

# Accessible Events Guide for Oklahoma State University

## Introduction

This guide was developed by the Staff Advisory Council's Access, Community, and Engagement Committee. The primary objective of this accessible events guide is to empower event organizers, participants, and attendees with the knowledge and tools needed to create inclusive and welcoming experiences. By providing clear guidelines, practical tips, and best practices, we aim to foster an environment where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can fully engage, participate, and enjoy events.

Accessibility is not merely a legal requirement; it is a fundamental aspect of community engagement and social responsibility. When events are designed with accessibility in mind, they become more enriching and meaningful for all. By removing barriers—whether physical, sensory, or cognitive—we ensure that everyone can fully participate, contribute, and celebrate together. Accessibility isn't an add-on; it's an integral part of creating memorable and impactful events.

Oklahoma State University thrives on the many strengths of our community. Our dedication to excellence isn't just a concept; it's a powerful catalyst for embracing inclusive thoughts and actions. Access and community impact, to us, is more than a quality-of-life enhancement – it's a vital economic force, fostering prosperity and well-being globally. Join us in shaping a future where accessibility leads the way!

We recommend familiarizing yourself with this guide, then using it as a reference document. There is a checklist at the end which you can use when planning individual events. You may anticipate that some events may require greater accessibility features than others, but do not assume that you know all of the needs of the attendees of an event. If you have specific suggestions to enhance this guide, please email [staff.advisory.council@okstate.edu](mailto:staff.advisory.council@okstate.edu).

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## I. Understanding Accessibility

Creating an accessible event means designing it to be open to anyone, regardless of their physical challenges or hidden disabilities. This effort fosters an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and supported. At Oklahoma State University (OSU), this commitment extends beyond legal obligations—it reflects our dedication to equity and diversity.

At OSU, adherence to legal requirements is paramount. The university operates within the framework of federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These regulations mandate equal access and prohibit discrimination based on disability. OSU's commitment as a Land Grant institution extends beyond compliance; it reflects a dedication to fostering an inclusive environment where all community members can thrive.

OSU recognizes that accessibility benefits everyone. When events are thoughtfully designed with inclusivity in mind, they promote the following:

- Equity and Inclusion: All participants, regardless of abilities, feel welcome and valued.
- Enhanced Participation: Removing barriers allows a broader audience to actively engage.
- Future-Proofing: By considering accessibility, OSU ensures compatibility with evolving technologies.
- Knowledge Dissemination: Accessible events uphold OSU's mission of knowledge dissemination by reaching diverse constituents.

## II. Pre-event Planning

### A. Venue Selection

Inclusive events recognize the diverse needs of attendees. **Universal Design** is key when it comes to accessible events. Universal Design is the process of creating products and environments that can be used by people of all ages, abilities, and sizes. The goal is to make products and environments accessible, useable, and inclusive without the need for specialized design or adaptation. A few examples of universal design in this use case are:

- Choosing a venue with step-free access, wide doorways, and elevators to accommodate wheelchair users and individuals with mobility aids. ([ADA National Network: A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities](#))

- Offering multiple registration methods, such as an accessible online form compatible with screen readers. ([Making Your Event Truly Accessible to All: A Guide to Disability Inclusion – Part 2](#))
- Providing all event materials in multiple formats, including large prints, Braille, etc. ([Hospitality & Disability: Accessible Meetings, Events & Conferences Guide](#))
- Offering real-time captioning and sign language interpretation for all presentations and panel discussions. ([KU: Best Practice Guidelines for Planning an Accessible Event](#))

When selecting a venue, prioritize wheelchair access. This involves ensuring that ramps are available for easy entry and exit. Wide doors accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility aids. Additionally, consider the availability of elevators if the event spans multiple floors. By addressing these aspects, we create an environment where all attendees can move freely and comfortably.

Proper lighting enhances safety and comfort. Aim for even illumination throughout the venue. Avoid harsh glare or overly dim areas. Additionally, consider high-contrast colors for signage, pathways, and seating. This benefits individuals with low vision, ensuring they can navigate confidently.

