



# National Disabled Legal Professionals Association

## *Crip the Law.*

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### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Guide for Hosting Events

#### Key Checklist (Not Exhaustive)

- ASL Interpreter
- CART provider
- Accessibility/Accommodations Contact
- Physical location is fully accessible (including bathrooms and all key locations)
- COVID-19 safety precautions are implemented
- Outreach materials are accessible (PDF accessibility, alt text, appropriate contrast, etc.)
- Accessibility information/Point of Contact on outreach materials
- Prepare panelists (Inform them about accessibility norms, visual descriptions, accessibility options, etc. Confirm access needs. Provide questions/run of show)
- Ensure any slides are accessible (including alt text) and emailed to participants in advance

#### I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

##### a. Panelists

For all events, the organizer should make a conscious effort to ensure more than half the program presenters are women, members of the LGBTQI+ community, disabled, or people of color. Organizers should also include law students and legal workers as appropriate.

This guidance is not intended simply to fill a convenient quota. It is intended to ensure that audience members are exposed to important perspectives that they would not otherwise be exposed to without including panelists with different lived experiences, as well as to ensure that we are including those perspectives in important conversations.

When hosting events about specific marginalized or historically excluded people, the panel should predominantly—and ideally, completely—include individuals from that marginalized or historically excluded group. Hosting panels about a marginalized group that continues to exclude them and their perspectives furthers their oppression.

Avoid selecting panelists who have made harassing, racist, ableist, or otherwise inappropriate comments or remarks, or have expressed similarly problematic viewpoints. Do your research when selecting panelists to ensure that no panelist will feel uncomfortable because of who they are. There is a difference between an ideological disagreement up for debate and an opinion that targets an individual's personhood.



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#### a. Location

When events are in person, ensuring that the location has a gender-neutral restroom is important for inclusion. In DC, businesses that have a single-occupancy restroom should have it, legally, open to any gender. However, it is important to check.

Your space may require a lactation room and a restroom with a baby changing station as well. Please be aware and ask about them as appropriate.

A prayer room may also be helpful.

If we are able to patronize businesses that are owned and operated by disabled people, people of color, and other marginalized folks, that is also preferred.

#### b. Respecting Identities

Be sure to create a space where all identities are respected. That means all names and pronouns are respected, and other aspects of a marginalized individual's identity are not challenged. Having all panelists introduce themselves with their pronouns is a helpful way to prioritize inclusion as well.

#### c. Code of Conduct

We may wish to adopt a code of conduct for events that presenters and attendees must abide by so that there are clear expectations. An example of such a code is available at <https://www.alterconf.com/code-of-conduct>.

#### d. Social Media, Outreach, and Promotion

Use images that are representative and inclusive in promoting the event. Take images that are representative and inclusive of the entire audience (if in person) or panel at the event for anything you plan to share after the event.

#### e. Land Acknowledgements

Land acknowledgements are an important way to acknowledge the ongoing colonization of tribal lands. However, if we would like to do land acknowledgements, they must be done properly. Otherwise, they are simply performative. Many indigenous folks, at this point, have expressed this very concern about the performative nature of so many of these land acknowledgements. Here is a helpful guide for proper land acknowledgements: <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>. This is a helpful resource for assisting with land acknowledgement: [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca).

#### f. Avoid religious holidays and days of observance when possible

This includes major religious holidays and days of observance for all religions.

#### g. Compensation of Marginalized Panelists

If we would like to ensure that marginalized folks are compensated for their labor and are able to share their important and valuable ideas, finding funding for panelists is extremely helpful. I understand that funding can often be a challenge. However, if this is something that we can accomplish, it would be a huge advancement for equity. Far too often, marginalized folks are used for their emotional labor and retraumatized with little to no compensation.

## II. Accessibility

### a. Accommodations Contact

In all event announcements, flyers, and advertisements, please note that accommodations are available and note who the contact for those accommodations is. There should always be a specific contact person.

### b. ASL Interpretation and Captioning

The most common accommodations that you may need to provide are CART (or live captioning) and ASL interpreting. People may request other types of accommodations, and they will do so by emailing the contact person. Arranging for captioning generally requires about two weeks' notice. Be sure that you are using an individual who is qualified and experienced.

Automatic captions are not a sufficient replacement for live captioning. It is not as accurate and may disappear quickly, among other problems.

For events greater than an hour or for events with multiple presenters, multiple ASL interpreters may be necessary. Certified Deaf Interpreters, in addition to hearing interpreters, may also be helpful, or essential, in some cases to provide appropriate access to attendees or panelists.

