GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

Accessibility Guide –

A toolkit for accessible communications in the workplace

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Introduction

This toolkit provides information and resources on how to make meetings, events, and communications accessible to all team members and customers.

To create a welcoming and accessible work culture, all leaders and team members shall have a disability-inclusive mindset focused on understanding that everyone, no matter what their abilities, should have the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life, including work.

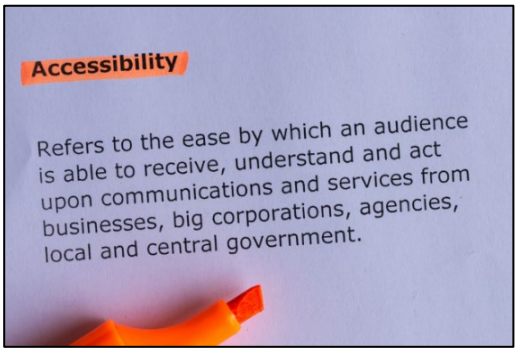
Making our work environment accessible and creating a welcoming culture of civility and respect is everyone's responsibility and benefits everyone.

What does accessibility mean?

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and environments usable and meaningful for as many people as possible.

This guide provides tools and resources to ensure accessibility of all:

- Meetings (in person and virtual)
- Events
- Documents and Emails
- Multimedia
- Websites (public and internal)
- Social Media Content



Why is it important to make meetings and communications accessible?

Making meetings, events, and communications accessible means providing better customer service. People with disabilities represent employees, customers, vendors, suppliers, and citizens.

Accessible meetings and communications lead to:

- Better communication with our audiences (internal and external)
- Increased attendance and participation in meetings and events
- Equal access to information on websites and social media platforms
- Creating a work environment where everyone is welcome
- Fostering a culture of civility and respect
- Broader reach to job seekers and customers with disabilities

Five key elements to better accessibility

Learn about making meetings, events and communications accessible by following these key steps.

1. Planning accessible meetings and events

Before the meeting/event

Prepare before scheduling meetings and events to make sure all your audience members can participate and access the information provided.

Onsite accessibility and examples of accommodations:

- Choose a meeting space that is accessible to all participants
    - Ensure wheelchair access to parking, building entrance, meeting space, stage, podium, registration, displays, food and beverages, and restrooms
    - Choose a large enough meeting space to seat your participants without being too crowded and allow for enough space in aisles for users of mobility devices (e.g., wheelchairs)
- Provide specific information in your meeting invitation, including location, date, time and length of the event, directions, and parking information
- Include detailed information and a point of contact for individuals to request reasonable accommodations, e.g., *"To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact [name, email, telephone]."*

    Accommodations offered may include:
    - American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, assistive listening devices, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
    - Alternate document formats (electronic, large print, high contrast, Braille, plain language)
    - Preferred seating for users of sign language interpretation or participants who are blind or have low vision
    - Fragrance-free events for individuals with chemical sensitivities/allergies
    - Special dietary options for food allergies or sensitivities
- Whenever possible, distribute presentation documents, handouts and media to invitees and attendees in advance of the meeting in electronic or alternate formats
- Make sure audio-visual presentations and documents are accessible (see #2, Page 6)

At the meeting/event

Follow basic meeting guidelines and etiquette tips to facilitate equal participation for all audience members:

- Go over housekeeping information (registration, exits, restrooms, breaks, refreshments)
- Introduce speakers and presenters (provide brief visual description for participants who are blind)
- In large meeting spaces, use microphones and loudspeakers
- For audience questions/participation, use microphones or repeat questions and ask participants to introduce themselves before speaking
- Make sure only one person speaks at a time and limit side conversations and background noise as much as possible
- Provide visual descriptions for audiovisual presentations (presentation slides, videos, images)
- Use plain language
- Limit the use of acronyms and explain any acronyms the first time they are used
- Give all attendees the opportunity to participate and allow time for questions

Training and Resources for accessible meetings

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) toolkit for Accessible Meetings
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-meetings.html

Create Accessible Meetings
https://www.section508.gov/create/accessible-meetings/

Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field
https://ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm

Planning Accessible Meetings and Events – A Toolkit
https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/commission-disability-rights/accessible-meetings-toolkit.pdf

Additional considerations for Virtual and Hybrid Meetings/Events

- Provide clear instructions on how to participate virtually
- Choose a virtual meeting platform that provides accessibility features, such as customizable views, automatic captioning/transcript, and recording
- Provide a quick overview of the meeting platform and the use of its features (full screen, chat, Q&A, captioning and transcript, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, how participants can pin an interpreter or presenter to remain in view)
- Use good lighting and audio equipment so participants and speakers can easily be seen and heard
- When sharing documents or presentation slides, provide visual descriptions of the information that you are sharing (Keep in mind that some participants may not be able to see or read the information on the screen)
- Provide the recording or electronic copies of presentations, documents, or resources shared during the event to the participants
- Ask participants and presenters to identify themselves by name before speaking, speaking slowly and clearly
- Ask that participants and presenters talk one person at a time, keep participants muted to minimize background noises
- Allow time for questions for understanding (Keep in mind that there may be different ways people prefer to receive information and learn – visual, auditory, reading, etc.)
- Provide participants the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations, such as a sign language interpreter or electronic documents prior to the meeting/event
- In hybrid meetings, make sure to include virtual participants in introductions, discussions, votes, polls, and other interactions