In restrooms, features such as grab bars, ample space for maneuvering, and accessible sinks and mirrors are essential. Clear signage directing attendees to accessible restrooms ensures ease of use. Remember, accessible restrooms benefit everyone, not just those with disabilities.

Designate quiet zones where individuals can retreat from noise and sensory overload. Comfortable seating in these areas allows for relaxation. By creating these zones, we acknowledge and accommodate sensory sensitivities, fostering a more inclusive event experience.

## **B. Communication**

To cater to diverse needs, event information should be available in various formats and be easy to understand:

- **Print:** Traditional printed materials are essential. Ensure that flyers, brochures, and schedules are clear and legible.
- **Digital:** In today's digital age, provide event details on websites, social media, and email. Use accessible formats, such as HTML, to accommodate screen readers.
- **Braille:** For attendees with visual impairments, consider providing event information like programs, maps, and schedules in Braille.
- **Plain Language:** Avoid jargon, complex terminology, and convoluted sentences. Use plain language that is easy to understand.

- **Concise:** Be succinct. Communicate essential details without overwhelming attendees. Clarity trumps verbosity.

For attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, having sign language interpreters during announcements and presentations is crucial. When using audiovisual content (e.g., videos, slideshows), provide closed captioning. This benefits attendees who are deaf, hard of hearing, or non-native language speakers.

### **C. Registration Process**

During registration, include thoughtful questions about specific accommodations. These inquiries allow attendees to communicate their unique needs. Consider asking about:

- Mobility requirements (e.g., wheelchair access or seating preferences)
- Sensory needs (e.g., visual or auditory accommodations)
- Dietary restrictions (for events with meals or snacks)
- Environmental sensitivities (e.g., allergies or visual triggers)

By gathering this information, event organizers can proactively address individual needs, creating a more inclusive experience. Providing maps of the venue in advance may help participants anticipate their own needs and prepare accordingly or ask for more specific assistance.

To cater to diverse needs, offer multiple registration methods:

- **Online Registration:** Provide a user-friendly online platform where attendees can register conveniently. Ensure the website is accessible, with clear instructions and accessible forms.
- **Phone Registration:** Some participants may prefer speaking directly with a registration representative. Offer a phone number for registrations.
- **In-Person Registration:** At events for which same-day registration is feasible, set up in-person registration at strategic locations for those who prefer face-to-face interactions. Trained staff can assist attendees and answer questions.
  - In-person pre-registration opportunities can be offered.
  - Cowboy Central /Slate can provide an option for early registration access and a check-in process

### **D. Transportation & Parking**

Facilitating accessible transportation and parking options ensures everyone can attend events and gatherings, including those with mobility challenges. This can be achieved via:

- **Accessible Parking:** Allocate designated parking spots close to the event venue for individuals with disabilities. Ensure these spots are clearly marked and provide ample space for wheelchair access. Verify parking areas have access to necessary wheelchair ramps, truncated dome pads, and/or other accessibility infrastructure to support accommodations.
- **Accessible Drop-off and Pick-up Points:** Provide designated drop-off and pick-up points near the entrance of the venue for attendees with mobility impairments. Designate standalone cargo loading/unloading zones to separate passenger traffic from freight traffic.
- **Public Transportation Options:** Include information about nearby public transportation options such as buses, trains or subways. Provide details on routes, schedules and accessibility features (e.g., ramps, lifts, priority seating).
- **Shuttle Services:** If feasible, consider offering shuttle services from nearby transportation hubs or parking areas to the event venue. Ensure these shuttles are wheelchair accessible and have adequate space for mobility devices.
- **Routes:** Ensure that pathways from parking areas, public transportation stops, and drop-off points to the event venue are accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. Remove any obstacles such as curbs, stairs or uneven surfaces, or map out alternative routes to avoid obstacles.
- **Transportation Information:** Provide comprehensive information about transportation options in your event guide, including accessibility features, contact details for assistance, and any special arrangements that can be made in advance. Display clear, visible signage and guidance to the venue.
- **Communication and Assistance:** Offer assistance to attendees who may require special transportation arrangements or have specific accessibility needs. Provide contact information for event organizers or transportation coordinators who can address inquiries and provide assistance as needed.
- **Interdepartmental Collaboration:** Work with appropriate campus partners, such as [Parking and Transportation Services](#), to ensure compliance and request assistance.