If a panelist is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, it is important to ensure that you use an interpreter that they work with often and trust.

### c. Social Media Posts, Flyers, and Outreach

In all social media posts promoting events, please use alt text or image descriptions when pictures are used. Alt text should be brief, functional, and culturally contextual. For more information on writing alt text, visit <https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/describe-content-images>. Each social media platform has its own process for adding alt text, as well.

For any event hashtags or hashtags used in posts, please be sure to capitalize the first letter of each word in the hashtag for screen readers (for example, #CapitalizeAllFirstLetters).

Please limit the use of emojis and take care in emoji usage. Avoid repeating emojis or unnecessarily using emojis in the middle of a sentence. These actions can be inaccessible for screen readers. Screen readers can generally read emojis; however, some emojis have better descriptions than others. If context is important, you may want to confirm what the emoji is conveying for a screen reader. For example, for the red flag meme, a screen reader basically just says, "triangular flag," or something to that effect, which is unhelpful.

Make sure all designs are high contrast and use sans serif font. You can check for appropriate contrast at [WebAim](#).

In all flyers, outreach emails, and communications, be sure to list a contact for all accommodations requests. If you know that you are providing CART, ASL, or other accommodations, you should also note that on communications or flyers.

Be sure that any flyers are screen readable and accessible. This is particularly of concern with PDFs. You may need to run an accessibility check through programs like Adobe Pro to ensure a PDF is screen readable. If using images, use alt text.

#### d. Remote And Hybrid Event Considerations

- For some, the chat is extremely hard to read and focus on and serves as an access issue. For others, the chat is an extremely helpful access function. Assigning someone to monitor the chat is helpful.
- Allowing call in participation is also extremely important. Additionally, not only fielding questions through the chat and Q&A is important, not just for those who call in, but also as an access consideration.
- Be sure to choose a platform that is accessible for all, as well as one that is compatible with captioning. Zoom is one of the more accessible platforms, whereas WebEx is one of the least accessible platforms.
- Ensure panelists can be seen and/or heard clearly. That might require ensuring they are in a quiet location, have headphones, etc.
- If you have an ASL interpreter, it may be helpful to spotlight/pin the interpreter in a webinar to ensure the interpreter is visible.
- Tech rehearsals with ASL interpreters and captioners may be helpful. Additionally, ensuring interpreters and captioners join early with panelists is helpful to circumvent tech concerns.
- When hosting a hybrid event, be sure that remote participants can meaningfully engage in the ways that in-person attendees can. This also requires quality sound, the ability to see key participants/interpreters, and a concerted effort to check the video chat for “hands,” messages, and more. You may elect to have an in-person individual monitor the videochat and take care of any tech issues.

#### e. In-Person Events

##### i. Hybrid Option

Note that, particularly as the pandemic continues, more disabled people may be unable to attend events in-person, particularly indoor, unmasked events. Other disabled individuals may have mobility, pain, or other concerns that prevent them from attending in person. When possible, we recommend a hybrid option.

##### ii. COVID Safety

For in-person events, we recommend the following considerations to ensure COVID safety:

- When possible, stick with outdoor events.
- Set masking requirements/expectations. Attendees should be required to wear a well-fitting mask (such as an N95 or KN95). Products such as [ClearMask](#) allow for COVID safety and improve accessibility for Deaf/Hard of Hearing attendees.
- You may provide, encourage, or require COVID-19 antigen testing.
- For indoor, in-person events, ensuring [safe air quality](#) is key.

### iii. Location

For in-person events, be sure to select an accessible location. This is mostly a consideration when having in-person events, and when they are at bars and restaurants.

- Many non-profits and event spaces are already ADA compliant. However, you should still check to make sure. For bars and restaurants, ensuring there are no stairs (to get in, to get to the bathroom, etc.), the doors are wide enough, there are no large bumps to get over, the bathroom stalls are accessible, and more, are helpful.
- Locations that are otherwise loud or echo may also make it hard for some with hearing loss or sensory triggers. Having a separate room where people can take a break can sometimes be a helpful solution to that when possible or appropriate.
- Locations that serve or revolve around alcohol can trigger concerns for those with substance use disorders. Hosting social and other events at more diverse types of locations is extremely helpful.
- Locations that have little seating or high-top seating can be a concern for those with physical disabilities.
- Locations that are far from public transportation may also be an access concern.
- Locations that use strobe or flashing lights may be dangerous or inaccessible.

These are just a few examples of possible concerns.

