

UAF Event Accessibility Toolkit

UAF Department of Equity and Compliance

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UAF is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination/.

Event Planning Checklist

General Planning

- Is information about the event accessible to a broad range of participants (including website information)?
- Required statements for advertising and ways to request event accommodations: uaf.edu/equity/resources.
- If creating a website for the event, follow UA website guidelines for digital accessibility: <https://www.alaska.edu/accessibility/>.
- Indicate how participants request accommodations through a registration form or other mechanism.
- Have funds been allocated in the budget to cover the cost of accommodations?
- Have presenters been asked if they need accommodation for equal access?
- Have presenters been informed of ways to make presentations accessible to the audience? Public-facing events must use captioning and/or translators. Will an American Sign Language or other language interpreter be utilized? Contact UAF Events Services (907-474-2747) or Disability Services (907-474-5655) for more information on these resources and contracting costs.
- Are food options available for participants with dietary restrictions/allergies?
- Is the staff knowledgeable about communicating with people who have various disabilities?

Exterior Features

- Barrier-Free, clearly marked (signage), well-lit accessible main entrance at street level so that all individuals can use this entrance.
- Entrance connected by an accessible route to public transportation stops, accessible parking and passenger loading zones, public streets or sidewalks.
- Main entrance/exit doorways that are wide enough (32 inches with the door opening 90 degrees) to accommodate wheelchairs/scooters/other mobility aids.
- Other entrances that are at street level or accessible by ramps or lifts.
- Easy-to-open (automatic/push-button door openers, lever handles), light (no more than 5 pounds) doors; no revolving doors.

- Glass doors with contrasting door frames, stickers, or bright signs.
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile/raised signage), covered drop-off and pick-up points adjacent to the main entrance, with curb cuts.
- Accessible transit services (private and public).
- Accessible, clearly marked (symbol of accessibility) parking spaces (1 space every 25 spaces) located on the shortest accessible route of travel from adjacent parking to an accessible entrance.
- Slip-resistant, level surfaces.
- Barrier-free/step-free paths of travel.
- Curb ramps/cuts so that persons who use mobility aids are not traveling in the street.
- Crosswalks with visual and audible signals.
- Ramps for inaccessible areas, equipped with handrails on both sides if the rise is greater than 6 inches, and level landings.
- Stairs with continuous handles on both sides; no open risers (space between steps).
- Tactile ground surface indicators that signal stairs and ramps for people who are blind or have visual impairments.
- Clearly marked relief areas for service animals.

Interior Features

- Registration/concierge desks at a height accessible by wheelchair/scooter users that allows for a frontal approach and provides adequate knee clearance under the desk.
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile/raised signage), accessible exits.
- Easy-to-open, light (no more than 5 pounds) doors with lever handles that are easy to grasp with one hand or automatic/push button openers.
- Wide (32 inches with the door open 90 degrees) doorways to allow for persons using wheelchairs/scooters/other mobility aids to enter/exit.
- Sufficiently wide (64 inches for two-way traffic), barrier-free hallways and corridors to allow everyone to move about freely.

- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile/raised signage), accessible restrooms located on an accessible route.
- Even, stable, regular, slip-resistant, non-sloped paths of travel.
- Procedures to respond to medical issues/emergencies.
- Emergency procedures for persons with disabilities (audio and visual alarms in halls and sleeping rooms).
- Accessible space for walking service animals.
- Availability of TTY, hearing-aid compatible, and volume-control telephones reachable by wheelchair/scooter users.
- Accessible sleeping rooms (check on number available) with roll-in showers.
- Accessible fitness center, including restrooms and showers.
- Accessible restaurants (including ability to provide for dietary restrictions and large print/Braille menus), bars/lounges, and shopping.
- Televisions with closed-captioning.
- Well-lit areas; adjustable lighting.