## E. Health and Safety

Event attendees may be immunocompromised or live in households with immunocompromised members. Whether event planners have this knowledge about their attendees beforehand, health and safety accommodations can be embedded into event planning to ensure that people of all abilities can safely access an event. Consider the following:

- **Venue selection:**
  - Can this event occur indoors or outdoors? If indoors is best, how can airflow be maximized? Can a larger indoor venue be reserved or layouts changed to

decrease crowd density at the event? Is the venue accessible for a variety of needs?

- **Attendees:**
  - Will your event provide a virtual attendance option? Are there accommodations to be considered based on the average age and health status of attendees coming to this event? How will you identify and respond to the health needs of attendees before the event?
- **Event activities:**
  - How will participants engage with each other and event hosts during the event? Which activities are necessary for your event, and which could be altered to be safer for immunocompromised attendees? What kinds of materials or technology will be required for your activities, and what do participants need to prepare in advance?
  - Can everyone who will speak or be invited onto the stage access the stage?
- **Duration:**
  - How long will this event be? How will breaks be designed, and how can low-contact activities be encouraged during break periods? Can the overall length of the event be altered to support low-contact engagement?
- **Reason:**
  - What is your reason for hosting this event? If this is a social event, can it occur in periods of lower infection rates and travel? How necessary are each of the components of your event, and can any aspects be improved to better include people with disabilities?

When selecting times, dates, and venues for events, event planners can consult state resources to determine if additional safety measures should be put in place:

- [OK ViralView Infectious Disease Dashboards](#)
- [Oklahoma COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [Oklahoma Influenza Dashboard](#)

In a typical year, illness rates will spike around national holidays due to travel and increased interpersonal contact. Event planners can create events outside of these periods of high contact and infection. Even if this cannot be accommodated, the following recommendations can help make all events safer for all participants' health:

- **Communication:**
  - Communicate with event hosts, planners, and guests in advance about accessible practices, including but not limited to face coverings, health screenings, RSVP deadlines to avoid over-capacity attendance, and staggered guest entry and departure times.

- **Health screening & training:**
  - Event hosts and employees for the event can be required to take preventative measures, such as wearing face coverings to the event. Event planners can track and report illnesses related to the event, as needed, and intensify event checklists with extra cleaning practices.
- **Event & planning practices modifications:**
  - Create event pathways and floor plans to follow distancing guidelines, and revise maximum indoor venue capacities based on this reduced crowd density plan. Display signage encouraging adherence to a safer, distanced event flow and sanitation practices. Event activities can be modified to reduce contact between attendees, and registration and feedback mechanisms for the event can be on virtual platforms.
- **Food service modifications:**
  - Offer single-serve options instead of buffet or communal food and drink options. Provide an outdoor or minimal-contact venue for attendees to eat. All food and drink servers should wear gloves, masks, and follow all other university food-handling protocol.
- **Cleanup:**
  - University cleaning protocols can be enhanced for events which must occur during periods of high infection or travel. Event planners can create sanitation plans and be trained in safety and cleaning, as well as employing professional university staff for their expertise at the event. Areas and items which will be high-contact, such as doorknobs, desks, microphones, or elevator fixtures, should be repeatedly sanitized throughout the event.

### III. During the Event

#### A. Signage and Navigation

Attending an event in an unfamiliar place leads to navigation challenges for everyone. Helping attendees understand where they are going and how they can get there is important for a smooth day. In addition to signs and other helpful navigation tools, you may consider alerting staff in the building or area about the event. Including basics like the spaces you'll be using, when the event starts and ends, and a contact number for assistance or questions is good practice for these shared spaces.

