EVENT PLANNING THAT ENSURES EQUITY AND ACCESS
The Office of Institutional Equity ADA Compliance Officer,
Johns Hopkins University

As an institution that is required to comply with the ADA and Section 504, Johns Hopkins University must put forth every effort to make all its programs and activities accessible to those who want to attend. To the extent readily achievable, this includes physical and programmatic access/accessibility as described further. Accomplishing this goal requires coordination across campus, as well as the participation of those seeking an accommodation. However, primary responsibility for accessibility rests with the event organizer. The organizer will make a good faith effort to accommodate all people with disabilities.

Two Guiding Principals

- Some modifications/accommodations should be in place for certain events as a matter of course
- Individuals should have the opportunity to request accommodations/ modifications

The following information will hopefully be helpful in your event planning.

Scheduling Events

The university will make every effort to schedule all events open to the public in an accessible space. For events open only to students, faculty, and/or staff (i.e., the university community), organizers should make every effort to schedule them in accessible spaces (i.e. path of travel, entry way, seating and restroom facilities). If for any reason a university community event is scheduled in a space that is not accessible and the event organizer receives a request for an accommodation from an individual with a disability, the organizer must work with the appropriate space reservation office to find an alternate location that is accessible.

Resources:
- Accessible Temporary Events, A Planning Guide
  http://dhs.sd.gov/accessibility/documents/Accessible%20Temporary%20Events%20Plan
- A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible
  https://adata.org/publication/temporary-events-guide
- Planning Accessible Meetings and Events: A TOOLKIT
  http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/mental_physical_disability/Accessible_Meetings_Toolkit.authcheckdam.pdf
- Planning On-Campus Events That Everyone Can Attend
  http://ada.osu.edu/ADAVenues/venues.html

Communication, Advertising and Alternative Formats

Event organizers are strongly encouraged to place an accessibility notice statement in all materials announcing the event. This includes electronic communications such as email as well as print materials (e.g., banners, posters, fliers, brochures, "clings," postcards, etc.). The text must include the name and contact information for the individual, school, department, or other unit or group to contact for accommodations. Suggested text is set forth below.

1. Suggested accessibility notice statement (long version)
"Please contact_____ (event organizer) at _____ (phone and email) at least one week prior to the event to request disability accommodations. In all situations, a good faith effort (up until the time of the event) will be made to provide accommodations."

2. Suggested accessibility notice statement (short version)
"For disability accommodations please contact (event organizer) at _____ (phone and email)."

Note: It is not necessary to include an accessibility notice in communications regarding routine or standing meetings for small groups of individuals when none of the individuals is in need of an accommodation.

Event organizers are required to ensure that all materials for the event are available to be put in an alternative format upon request. Event organizers are responsible for contacting the ADA coordinators' office during the event planning stage to ensure that all materials can and will be made accessible.

Resources:

- American Council for the Blind- Best Practices and Guidelines for Large Print Documents used by the Low Vision Community: http://www.acb.org/large-print-guidelines
- American Foundation for the Blind- Tips for Making Print More Readable: http://www.afb.org/info/reading-and-writing/making-print-more-readable/35

Providing Interpreters and/or Captioning

For large events, it is strongly recommended that arrangements be made in advance for Interpreters and/or captioning. If there are not requests made 48 hours in advance, then the sponsoring organization can choose to cancel the service. It is much easier to cancel without penalty than it is to try to find an available service provider 48 hours in advance. Make sure to confirm the agency cancelation policy. However, if the event is more than 250 people, it is strongly recommended that captioning still be available, when possible. This will allow anyone with any kind of hearing issue or language barrier the opportunity to participate fully in the event. In addition, the larger the audience, the greater the chance that there will be someone in attendance with a hearing issue.

List of Procurement approved resources for interpreting, transcribing and captioning: http://accessibility.jhu.edu/interpreter-resources/

Ticketing and Seating

When hosting a ticketed event, additional steps must be taken to ensure accessibility. This would include events such as concerts, plays, lectures, sporting events, etc. The key: equal opportunity to purchase tickets for accessible seating. Please refer to the DOJ link below for additional specific information.

Resources:

- DOJ Ticket Sales FAQ: https://www.ada.gov/ticketing_2010.htm

Final Thoughts

It is important to be thinking about accessible when planning events during the planning stages in order to avoid having to make changes later. During the planning process it is recommended that you start with the following list of questions:

- Is the venue accessible?
- What are the seating options (wheelchair and for ASL)?
- How do we plan to provide ASL and/or Transcribing?
- How do we plan to provide Large Print?
- How do we plan to provide Braille?
- Is the venue equipped to provide FM Systems/ ALD through the sound system?
- Make sure to post a disability access statement in all electronic and paper announcements of the event.
- Make sure if they register on-line to attend that the registration is accessible and that the form asks about accommodations.
- Make sure that the ticketing options are accessible.

Some modifications/accommodations should be in place for certain events as a matter of course and Individuals should have the opportunity to request accommodations/ modifications.

For further information or for assistance with helping to plan the event, please contact The ADA Compliance Officer in The Office of Institutional Equity at oiedisability@jhu.edu or 410-516-8075