

Best Practices Meeting Location and Space

Structural Accessibility Outdoors:

Accessible parking should be clearly identified with proper signage and enforced.

- Ratio – 1 accessible space for every 25 spaces and 1 van space for every six accessible spaces
- Should connect to the shortest possible accessible route to the accessible entrance
- Access to the accessible entrance should include a curb cut

Location of accessible entrance should be clearly identified with proper signage

- Accessible entrance should be able to be used independently
- Service entrance should not be used as the accessible entrance unless there is no other option

A designated area for service animals to relieve themselves should be identified and participants using service animals should be made aware of the location.

Structural Accessibility Indoors:

In the event that the meeting room has a platform or riser for presenters to stand on:

- Height of any stair rise to the platform should be considered (not to exceed 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ").

- If there is not a ramp, if any presenter needs to make their presentation from the floor, ALL presenters should make their presentation from the floor.

People who use mobility devices should have freedom of association and not be segregated to a specific section of the meeting room.

- Aisles and doorways should measure no less than 36"
- There should be 36" between rows of chairs to facilitate movement
- Chairs may need to be moved at ends of some rows to facilitate wheelchairs and seated walkers (integrated seating)
- Tripods or other equipment used for videotaping should not impede accessibility or make a walkway narrower than 36"
- Extension Cords should be securely taped to the floor to avoid a fall hazard and allow a mobility device to pass over it safely

There should be a mix of hard and soft surface chairs, with and without arms available to ensure that people can participate without pain or extreme discomfort.

ADA compliant table surface at a level that someone in a wheel chair could be able to come up to it and pull the chair far enough under it and still have their arms on the surface of the table.

An accessible restroom should be present and properly identified.

If a water fountain is available for participants, it should be ADA compliant.

When food is to be served at meetings:

- Participants should be made aware and presented with the opportunity and means to request food that meets dietary requirements or restrictions at the time that the meeting notice is sent.
- Consideration should be made to plan food that is easy to handle and eat for persons who have disabilities that impact their manual dexterity
- Participants who need to bring their own food should be made aware if a refrigerator is available for storage or the location of an outlet should they bring their own cooling device.

A room separate from the meeting room should be identified for use as a Quiet Room for use by participants who experience sensory disabilities. This room should also meet ADA requirements.

Accessible communication:

When asking people to rise for such things as the Pledge of Allegiance the language should be “Stand if you can”, not “Stand” or simply announce “We are now going to say the Pledge of Allegiance”.

When a person is called upon to speak, the best practice is to hand them a wireless microphone and not require them to stand or go to a microphone.

When presenting to a group rather than a flip chart, it is better to use a projection system and type the words or make sure that the writing can be easily seen from the back of the room from anywhere in the room.

Participants should be given the opportunity and means to request a sign language or other interpreter or CART transcriptionist at the time that a meeting notice is sent.

A description of the meeting room layout or a picture is helpful, so that people can make appropriate requests for accommodation.

If slide presentations or videos are used:

- Screen or Television/monitor should be large enough to be viewed by persons who experience low vision from the back of the room.
- Font should be in high contrast from background, a sans-serif font such as Arial, Calibri, or Helvetica and large enough to be read by persons who experience low-vision.
- Videos should be captioned.
- Consideration should be given to where any monitor is placed and at what height.

Anyone participating in discussion should use a microphone to ensure that everyone hears what is being communicated.

- There should be sufficient wireless mics and someone to serve as a “runner” for each mic to ensure that every participant has the opportunity to speak and be heard.
- It is helpful for people who are blind or have low vision if a speaker announces themselves when they first begin to talk.
- A device should be available to participants who need assistance in voting or otherwise participating. This can be as simple as a two-sided, color-coded paper fan that a participant can use to signal that they have a question or need assistance.

Land Line should be readily available to facilitate virtual participation and use of CART.

Meeting space should be equipped with Wi-Fi of adequate bandwidth to accommodate multiple computers and other devices accessing the internet as well as live streaming.

Appendix:

ADA standards for structural accessibility