

Event Requirements Checklist for Ensuring Meeting/Event Accessibility

- Prior to committing to a meeting/event site, evaluate the accessibility of areas of the facility that will be used for any aspect of the meeting/event. An accessibility survey of the site using the **Meeting Facility Accessibility Evaluation**¹ should be conducted by a Forest Service employee knowledgeable about the facility accessibility requirements.
- Provide an opportunity for individuals to request sign language interpretation as well as other disability related assistance on all printed and website notices. Add the following statement to any communications, announcements, or flyers about your meeting/event:

If you have questions concerning special needs or to request sign language interpretation, contact *(name)* at *(phone)* (TTY and voice) or *(email address)* by *(deadline for request)*.² If necessary, the contact person shall designate an alternate contact person.
- If sign language interpreting and/or computer assisted real time (CART) captioning requests are made, contact an interpreting service early in the process when scheduling these services for the hearing impaired, (it is important that you are aware of the lead-time necessary to provide such services). Provide interpreters³ for public meetings or widely attended events, (example: public meeting with the governor).
- Plan the room set-up to accommodate people with disabilities and equipment for accessibility (seats, space between rows and desks, entrance, egress, lighting, acoustics, accessible podiums and stages, etc.) The **Facility Accessibility Evaluation** can be found on the Forest Service website and will aid with these details. Ensure that space, lighting, and acoustics are adequate for sign language interpreters or services. Identify a seating area for attendees that are deaf or hearing impaired.
- Video and multimedia productions must be captioned if they are used to support the agency's mission, regardless of format, and contain speech or other audio information necessary for the comprehension of the content. In accordance with 36 CFR, Part 1194, all video and multimedia productions containing visual information must be audio described. Contact The USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice/TTY) to arrange for captioning services during video teleconferences.
- Ensure hard copy information is/can be provided in alternate formats such as large print, disks, or Braille when requested in advance of the meeting or event. Contact The USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice/TTY) to arrange for Braille.
- Arrange for assistive listening devices when requested in advance. Contact USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice/TTY) for advice on models.

¹ http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/cr/disability/accessibility/Meeting_Facility_Accessibility_Evaluation.pdf. This website takes you to a well illustrated, printable copy of procedures for evaluating the accessibility of a meeting site. Due to the age of the document, it could not be converted for Section 508 compliance.

² Contact the local Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, local Independent Living Center, or USDA TARGET Center for the WO, to determine the amount of time it will take to ensure two sign language interpreters can be scheduled in the location of that meeting or event. Two sign language interpreters are required if the duration of the meeting/event is longer than 30 minutes. Set a deadline for requests accordingly. Ensure the notices are distributed well in advance of that deadline for requests.

³ Additional assistance may be obtained by contacting your local Independent Living (IL) Association, <http://www.ilusa.com/olinks/ilcenters.htm>, local Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), www.rid.org, or the National Court Reporters Association, www.ncraonline.org. The USDA Interpreting services the WO only and can be scheduled at interpreting.services@usda.gov.

- Always consider transportation to events or meetings. Hold meetings or events close to transportation routes whenever possible. If transportation is provided to all participants, provide accessible transportation for participants with disabilities.
- If the meeting attendees must depend on local restaurants and establishments for meals, scope out accessibility for participants.
- At locations where absolutely no accessible meeting sites are available (such as some remote sites), take every action to ensure people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.
- Include the USDA Non-Discrimination Statement on the notices or, if space is limited, the alternative statement: "USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider." Display the "And Justice for All" poster prominently in the facility during the session.
- Ensure outreach is made to minority constituents who may not be frequent customers of Forest Service programs.
- Distribute a comprehensive special needs request form with the pre-registration materials when pre-registration is required for a public or employee meeting, training or event.

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