EVENT ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

Access means providing the opportunity for full participation free from barriers. Planning a successful event is planning for access. It is both anticipating the needs of attendees to the event so that it is accessible by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for individual modifications, and providing an effective means of responding to specific requests for accommodations, where needed. In making access a key tenet in event planning, you make a commitment to making your event inclusive and welcoming to all attendees.

We encourage all volunteers to consider the below checklist when planning and executing an event. If you have concerns about providing access for your event, please contact your staff liaison or the Alumni Association via email at alumniassociation@uchicago.edu or by phone at 773.702.2150.

✓ Plan for accessibility early, e.g., in selecting a location, budgeting, etc. This can cut down on costs as well as the need for individual accommodations.
✓ Strive to create a positive experience for attendees. Considering access and having a clear process in place to respond to requests for accommodation communicates a commitment to inclusiveness of all attendees.
✓ Commit to similar, if not identical experiences for people with disabilities.

BEFORE THE EVENT

☐ Select a location that is accessible and supports other reasonable accommodations, considering
  ○ Neighborhood/Close to public transportation
  ○ Distance to parking and drop off areas
  ○ Entrance/Accessible routes - ramps/elevators for wheelchair-users?
  ○ General room space and layout, i.e., seating, lighting, acoustics, presentation area
  ○ Gender-neutral restrooms/lactation room

☐ Include information regarding accessibility on all communications such as a disability accommodation statement inviting participants to ask for
accommodations in advance of the event and providing the event contract email and phone number

- Add information about the availability of transportation services, food options for persons with food allergies, if the venue is air-conditioned

☐ Prepare for requested accommodations, including, e.g., scheduling ASL interpreters and/or CART captioners or other requests*

☐ Caption video and audio content (if event is using A/V technology)

**DURING THE EVENT**

☐ Take responsibility for ensuring access and accommodations at the event

☐ Identify the entrance, exit, and paths of travel with clear signage

☐ Communicate appropriate language regarding disability and access

  - Refer to a disabled person as either “disabled” or a “person with a disability” (the term handicapped is no longer used when referring to individuals with disabilities)

  - Refer to those using wheelchairs as “wheelchair-users”

  - Refer to accessibility features as “disability-related access,” not “special”

☐ Make presented content accessible, e.g.,

  - Provide information to attendees on how to access assistive listening devices (if available)

  - Request that presenters and other speakers use a microphone

  - Enable captions for audio/video content

  - Make materials and handouts available in accessible formats

  - Consider legibility and size of font (20+) as well as color contrast in written materials as well as presentations

**AFTER THE EVENT**

☐ Reflect on any accessibility-related issues

☐ Consider sharing feedback with the venue and/or the staff liaison

*Accommodation requests may include requests for an American Sign Language (“ASL”) interpreter, Communication Access in Real Time (“CART”) captioning service, large print, Braille, wheelchair access, assistive listening devices, closed captioned videos, and alternative food options for individuals with dietary restrictions. While these aids should be provided upon reasonable request for accommodation, some may come with additional costs and should be consulted with the staff liaison.