Elevators

- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile/raised signage) elevators located on both sides of the door and along an accessible route.
- Elevator call buttons with visual and audio signals, reachable by wheelchair/scooter users.
- Elevator control buttons that are designated by Braille and raised characters or symbols and are reachable by wheelchair/scooter users.
- Elevator interior is adequately illuminated and wide enough to allow for persons using wheelchairs/scooters/other mobility aids to enter, maneuver within reach of controls, and exit.
- Elevator voice and visual display two-way emergency communication.

Public Restrooms

- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile/raised signage) accessible restrooms located on an accessible route.

- Is there signage at inaccessible restrooms directing people to accessible restrooms?
- Are restrooms located along an accessible route of travel?
- Does the restroom door provide a minimum of 32 inches of clear opening width?
- Does the restroom door have levered handles?
- Is there an accessible toilet stall (5' X 5' clear floor space)? Is the toilet seat 17 to 19 inches above the floor? Are there grab bars at the side and back of the toilet mounted at 33" to 36" above the floor?
- Is the door to the accessible stall at least 32" wide and swing outward?
- Does the sink provide knee clearance of 29 inches? Are soap, paper towel dispensers and amenities located at or below 48 inches?

A map of gender inclusive and ADA accessible showers and restrooms at UAF can be found here: <https://uaf.edu/campusmap/maps/gender-inclusive-ada-showers-restrooms.php>.

Promotional/Registration Materials

- Include a statement that the meeting/event is accessible (example event accessibility statement can be found here: uaf.edu/equity/accessibility-ada-504/index.php).
- Include a request for accommodations statement.
- Designate a contact person to handle accommodation requests.
- Ensure that your website is accessible.
- Include an accessibility link for meeting/event on your website in a prominent place.
- Identify any barrier that cannot be eliminated.
- Offer materials in alternative formats.
- Provide alternative registration options (online, telephone, text, email).

Meeting Rooms

- Signs (with Braille and tactile characters, sans serif or simple serif large font, sentence case, and good contrast) that direct attendees to all rooms.
- Barrier-free path to rooms.

- Doors wide enough (32 inches with door open 90 degrees) for wheelchairs/scooters to enter/exit.
- Easy-to-open, light doors (no more than 5 pounds) with lever handles or automatic/push button openers.
- Seating aisles that are wide enough (36 inches) to accommodate a wheelchair/scooter/other mobility aid.
- Accessible, integrated seating throughout the room, with preferred seating for people with visual and hearing impairments in the front row.
- Barrier-free aisle wide enough (at least 36 inches) to accommodate a wheelchair/scooter/other mobility aid.
- Rooms large enough to allow all people to move about freely.
- Speaker podium at ground level or accessible via ramp or lift.
- Accessible exhibit areas.
- Well-lit rooms for participants with visual and hearing impairments.
- Good acoustics and a functioning auxiliary sound system.
- Prominent, well-lit, visible space for an interpreter to stand (e.g., raised platform with a dark solid color background).
- Assistive listening devices, hearing or induction loops, and Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing. Contact the Department of Equity and Compliance at (907-474-7300) or uaf.edu/equity for information.
- Clear lines of sight to interpreters and real-time CART.
- Roving microphone for audience questions.
- Location of all audio-visual equipment in an area that does not block paths of travel.
- Multiple sets of outlets for laptops and other electronic aids.
- Well-secured and covered cables, wires, cords, and microphones placed outside the paths of travel.
- Proper air circulation with temperature control.
- Tables for materials and food/beverage at a height (28-34 inches) reachable by wheelchair/scooter users and in an accessible location.
- Meeting spaces are located along an accessible route.

- Elevators near rooms.
- Quiet break space near rooms.