Whenever possible prior to the event, you may want to consider sharing navigational tools like maps that note accessible parking, entrances, and paths to the event space. Other spaces to consider including on your map may be restrooms, changing tables, lactation rooms, etc. This will not only help people feel more comfortable on the day-of the event, but it will communicate that your event welcomes all invited attendees.

Whenever staffing allows, you may consider posting people along the path to the event to help attendees find their way. Place wayfinders in strategic locations starting from suggested/popular entrances throughout the building to the event space. Instruct wayfinders to be proactive in asking people if they are attending the event and to give clear instructions on next steps. Ensure that wayfinders are aware of and able to answer questions regarding locations of elevators, restrooms, and other possible points of interest.

Whether or not you use wayfinders, you may want to consider using signage along the route through the building as well as denoting any spaces that are being used. Place signage, again, in strategic places throughout your event space, much like with wayfinders. The signage should be clear and concise. While you want to remain on brand for your event, using fonts that have high contrast with their background and are easy to read will be key to accessible signage. Examples of recommended fonts include Times New Roman, Verdana, and Calibri. Don't forget to ensure the font size is large to allow for easy reading! If and whenever possible, consider adding Braille or other tactile pieces to your signage. Depending on your event space, you may be able to make use of floor markers to help attendees find their way through your space.

In addition to assisting attendees as they find their way through a building, if your event has a welcome session, you may consider including some basics regarding navigation before starting your program. Consider restroom accessibility, navigating stairs/elevators, changing tables, lactation rooms, etc. While it may feel repetitive to include navigational instructions in so many spaces, doing so will help ensure that attendees receive the information they need at a time that is useful to them.

## **B. Check-In at Event**

- Clear pathway to check-in
- Consider kiosk height – accessible devices or assistance from staff readily available
- Staff to help where needed
- Sanitation kiosks nearby
- Multiple language options for signage, check-in walkthrough process, etc.
- Labeled directions to stairs, escalators, elevators, etc.

Avoid placement of additional interior rugs and/or carpeting to ensure participants in wheelchairs can adequately navigate interior spaces.

Avoid placement of wires and cables along floors to prevent tripping and/or wheelchair difficulty.

Tape down torn carpeting/tiling to prevent tripping hazards or wheelchair mobility issues.

## **C. Seating Arrangements**

While planning your event, it is important to ensure that seating is inclusive and accessible. Make sure to reserve seating areas for attendees with disabilities. If possible, incorporate accessible seating areas in multiple areas including the front, middle, and back of the venue. Ensure that service animals and assistive devices are given proper space. Provide different types of seating including chairs with and without arms and chairs not connected to tables. Reserve seating near the front of the venue for attendees with vision or hearing impairments. Check that all accessible seating has a clear view of the speaker and an unobstructed view of an ASL interpreter. Reserve a well-lit space for ASL interpreters with a dark, solid-colored background with a chair for ASL interpreters to rest when not interpreting.

## **D. Audio-Visual Accessibility**

Event planners should ensure that audio and visual components of their event are accessible to attendees of all abilities. This section contains guidance on creating events and material accessible to those with audio or visual impairments. The following guidance can apply to overlapping populations:

### ***Audio Accessibility***

- Include transcripts for video or audio being used in the event, translated into Braille and other languages as needed by your audience.
- Add captions that are synchronized to the audio for pre-recorded videos and use automatic generating captioning services for live audio or video. Translate video captions to other languages as needed by your audience.
- Employ the services of ASL and other language interpreters to translate pre-recorded and live video and audio.
- Create descriptive captions and transcripts when possible. Descriptive captions describe audible sounds other than speech, including descriptions of backgrounds, people included in the media, and more.
- Consider purchasing telecoil or headphone systems that can provide individual audio output streams to certain people while maintaining a consistent level of sound for other attendees.
- Provide microphones for speakers and distribute sound speakers around the event space.
- Have live and pre-recorded presenters speak slowly and clearly. Pause between topic changes to allow for audience processing and avoid or explain jargon, acronyms, and idioms. When possible, ensure the visibility of presenters' faces in a clear light to help attendees hear and understand better.

