Accessible & Inclusive Events Planning Checklist

When planning an event, think about the widest range of individuals who might attend your event. How can you include all of them in your program? Considering access and inclusion throughout your planning process will help ensure all participants have a good experience.

Contents

In-Person Events

Selecting a Venue

- ☐ Accessible parking is available nearby
- ☐ There is an accessible path to the entrance and an automatic door opener. Signage denotes accessible entrance - refer to [Campus map](#).
  - ● The path must be unobstructed and involve no steps.
- ☐ There is a working elevator that is large enough to accommodate a power wheelchair.
- ☐ There is enough room in the event space for wheelchairs (including power chairs) to move through aisles (36" wide) and find seating.
- ☐ There are accessible and gender neutral restrooms with Braille signage.
- ☐ For large venues (30+ people), there is a working PA (Public Address) system and a roving microphone.
- ☐ Assistive listening devices are available.
- ☐ There is seating near the presenter for those who use lip reading. If a mask needs to be worn, consider providing a clear mask to the presenter(s) (available from Disability Services).
- ☐ There is space for service animals during the event and, for long events, an accessible route to toileting and watering facilities for the service animal.
- ☐ Electrical outlets are available in accessible seating areas to accommodate devices, laptops, etc. - especially if [CART](#) services will be provided.
- ☐ Review the lighting in terms of buzzing, flashing and other sensory aspects of the environment. Check that the lighting can be adjusted.
- ☐ Discourage the use of scents (ie, perfume, candles, incense) in the space and by others at the event. For example, include a note in advertising materials or invitations to the event.
- ☐ Accessibility is included in emergency planning (building evacuation, etc.)
- ☐ If the speaking area is elevated, there is a ramp to allow access for the speakers, presenters, and/or ASL interpreters.
- ☐ If an ASL interpreter is requested, provide seating for the interpreter near the speaker. If the lights will be dimmed during the presentation, ensure that your audience can see the ASL interpreters by providing a spot light on the interpreters. Direct line of sight seating should be available to those who need to see the interpreters.

Prior to the Event

- ☐ Invitations, registration forms and website information meet accessibility guidelines. (contact ITSHelp@colgate.edu for an accessibility check)
  - "CART captioning provided" is included in flyers and other communications for the event when applicable.
  - Disclose the use of strobe lights, surround sound and/or large format video, fireworks or other unusually loud elements through registration materials, registrant confirmation or other communications.
- ☐ On event communications, invite attendees and presenters to request accommodations if needed.
  E.g. "We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals, including those with disabilities, to engage fully. To request accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact (name of event planner, email, phone) by (date)."
- ☐ CART is recommended for events with 30+ participants. In addition, CART must be arranged for when requested as an accommodation regardless of the size of the event. (see CART and ASL Services). NOTE: If an ASL interpreter is requested as an accommodation, it is **not** appropriate to substitute CART for ASL.
- ☐ Provide presenters with a checklist for accessibility considerations (see the Session Leader - Presenter's Checklist)
- ☐ If ordering food for the event, consider alternative food options for participants with dietary restrictions or food allergies. Invitations and promotional materials contain language indicating how attendees can communicate dietary restrictions, needs or preferences.

Day of the Event

- ☐ If accommodations have been requested, designate someone to be responsible for following up on those accommodations (seating, captioning, clear pathways, etc.). Ask them to review the Disability Etiquette / Communication Considerations.
- ☐ If offering a buffet, the food is at a level accessible to wheelchair users (not higher than 34" from the floor). Staff are available to assist guests as needed.
- ☐ If food is provided, clearly indicate allergens, ingredients, and types of foods such as: gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian or other options.
- ☐ Ensure materials to be distributed are available in alternative formats (digital, large print). See Create Accessible Content.

Virtual Events

Prior to the Event

- ☐ Invitations, registration forms and website information meet accessibility guidelines. See [Create Accessible Content](). (contact [ITSHelp@colgate.edu]() for an accessibility check)
  - "CART captioning provided" is included in flyers and other communications for the event when applicable.
  - Include the virtual format being used in the event information so participants can plan for any assistive needs.
- ☐ On event communications, invite attendees and presenters to request accommodations if needed.
  E.g. "We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals, including those with disabilities, to engage fully. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact (name, email, phone) by (date)."
- ☐ Have a telephone-based teleconferencing connection available for participants that cannot use the virtual event technology or plugin.
- ☐ Provide presenters with a checklist (see [Presenter's Checklist]())
- ☐ CART is recommended for events with 30+ participants. In addition, CART must be arranged for when requested as an accommodation regardless of the size of the event. (see [CART and ASL Services]() below). NOTE: If an ASL interpreter is requested as an accommodation, it is **not** appropriate to substitute CART for ASL.
- ☐ Provide materials (slide files, handouts) ahead of time to allow participants to review the information.

Virtual Participation

- ☐ If providing CART services, enable CART services in Zoom (see [Enabling and managing closed captioning and live transcription in Zoom]() - scroll to the "User" section). Confirm that the captioner is present and captions are working.
- ☐ If not using CART, enable Live Transcription in Zoom and inform your participants that it is available to them. (see [Enabling and managing closed captioning and live transcription in Zoom]())

- Provide various ways for participants to respond/participate in the presentation such as questions emailed prior to the start of the event, chat and microphone.
- If the event will be recorded, prepare accessible versions and create transcripts of the presentation if possible.
- Provide clear instructions for engagement to participants, including the process for accessibility troubleshooting and accessibility needs (e.g. during Q&A, anyone speaking should start by saying their name for the captioner, or provide writing materials such as pen and paper).
- Ensure the presenter's face (and the ASL interpreter's upper body if applicable) are well lit and clearly displayed on the screen. Allow participants to "multi-pin" videos of the presenter and the interpreter.

