

Cultural Institution Accessibility Self-Evaluation

The first step toward improving your institution's accessibility is to assess what you currently have in place. Meet with a staff member or two and set aside about an hour-and-a-half.

Don't distress if you're not where you want to be. Ensuring programs and services are accessible to all is an ongoing effort.

I. General Questions

A. Is there a designated person in your organization who is responsible for making your facility and programming accessible to people with disabilities?

1. If yes, please provide that person's name, title and department.

B. Does your organization have a current plan in place to improve accessibility and service for visitors with disabilities? If yes:

1. What, if any, actions called for in that plan has your organization undertaken?

C. Have any members of your staff received training on disability etiquette, disability awareness or other issues related to the provision of service to people with disabilities? If yes:

1. Which members of your staff were trained?
2. Who provided that training and when was it conducted?
3. Is there regular training in place for new hires and continuing education for current staff?

D. Has your website been evaluated for accessibility? If yes:

1. Who conducted the evaluation?
2. When was the evaluation conducted?
3. Have any steps been taken to improve the accessibility of the website?
4. Does your website include any accessibility information?

E. Has the physical accessibility of your facility ever been evaluated? If yes:

1. Who conducted the evaluation?
2. When was the evaluation conducted?
3. What steps if any have been taken to improve physical access since the evaluation was conducted?

F. Does your facility provide access to people with mobility disabilities, including wheelchair-users? Specifically:

1. Is there a way to enter each facility without climbing steps or steep inclines?
2. Is the entrance door at least 32 inches wide at its opening?
3. Does the facility have a restroom with a stall that is wide enough for a wheelchair and is that stall equipped with grab bars?

G. Do you provide accommodations (e.g., sign language interpretation) by request? If yes,

- a. Is contact information available on your website?
- b. Is contact information available in your brochures and publications?
- c. Is there a phone number?
- d. Is there a TTY (text telephone) number?
- e. An email address?
- f. Are these messages checked regularly?

H. Do your publications include mention of accessible services and programs?

II. Performances, Lectures, Events

Does your organization host performances or lectures (e.g. plays, music concerts, film presentations, dance recitals, performance art)? If so, please answer the following questions.

A. Accessibility for Visitors Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

1. Does your organization provide sign language interpreters at performances on a scheduled basis? If yes:
 - a. How many performances and on which days/evenings of the week?
2. Does your organization provide sign language interpreters upon request for performances where an interpreter was not scheduled in advance? If yes:
 - a. How much notice does your organization require?
3. Does your organization provide captioning for performances on a scheduled basis? If yes:
 - a. How many performances and on which days/evenings of the week?
 - b. Are the captions projected on a screen near the stage or transmitted to hand-held or seat-mounted devices?
4. Does your organization provide captioning upon request for performances where captioning was not scheduled in advance? If yes:
 - a. How much advanced notice is preferred?

- b. Does your organization have interpreters'/ agencies' contact information to request this service?
 - c. Is the contact information to request this service accessible to the visitor (i.e. is there an email address or TTY number to request service)?
5. Does your organization provide information about the availability of sign language interpreted and/or captioned performances?
- a. In advertising?
 - b. On your website?
 - c. In Playbills or other programs?
6. If you provide sign language interpretation or captioning at performances, does your organization provide reserved seating for people who are deaf or hard of hearing that allows them a clear view to the sign language interpreters or captioning?
7. Does your organization have an assistive listening system for visitors who are hard of hearing? If yes:
- a. Is the system available for all performances or presentations?
 - b. If the system is not available for all performances or presentations, for which is it provided?
 - c. Is the system available when amplified sound is used?
 - d. If a presentation is performed without the use of amplified sound, does your organization use the assistive listening system anyway so that visitors with hearing loss are able to enjoy the performance?

8. Does your organization provide visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing with copies of scripts, lectures, or PowerPoint presentations in advance?

B. Accessibility for Visitors who are Blind or Have Low Vision

1. Does your organization provide audio description services for people who are blind or have low vision on a fixed schedule? If yes:
 - a. How many performances/events and on which days/evenings of the week is audio description provided?
2. Does your organization provide audio description services upon request for performances/events where it was not scheduled in advance? If yes:
 - a. How much notice does your organization require?
3. Does your organization reserve seating for people who are blind or have low vision that allows them to sit near the performance or presentation?
4. For plays and similar types of performances does your organization conduct walking tours and/or touch tours of the set and props prior to any of the performances to allow people who are blind or have low vision to familiarize themselves with the set and objects used in the performance? If yes:
 - a. At how many performances/events are walking and/or touch tours provided and on which days/evenings of the week?
 - b. Who conducts the tours?

