "wheelchair bound" and "handicapped" are examples of outdated terms that present disability in negative terms. More information about People First Language and tips on communicating with and about people with disabilities [can be found online](#).

On-site Registration

Registration workers should be well-informed about how to provide accommodations and where to obtain services. Staff should know the answers to common questions such as:

- "Where is the accessible restroom and water fountain?"
- "When traveling around campus, how do I find [accessible paths of travel?](#)"
- "Are there Braille directional signs in the building?"

During the Event

Event staff should be apprised of the general obligation to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Staff should be prepared to offer assistance (directions for drop-off and accessible parking, seating or using the amenities of the building, etc.).

Best Practices to Consider for Accessible Programs & Events

Consider the following best practices for ensuring your event or program is fully accessible:

- Designate an **Accessibility Coordinator** on your planning committee. The Accessibility Coordinator can manage requests for disability accommodations and services.

- Early in the planning phase, have your Accessibility Coordinator meet with the appropriate campus partners in order to have any questions about accessibility, accommodations, and disability etiquette answered.

- Connect with sign language interpreting and CART vendors well in advance of the event. Let them know that you will more than likely need their services—even if you haven't received a request yet. UCLA's vendors include:
    - The Sign Language Company
    - Total Recall Captioning

- Contact Transportation Services in order to arrange parking for the sign language interpreters and captioners.
- If you are creating an event brochure, arrange for printing services to create a few brochures in large print for guests with low vision.
- If you need Brailled materials, arrange for this service well in advance.

Wheelchairs

- Consider utilizing wheelchair rental services in lieu of utilizing campus wheelchairs. While this may incur a slightly higher cost, you won't have to worry about the logistics of moving wheelchairs from one location to another—rental companies will deliver and pick up wheelchairs—a much more convenient option.
- Establish and implement a protocol for loaning wheelchairs to your guests.
    - Collect IDs to ensure wheelchairs are returned to the appropriate location.
    - Have guests sign a general liability waiver.
- Two local vendors for renting medical equipment are:
    - Pico Medical
    - Horton and Converse

In summary, considering the needs of individuals with disabilities during the event planning phase reinforces UCLA's commitment to maintaining an inclusive campus environment for all who participate in programming and activities on our campus. In short,

Accessibility is Everyone's Responsibility!