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Plan Accessible Events [1]

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Thoughtful planning and inviting your participants to make requests for accommodation on all your communication will minimize surprises and allow you to respond to requests efficiently.

Promotion & Registration

- Include an accommodation statement on your registration form, flyers, and computer or print advertisements.
- Include photographs of individuals with disabilities in the promotional material; this illustrates a commitment to assuring all participants an accessible conference/meeting.
- Planners should arrange for all promotional material to be available in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, or computer disk.
- In all conference/meeting materials, make participants aware that accommodations can be made for a variety of needs. The registration form must ask whether assistance is needed. Examples include statements such as the following:
    - If you have a disability and require assistance, please inform (planner) by attaching your requirements to this form or call (planner & their contact information.)
    - If you have a disability and require accommodation in order to fully participate in this activity, please check here. You will be contacted by someone from our staff to discuss your specific needs.

If a general statement such as the one above is included, staff responding to requests should be prepared to ask detailed questions regarding necessary accommodations. A more detailed registration form requesting information on specific needs can also be used.

Sample detailed registration questions:

- I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:?
    - ASL Interpreter
    - Note taker
    - Assistive listening device
    - Captioning
    - Large print
    - Braille
    - Audio Cassette
    - Disk. List format: _____
    - Wheelchair access
    - Orientation to facility

- Diet Restrictions. List: _____
- An assistant will be accompanying me Yes No
- Other: _____

Presentations

The conference/meeting planner should work with invited speakers and presenters to ensure that presentations are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- Choose well-lit and easily accessible meeting rooms.
- Control background noise to the greatest extent possible.
- Choose a meeting room with good acoustics and an auxiliary sound system, if possible.
- Provide written materials (handouts, overheads, etc.) disseminated at the meeting in a variety of formats as requested by participants, (e.g., raised print, large print, Braille, audiocassette, or computer disks.)
- Discuss with each presenter prior to the meeting the importance of developing a presentation that will be accessible to all participants.
- Instruct the presenter to include the key points of the presentation on overheads or slides. Be sure they are completely legible, with large print and sharp, contrasting colors. In addition, ask the presenter to limit the number of overheads or other visual aids used in the presentation and to allow adequate time for the audience to read the visual aids.
- Ask the presenter to accompany materials, including presentations and handouts, with a complete verbal description. If slides, overheads, videos or other visual aids are used, the speaker must describe them orally.
- Ask the presenter to provide a copy of presentation materials well in advance to allow for large print or Braille transcription.
- Check for the needs of presenters with disabilities (ramping or podium requests, a reverse interpreter, sighted guide for a person with limited vision, etc.)

Social Functions & Meals

When planning social functions and meals, planners should:

- Include personal assistants and interpreters in the estimated number of participants at no charge to them.
- Make adequate provisions for seating, allowing all participants to sit in the same area. Do not place persons in wheelchairs or those who use walkers or dog guides on the fringes of the dining area.
- If you choose a buffet, have servers available to assist; buffets can be particularly difficult for persons with mobility or visual impairments.
- Determine the accessibility of any outside entertainment and transportation services offered to participants.

Budget

When budgeting for meetings or conferences, include accommodating people with disabilities as a budget item. You might need a sign language interpreter, assistive listening devices or amplification of the speaker or media in an alternate format, i.e. a copy of the power point presentation or handouts in large print or Braille.

Staff

When you plan for moderators, facilitators, and registration, identify individuals that would be willing to volunteer as readers, guides, and do other functions related to accommodating individuals with disabilities. Be sure that these volunteers are included in any staff orientation and ensure that they have training on how to work with people with disabilities.

Have communications and other assistive devices regularly available for the use of individuals with disabilities. Consider the size and nature of your event and participants and the possibility of reserving interpreters and/or captionists as soon as you have selected the meeting dates. Familiarize yourself with the cancellation deadlines for the various agencies.

Resource

https://ada.osu.edu/resources/accessiblemeetings.html [3]
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