## **Visual Accessibility**

- Avoid blinking or flickering lights, or other animations and visual media motion that is distracting and could cause seizures for certain people.
- Limit the amount of text in one space and create clear space between topics or ideas that are grouped together to help attendees better follow the flow of material.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) promote sans-serif font in their accessibility guidelines. Typed text should also be at least 3/16" inches tall, and text color should be in contrast with the background. More information on these standards can be in section 703.2.3 of the ADA here: [Americans with Disabilities Act](#).

The World Wide Web Consortium, W3C, has developed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which provides more specific guidance on fonts, text size, luminance contrast, and recommendations for making Web content more accessible. The most updated version of the WCAG can be found here:

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Additionally, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility standards can be found here, for more specific guidance:

- [Section 508 & ICT Accessibility Standards](#)

## **E. Content Presentation**

Content presented during an event can be made more accessible in multiple ways. Whenever possible, make event content, including presentations, handouts, and brochures, accessible to attendees before and after the event. Sharing presentation slides and resources in advance of the event can help attendees better understand important material and prepare for their role in the event, as well as reducing general anxiety about event logistics. We encourage you to share these materials after the event so participants may have more time, as needed, to review materials at their pace.

When event content and materials are being created, it is also important to factor in accessibility considerations. Event presenters can be encouraged to use a large font size. Event planners should collaborate with other accessibility resources to translate materials when needed and employ translators at the event itself.

If you are converting already created materials to an accessible format, [Dax Castro's Accessibility Level of Effort Guideline Matrix](#) can help you schedule the time needed to make accessible changes. Additional resources are included in the appendix to guide you in following established content accessibility guidelines.

## F. Food and Beverage

When organizing an event, it's essential to proactively address dietary restrictions and allergies. Here's how we can ensure everyone enjoys the culinary offerings:

### *Advance Menu Sharing*

- **Transparent Communication:** Share the event menu well in advance with attendees, employees, and volunteers. Transparency allows individuals to plan accordingly.

Also, be sure to clearly indicate options for various dietary preferences:

- **Gluten-Free:** Highlight dishes that are safe for those with gluten sensitivities. This diet excludes foods containing gluten—a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. It's crucial for people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity.
- **Vegetarian and Vegan:** Specify plant-based options. A vegetarian diet is a dietary preference or need where a person refrains from eating meat and primarily consumes vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, and sometimes eggs or dairy products. A vegan diet is one that includes a strict vegetarian diet but also avoids all animal products, including meat, eggs, and dairy. You may also consider if leather is incorporated into any gifts or giveaways, as vegans often do not use leather products, either.
- **Allergen-Free:** Identify dishes that are free from common allergens, such as nuts, dairy, and shellfish. Because allergens may be present through cross-contact during preparation or production, provide options that safely accommodate individuals with food allergies or sensitivities.

### *Clear Food Item Labeling*

- **Allergen Information:** Label food items with allergen information. This helps attendees make informed choices.
- **Ingredients:** Include ingredient lists for each dish. Some individuals may have specific dietary requirements beyond allergies.

By proactively considering dietary needs and providing clear food labeling, we create an inclusive dining experience where everyone can savor the flavors without worry.

## G. Sensory Considerations

There are many conditions that could cause environmental conditions to negatively impact an event participant, including neurodivergent differences, epilepsy, and more.

## ***In-person Conferences & Meetings***

Ensure that the **main meeting area** does not have distractions.

- Avoid intense, strobing, flickering, or fluorescent lighting; natural light is preferred. Know where the light switches are and what they control.
- Reduce loud sounds. Check for fans or ventilation that may be scheduled to run during the meeting. Acoustic tile, carpet tile, and wall panels may help reduce sounds while balancing the safety and comfort needs of running the air conditioning. Don't overlap sounds, such as a guest speaking, over walk-up music.
- Reduce or eliminate artificial smells, such as air fresheners, cleaners, etc. Some natural smells or allergens may also distract guests, such as floral arrangements.

