ReShape Newsletter

The National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project

Working together to end sexual violence.

Breaking Down Barriers: Accessibility

INTRODUCTION

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Accessibility is a key feature of inclusive, empowering coalition events such as trainings or membership meetings. To interrupt the silence of sexual violence, we must ensure that all people are engaged and respected. To address the oppression of people with disabilities, we must train ourselves to be proactive in thinking about the needs of participants with varying abilities. This ReShape contains resources on building accessible events for your state/territorial coalition.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

'Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals: Registration Tip Sheet' from the Vera Institute of Justice

'Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals: Budgeting for Access Tip Sheet' from the Vera Institute of Justice

Event Planning Accessibility Toolkit

About the Resource Sharing Project

The National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project (RSP) was created to help state sexual assault coalitions across the country access the resources they need in order to develop and thrive. The project is designed to provide technical assistance, support, and the facilitation of peer-driven resources for all state and territorial sexual assault coalitions. The RSP recognizes the needs of all sexual assault coalitions, especially those designated as new or emerging, regarding issues of organizational growth, professional development, and policy development.

The RSP is led by the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (IowaCASA) with project partners the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) and the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP). The RSP is made possible by a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), United States Department of Justice. Email rsp@iowacasa.org for more information.

www.resourcesharingproject.org

> *Many people with disabilities or Deaf/hard of hearing individuals have been repeatedly denied accommodations over their lifetimes, and may have given up asking for accommodations or attending events where they believe accommodations will not be provided.*

One in five Americans has some type of disability, according to the US Census Bureau. Disability can be broadly defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of a person. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body/mind and features of the society in which they live. In this way, disability can be thought as the barriers the world presents or doesn't. If all buildings are fully accessible, for example, the need to use a wheelchair is no longer a disability. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers

Many people who have bodies or minds that differ from dominant culture definitions of "normal" may not identify as having a disability. Whether or not people need additional assistance around access, they should not have to disclose whether or not they have a disability or how they define their abilities. At the same time, when we plan events, it makes sense to do so with the assumption that 20% of our audience will have accessibility needs. That premise is the core of universal design, a concept that makes products, buildings, policies, communication, information and programs inherently accessible and inclusive to the largest array of people possible. Universal design increases the confidence, comfort, and control of participants, and in trainings, provides an educational setting with little to no barriers to fully engaged learning.

When speaking about people with disabilities, we always put the person first: "a person who uses a wheelchair" or "a person with a learning disability." However, when speaking of the Deaf/hard of hearing, however, we say "Deaf people" or a "Deaf individual" to focus on Deafness as a cultural identity. Deafness is legally considered a disability, but most Deaf/hard of hearing people do not consider themselves disabled. Rather, Deaf people speak another language (typically American Sign Language, or ASL, in the US) and share a unique culture.

Many people with disabilities or Deaf/hard of hearing individuals have been repeatedly denied accommodations over their lifetimes, and may have given up asking for accommodations or attending events where they believe accommodations will not be provided. It's important to add clear information about accommodations to event publicity to send a welcoming message, and to do targeted outreach if you have member programs or allied programs focused on people with disabilities or the Deaf.

For example, publicity for a statewide conference could say, "Interpreters and other accommodations will be available at no cost. The hotel and meeting space is wheelchair accessible." As we build events based on the

assumption that accommodation is necessary, we can also look at who our likely audience will be and use that information to make some specific budget modifications and plans. In states that have a Deaf-specific advocacy program, for example, you know that you will need to schedule ASL interpretation at all meetings and events until and unless the Deaf program tells you they cannot attend. If you're holding a state- or territory-wide meeting and want to encourage the participation of lots of people with disabilities, you know from the beginning that you will need to budget more money for accommodations like putting materials into Braille.

Accessibility is an important consideration in selecting hotels or meeting venues. We want to select venues carefully to ensure all participants can fully and equally attend. When you sign a contract with a hotel, you may share legal liability for any barriers to accessibility. At the event, strive for equality in all aspects of the event. All participants should be able to enter through the front door of the hotel and select any seat they wish in meeting spaces. See Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals: Budgeting for Access Tip Sheet for more details.

> *An atmosphere of inclusivity and accessibility doesn't stop with events; to be truly inclusive and accessible, it is equally important to have accessible offices, workspaces, webinars, conference calls, and the like.*

Including questions about accommodations in registration forms is also a strong signal that you value full participation of all attendees. In your registration forms, ask about needs rather than disability. It's generally not important to know what type of disability someone has, and the questions are invasive. Moreover, the type of disability doesn't necessarily tell you what kind of accommodation someone might need. It takes some time to make all the accommodations you need, so it's important to close registration for events 1-3 months before the event. Many of us are not accustomed to closing registration so early, but such a cultural shift within our coalitions is a big step towards ensuring full participation by all. Registration should close at the same time for all attendees; you cannot have a different deadline or extend registration for attendees who do not need accommodations. Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals: Registration Tip Sheet has more detailed instructions on setting up accessible registration for events.