Presentations

- Announce when the meeting begins and ends.
- At the start of the meeting, introduce the interpreter(s) and other service providers. Presenters (in person or online) should consider a visual description of themselves as part of the introduction (ie: I am a middle-aged woman, with brown hair that falls just below my shoulders, I am wearing dark square-rimmed glasses, and am wearing a black jacket with a flower-patterned top and gray pants).
- At the start of the meeting, orally describe the room layout and location of emergency exits, food/beverages, and restrooms.
- Inform attendees of the meeting agenda in advance and provide clear directions at the start of any writing or reading activities during the meeting so people with visual, cognitive, or motor impairments can fully and equally participate.
- Avoid the use of strobe lights and unusually loud sounds.
- Share applicable content warnings at the start of the presentation and again immediately before sharing potentially sensitive or upsetting information/media.
- Keep the presentation clear, simple, concise, and organized.
- Provide an overview of the presentation at the start and a summary of the key points at the end.
- Avoid only using gestures and visual points of reference- explain them in words as well.
- Use simple language; avoid acronyms, jargon, and idioms.
- Always face the audience; never turn away.
- Keep hands and other objects away from your mouth when speaking.
- Be visible to everyone; stand in good light.
- Use a microphone.
- If interpreters are being used, do not walk while speaking. Stand near interpreter.
- Speak to the person, not their interpreter.
- Speak in well-modulated tones and at a pace that allows interpreters to interpret accurately and persons with learning cognitive impairments to process.

- Describe verbally all text and visual materials (e.g., slides, graphs, photos, videos, etc.) in detail.
- Ensure that visual aids are printed in large font and make print copies available.
- Provide a written description of all images.
- Allow participants extra time to look at visual materials (for instance, individuals who use interpreters cannot look at both the interpreter and the materials simultaneously and persons with learning disabilities and cognitive impairments need time to process the information).
- Use multiple communication methods for different learning styles (verbal information, pictures and diagrams, text, auditory).
- Give people time to process information by pausing between topics.
- Check in with participants to ensure that the presentation is understood and clarify if needed.
- When reading directly from text, provide an advance copy and pause slightly when interjecting information not in the text.
- Provide audio descriptions (i.e., describe facial expressions, body language, actions, and costumes) and captioning or CART for all videos.
- Instruct participants to wait to be called on, not interrupt, speak one at a time, and speak clearly into the microphone.
- Repeat questions posed by people in the audience before responding.
- Allow for written questions.
- Build in sufficient time for participants to get from session to session.
- Prepare all materials (papers, PowerPoints, agendas, slides) in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, audiotapes, computer disks, CD-ROMs).
- Make electronic versions of materials available in plain text, rich text, Microsoft Word, or Google Docs.
- Make materials available in advance of the meeting to allow persons with learning and other cognitive impairments, as well as interpreters and other support personnel, to familiarize themselves with the material and ask any questions.
- Allow persons with visual or learning disabilities to record meetings.
- Tab and label materials.
- Provide screens that are viewable from all areas of the room.

- Make text and visuals large enough to be read from the back of the room.
- Reserve seats in front of the presenter for individuals with visual, hearing and cognitive impairments.
- Ensure that all accessible seating is integrated within the room so as to avoid sitting all persons with disabilities together.
- Allow for regular breaks (about every 45 minutes) for questions and answers; people/service animals restroom; access service providers such as interpreters, CART providers, note-takers, and readers.
- Do fire and emergency alarms have both audible and visual signals?
- Is there an evacuation plan for persons with disabilities?
- Are exits clearly identified and accessible?
- Will you have interpreters?
 - For assistance with American Sign Language (ASL), connect with UAF Student Disability Services (<https://uaf.edu/disabilityservices/about.php>) or UAF Event Services (<https://uaf.edu/universityrelations/services/events.php>) to discuss options.
 - For other language interpreters, contact LanguageLine Solutions, UAF Languages Department, the school district, and/or state courthouse, depending on your location and resources in your area.

Meeting Activities

- If an off-site trip is planned, is accessible transportation arranged?
- If an overnight stay is required, has the accessibility of guest rooms been assessed?
- If participants are moving around campus, have transportation options been arranged?

Meals/Social Functions

- Provide chairs with and without arms.
- Make tables available.