Allow participants to accommodate their needs within the event space, such as wearing headphones or sunglasses, or designate **a quiet space** with resources for self-regulation.

- **Navigation:** Obvious signage and training for staff to give directions; in an accessible location
- **Connection:** TV with Live stream of event with subtitles, as well as the ability to adjust the volume
- **Room conditions:** Adjustable lighting (dimmer switch or lamps available); sound machines; variable seating (soft, hard, standard, tall, balance ball, rocking chair, bean bag chair, couch, recliner, etc.); carpeted room and wall tiles to reduce noise; fan; cold water and cups; strong peppermints; gum
- **Regulation assistance:** Coloring books, crossword puzzles, blank paper; markers, crayons, and pens; lava lamp or other motion-based visual stimulant; manipulatives: fidget spinners, stress balls, slinky, hand and foot rollers, Koosh balls; plants
- **Service:** Room should be checked periodically to ensure resources do not need to be refilled and those utilizing the space do not have other needs. Contact information should be posted in case someone needs to immediately speak with a conference host or if further assistance is needed
- **Improvement:** Feedback forms should be available for future improvement; make sure collecting the forms is on the wrap-up list

## ***Virtual Meetings***

- Provide technology orientation in advance. Designate a helpdesk phone number or email address. Identify a technical host in each session, verbally and in the chat.
- Review the meeting set-up in advance. New capabilities and setting changes are common after a platform update.
- Allow participants to turn off their cameras.
- Turn on captioning.

## ***Additional Resources***

- [What is Sensory-Friendly and what does it matter?](#) (AutismBC, Canada)
- [Sensory Differences – A Guide for All Audiences](#) (National Autistic Society, UK)
- [Sensory Room Development](#) (The Sensory Connection Program)
- [Accessible Meetings and Events for Neurodiverse Individuals](#) (American Bar Association)
- [Hosting a Sensory Friendly Event](#) (Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative, Pennsylvania)
- [Inclusion, Autism, and Universal Design](#) (Hire Autism)
- [Building Your Ideal Sensory-Friendly Space](#) (Links ABA Therapy Solutions)
- [KultureCity Sensory Inclusive® Certification](#)

## **IV. Training and Staffing**

### **A. Staff Training**

- Schedule regular training on accessibility and inclusion. Suggested topics include:
  - “Invisible” disabilities, other cultures, and diverse identities
  - Resources offered through conference/meeting host
  - Resources offered by venue (location of restrooms, lactation room, sensory room, service animal break areas, etc.)
    - [Service Animals](#) (ADA)
    - [Oklahoma Access Laws](#) (pertaining to service animals; Brush Creek Service and Therapy Dog Center, Oklahoma)
    - [Service Dogs 101](#) (general information and etiquette; Therapeutics Service Dogs of Oklahoma)
  - Training may be offered by specific organizations, the [Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services Program](#), or through OSU, such as Talent Development’s [LinkedIn Learning offerings](#).
- Provide an accommodation guide to event staff for easy reference, including who to call if a need arises.

### **B. Event Volunteers**

- Recruit volunteers familiar with accessibility needs.
- Ensure that all volunteers know who to call if they are informed of an accessibility need. Set expectations in advance of the standard of care expected of volunteers.
- If specific needs are known in advance, consider assigning volunteers to roles related to accessibility (e.g., guiding visually impaired attendees).

## **V. Feedback and Continuous Improvement**

### **A. Before the Event**

- Describe the ideal experience for guests, staff, and volunteers.
- Set SMART goals for event experience (i.e., score an average of 3.8 on accessibility questions on follow-up survey from a minimum of at least 10 respondents). Consider short-term and long-term reporting and development needs.
- Craft questions related to these goals to include on the follow-up survey. Ensure that the feedback questions are aligned with continuous improvement goals for effective measurements and actionable results.
- Check power-assist doors throughout the building (entrances, restrooms, and conference rooms) at least two weeks in advance to ensure they are in working order. Submit work orders to fix any that are broken.