- c. Are all touch tours scheduled in advance or can an individual request that one be conducted on a specific date?
5. Does your organization provide information about the availability of audio described performances and touch tours?
- a. In advertising?
 - b. On your website?
 - c. In Playbills or other programs?
6. Does your organization provide Playbills, programs and other written materials in alternate formats for people who are blind or have low vision?
- a. Braille?
 - b. Large print?
 - c. Accessible electronic formats (emailed to visitors prior to the event)?

c. Accessibility for Visitors who Have Mobility Disability (Including But Not Limited to Wheelchair-Users)

1. Does your organization have wheelchair seating locations?
If yes:
- a. Are they located along an accessible route (no steps, steep ramps, narrow hallways, etc.) from the entrance lobby?
 - b. Are they dispersed throughout the different seating areas?
 - c. Are they provided at a variety of prices?

2. Is each wheelchair seating location accompanied by at least one companion seat?
3. Are there additional seats (not companion seats) that are equipped with folding or removable armrests? If yes:
 - a. How many?
4. Are there ticket, information and customer service counters provided at a lower height for people who use wheelchairs and people of short stature?
5. Are there ticketing policies in effect that require that tickets for wheelchair and companion seating locations be reserved for visitors who need it unless all other tickets to an event or performance are sold?
 - a. Is there a policy in place if a wheelchair-user arrives at the performance and does not have a wheelchair accessible seat?
6. Can visitors who need wheelchair accessible seats purchase tickets online, without calling?

D. Accessibility for Visitors with Cognitive or Learning Disabilities

1. Does your organization offer any autism or sensory friendly performances?
2. Does your organization offer any dementia-friendly performances?
3. Does your organization provide social stories or other ways to help prepare visitors with autism and other disabilities for a visit?

III. Exhibits, Displays and Related Programming

Does your organization display exhibits (e.g. museum collections, art gallery, exhibit displaying student works)? If yes, please respond to the following questions.

A. Accessibility for Visitors who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

1. Does your organization provide audio guides of exhibits or displays? If yes:
 - a. Is closed or open captioning available? If not,
 - i. Does your organization provide written descriptions (or a script)?
 - b. Does your organization provide a sign language interpreted alternative?

2. Does your organization conduct tours and provide educational programs? If yes:
 - a. Does your organization provide scheduled sign language interpreted tours? If yes:
 - i. How frequently are these tours provided?
 - ii. Are any of the tours led by a Deaf guide (meaning the Deaf guide leads the tour in sign language, and possibly a voice interpreter interprets for the hearing audience)?
 - b. Does your organization provide sign language interpreted tours upon request? If yes:
 - i. How much advanced notice is preferred?
 - ii. Does your organization have interpreters'/ agencies' contact information to request this service?

- iii. Is the contact information to request this service accessible to the visitor (i.e. is there an email address or TTY number to request service)?
3. Does your organization provide information about the availability of sign language interpreted programs?
 - a. In advertising?
 - b. On your website?
 - c. In publications?

B. Accessibility for Visitors who are Blind or Have Low Vision

1. Do you provide tours or other programs for people who are blind or have low vision using verbal description to describe the visual aspects the objects/display?
2. Do you provide an audio guide that describes the objects or collections for people who are blind or have low vision?
3. Do you provide information about the objects or collections in alternative formats including:
 - a. Braille
 - b. Large print (size 18 or larger)
 - c. Electronic formats for use on mobile devices
4. Do you have staff or volunteers trained in verbal description (to describe the visual aspects of the objects/display)?
 - a. If yes, are there scheduled times when verbal description is available for visitors who are blind or have low vision?
 - b. May visitors schedule this service by request?
5. Do you provide multisensory opportunities on your tours or during your program?

C. Accessibility for Visitors who Have Mobility Disabilities, Including Wheelchair-Users

1. Is each exhibit and display area located on an accessible route (no requirement to climb stairs, go through narrow hallways or doors, etc.)?
2. Do the restrooms serving the gallery or display areas for each gender contain an accessible stall (wide stalls with grab bars, etc.)?
3. If there are signs describing items in exhibits and galleries, are they mounted at a height that is easily visible to people who use wheelchairs and people of short stature?
4. Are staff/docents/volunteers trained where accessible routes and restrooms are located?

D. Accessibility for Visitors with Cognitive or Learning Disabilities

1. Do you offer programs for children or adults with cognitive or learning disabilities?
2. Are staff/volunteers trained for welcoming visitors with cognitive or learning disabilities during any tour or program?
3. Does your organization provide social stories or other ways to help prepare visitors with autism and other disabilities for a visit?

Have questions?

In the City of Chicago:

Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)

Phone: 312.744.7050 ☐

TTY: 312.744.4964

In Chicago and region:

Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium (CCAC)

www.ChicagoCulturalAccess.weebly.com

ChicagoCulturalAccess@gmail.com

Great Lakes ADA Center

Free, technical ADA assistance: 800-949-4232 (V/TTY, M-F 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

www.ADAGreatLakes.com