

Policy to Practice: Accessible Events by Design



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Agenda

- Setting the Stage: Case Studies
- Build a Sense of Urgency
- Event Toolkit Considerations
- Implementation Roadmap
- Next Steps

Setting the Stage: Case Studies

Case Study 1: Annual
Student Leadership
Conference

Case Study 2: Faculty
Research Symposium
on Zoom

Case Study 3: Hybrid
Event — Campus
Strategic Planning
Town Hall

Three Case Studies – Discussion Questions

Question 1

How might participants be impacted by the organization and design of this event?

Question 2

how could event organizers better support equitable participation for speakers and attendees with disabilities?

Question 3

What planning steps could have prevented these barriers?

Build a Sense of Urgency

Catalysts for Change

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Updates to Section 504
- State Regulations (if any)

Decentralized Event Planning Risks

- Communication Breakdowns
- Budgetary Oversights
- Ableist Assumptions
- Inconsistent Procurement
- Physical Space
- Reputational Damage
- Expensive Retroactive Remediation
- Legal Liability

Paradigm Shift in Event Accessibility

	Retroactive Accommodation	Proactive Design
Methodology	Accessibility treated as an afterthought or an individual's burden.	Accessibility is integrated alongside safety, risk management and sustainability.
Impact	High cost, disruptive last-minute fixes, alienating add-on solutions.	Low burden, reliable systems, built-in features.
Outcome	High institutional risk and a culture of exclusion.	Reduced liability and a culture of belonging.

