Planning an Accessible Event

Introduction:
This document provides information on how to plan and create an accessible, inclusive event for attendees.

Event Announcement
- Announce event early
- Post announcement to program website, even if sending via email/postal mail
- Include an accessibility tagline so attendees know to whom to direct accommodation requests:
  “(UW-Madison/College/School/Department/Program) is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible event. If you need a reasonable accommodation to attend this event, please contact (name, event host/coordinator) at (phone number/email). All reasonable accommodation requests should be made no less than (insert number here) weeks before the event. We will attempt to fulfill requests made after this date, but cannot guarantee they will be met.”
- Include this dietary restrictions tagline if your event includes food/beverage:
  “If you have special dietary needs, please contact (name, host department) at (phone number/email).”
- Announcements distributed via email:
  o Attachments should be sent in PDF, and;
  o Copy the text of the PDF and paste into the email body to improve screen reader access

Event Materials
- Include the following statement on printed event-materials:
  “This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting (name, host department) at (phone number/email).”
- Have program materials/documents available:
  o Electronically – Post to Box or Google drive and generate a go.wisc.edu shortened URL to provide to attendees
  o Large-print format – usually no smaller than font size 18

Parking and Transportation
Parking
- Inform attendees of the nearest available parking lots with ADA parking stalls
- Consider creating a wheelchair drop-off/pick-up assistance closer to event location

Shuttle
- Any shuttle service should have wheelchair lift

Facilities
Entrance and Emergency Exits
- Ensure main entrance is wheelchair accessible – avoid separate entrance for wheelchair users
- Entrances should have door actuators (openers)
- Emergency exits – clearly marked and accessible

Bathrooms
- Bathrooms should have accessible stalls and door actuators (openers)
- Located on same floor as event room, as possible
Elevator
- Ensure there is elevator access to get to event room/accessible bathrooms

Event Stage
- Ensure there is a wheelchair accessible ramp
- Maintain enough space on stage for wheelchair seating or passageway

Seating
- Reserve space for wheelchair seating and for individuals with mobility needs
  o Have companion seating in reserved section available – 1-2 seats per person
- Reserve seating near video/projection screen/sign language interpreters/captioners

Communication
- Microphone – all verbal communication by anyone (speaker, audience) should be done through a microphone
- Have Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) available and synced to microphone
- Projection screen – ensure large enough to be viewed by all and from all angles
- Videos should be accurately captioned (do not rely on auto captions)

Technology
- Any interactive technology/software to be used by audience should be accessible – consult with the Center for Digital Accessibility and User Experience

Day of Event
- Inform volunteers about locations of accessible bathrooms, parking, and emergency exits
- Inform volunteers about any service providers – sign language interpreter or real-time captioner
- If a guest shows up who didn’t request an accommodation, check in with them and see what they need to have access. Consider sending event transcript, for example, after event so they are included to the greatest extent possible

Other Considerations
- Ensure your event budget allows for accommodation requests
- Advertise early – allow attendees the opportunity to request accommodations

Questions?
- Contact the campus ADA Coordinator – ada_coordinator@wisc.edu or (608) 265-6018
- Other campus resources:
  o McBurney Disability Resource Center
  o Facilities Planning & Management
  o Center for Digital Accessibility and User Experience