- Ensure the table and bars are at the correct height (28 to 34 inches) for persons using mobility aids.
- Avoid fixed seating attached to tables.
- Avoid counter-top high tables and chairs.
- Ensure adequate room under dining tables for wheelchairs/scooters to roll under.
- Ensure sufficient space between seating areas for wheelchairs/scooters/other mobility aids.
- Ensure sufficient room for everyone to maneuver safely and independently.
- Ensure that there is an accessible route of travel to the food and entertainment and between tables.
- Avoid seating persons with disabilities in one area or on the fringes of the venue.
- Ensure that any entertainment is accessible.
- Arrange for accessible transportation.
- Avoid self-serve meals or buffets; otherwise, have personal assistants on hand.
- Accessible restaurants (including ability to provide for dietary restrictions and large print/Braille menus), bars/lounges, and shopping.
- Include finger foods that do not require people to use utensils or hold plates.
- Avoid setting up food and beverages in tiers.
- Set up more than one food and beverage area.
- Account for special dietary needs (gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free, vegan, vegetarian, etc.) and clearly mark and place food/beverages on separate platters.
- Provide a choice of cutlery and crockery (e.g., straw, lightweight plastic cups, and plates).
- Avoid long, billowy tablecloths.
- Have personal assistants and interpreters on hand.
- Include personal assistants and interpreters in the estimated number of participants.

Lodging

- Doors wide enough (32 inches wide, opens 90 degrees) for wheelchairs/scooters/other mobility aids to enter/exit.

- Easy-to-open, light doors (no more than 5 pounds) with lever handles.
- Barrier-free pathways, wide enough (at least 36 inches) to permit wheelchairs/scooters to navigate.
- Televisions with closed-captioning.
- Multiple sets of outlets for laptops and other electronic aids throughout the room.
- Is the toilet seat 17 to 19 inches above the floor? Are there grab bars at the side and back of the toilet mounted at 33" to 36" above the floor?
- Bathrooms with roll-in showers.
- Accessible space for service animals for inclusion in the program and for relief spaces.
- Emergency procedures, clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage), audio and visual alarms in rooms and halls.

Staff/Volunteer Training

- Appoint a point person for accessibility issues and list as contact on all materials.
- Contact the Department of Equity and Compliance for assistance with training or other needs at (907-474-7300) or uaf.edu/equity.
- Train staff/volunteers on accommodations, assistive devices, emergency procedures, and accessibility features of the venue/software.
- Hold orientations for staff/volunteers on types of disabilities and disability etiquette.
- Hold orientation for attendees with disabilities to review accessibility features, location of meetings/events, and accommodations.
- Do a walk-through of the venue/software a few days before the day of the meeting/event.
- Test all technical equipment when it arrives and on the day of the meeting/event.

Emergency Planning

- Are exits clearly identified and accessible?
- Do fire and emergency alarms have both audible and visual signals?
- Is there an evacuation plan for persons with disabilities?

Considerations for Conference Activities or Participants' Free Time

- Accessible fitness centers (including restrooms and showers).
- Accessible Restaurants (including ability to provide dietary restrictions and large print/Braille menus), bars/lounges, and shopping.

Effective, Respectful Communication

Everyone deserves respectful and clear communication. In addition to disability-specific etiquette, it is also important to familiarize yourself with general inclusive communication practices and language and to use them regularly. Many disabilities are “invisible” which means you’d likely never know that a person has a disability unless they shared that information with you. By using inclusive language and communication practices in your daily life, you are supporting people of all abilities and helping embrace and grow a culture of respect, diversity, inclusion, caring, accessibility, and accountability. Here are some general guidelines:

Every Person

- Treat the person with the same respect that you extend to every person.
- Focus on the person, not their disability.
- Ask each person what will make them more comfortable.
- Always ask the person if they need assistance and how you can assist; do not assume they need help.
- Do not make decisions for the person.
- Address the individual directly rather than the sign language interpreter, friend or family member, reader, or other access provider, who may be with them.
- Do not feed, touch or distract service animals.
- Walk on the opposite side of the service animal.
- Refrain from using ableist language (See American Psychological Association’s 2021 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Inclusive Language Guidelines for more info: www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines).