### iv. Name Tags

One possibility for events is providing name tags that include red, yellow, or green stickers for to reflect an individual's comfort level with being approached. This practice was extremely common at disability events prior to COVID-19, but it has become a common practice for events during COVID-19 to demonstrate comfort levels for approaching due to the pandemic.

### v. Food

If food is being served, be sure to ask about dietary needs or allergies on the registration form, or instruct people with allergies or dietary needs to reach out to a specific point of contact. Having allergen-free food is a plus.

### vi. Fragrance Free

When events are in person, it is helpful to implement fragrance free policies. Many disabled people are allergic or sensitive to fragrances. For some, certain fragrances might even cause debilitating migraines. Reminding folks not to wear fragrances is one way to maintain an accessible space.

### f. Avoid Flashing or Strobe Lights

Do avoid flashing or strobe lights. These can cause seizures or trigger folks unnecessarily. If it is absolutely necessary to use these, please provide a warning. However, I would not advise it, and it seems highly skeptical that they would be necessary at any of our events.

#### g. Panel Considerations

- At the beginning of the event, be sure to announce how to access accommodations like captioning or ASL interpreting.
- Make sure panelists who speak to communicate, and who can do so, speak clearly for access and try to avoid speaking over one another for the captioner.
- The first time someone speaks or introduces themselves, they should provide a visual description of themselves (i.e. “I am a white woman with dark hair pulled back, dark glasses, a light pink, short sleeved dress top, and I am sitting on a couch.”).
- Every time panelists speak, be sure that they say their name as they begin (i.e., every time Marissa Ditkowsky speaks, “This is Marissa” before she starts).
- When in person, especially, be sure panelists and all who ask questions use mics. Trust me, the one person who says, “I don’t need the mic! I can be loud,” is not, in fact, loud enough for the person with hearing loss. Having the mic is extremely important for our equal participation. For longer presentations especially, including a break is critical.
- Allowing individuals to walk or move around as needed is also important. You may wish to make an announcement at the beginning of the event stating that is acceptable.
- Try to ensure that plain language is used as much as possible. Be sure that words and acronyms are defined that audience members might not know.

#### h. Using slides

- When there are slides, always send them out in advance when possible. This allows those who are blind or low vision to better access the slides. It also allows those with other access needs, such as those ADHD, auditory processing disorders, and other disabilities, time to process the information. I recommend sending the slides in their typical PowerPoint format and not as a PDF. PDFs are not always accessible, may not be screen readable, and may wipe any alt text you apply to images in your PowerPoint.
- Use alt text in all images in slides. See the “Social Media Posts” section above for more information about appropriate alt text.
- If there are images in presentations, please describe the images and graphics during the presentation in brief, functional, and culturally contextual terms.

#### i. Content Warnings

For potentially triggering topics, including violence, assault, and others, please use content warnings in promotional materials if triggering topics are integrated in major part in the event itself, or are mentioned in promotional materials. Please use content warnings in the event itself when bringing up possibly triggering topics.

#### j. Other Resources

[The Revolution Must Be Accessible](#)  
[Access Suggestions for A Public Event by Sins Invalid](#)

## **CART Providers**

Jeanna Malcuit <[jeannamalcuit@gmail.com](mailto:jeannamalcuit@gmail.com)>

Mirabai Knight <[askeladden@gmail.com](mailto:askeladden@gmail.com)>

Denee Vadell <[deneevadell@gmail.com](mailto:deneevadell@gmail.com)> (Does not provide captions on weekdays)

Stanley Sakai <[stanley@stanographer.com](mailto:stanley@stanographer.com)>

Kayla Baker <[kbaker@1sourceevents.com](mailto:kbaker@1sourceevents.com)>

Home Team Captions <[coordinators.na@ai-media.tv](mailto:coordinators.na@ai-media.tv)>

[Ennis Captioning](#)

## **ASL Interpreters**

Shannon Morrison <[morrinterpreting@gmail.com](mailto:morrinterpreting@gmail.com)> ASL

Tristan Wright <[trismichael@gmail.com](mailto:trismichael@gmail.com)> ASL, English

Mónica Gallego <[monicagallego77@gmail.com](mailto:monicagallego77@gmail.com)> ASL, English, Spanish

Nora Rodriguez <[njr.interpreting@gmail.com](mailto:njr.interpreting@gmail.com)> ASL English

Tricia Vazquez <[vazquez.terpservices@gmail.com](mailto:vazquez.terpservices@gmail.com)> ASL, English

Kyle Duarte <[interpreter@kduarte.com](mailto:interpreter@kduarte.com)> ASL, English, Spanish, French, other signed languages

[Vital Signs](#)