Finally, remember one of the core values of the disabilities rights movement: "Nothing about us without us." Include people with disabilities and the Deaf community in your meeting or training planning, or invite them to join your board of directors or coalition membership. An atmosphere of inclusivity and accessibility doesn't stop with events; to be truly inclusive and accessible, it is equally important to have accessible offices, workspaces, webinars, conference calls, and the like. Please see the resources in this ReShape or contact your RSP TA Provider for support as you build inclusive and accessible events for your coalition.

Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination of people with disabilities. Title III requires public accommodations, including meeting facilities, to provide accessible goods and services, and auxiliary aids, if necessary.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal agencies and private entities receiving federal funds to make electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities, including online registration forms.

The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act requires that all communications, video programming, and equipment providers provide services, including internet-based services, and equipment equally accessible to people with disabilities.

Registration is a critical part of any successful event. It provides an opportunity for you to collect information and payment, if appropriate, from individuals who will be attending your event, allowing you to proactively design an event that best meets the number, background, and needs of your attendees. Registration is essential to designing an event that is accessible to people with disabilities. It serves as the mechanism by which attendees can request the accommodations they need—such as materials in large font or American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters—to be able to fully access and participate in your event. With this information, you can create an event that is accessible for all attendees and meets your legal obligations as the event host under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Is Your Registration Form Accessible?

Your registration form must be accessible to people with disabilities. If you are using an online registration form, make sure the service you are using is compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the 21st Century and Video Accessibility Act. You will want to make sure that, among other things, it is accessible to individuals who are blind or have low vision and use a screen reader. It is best to contact your service provider and request information about the accessibility of

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their services. You can also check the accessibility of your online survey by using a free web accessibility tool, such as WAVE (www.wave.webaim.org). You should also make your registration process available in alternate formats, such as in a paper version, and allow people to register by phone.

Asking the Right Questions

Registration is your opportunity to collect as much information about your attendees and their needs as possible, so be thorough. In addition to asking for basic information—name, title, agency, contact information—be sure to ask about the full range of needs attendees with disabilities may have pertaining to lodging, meals, interpreting, personal care attendants, and other accommodations. The more specific your questions and answer choices, the better equipped you will be to successfully meet the needs of your attendees. In this section, we discuss a few areas that are important to address on your registration form and provide sample registration questions. The sample registration questions can be found in a box following each section.

• **Personal Care Attendants:** Some people with disabilities who need assistance with certain daily activities—getting ready in the morning, toileting, eating, etc.—may have a personal care attendant or a personal assistant attend your event with them. While personal care attendants will not be participating in your event in the same way as other attendees, they will be present. If there are registration fees for your meeting, you will

need to decide whether you will charge personal care attendants. Regardless, it is important to include them in your count for space and other considerations. Your registration should include a question about them and, possibly, require them to complete their own registration form.

Are you traveling with a personal care attendant (PCA) or personal assistant (PA)?

> Yes
> No

If yes, for planning purposes, please provide your PCA's or PA's contact information:

> First name:
> Last name:
> Phone number:
> Email address:

• **Lodging:** If your event requires overnight lodging, your registration should ask attendees questions about their lodging needs. If you are paying for and/or making lodging reservations for individuals, you will need to know if an attendee requires an ADA room with a roll-in shower, an ADA room with a tub and chair, a room accessible for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or a chemical-free room.

Even if your event attendees are making their own hotel reservations, it is helpful to collect information about their lodging needs. As the event organizer, you and the hotel are responsible for ensuring the

accessibility of the accommodations. By having this information on hand, you will be able to check with the hotel to make sure attendees' requests are met before they arrive.

Option 1: Please indicate which room type you require from the following list.

Option 2: You are responsible for making your own hotel reservation. However, by providing us with information on the type of room you require, we will be able to check with the hotel to make sure they meet your needs. Please indicate which room type you require from the following list:

> No lodging required
> Standard room
> ADA room with roll-in shower
> ADA room with tub and chair
> Room accessible for Deaf/hard of hearing
> Chemical-free room
> Other: Please specify

• **Meals:** If you are serving food and beverages at your event, you will need to ask about attendees' dietary needs. Some people with disabilities may have dietary restrictions related to their disability, such as diabetes, or food needs associated with their medication. In addition, some individuals with limited mobility may require a pre-cut meal. This is

Definitions

>**A roll-in shower** has a floor that is flat and rimless, allowing a wheelchair to maneuver into the shower stall.

> **A tub chair** sits inside the tub or shower and allows the person to take a shower while in a seated position rather than standing on the slippery bottom of the tub or shower.

> **A room that is accessible for Deaf/hard of hearing individuals** either has permanently or temporarily installed equipment which makes auditory alerts—a fire alarm, knock at the door, or telephone ring—visual.