Persons Who Use Wheelchairs/Scooters/Other Mobility Aids

- When speaking for more than a few minutes with someone using a wheelchair or scooter, pull up a chair.
- Never lean on, push, or touch the individual’s mobility aid.

Persons Who Are Blind or Have Visual Impairments

- Introduce yourself and others if present.

- Ask the person their name.
- Identify your job or role.
- Be descriptive when giving directions, do not use motions to explain.
- Avoid using visually-oriented references.
- Offer your arm if the person needs to be guided (Learn proper guiding techniques here: www.everydaysight.com/how-to-guide-a-person-who-is-visually-impaired/).
- Describe where you are going and any obstacles if you are serving as a guide.
- With permission, guide the person's hand to the back of a chair if you offer someone a seat.
- Let the person know when you are leaving.
- Find a place with good lighting, but not too bright.

Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

- Ask the person how they prefer to communicate (e.g., sign language, gesturing, writing, or speaking).
- Advise the person if you have trouble understanding them, do not pretend to understand when you do not.
- Face the person when talking.
- Find a well-lit room, but avoid glare.
- Speak clearly, avoiding gum chewing or obscuring your mouth with your hands.
- Use your normal tone of voice and volume.
- Avoid spaces with background noise.
- Have pen and paper or a device to text on hand as an alternative communication method.
- In groups, request that people speak one at a time.
- Address the person rather than their interpreter.
- When communicating with a person who reads lips, speak clearly in a normal way that does not over-exaggerate words, use short and simple sentences, avoid blocking your face, and stand in a well-lit place.
- Ensure that the venue has an induction loop that stops background noise from interfering if the person is wearing a hearing aid.
- Ask, if you have any doubt if the person understands you.

- Be aware of situations involving announcements or calling out names so you can notify Deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals.

Persons with Speech Difficulties

- Ask each person what will make them most comfortable.
- Listen carefully.
- Do not pretend to understand when you do not.
- Give the person your full attention.
- Find a quiet space.
- If you do not understand, ask the person to repeat; if you still are unable to understand, ask the person to write the information or recommend an alternative method of communicating.
- Do not finish sentences for the person or interrupt.

Person with Learning or Cognitive Difficulties

- Ask each person what will make them most comfortable.
- Listen carefully.
- Speak clearly.
- Check for understanding.
- Use clear, concrete language, and avoid abstractions.
- Allow the person extra time to process the information and ask questions.
- Ask the person how they prefer to communicate (e.g., written or verbal).
- Don't overload the person with too much information.
- Find a quiet place without distractions.

Persons with Developmental Disabilities

- Ask each person what will make them most comfortable.
- Speak clearly.
- Use simple and concrete words, not abstract concepts.
- Break down complex concepts into small parts.
- Do not use "baby" talk.

- Ask neutral questions.
- Allow time for decision-making.
- Keep to the person's schedule and routine.
- Let their vocabulary and pace inform your own.
- Verify responses by repeating questions in different ways.
- If you are not sure if the person understands you, ask them to repeat the information for your benefit.

Persons with Psychosocial Conditions

- Ask if there is a preferred time to communicate.
- Schedule communications in the late morning or early afternoon.
- Keep the pressure of the situation to a minimum. If possible, let them know ahead of time what topics you want to discuss and the nature/goal of the conversation.
- Use automated reminders to highlight the time and location of meetings.
- Provide written instructions.
- Allow for breaks.

Contact the Department of Equity and Compliance at 907-474-7300 or email uaf-deo@alaska.edu, if you have any questions.

This resource was adapted from the American Bar Association's accessible meetings and events toolkit.