

Event Planning Accessibility Checklist

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Planning and Event Policies	1
3. Venue Features and Amenities	2
4. Event Features and Amenities	4
5. Event Programs and Signage	5
6. Considerations for Presenters	6
7. Considerations for Attendees	7
8. Further Resources	7

1. Introduction

This checklist was developed by the Inclusion and Diversity Committee (IDC) of New England Archivists to comply with goal 4.5.1.c of NEA's 2016-2020 strategic plan, which called for "a planning checklist for planners of NEA events to ensure baseline accessibility and procedures for requesting and accessing additional access and accommodation services for NEA events."

This document provides questions, specifications, and suggestions for NEA event planners to consider before, during, and after their event. It is intended as a starting point for event planners that can be scaled based on the size and scope of the event, rather than a prescriptive list of requirements. More detailed guidance can be found in the resources in Section 8. Liaisons from the Inclusion and Diversity Committee are also available for guidance and assistance.

Event planners should be flexible when assessing accessibility and negotiating accommodations. Many factors affect accessibility planning, including budget and logistical feasibility. Where possible, multiple suggestions and possible solutions are included in the checklist to account for some of these factors. Ultimately, the guiding principle of accessibility planning is to clearly identify and communicate any barrier that cannot be eliminated.

The Inclusion and Diversity Committee welcomes feedback on this document: diversity@newenglandarchivists.org. This checklist is a living document that is revised as needed. For a full revision history of this document, please contact the IDC.

2. Planning and Event Policies

- Establish at least one accessibility coordinator on the program committee to coordinate accessibility planning and accommodations with the venue, vendors, and IDC.
 - List the contact details of the accessibility coordinator(s) on event registration materials, event websites, and programs.
- Consider event policies that promote accessibility, such as combined discounted registration for attendees with disabilities who bring a sign language interpreter, personal support worker, or person to provide other assistance to the event.
 - These policies should be communicated clearly before the event, especially during event registration.
- Consider having an accessibility section on the event website that outlines accessibility policies, accommodations, and barriers at the event.
- Ask attendees and presenters if they have accessibility needs or require accommodations, preferably by adding free-text questions to the registration form, session proposal form, and session participation agreement form.

- Requests for accommodations should be routed to the accessibility coordinator(s), who should contact the venue, vendors, IDC, or other NEA contacts as appropriate.
- Consider asking attendees for their pronouns on the event registration form.
 - Make sure there is always an option for “no pronouns” and “prefer not to say” when asking for pronouns. Also include a free text option for pronouns.
 - Consider asking attendees if they want their pronouns printed on their name badge at the event.
- Include questions about accessibility and future accessibility recommendations in the post-event survey.
 - Consider following up with attendees who requested accommodations to solicit feedback and accessibility recommendations for future events.

3. Venue Features and Amenities

- Is the venue accessible using a variety of transportation options, including walking, driving, and public transportation?
 - Communicate transportation options and limitations before the event, including during registration.
- Are there free or affordable parking options near the venue, including an appropriate number of accessible parking spaces?¹
 - Communicate parking options and limitations before the event, including during registration.
- Is the venue wheelchair-accessible? This means that all public spaces in the venue should be at least 30 inches wide and 48 inches long, with a diameter of 60 inches so people in wheelchairs can comfortably turn around. All doors should have a 34-inch clear opening.
 - If not all public spaces at the venue are wheelchair-accessible, communicate this before the event, and include appropriate accessibility symbols on event programs and maps.
- Are heavily trafficked areas free from protruding objects, uneven floor surfaces, and uneven level changes that could be obstructive to people in wheelchairs?
 - If the venue has uneven floor surfaces and level changes, are there accessible ramps or elevators nearby?

¹ For further guidance, see the ADA National Network’s fact sheet on accessible parking: <https://adata.org/factsheet/parking>

- Be mindful of accessibility when setting up the space, and avoid placing obstructive objects like wires on the floor in heavily trafficked areas.
- Are there wheelchair-accessible restrooms near event spaces?
 - Mark wheelchair-accessible restrooms on event maps.
- Are stages and platforms wheelchair-accessible?
 - If stages and platforms are not wheelchair-accessible, ask the venue if temporary ramps can be provided.
 - If there are a limited number of ramps available at the venue, consider adding a question to the session proposal and session participant agreement form about ramps, so event planners can make informed decisions about prioritizing rooms that need ramps.
- Are there automatic doors that can be operated by people in wheelchairs and people with limited mobility?
- Are there elevators and ramps available for event attendees?
 - If elevators and ramps are not available for general use, are there staff or freight elevators that can be used upon request by attendees with disabilities?
- Is venue signage for entrances, exits, elevators, ramps, and accessible restrooms?
 - Is there signage in Braille?
 - Is signage clear and easy to read, in a large font with a high contrast between text and background?
- Does the venue allow service animals? Can the venue provide special accommodations for people who bring service animals?
 - Communicate the venue's policies about service animals before the event.
- Are event spaces free from sensory triggers such as flashing lights and loud noises?
 - Consider asking if the venue can accommodate room allocation requests from event attendees and presenters, such as a quieter room or a room with dimmable lights.
- Does the venue provide chairs without arms?
 - If it is cost-prohibitive or impossible for all chairs at the event to be armless, consider asking the venue to provide some armless chairs for plenary and other sessions with anticipated high attendance.
- Are there gender-neutral restrooms, or restrooms that can be temporarily designated gender-neutral during the event?
 - Mark gender-neutral restrooms on event maps.