> **A chemical-free room** is cleaned without the use of harsh chemicals prior to the guest's arrival.

a good place to collect requests for other dietary needs such as a Kosher, vegan, or vegetarian meal.

Please note any dietary needs from the following list:

> No dietary needs
> Kosher meal
> Pre-cut meal
> Vegan
> Vegetarian
> Other. Please specify

• **Accommodations:** People with disabilities are as diverse as every other community and their accessibility needs are just as varied. Extra steps may need to be taken in order to address unique accessibility or accommodations needs. Your registration should include a question on attendees' accommodation needs. Providing a list of options, along with an "other" choice, communicates your commitment to access and may increase attendees' comfort levels when requesting an accommodation.

Please select any additional accommodations you require from the list below. If you require something that is not listed, please indicate your request by selecting "Other" and providing us with specific information about your request in the comments box. We may contact you for further information, if necessary.

> None
> Electronic copies of materials in advance
> Electronic text file of materials on-site
> Hard copies of materials on-site
> Materials in Braille
> Materials in fond over X pt (insert your standard font size)
> Wheelchair access
> Other. Please specify _____

• **Interpreting:** Individuals who use a different language than the primary one used in your event, including Deaf individuals who use ASL, will need interpreters to fully participate in your event. A simple question can be included on your registration to capture whether someone needs an interpreter. In addition, it is best to follow up with anyone who requests an interpreter to learn more about their communication needs to ensure you hire interpreters who are the best fit for the person making the request.

Please indicate your interpreting needs from the list below:

> None required
> American Sign Language
> Simultaneous spoken foreign language interpretation,
   Please specify _____
> Other. Please specify _____

If you know that a large number of Deaf or hard of hearing individuals are likely to attend your event, it makes sense to provide more detailed interpreting options in your answer choices. This will provide you with more information as you work to meet everyone's requests and ensure the interpreters you select meet the unique communication needs of your attendees. Even with this detailed information, it is best to follow up with anyone who requests an interpreter to get more information to help you hire the best team of interpreters.

• **A Catchall Question:** Given the diversity of disabilities and possible auxiliary aids people may need to fully participate in your event, it is important to provide registrants with an open-ended question designed for them to tell you about any other needs they may have.

> Please tell us any additional needs you may have for this meeting. Please be as specific as possible:
>
> _____
> _____
> _____
> _____
> _____

An Important Caveat

As the meeting host, you are responsible for meeting reasonable requests for accommodations that are made through the meeting registration

process. While efforts should be made to meet requests that are made on-site, provided that you created an opportunity for individuals to make requests during your pre-event registration, you are not legally required to meet those on-site requests. Moreover, you are only required to provide auxiliary aids or modifications to event programming during the hours of the event. The individual is responsible for securing auxiliary aids for after-hour engagements that are not part of your programming. It is important to notify individuals of these limitations during registration.

> Every effort will be made to accommodate advance requests; on-site requests cannot be guaranteed. Reasonable accommodations will be provided during meeting sessions. Referrals for assistance outside of the meeting can be made available. Please contact (INSERT STAFF PERSON) at emailaddress@dot.org with any questions or for more assistance.

Timing is Everything

Since attendees are making their accommodation requests through your registration process, you will need to make sure registration closes on a date that gives you ample time to meet any accommodation requests. For example, you typically need to secure ASL interpreters two to three months in advance to ensure qualified interpreters are obtained. Thus, you would need your registration to close two to

three months before your event is scheduled to take place. As a general rule, we recommend that you close your registration three months before your event.

Additional Resources

U.S. Department of Justice **>** ADA Home Page **>** www.ada.gov
Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act

ADA National Network **>** www.adata.org
Information, Guidance, and Training on the ADA available through 10 Regional Centers

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) **>** www.ataporg.org
Resource on and link to Assistive Technology Programs in Your State

About the Center on Victimization and Safety

The Center on Victimization and Safety at the Vera Institute of Justice works with communities around the country to fashion services that reach, appeal to, and benefit all victims. Our work focuses on communities of people who are at elevated risk of harm but often marginalized from victim services and the criminal justice system. We combine research, technical assistance, and training to equip policymakers and practitioners with the information, skills, and resources needed to effectively serve all victims.

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Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals

BUDGETING FOR ACCESS Tip Sheet

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires any business or organization to make all of their services available to individuals with a disability.

Title III also requires public and private entities to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to ensure that individuals with speech, hearing, and vision disabilities understand what is said or written and can communicate effectively.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits organizations receiving federal funding from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services.

When planning events—meetings, conferences, roundtables, seminars, etc.—there are accommodations necessary to ensure that attendees with disabilities and Deaf attendees have complete access to the venue and the event's presentations and materials. Although many modifications and accommodations have little-to-no cost, some accommodations do. This tip sheet is designed to provide you with information and cost estimates so you can incorporate those considerations into funding proposals and budgets for your event. Including accurate estimates for common meeting expenses and specific disability accommodation line items in your budget is essential to meeting your obligations (see box at left) under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and creating a welcoming environment for attendees with disabilities and Deaf attendees.