Session Leader / Presenter's Checklist

Prior to the event

☐ Submit materials in 3-5 business days in advance so they can be forwarded digitally to individuals who may not be able to view screens or other visual presentation materials. Original file formats (Powerpoint, Word rather than PDF) are encouraged.

☐ Ensure that all videos are captioned

☐ If providing printed materials, include some copies with large print (18pt or larger font)

☐ Make presentation slides easily readable:

- Use large fonts (22 pt or larger)
- Use high contrast colors (text vs background). See Color Contrast recommendations & Accessible Color Palette Matrix.
- Avoid using color alone to convey meaning (especially in charts & graphs). Adding a pattern to a color to denote meaning is an easy way to make it more accessible.
- Avoid busy backgrounds or themes
- Leave space for the camera view and/or captions at the bottom of the slide, so important information remains visible.
- Limit the amount of text you use on a slide

Things to keep in mind during your presentation

- Verbally describe visual materials (slides, charts, etc.) and read aloud any text content that is substantive to the presentation
- Explain acronyms and jargon
- Face participants when speaking to assist those who rely on lip reading
- Activate captions on videos
- Build in hourly breaks
- Organize breakout group activities to maximize distance between groups to reduce noise distractions
- Repeat questions posted by audience before responding
- Always use a microphone and ask all participants to use the microphone when asking questions

CART and ASL Services

CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation) is a service that provides real-time transcription of the spoken word into text. It may also be referred to as real-time captioning. It is often necessary for hard of hearing and deaf individuals while also being beneficial to many others. Most CART users can voice for themselves and use CART to understand what others are saying, especially in meetings, classrooms or large events. CART and ASL (American Sign Language) can be done for remote or in-person events.

Colgate uses remote CART services where the captionist is in a remote location and listens to the event through the use of a telephone or internet connection. Event participants will view the transcript on a large screen or on a personal mobile device.

CART services and ASL interpreting require at least two weeks lead time to organize. Meeting audio and video needs for CART and may require coordination with ITS, especially for large events.

NOTE: CART and ASL services should be built into the budget for the event. ITS cannot cover these costs.

NOTE: CART uses human captionists to produce the transcript with an accuracy rate of 98%. Computer-generated transcription, like Zoom's Live Transcription option, uses speech recognition technology and can be considerably less accurate than CART depending on the circumstances.

Arranging for CART and ASL services

1. **Contact a provider** (at least 2 - 4 weeks prior to the event) to request a quote and schedule services

   CART Services
   Professional Reporting Services, Inc.
   Email: sally@professionalreportingservices.com
   Sally Maiorano, President
   (315) 436-7775
   ProfessionalReportingServices.com

Caption Advantage, LLC
Email: CaptionAdv@aol.com
(315) 492-0069 (local)
(877) 227-2382 (toll-free)
Caption Advantage Website

ASL Interpreting Services
Empire Interpreting Service
Email: info@empireinterpreting.com
220 S Warren St., Suite 1001, Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 472-1383
www.empireinterpreting.com

2. When using CART for large events, contact ITS (at least 2 - 4 weeks prior to the event)

315-228-7111 or ITSHelp@Colgate.edu

The CART provider may want to be in touch directly with ITS to arrange details and to set up the event. Provide the following information:
- **Who will the CART provider be?** Provide email and phone.
- **Is the CART request for a few individuals or for the entire audience?** For 1 to 5 individuals, a private link will be provided for them to view captions on their own device.
- **Are there going to be PowerPoint slides that will be projected?** If the audience will be large and there will be slides, the venue will need dual projection capabilities, i.e. Olin 300.

3. Provide event-specific terminology to the provider
Forward names of presenters, PowerPoint slides and other presentation materials to the CART provider and/or ASL interpreting agency at least one week before the day of the event.

Disability Etiquette / Communication Considerations

- Focus on the person, not their disability
- Do not assume an individual needs assistance. Approach, Ask, Assist.
  - **Approach**: if you suspect someone may need a hand, walk up, greet them and identify yourself.
  - **Ask**: "Would you like some help?" The person will accept your offer or tell you if they don't require assistance.
  - **Assist**: listen to the reply and assist as requested. Don't be offended if your assistance is not required.
- Talk directly to the individual, not the interpreter, companion or attendant.
- Be polite in greeting.
- Listen carefully, wait to reply until the individual is finished speaking.
- Be sensitive about physical contact and space. Never touch anyone or anything that belongs to them without asking first.
- Respect an individual's privacy.
- Do not make a decision on behalf of a person with a disability regarding what they can/cannot do.
- Place yourself at eye level when speaking with an individual that uses a wheelchair for more than a minute or two.

Additional Resources

Best Practice Guidelines for Planning an Accessible Event, The University of Kansas, Accessible KU

Planning Inclusive Events, Syracuse University

Accessibility Information, Event Planning, Cornell University

Baking Accessibility into your Event Strategy, recorded webinar by 3PlayMedia including slide deck

Can everybody see my screen? (Delivering accessible PPT presentations), Doug Abrams, Accessibility Engineer at TPGi