- Is there a lactation room, or a space that can be temporarily turned into a lactation room during the event?
 - Mark lactation rooms on event maps.

- Is there a nondenominational prayer room, or a space that can be temporarily turned into a prayer room during the event?
 - Mark prayer rooms on event maps.

- Is each event space outfitted with appropriate audiovisual equipment, including microphones, projectors, and speakers?
 - Are there a variety of different types of microphones available for people with disabilities, including table microphones and lapel microphones?
 - If sessions involve audience questions, are there roving microphones that can be passed to audience members who cannot use standing microphones?
 - Consider asking presenters if they need a particular type of microphone before the event.

- Can the venue provide any additional accommodations to attendees with disabilities upon request?
 - The accessibility coordinator(s) should ask the venue about potential special accommodations as early in the planning process as possible.
 - Based on accommodations requests received during event registration, the accessibility coordinator(s) should coordinate accommodations with the venue on an ongoing basis before the event.

4. Event Features and Amenities

- Is the registration desk centrally located and accessible?
 - Is the registration desk located on an accessible route near the main entrance and primary event spaces?
 - Is there accessible and clear signage directing attendees to the registration desk?
 - Is there a section of the registration area that is no higher than 36 inches and at least 36 inches long with adequate knee clearance so people in wheelchairs can comfortably use it?

- Consider providing magnifying glasses at the registration desk.

- Consider keeping a laptop at the registration desk for attendees to use throughout the event.

- Brief event staff and volunteers on accessibility accommodations and limitations at the venue, including the location of elevators and wheelchair-accessible restrooms.

- Train event staff and volunteers to be sensitive to disability and accessibility when interacting with event attendees.
 - Provide training on disability etiquette, the use of assistive devices, emergency procedures, and available accessibility features and services.² For example, volunteers should be willing to read information aloud or locate wheelchair-accessible routes upon request.
- Provide a quiet respite room at the event.
- Provide a lactation room at the event.
- Provide a nondenominational prayer room at the event.
- If catered meals are provided, does the caterer provide options for kosher, halal, dairy-free, gluten-free, nut-free, vegetarian, and vegan meals?
 - Can the caterer provide special meals based on other dietary needs upon request, particularly concerning allergens?
 - Ask caterers to provide ingredient lists at the event, including prominently noting common allergens and designating kosher and halal menu options.
- Consider reviewing the Guidebook app for accessibility and customizing it with accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in mind.
 - Consider adding a copy of the conference map to the app, marked with the locations of the registration desk, elevators, wheelchair-accessible restrooms, gender-neutral restrooms, lactation rooms, respite rooms, and nondenominational prayer rooms.
 - Consider adding an accessibility section to the app, including the names and contact details of the accessibility coordinator(s).
 - Consider adding a copy of the NEA Code of Conduct to the app, including instructions for reporting code of conduct violations.
- Consider creating a Bitly link to the conference website for attendees who do not have or cannot use the Guidebook app. Prominently display this link on conference materials.

5. Event Programs and Signage

- Are event materials, including programs and maps, designed with accessibility in mind?
 - Use a 16-point font when possible. If printing the entire program in 16-point font is not possible due to budget constraints or the length of the program, smaller

² For further guidance on disability etiquette, see *Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities* by the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (<https://www.chicopeema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/732/ADA-Disability-Etiquette-Booklet-PDF>) and *No Need to be Awkward: Disability Etiquette for Everyone* training by the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center (<http://www.adainfo.org/training/disability-etiquette-for-everyone>)

fonts can be used. In these cases, consider printing only portions of the program in 16-point or 14-point font, such as the schedule at a glance.

- Use sans-serif fonts, and avoid highly stylized fonts that are difficult to read.
 - There should be high contrast between the text and background.
 - Include appropriate symbols of accessibility to indicate accessibility features, aids, or services.³
 - List the contact details of the accessibility coordinator(s) on event programs.
-
- Is event signage simple in design with large print, readable fonts, high contrast, and non-glare finish?
 - Consider providing programs in large print for attendees with vision impairments.⁴
 - If cost prohibits large-print programs from being professionally printed, files can be edited and printed in house. Editing and reformatting digital files before printing is preferable to using the enlargement feature on photocopiers, which produces fuzzy text.
 - Have large-print programs readily available at the registration desk.
 - Consider having a sign indicating that large-print programs are available.
 - Consider printing a poster-sized enlargement of the schedule at a glance for display at the registration desk.
 - Consider printing a copy of the NEA Code of Conduct in event programs, with instructions for reporting Code of Conduct violations.
 - Consider printing a short excerpt of the NEA Code of Conduct and instructions for reporting Code of Conduct violations on the back of name badges.