Estimating Venue-Specific Expenses

Budgeting for an accessible event will include line items that exist in the budgets of most events, such as room rentals and audio-visual aids, but certain costs will need to be calculated differently. For all of the items and accommodations listed below, check prices with your venue in advance.

• **Meeting Room Rental:** Venues estimate the maximum number of people who can fit into their

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meeting rooms assuming very narrow pathways between tables, which are often inaccessible to people with disabilities. To create accessible pathways (e.g., pathways that can be easily navigated by people using wheelchairs), it is necessary to set the room with a minimum of 36-inch-wide aisles between tables. To meet these requirements, you should secure meeting space that, according to the hotel, can accommodate 30 percent more people than you anticipate attending. A larger room may cost more so you will need to account for this additional expense in your room rental calculations. Room rental expenses vary greatly. You may be able to negotiate for free meeting space, or you may pay a premium per room per day. Factors that impact your room rental costs include the number of rooms, size of rooms, number of days the space is needed, and other expenses you have committed to at your venue. Room rental costs range anywhere from $0 to $1,500+ per meeting room per day.

> **TIP!**
>
> Always have the venue provide you with a diagram of the space using **36-inch-wide aisles** to ensure the space they are proposing will work for you needs.

• **Stage and Ramp:** If you are holding your meeting in a large space, you should ensure that everyone in attendance has a clear line of sight to your presenters, presentations, and interpreters. If you have a stage, you will need a ramp to ensure that people with disabilities affecting their mobility can access it. While hotels generally offer these at no cost, should you be holding an event at a retreat center, you may have to rent a ramp to the stage that meets ADA requirements. The cost for the stage and ramp vary so you should request a price list from potential venues or rental companies prior to contracting with your venue. You will also need

TIP!

To save on costs, if your venue does not have an ADA ramp available, suggest they borrow one from another venue.

to ensure that any ramps meet ADA requirements, including being of adequate width (36 inches), having an appropriate slope (no more than one inch in height for every 12 inches in length), and handrails.

• **Audio-Visual Aids:** Presenters and their presentations need to be easily seen and heard to ensure that all attendees have the same access to the information being shared.

Microphones ensure that everyone, especially people who are hard of hearing and may be using assistive listening devices, can hear the information presented at your event. In addition, microphones ensure that American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters can dedicate their full attention to interpretation without straining to hear. The number of microphones needed for your event depends on the size of the room and the format of the event. At a minimum, you should budget for one to be used by the speakers and one to be used by audience members if there will be discussion or questions and answers. While the costs of microphones vary considerably from venue to venue, the average cost per wireless microphone varies from $150 to $300 per day. In addition, if using microphones, you will incur additional expenses for a sound system (the costs of which can vary widely depending on the amount of equipment needed and the quality of equipment used) and, possibly, tech support.

Tripod screens are commonly used at events to show PowerPoint presentations, videos, or broadcasts of the event. Multiple screens may be needed to

ensure that all attendees—especially those using wheelchairs who may have limited mobility and Deaf and hard of hearing attendees who rely heavily on sight—have a clear line of sight. These screens can cost anywhere from $150 per day for a 5' X 5' screen (not including a projector) to $1,350 per day for a 7.5' X 10' screen (including projector) at a hotel.

Pipe and drape background—a typically solid-colored fabric used to create a backdrop to a stage—should be considered if a significant portion of your event is occurring on a stage with extremely busy walls behind it (i.e., patterned or decorated with bright colors). Busy walls can be distractions for Deaf individuals and can cause eyestrain. Average cost for draping is $150 per panel, but the cost is heavily dependent on the venue and will vary depending upon how many panels you need.

• **Postage and Delivery:** An individual may request to receive meeting materials in advance of your event. This would include anything that will be disseminated on-site at your event. You should send meeting materials to ASL interpreters in advance of your event to give them time to familiarize themselves with the core content of the event, including participants' names and any specialized language that will be used. Unless you are sending these materials electronically, your budget should include additional money to cover copying and shipping costs. Costs for shipping vary greatly depending on your provider and how quickly you need to have materials arrive at their destination.

Service animals need a designated relief area.

• **Service Animal Relief Area:** Service animals assist people with a wide range of disabilities, including sensory and mobility limitations. Because you cannot ask participants if they will be traveling with a service animal, you need to proactively ensure that there is a designated service animal relief area on the venue's property for every event. This can be a grassy area that exists already (in which case there should be no charge) or the venue may have to create a space (in which case you may incur a charge). You will need to work closely with the hotel to determine where the space will be. Additionally, you will need to advertise the location of the service animal relief area in your program and materials, and with appropriate signage.

Budgeting for Individual Accommodations

While the items listed in the previous section are common event-related expenses, the following is a list of accommodations that may be requested by individual attendees.