Training and Resources for accessible virtual and hybrid events

Virtual Meetings: Accessibility Checklist & Best Practices
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/disabilityrights/resources/covid-resources/virtual-meetings-checklist/

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) toolkit for Accessible Meetings
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-meetings.html

ADA Network Tip Sheet – Hosting Accessible Virtual Meetings, Events, and Conferences
https://www.adainfo.org/wp-content/uploads/imported/ADA-VirtualMeeting-tipsheet.pdf

2. Learn about making content and online platforms accessible

To facilitate effective and inclusive communication with our audiences, it is important to create accessible content. Promote inclusivity by selecting a diverse representation of people in your flyers, program materials, social media, and website content.

Documents and Emails

- Learn how to create accessible documents in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, PDF, etc., by using the resources and training provided below
- Create accessible flyers and program materials
- Offer printed materials in electronic format (include QR code for electronic format)
- Use plain, easy to understand language, explain acronyms
- Use clear, descriptive text for all links
- Use high-contrast
- Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning
- Provide a descriptive title in the document properties
- Create a uniform heading structure through use of heading styles
- Format lists of items using the numbered and bulleted list option
- Data tables need formatted table headers
- Ensure image accessibility through the use of alternate image descriptions

Training and Resources for accessible documents

Let's Talk ICT! Accessible Word
https://youtu.be/T4tY6qiwyqY

Let's Talk ICT Accessible PowerPoint
https://youtu.be/Ehg2ejWiOQQ

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessible Documents
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-electronic-documents.html

How to make an accessible document in Microsoft Word
https://www.section508.gov/create/documents/training-videos/

How to test and remediate PDFs for accessibility
https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs/training-videos/

Create PowerPoint templates
https://www.section508.gov/training/presentations/creating-powerpoint-templates/

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Training Resources
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-training.html

Multimedia

- Ensure video accessibility through the use of video captioning/subtitling, sign language interpretation, and audio descriptions
- Ensure alternate text formats for any other type of multimedia (for example, Tableau maps or other interactive maps)

Training and Resources for creating accessible multimedia

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) creating Accessible Multimedia
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-multimedia.html

Creating Accessible Media
https://www.section508.gov/create/synchronized-media/creating-accessible-media/

Websites (Public and Internal)

- Provide training on web accessibility awareness and standards to web content creators
- Work with content creators and publishers to assure accessibility of webpage content and documents
- Assure accessibility of website templates and web applications
- Use plain, easy to understand language, explain acronyms
- Allow users to choose different font sizes
- Use high contrast
- Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning
- Create a uniform heading structure through use of heading styles
- Format lists of items using the numbered and bulleted list option
- Data tables need formatted table headers
- Ensure accessibility of videos by providing video captioning/subtitling, sign language interpretation, and audio descriptions
- Ensure accessibility of images through the use of alternate image descriptions
- Invite feedback from disability community on the accessibility and usability of websites and applications

Training and Resources for creating accessible websites

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) Web & Applications Testing
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-websites-webapps.html

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Training Resources
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-training.html

Seven Core Features of Accessible Web Content
https://accessibility.umn.edu/getting-started/learn-7-core-accessibility-skills

Social Media

- Learn how to make social media content accessible by using the resources and training provided below
- Ensure video accessibility through the use of video captioning/subtitling, sign language interpretation, and audio descriptions
- Ensure accessibility of images by providing alternate image descriptions
- Check emoji meaning, limit use of emoji's
- When using hashtags, use CamelCase (capital letters for each word for easier reading)
- Avoid acronyms, abbreviations as much as possible

Training and Resources for creating accessible social media content

Creating Accessible Social Media Posts
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHIUYJyPiaU

Missouri Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessible Social Media
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-social-media.html

3. Establish inclusive policies and practices

- Make it common practice to create accessible content/communications and host accessible events
- Follow the meeting tips and guidelines for content creation in this guide
- Provide training to team members who create content and host meetings
- Encourage training disability awareness, civility and respect for all team members
- Include individuals with disabilities when creating content, programs, policies, and procedures for your company or organization

4. Gather feedback and evaluations from your internal and external customers

- Provide evaluation/feedback forms for your meetings and events. This allows an opportunity to improve the accessibility of your meetings and establish best practices for future events.
- Consider feedback when creating new content
- Provide contact information and/or feedback forms for websites

5. Know your resources

- Utilize the training and resources provided in this guide to increase your knowledge and skills in creating accessible communications and events
- Know who to contact for questions or assistance

Contacts for information and assistance

Governor's Council on Disability – Disability related questions, information about accommodations
gcd@oa.mo.gov
(573) 751-2600
https://disability.mo.gov/gcd

Missouri Assistive Technology – Online training, resources, assistive technology devices
info@mo-at.org
(816) 655-6700
https://at.mo.gov/it-access/

Job Accommodation Network – information on workplace accommodations
jan@askjan.org
(800) 526-7234
https://askjan.org/