### **B. During the Event**

- Designate specific staff or volunteers to handle accessibility issues.
- Provide a direct line or contact for accessibility concerns.
- Include a hotline number in printed/digital materials for attendees to request assistance. Identify a method to catalogue requests for review following the event (or each day, for multi-day events).

### **C. Post-Event**

- Request feedback following the event, with questions included that specifically address accessibility. Make sure these are distributed to staff and volunteers, as well as speakers and attendees.
- Maintain channels for attendees to share their experiences and suggestions, even after the survey closes.

### **D. Review and Analysis**

- Regularly assess the success and areas of improvement regarding accessibility.
- Update the planning documents based on feedback and changing needs.
- Continuously reevaluate updates to state and federal laws and evolving Supreme Court decisions that further clarify existing rules and regulations pertaining to accommodations. Remember that legal obligations reflect the minimum requirements and that providing service that goes above and beyond reflects positively on your organization.

## **E. Collaboration**

- Partner with accessibility organizations or experts.
- Engage with the campus community to stay informed about evolving needs.
- Include organization members with different needs in the planning process.
- Emphasize involvement with members who may have different needs during planning processes to ensure the team receives a firsthand perspective of potential accessibility issues.

## **VII. Conclusion**

### **A. Embracing Inclusivity: A Pledge for the Future**

As we conclude this guide, let us reaffirm OSU's unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive environment. Inclusion isn't a checkbox—it's a continuous effort that permeates every aspect of our campus life. From events to everyday interactions, we strive to create spaces where diversity thrives, and every voice is heard.

### **B. Event Coordinators, Take the Lead**

To our event coordinators, we encourage you to view accessibility as an ongoing journey, not a destination. Each event presents an opportunity to learn, adapt, and improve. Seek feedback from participants, engage in dialogue, and remain open to innovation. By embracing this mindset, you contribute to a legacy of inclusivity—one that resonates far beyond the confines of any single event.

Together, let's weave inclusivity into the fabric of OSU, ensuring that every gathering, celebration, and moment reflects our shared commitment to a brighter, more equitable future.

## **Appendix**

### **Resources and Organizations Related to Accessibility**

#### ***Oklahoma State University***

##### [Equal Opportunity Services](#)

- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA: Reasonable Accommodation\)](#)

##### [Student Accessibility Services](#)

- [Sign Language Interpreter Request](#)

##### [Reboot Center](#)

##### [Meeting and Conference Services](#)

##### [Parking and Transportation Services](#)

##### [Campus Safety](#)

##### [Slate Resources](#)

##### [Cowboy Central](#)

##### [Brand Management](#)

#### ***State of Oklahoma***

##### [Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services: Employers](#)

##### [Oklahoma ABLE Tech](#)

##### [OK ViralView Infectious Disease Dashboards](#)

- [Oklahoma COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [Oklahoma Influenza Dashboard](#)

[Oklahoma Access Laws](#) (pertaining to service animals; Brush Creek Service and Therapy Dog Center, Oklahoma)

## **Federal Government**

### [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

- [Service Animals](#)
- [Communicating Effectively with People with Disabilities](#)
- [Accessible Parking Spaces](#)
- [Emergency Planning](#)
- [ADA National Network: A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities](#)

### [Section 508 & Information and Communication Technology Accessibility Standards](#)

### [Section 508: Create Accessible Video, Audio and Social Media](#)

### [Digital.gov \(Accessibility Resources\)](#)

- [Accessible Typography](#)

### [COVID-19 Event Planning Questions & Answers from the CDC](#)

## **Other Organizations**

[Service Dogs 101](#) (general information and etiquette; Therapeutics Service Dogs of Oklahoma)

[Web Accessibility Initiative: Making Events Accessible](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)

[Dax Castro's Accessibility Level of Effort Guideline Matrix](#) (PDF Conversion)

[Hire Autism Resource Center](#)