• **ASL Interpreters:** Qualified ASL interpreters provide translation between ASL and spoken English. ASL has its own grammar and sentence structure and is the primary language used by Deaf individuals. The average cost for an ASL interpreter is between $55 and $65 per hour, with a minimum of two interpreters required in a team-interpreting format.

• **Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)** help individuals separate the sounds they want to hear from background noise and are available for

personal and group use. Some ALDs are designed to be used with hearing aids or cochlear implants, while others are designed to be used alone. If an ALD is used in conjunction with a hearing aid, it may require a telecoil (T-switch). Costs for telecoils range from $50 to $170+.

Personal ALDs have separate tone and volume controls and may be configured to work with more than one speaker. The most common devices are wired, like the Pocket Talker. Similar in purpose is the wireless—and more flexible—Personal Frequency Modulation System. Event organizers can purchase or rent these items if the individual does not own one him/herself. The purchase cost ranges from $150 to $800.

Group ALDs are preferable when there are several people with hearing loss in a group. The primary advantage is that multiple people can benefit from these systems, though they are expensive and not as portable as single-user devices. Costs for group ALDs range from $500 to $1500 depending upon the number of receivers, headphones, etc.

• **Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs)** are individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing who have been certified as interpreters by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. CDIs may have specialized training in gesture, mime, props, drawings, and other tools. A CDI may be needed when an interpreter who is hearing does not meet a Deaf attendee's communication needs. The average cost for a CDI is between $55 and $65 per hour.

TIP!

If there are no CART providers in your event city or surrounding area, CART services can be provided remotely via a telephone, Internet connection, and a laptop computer.

• **Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART)** is the instantaneous, word-for-word translation of spoken language into text which is displayed in various forms. English text is produced with less than a two-second delay. An accommodation for a variety of disabilities, the CART writer transcribes what is heard into text that can displayed on a computer screen for an individual or on a larger display for the entire audience. The cost for CART service varies but on average runs between $120 and $160 per hour.

• **C-Print** is a speech-to-text system developed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf for individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or have disabilities that affect their concentration and attention. A typist—called a C-Print captionist— listens and simultaneously types an interpretation of the meeting content (including comments made by others) onto a laptop computer, which is transmitted to the consumer's laptop. A printed transcript and notes are available via email. The C-print captionist receives between $16 and $22 per hour.

TIP!

If you are hosting an event and need more Deaf kits than the hotel has on hand, suggest that the hotel borrow additional kits from other properties in the area.

• **Deaf Kits:** Hotels offer kits to individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing that generally include a text telephone (a device—commonly known as a TTY—that allows the user to communicate through typed messages instead of talking and listening), telephone handset amplifier, visual smoke detector, multifunctioning alert system (telephone, doorbell, alarm clock, sound monitor) and other items. Hotels generally offer these at no cost to the guest. If you need to purchase a Deaf kit, the cost ranges from $400 to $700.

• **Material in Alternate Formats:** Individuals who are blind or have low vision, people with cognitive disabilities, and others may need the material you are offering to be made available in alternate formats.

Audio Tapes offer a spoken version of the written material to individuals who are blind or have low vision and some people with cognitive disabilities. Audio cassette recordings cost an average of $0.25 per page and if making a digital audio recording, the cost climbs to $0.50 per page plus an additional $12 per digital cartridge.

CDs/USB Flash Drives provide individuals who are blind or have low vision with an electronic version of all written materials which they can access using screen readers. These can be created in-house for small quantities or out-sourced for larger orders. Costs for CDs vary depending upon size. On average, you can purchase 100 CDs for $20. Costs for a 1GB USB flash drive average around $6 each when purchased in bulk. Costs will vary depending upon the style, size, any customizations such as logos, and quantity ordered.

Large Print is defined as print that is at least 16 points in size and is made available to accommodate people with low vision. Large print can be done in-house by changing the font of the document being offered or it may be out-sourced, in which case the cost would vary. When creating documents in large print in-house, costs would include staff time and any special materials needed, for example, paper in larger than standard sizes.
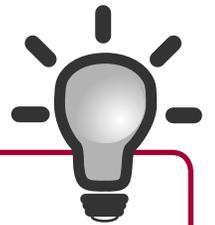
TIP!

If you receive a request for materials in large print, be sure to let the hotel know so they can create menus and other materials in large print.

Plain Language is a clear and succinct way of writing designed to ensure that the reader understands the material quickly and completely. Creating material in plain language can often be done in-house or out-sourced to providers that specialize in editing material. Hiring a plain language consultant can cost an average of $450 to $650 per day.

• **Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)**—also known as caregivers, personal care assistants, patient care assistants, personal support workers, and home care aides—are people hired to help persons with disabilities with their daily activities, such as bathing, eating, etc. If you have a presenter who uses a PCA, you will need to include the PCA's travel, lodging, per diem, and if negotiated, their hourly rate. Whether or not you will need to pay for the PCA's time depends on individual circumstances. You will need to include the PCA in your count of attendees for any meals and materials. Hourly rates for PCAs can vary from $8 to $16.