6. Considerations for Presenters

- Before the event, remind presenters to design their presentation materials with accessibility in mind.
 - Ask presenters to use slides with minimal text, preferably in 28-point sans-serif fonts.
 - Ask presenters to use slides with high contrast between the text and background.
 - Ask presenters to provide comprehensive alternative text for all images in their presentations.⁵

³ For further guidance, see *Understanding the Universal Symbols of Accessibility* by the Council of Ontario Universities, <http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/reference-library/symbols-of-accessibility/>

⁴ For further guidance, see the American Council of the Blind's *Best Practices and Guidelines for Large Print Documents*, <https://www.acb.org/large-print-guidelines> and the American Printing House for the Blind's *Guidelines for Print Document Design*, <https://www.aph.org/research/design-guidelines/>

⁵ For guidance on writing alt text, see Perkins School for the Blind's *How to Write Alt Text and Image Descriptions for the Visually Impaired*: <http://www.perkinslearning.org/technology/blog/how-write-alt-text->

- ❑ Ask presenters to perform accessibility checks on their presentation materials before the event. Built-in accessibility checkers are available in Microsoft Office and Adobe products. Contrast Checker is a free website for checking the contrast between foreground and background colors.
- ❑ Ask presenters to provide a Bitly link to slides, handouts, and other session materials at the beginning of their session, so people with disabilities can view the materials on screen readers and other assistive devices.
- ❑ Before the event, remind presenters to conduct their sessions with accessibility and inclusivity in mind.
 - ❑ Remind presenters to speak slowly and clearly into microphones.
 - ❑ Ask presenters to briefly explain and contextualize audio clips, videos, charts, and other visual and aural components of their presentation.
 - ❑ Ask presenters to remind session attendees to speak clearly into microphones and introduce themselves when asking questions. Presenters should be prepared to repeat audience questions clearly into their own microphones if necessary or upon request.
 - ❑ Remind presenters to use gender-neutral language and pronouns when referring to people who have not identified their pronouns.

7. Considerations for Attendees

- ❑ Encourage attendees to introduce themselves with their names and pronouns at the event, especially in larger sessions when name badges are not visible.
- ❑ Encourage attendees to be active participants in creating an accessible and inclusive event by reporting Code of Conduct violations and accessibility barriers.
- ❑ Encourage attendees to complete the post-event survey.
 - ❑ Consider providing a blank page in the program where participants can write down their thoughts, reactions, and suggestions during or immediately after the event. This will keep feedback fresh in their mind until they receive the link to the online survey.

8. Further Resources

Acart Communications, Contrast Checker.

<https://contrastchecker.com/>

ADA National Network, *Accessible Parking*.

<https://adata.org/factsheet/parking>

[and-image-descriptions-visually-impaired](#) and University of Leicester's guide *Writing Effective Alt Text*.
<https://www2.le.ac.uk/webcentre/plone/build/basics/add-images/alt-text>

ADA National Network, *A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities*.

<https://adata.org/publication/temporary-events-guide>

ADA National Network Hospitality & Disability Initiative, *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings, Events, and Conferences*.

<http://www.adahospitality.org/accessible-meetings-events-conferences-guide/book>

American Bar Association, *Planning Accessible Meetings and Events: A Toolkit*.

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/mental_physical_disability/Accessible_Meetings_Toolkit.authcheckdam.pdf

American Council of the Blind, *Best Practices and Guidelines for Large Print Documents*.

<https://www.acb.org/large-print-guidelines>

American Printing House for the Blind, *Guidelines for Print Document Design*.

<https://wwwAPH.org/research/design-guidelines/>

Council of Ontario Universities, *A Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences*.

<http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A-Planning-Guide-for-Accessible-Conferences-1.pdf>

Council of Ontario Universities, *Understanding the Universal Symbols of Accessibility*.

<http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/reference-library/symbols-of-accessibility/>

Digital Library Federation, *Guide to Creating Accessible Presentations*.

<https://www.diglib.org/dlf-events/2017forum/guide-to-creating-accessible-presentations/>

Digital Library Federation, *Social Event Checklist*.

<https://www.diglib.org/dlf-events/dlf-social-event-checklist/>

Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, *Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities*.

<https://www.chicopeema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/732/ADA-Disability-Etiquette-Booklet-PDF>

Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, *No Need to be Awkward: Disability Etiquette for Everyone*.

<http://www.adainfo.org/training/disability-etiquette-for-everyone>

Perkins School for the Blind, *How to Write Alt Text and Image Descriptions for the Visually Impaired*. <http://www.perkinselearning.org/technology/blog/how-write-alt-text-and-image-descriptions-visually-impaired>

Society of American Archivists, *Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities*.

<https://www2.archivists.org/standards/guidelines-for-accessible-archives-for-people-with-disabilities>

University of Leicester, *Writing Effective Alt Text*.

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/webcentre/plone/build/basics/add-images/alt-text>