## **Event Guide Examples**

[The Kennedy Center: Accessibility for Patrons and Visitors with Disabilities](#)

[Cornell University: Accessible Meeting and Event Checklist](#)

[Teacher's College, Columbia University: Event Planning Guide](#)

[National Endowment for the Arts: Accessibility: Resources to Help Ensure Accessibility of Your Virtual Events for People with Disabilities](#)

[Hospitality & Disability: Accessible Meetings, Events & Conference Guide](#)

[University of Kansas: Best Practice Guidelines for Planning an Accessible Event](#)

[University of South Carolina: COVID-19 Event Planning Guidelines](#)

### ***Exit Survey Question Example***

During the event, did you experience any accessibility problems? *This could include things like trouble moving around the building, difficulty hearing or seeing information, or language or cultural barriers. Check all that apply.*

- |  |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Barriers | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Barriers | <input type="checkbox"/> No Barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Barriers   | <input type="checkbox"/> Language Barriers |                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Barriers  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Barriers    |                                      |

### **Glossary of Terms**

Allergen-Free Diet: a diet that excludes common allergens (e.g., nuts, dairy, shellfish), as well as foods that may have come into contact with an allergen during production

Gluten-Free Diet: a diet that excludes foods containing gluten—a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley; crucial for people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity

Neurodivergent: the term most frequently used to categorize specific neurological profiles that “diverge” from those of the majority of the population, such as those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette’s Syndrome, and other conditions

Sensory-Friendly: temporary or permanent changes to an environment to make it more accessible to people with sensory processing differences

Sensory Processing Differences: an individual’s experience where external stimuli are processed by the brain in a way that is different from most people

Service Animal: dogs or miniature horses trained to perform a task directly related to a person’s disability ([ADA](#))

Vegan Diet: a diet that includes a strict vegetarian selection but also avoids all animal products, including meat, eggs, and dairy; vegans often do not use leather products, either

Vegetarian Diet: a diet that excludes meat and primarily includes vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, and sometimes eggs or dairy products

Wayfinder: a dedicated staff member or volunteer who helps direct traffic to ensure that participants arrive at their destination

# Oklahoma State University Accessible Events Checklist

## Event Details:

- Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Venue Selection: ✓

- Wheelchair accessible.
- Accessible restrooms available.
- Adequate lighting for visual impairments.
- Quiet zones for sensory sensitivities.
- 

### 2. Communication: ✓

- Information available in multiple formats (print, digital, Braille).
- Understandable language is used for all materials.
- Sign language interpreters or closed captioning arranged.
- 

### 3. Registration Process: ✓

- Questions about specific accommodations included.
- Various registration methods offered (online, phone, in-person).
- 

### 4. Transportation & Parking: ✓

- Accessible transport options available.
- Designated accessible parking spots.
- Clear signage to venue.
- 

### 5. Signage and Navigation: ✓

- Clear, large-print signs in place.
- Tactile signs or floor markers for visually impaired attendees.
- 

### 6. Seating Arrangements: ✓

- Reserved seating for attendees with disabilities.
- Space allocated for service animals/assistive devices.
-

**7. Audio-Visual: ✓**

- Microphones are available for all speakers.
- Headphones or listening devices on hand.
- Sign language interpreters booked.
- 

**8. Content Presentation: ✓**

- Slides/materials shared in advance.
- Content available in alternative formats.
- 

**9. Food and Beverage: ✓**

- Dietary restrictions considered.
- Clear labeling for food items.
- 

**10. Sensory Considerations: ✓**

- No intense lighting or loud sounds.
- Designated quiet space arranged.
- 

**Feedback Mechanism in Place: ✓**

- Staff/volunteers handling accessibility concerns.
- Direct line for accessibility concerns active.
- Post-event feedback form ready.

**Comments/Additional Notes:**

This form is designed as a checklist for ensuring many of the necessary components of accessibility are in place. Event coordinators can use this as a guideline, assisting them in reviewing essential aspects of event planning. Additional needs can be added to each section and any additional measures taken or considerations needed can be included in the comments section.