Flexibility is Key

Some of the most common individual accommodations include ASL interpreters, materials in electronic format, materials in large print, CART, and C-Print. Creating a standard set of accommodations that you always build into your event budgets will give you greater flexibility. For example, you may not always have requests for both CART and C-Print at the same event, but setting these dollars aside gives you the ability to absorb unforeseen costs or reallocate that money to other requests or expenses as needed.

Additional Resources

U.S. Department of Justice **>** ADA Home Page **>** www.ada.gov
Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act

ADA National Network **>** www.adata.org
Information, Guidance, and Training on the ADA available through 10 Regional Centers

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) **>** www.ataporg.org
Resource on and link to Assistive Technology Programs in Your State

About the Center on Victimization and Safety

The Center on Victimization and Safety at the Vera Institute of Justice works with communities around the country to fashion services that reach, appeal to, and benefit all victims. Our work focuses on communities of people who are at elevated risk of harm but often marginalized from victim services and the criminal justice system. We combine research, technical assistance, and training to equip policymakers and practitioners with the information, skills, and resources needed to effectively serve all victims.

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The Vera Institute of Justice combines research, technical assistance, and demonstration projects to help leaders in civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

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www.vera.org.

Meeting Guidelines
Version 1

Please help us create an environment where everyone can participate equally and comfortably by following these guidelines.

- Turn your cell phone to the vibrate position.

- Use the microphone when available.

- State your name at the beginning of speaking in front of the group.

- Pace yourself when you speak to the group to allow time for the interpreting process, which can lag a few seconds behind the spoken discussion.

- Use people first language (say "people with disabilities" and not "disabled people" and avoid expressions that draw from violent references (i.e., "it strikes me," "take a stab at it," etc.).

- Explain any acronyms or jargon you may use.

- Push your chair into the table when you leave.

- Ask permission before you take someone's picture.

- Remember and be respectful of the fact that we are coming from different fields, with different histories and languages.

- Create a safe place for people to learn; if there is a conflict, use it as a learning opportunity.

Event Analysis
Key Questions

American Sign Language Interpreters
- Will Deaf people be in attendance?
- Is the number of interpreters budgeted sufficient to create a comparable experience for Deaf attendees?
- Is the amount budgeted sufficient to secure qualified interpreters?
- Will local interpreters be used or will interpreters be flown in? If it is the former, can qualified interpreters be secured in the meeting city?

Audio Visual Costs
- If the meeting has fewer 30 people:
  - What are the room size, setup, and acoustics?
  - Will Deaf and/or hard of hearing people be in attendance?
- If the meeting has more than 30 people:
  - Have A/V costs been included for general and breakout sessions?
  - Have enough microphones been estimated per room so presenter(s), interpreters, and audience members can use them?

Braille
- If using printed materials, is a line item for Braille included?
- Will you repurpose funds in the budget to provide Braille if requested?

Electronic Resources
- Does the individual responsible for design and layout have expertise in accessibility?
- Are access features embedded in electronic documents to ensure access for people using screen readers and other assistive devices?
- What process will your organization use to assess its e-resources for accessibility before they are finalized and distributed?

Event Analysis
Key Questions

Printing in Large Font
- Are increased printing estimates included to allow for large font materials to be printed?
- Assume 25% more printed pages at 18 pt font.

Room Rental Fees
- Do the room rental fees assume enough rooms and rooms of ample size to set the event for access (i.e., 30 percent more attendees than anticipated)?

Video
- If videos will be shown during the event, are funds included to caption the video?
- Does the content or intended audience warrant simultaneous interpreting?
- If an existing video is not captioned, are ASL interpreters included?

Website: If using a website to advertise the event:
- If developing new website:
  - If you're using an out-of-the-box platform (like Word Press, for example), is it 508 compliant? Will you be able to maintain access features when designing and populating the website?
  - If designing a website from scratch, what is the expertise of the developer and designer? Do you plan to test the prototypes and final designs with people with disabilities and Deaf people?
- If existing:
  - Has you tested the accessibility of the website?
  - Do any known access issues exist? Is there a plan in place to remove them?
- For all websites:
  - If the site includes videos, are they captioned?
  - If the site includes images, are alt-text descriptions used?
  - If materials are available for download, are they available in multiple, accessible formats (PDF, text)?

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Accessibility Guidelines for Presentations

All presentations and materials must be accessible to all participants. To create accessible presentations and materials, please keep in mind the following guidelines and learning considerations.

