

The Office for People with Disabilities

ADA Compliance and Best Practices for Special Events

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. The ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability. To prevent discrimination against people with disabilities, the ADA sets out requirements that apply to many of the situations you encounter in everyday life.

Employers, state and local governments, businesses that are open to the public, commercial facilities, transportation providers, and telecommunication companies all must follow the requirements of the ADA. When planning a special event, it's essential to ensure that it is accessible to all attendees, including those with disabilities. By incorporating these features, you can create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all event attendees, ensuring ADA compliance and improving overall accessibility.

For more information about accessibility, visit the [ADA website](#).

Some best practices that event organizers should follow include:

Entrance and Parking Accessibility

- Accessible parking spaces close to the event venue.
- Accessible ramps or entrances with automatic doors.
- Clear signage indicating accessible entrances.
- Curb cuts and smooth pathways for wheelchair access.

Restrooms

- Accessible restrooms, including stalls large enough for a wheelchair and proper handrails.
- Accessible sinks and mirrors at appropriate heights.
- Adequate space for maneuvering in restrooms.

Seating

- Designated accessible seating areas with clear sightlines.
- Flexible seating arrangements to accommodate wheelchairs or mobility devices.
- Companion seating for those with disabilities.

Signage

- Clear, large, and high-contrast signs indicating accessible areas (entrances, restrooms, etc.).
- Braille or tactile signs for visually impaired attendees.
- Visual or text-based signage for hearing-impaired guests.

Transportation and Mobility

- Availability of transportation options that accommodate wheelchairs or other mobility devices.
- Shuttle services that are ADA compliant, including lifts or ramps for buses.

Communication Accessibility

- Sign language interpreters or captioning services for events with speeches, presentations, or performances.
- Assistive listening devices or induction loops for those with hearing impairments.
- Written materials available in accessible formats (large print, Braille, electronic).

Program Materials

- Providing event programs in alternate formats (e.g., large print, electronic version, or Braille).
- Ensuring that the event's website is ADA-compliant with screen reader compatibility.

Event Staff and Training

- Event staff should be trained on ADA requirements and how to assist guests with disabilities.
- Having a designated staff member or volunteer to assist guests with specific accessibility needs.

Food and Beverage Accessibility

- Providing accessible food stations or buffets, with enough space for wheelchair users to reach the counter.
- Ensuring there are menu options for guests with dietary restrictions related to disabilities.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

- Clear, accessible emergency exit routes.

- A plan for assisting people with mobility impairments during evacuation.
- Emergency alarms with both auditory and visual signals for attendees with hearing impairments.

Audio/Visual

- Ensuring that sound systems are equipped with accessible features like volume control for individuals with hearing impairments.
- Providing closed captioning or subtitles for video presentations.

Assistive Devices

- Availability of wheelchairs, mobility scooters, or other devices for rent or loan.
- Accessible charging stations for electric mobility devices.

Outdoor Accessibility

- Accessible pathways and temporary ramps in outdoor or tented event spaces.
- Providing shade and seating for individuals with medical conditions that require special consideration.

Break Areas and Rest Spaces

- Accessible quiet areas or rest zones for individuals with sensory sensitivities.
- Comfortable seating options in accessible locations.

Online Event Accessibility (if virtual or hybrid event)

- Ensuring that any online platforms or streaming services used for virtual events are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Providing captions and screen reader compatibility for digital content.