Event Toolkit Considerations



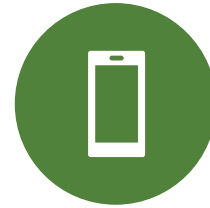
Pre-planning



Communication
and marketing



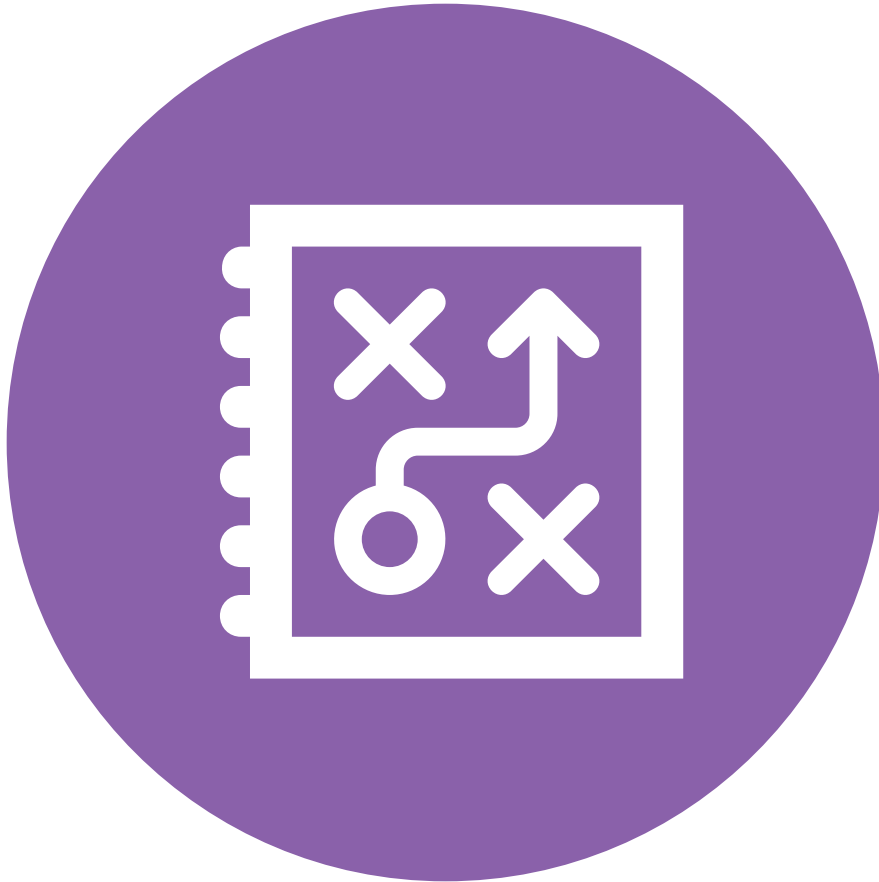
Physical spaces
and in-person
logistics



Virtual spaces
and technology



Content design
and presenter
practices



Pre-Planning

- Define audience and goals
- Designate an access coordinator
- Budget for access
- Strategic scheduling
- Build a cross-functional team
- Event staff training
- Insurance, permits and liability considerations



Communication and Marketing

- Registration
- Accommodation statements
- Set attendee expectations
- Promotional materials
- Advance and Follow-up materials
- Use inclusive language
- Content alerts
- Post-event feedback



Physical Space and In-person Logistics

- Barrier-free navigation
- Directional signage
- Inclusive amenities
- Furniture and layout
- Food and menu labeling



Virtual Space and Technology

- Virtual platform accessibility
- Captions and interpretations
- Tech checks with interactive elements
- Virtual event support



Content Design and Presenter Practices

- Provide advance materials
- Accessible content design
- Audio/visual quality
- Speaker etiquette
- Pacing and breaks

Implementation Roadmap





Phase 1: Advocate

Build a cross-functional team (Disability Services, IT, Facilities, Communications) and raising consciousness about the legal and ethical urgency of accessible events

- **Cross-Functional Representation Metric:** The number of essential campus units actively engaged in the core team (specifically looking for representation from Disability Services, IT, Facilities, and Communications).





Phase 2: Propose

Form a small working group to draft the event toolkit, consulting with affected areas, and gathering resources. Make sure the toolkit addresses all five consideration categories.

- **Consultation Metric:** The number of affected campus areas (such as events staff, accessibility services, and facilities) that have formally reviewed and provided feedback on the proposal
 - **Deliverable Metric:** The completion and approval of the draft event accessibility toolkit by the working group.
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Phase 3: Endorse

Secure official approval, such as a Cabinet endorsement or a resolution from campus governance.

- **Governance Metric:** The successful passage of formal resolutions by campus governance bodies.
 - **Executive Metric:** The attainment of documented, official endorsement from the Cabinet or executive leadership.
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Phase 4: Implement and Promote

Make the toolkit official by posting it in a central, public location (like a University Events page) and actively promote it. Secure a dedicated budget for event accessibility and accommodations.

- **Publication Metric:** The successful posting of the toolkit in a central, public-facing location, such as the primary University Events webpage.
 - **Promotion Metric:** Tracking the reach of promotional efforts (e.g., communications sent, webpage analytics) to ensure the campus is aware of the new standards.
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Phase 5: Institutionalize

Integrate the toolkit into existing infrastructure and policies, and reset default expectations (e.g., microphones are automatically included with all room reservations).

- **System Default Metric:** The number of facility or infrastructure defaults that have been reset to be accessible by design (e.g., tracking the percentage of standard room reservations that now automatically include microphones).
 - **Integration Metric:** The successful incorporation of the accessibility toolkit into other mandatory campus protocols, such as safety, risk-management, and sustainability processes.
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Phase 6: Monitor and Iterate

Reinforce the new standards and hold units accountable.

- **HR/Performance Metric:** The number of employee performance plans, or tenure and promotion guidelines, that explicitly incorporate the new event accessibility standards
 - **Audit Metric:** The completion of annual accessibility audits evaluating event infrastructure, campus policies, and the toolkit.
 - **Feedback Loop Metric:** Post-event evaluations gathering accessibility feedback from attendees and accommodation providers to drive continuous improvement.
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Next Steps

Think. Pair. Share.

Question 1

What phase is your institution in right now? How do you know?

Question 2

What barriers are preventing your institution from moving to the next phase?

Question 3

What is a step you can take to move the campus toward the next phase?

Session Evaluation

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Thank you for attending!

Your feedback helps shape
future programming.