Deaf Culture
- ☐ While not everyone who is deaf or hard of hearing identifies with Deaf culture, many members of the Deaf community do. The term Deaf, with a capital D, is used to reflect their cultural identification. Their culture, known as Deaf culture, was developed based in part on a shared language, which in the United States is American Sign Language (ASL). Like any other culture, Deaf culture has its own values, norms, community institutions, and history that are important to understand and incorporate when serving Deaf survivors.
- ☐ Please use Deaf with a capital D to refer to Deaf survivors, and people who are hard of hearing.
- ☐ Do not use the terms hearing impaired, deaf-mute, or deaf and dumb.

People First Language
- ☐ All presentations and materials must use people first language.
- ☐ Put the person before the disability, e.g. use "person with a disability or who has a disability" or "people with disabilities or who have disabilities."
- ☐ Avoid using language such as disabled, handicapped, patients, or crippled.
- ☐ Other examples include:
  - o Use wheelchair user or uses wheelchair, do not use the terms wheelchair bound/confined to a wheelchair.
  - o Use people who have a development disability or people with developmental disabilities. Do not use the terms mentally retarded or retarded.

Power Point Presentations
- ☐ Use simple slide backgrounds, for example, avoid backgrounds with images.
- ☐ Choose backgrounds that are in sharp contrast to your font color.

Accessibility Guidelines for Presentations

- ☐ Use at least 18-point font. For body text, use a sans serif font, for example, Arial or Tahoma. Use font colors that contrast sharply with your background.
- ☐ As much as possible, use common 1-2 syllable words. Define unfamiliar, but necessary, words and terms.
- ☐ Be consistent with words and terms used, use the exact same wording each time.
- ☐ If possible, convey complicated concepts using pictures and stories.
- ☐ As much as possible, present information in bullet points with a maximum of 4-5 points per slide. Try to avoid slides heavy in text.
- ☐ Use headers to identify new sections and topics.
- ☐ Line up or justify the left margin. Do not justify to the right or center.
- ☐ Any video or audio elements must be closed or open captioned.
- ☐ Pace your presentation. As a general rule, use 1-2 slides per minute.
- ☐ Be prepared to fully describe any graphics or pictures used in your presentation.

Handouts

- ☐ Use at least a 14-point font. For body text, use a sans serif font, for example, Arial or Tahoma.
- ☐ Use headers to identify new sections and topics.
- ☐ Line up or justify the left margin. Do not justify to the right or center.
- ☐ Handouts should be provided in a format that can easily be converted to a larger font size.
- ☐ Hard copies of handouts will not be provided, however, handouts will be included on a USB flash drive for all participants.

During the Presentation

- ☐ Speak clearly at a nice, easy pace; this allows for optimal translation via the interpreter.
- ☐ Be mindful of your position in the room; keep the line of sight to your presentation and to the interpreters clear. Do not walk, or stand, in front of interpreters.
- ☐ Be mindful about the type of directions that you give the audience. For example, do not ask the audience to refer to a handout while you continue to speak at the same time. Give the audience time for review.
- ☐ Be sure to always use the microphone (or to have your interpreter use the microphone) and remind audience members to also use the microphone.

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Accessibility Guidelines for Presentations

☐ Ensure that interpreters can be seen if the lights are dimmed.

☐ Be mindful to face the audience as interpreters and participants using other accommodations may rely on your facial impressions.

☐ Avoid jargon and acronyms. If you use an acronym or terms specific to your field of work, be sure to explain them.

☐ Be sure to slow your speaking rate if you are a rapid speaker.

☐ Be sure the audience is clear about any questions or comments.

☐ Repeat or paraphrase all questions and comments from the audience.

☐ Be mindful of varying abilities when asking for audience participation. For example, some people may not be able to raise their hands to participate in question and answer periods.

☐ If you are planning to read something aloud (a quote, a bio, a paragraph) during your presentation, please read slowly.

☐ When conversing with a Deaf participant via an interpreter, look at the participant and address her directly.

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Contracting with the Hotel
Sample Language

Accessibility-Related Clauses for Hotel Contracts

RELOCATION CLAUSE

The Hotel agrees that it will not relocate guests requiring ADA rooms. However, in the event any other Vera Institute of Justice Guest with a guaranteed reservation cannot be accommodated by the Hotel, the Hotel will provide the following:

- Accommodations at a comparable Hotel as close as possible and at no charge to the guest. This is applicable to the first night that guest is displaced from the Hotel and any night thereafter.
- One complimentary round trip group transportation between Hotel and the alternate Hotel for each day the guest is displaced.
- Two five-minute phone calls (or one ten minute phone call) and necessary arrangements for forwarding of the displaced guests' telephone messages, packages and mail.
- Offer to relocate displaced guest back to first available room in the Hotel. If room becomes available and the guest elects not to return to the Hotel, the Hotel will have no further obligations under this clause.
- Upon return to the Hotel, the guest will receive upgraded accommodations (if available) and a welcome expression and amenity from the General Manager.
- Credit will be applied to Vera Institute of Justice's room block for any displaced guest room nights.
- Hotel will immediately notify onsite Vera Institute of Justice's Planner of relocation and any follow up action.

FUNCTION SPACE

Based on the requirements outlined by Vera Institute of Justice, the Hotel has reserved the function space set forth on the Program of Events attached to this Agreement.
Hotel agrees to set all banquet functions so they are accessible for group participants with disabilities. In order to meet this requirement the following will be done:

- Buffet stations will be positioned so there are clear 36 inch aisleways and room for a 60 inch turning radius.

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Contracting with the Hotel
Sample Language

- All buffet stations will be set so that food/utensils/display items are flush to the table. Cups/plates will be stacked no more than two high and no risers of any kind should be used.
- All tables (crescent rounds) in the general session rooms will be set (at a minimum) with 36 inch aisleways between each tables (measure from chairs from one table to chairs of the next) to allow for appropriate wheelchair access
- The main staging in the General Session spaces will be equipped with an ADA regulation wheelchair ramp to allow stage access to staff and presenters who use wheelchairs.
- All breakout rooms (theatre) should be set with ample aisle ways. Hotel will make every effort to space the rows such that each row allows for a 36 inch aisle way between chairs.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE

Each party agrees to use good faith efforts to ensure that it complies with its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Act's accompanying regulation and guidelines (collectively the "ADA"). Each party further agrees to indemnify and hold the other party harmless from and against any and all claims and expenses, including attorney's fees and litigation expenses, that may be incurred by or asserted against the other party or its officers, directors, agents, and employees on the basis of the indemnifying party's non-compliance with any of the provisions of the ADA. Vera Institute of Justice agrees to provide Hotel with reasonable advance notice about the special needs of any attendees of which Vera Institute of Justice is aware. Hotel agrees to ensure that all necessary staff will attend a training on "Disability Etiquette" provided by the Vera Institute of Justice which will be scheduled and provided within one month of the program.
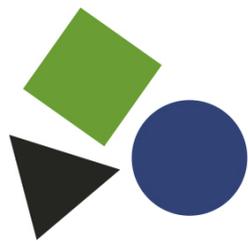
Additional Resources on Accessibility

Serving Sexual Violence Survivors with Disabilities

Barriers exist in all parts of the response systems for survivors with disabilities: victim services, disability organizations, criminal justice systems, and health systems. Barriers can exist in communication, physical access, policies, program design, information, and attitudes. In rural communities, additional barriers may exist due to a lack of nearby services and resources, confidentiality and privacy challenges, and inadequate transportation systems. To enhance access to sexual assault services for victims with all types of disabilities in rural dual/multi-service advocacy agencies, attention must be paid to our policies, outreach, welcoming environments, ensuring access, attitudinal access, communication access, collaboration, training, and sustainability. Each of these strategies will be addressed with an emphasis on practical application.
Click here for more information >>

Eight Step Advocacy Plan for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Survivors of Sexual Assault

This guide is intended for rural sexual assault advocates searching for concrete information on how to work with Deaf and hard of hearing sexual assault survivors. Deaf survivors of sexual assault face numerous obstacles, such as isolation, stereotyping, and lack of anonymity in accessing all kinds of services in rural communities. The steps in this guide will direct you towards providing Deaf sexual assault survivors with trauma-informed and culturally appropriate services, assist you in identifying accommodations in services and changes in technology, and encourage you to reach out to Deaf sexual assault survivors in your community.
Click here for more information >>

Illinois Imagines

Illinois Imagines is a statewide project to improve services to women with disabilities who have been victims of sexual violence. The project is directed by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois rape crisis centers, disability service agencies and self-advocates. Collaborative teams have been established in 30 communities across the state.
Click here for more information >>

Forging New Collaborations: A Guide for Rape Crisis, Domestic Violence, and Disability Organizations

Between 2006 and 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women funded the development of collaborations between victim services and disability organizations in more than 40 communities to ensure people with disabilities who have experienced domestic or sexual violence have the community-based supports and criminal

justice responses they need to heal. This report, based upon Vera's work with these burgeoning collaborations, recommends steps for building effective collaboration and practical strategies for overcoming common obstacles.
Click here for more information >>

Culture, Language, and Access: Key Considerations for Serving Deaf Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence
Recent research suggests that Deaf women experience higher rates of sexual and domestic violence than their hearing counterparts, but are often shut off from victim services and supports that are ill-equipped to respond to their unique needs. As a result, they are denied access to services that could help them safely flee from abuse, heal from trauma, and seek justice after they have been harmed. This policy brief offers practical suggestions for expanding and enhancing Deaf survivors' access to victim services and other supports.
Click here for more information >>

ReShape Newsletter: Building Bridges with Disability Advocacy Agencies (Fall 2004)
The subject of this edition is capacity building around serving the sexual assault survivor or secondary victim with disabilities. I have endeavored to provide you with articles that will inform and enlighten you on the challenges of quality service provision as well as suggest ideas and resources to improve already existing services. There are many tools currently available to your coalition to ensure appropriate service to all individuals.
Click here for more information >>

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