



## **Accessible In-Person and Virtual Workshop and Training Guidelines and Checklist**

The Leave No Trace commitment to accessibility for all begins with these site selection guidelines, as well as our efforts to ensure that website functionality and content are accessible to all people.

Our ongoing accessibility effort works towards ensuring that the sites our office chooses to hold public or private events at are accessible to all people. These same guidelines are used to encourage site hosts who invite our staff to their locations to provide Leave No Trace education and training. In addition to site accessibility for all people, there are guidelines to help make virtual programming accessible to users with sensory, cognitive, and mobility disabilities.

### **CHOOSING A VENUE**

These venue guidelines are intended to guide office staff in selecting sites for fundraising events and educational programs that are accessible to all people. Staff are encouraged to visit sites (if possible) before selecting or work closely with the site host to cover these guidelines.

These same guidelines should be used with site hosts for Traveling Teams. Site hosts should be encouraged to meet as many of these guidelines as possible when hosting a Leave No Trace workshop, training, or event.

### **Exterior Features Checklist**

#### **General**

- Close proximity of venue from train and bus stations, paratransit services, and public transportation
- Barrier-free/step-free paths of travel
- Slip-resistant, level surfaces
- Tactile ground surface indicators that signal stairs and ramps for people who are blind or have visual impairments
- Stairs with continuous handrails on both sides; no open risers (space between steps)
- Ramps for inaccessible areas, with handrails on both sides if the rise is greater than 6 inches, and level landings
- Curb ramps/cuts for persons who use mobility aids or devices

- Crosswalks with visual and audible signals
- Toileting, watering, and walking areas for service animals

### **Entrance**

- Barrier and step-free, clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage), well-lit, slip-resistant accessible main entrance at street level so that all individuals can use this entrance
- Direct access from the main entrance to the lobby, main floor, and elevators
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage), covered drop-off and pick-up points adjacent to the main entrance, with curb cuts
- Alternative accessible entrances are used during the same hours as the main entrance
- Signs (Braille and tactile) indicating the location of accessible entrances
- Entrance connected by an accessible route to public transportation stops, accessible parking and passenger loading zones, and public streets or sidewalks
- Other entrances that are at street level or accessible by ramps or lifts

### **Doors**

- Main entrance/exit doorways that are wide enough (32 inches with the door open 90 degrees) to accommodate mobility devices and aids
- Easy-to-open (automatic/push button door openers, lever handles), operable with one hand, within reach for mobility device users, lightweight (no more than 5 pounds) doors; no revolving doors
- Glass doors with contrasting door frames, stickers, or bright signs

### **Parking/Transit**

- Accessible, clearly marked (symbol of accessibility) parking spaces (at least 1 handicap space for every 25 total spaces) located on the shortest accessible route of travel from adjacent parking to an accessible entrance
- Accessible transit services (private and public)
- Available paratransit services

## **Interior Features Checklist**

### **General**

- Well-lit areas; adjustable lighting
- Even, stable, regular, slip-resistant, non-sloped paths of travel
- Sufficiently wide (64 inches for two-way traffic), barrier-free hallways and corridors to allow everyone to move about freely
- Securely attached edges of carpets or mats
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage) accessible exits
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage) accessible restrooms located on an accessible route

- Video screens with closed-captioning
- Venue free of strong smells (perfume, cleaning agents, etc.), loud noises, and flashing/bright lights

### **Doors/Elevators**

- Easy-to-open, lightweight (no more than 5 pounds) doors with lever handles that are easy to grasp with one hand or automatic/push button openers
- Wide (32 inches with the door open 90 degrees) doorways for mobility devices to enter/exit
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage) elevators along an accessible route
- Elevator doors that reopen automatically when obstructed by an object or person
- Elevator interiors are adequately illuminated and wide enough for wheelchairs/scooters/mobility devices to enter, maneuver within reach of controls, and exit
- Elevator call buttons with visual and audible signals, reachable by mobility device users
- Elevator control buttons that are designated by Braille and tactile characters or symbols and are reachable by wheelchair/scooter/mobility device users
- Elevator voice and visual display two-way emergency communication

## **Meeting/Event Rooms Checklist**

### **General**

- Barrier-free, slip-resistant path to rooms
- Proper air circulation with temperature controls
- Rooms large enough to allow all persons to move about freely
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage) accessible restrooms located on an accessible route in close proximity to rooms
- Elevators in close proximity to rooms and along an accessible route
- Easy-to-open, lightweight doors (no more than 5 pounds) with lever handles or automatic/ push-button openers
- Doors wide enough (32 inches with the door open 90 degrees) for mobility devices to enter/exit and maneuver
- Doors are propped open at the start and end of each session, with attendants or an automatic mechanism to open the doors during the session
- Multiple sets of power outlets for laptops and other electronics
- Well-secured, covered cables, wires, cords, and microphones placed outside of paths of travel
- Tables for materials and food/beverage at a height (28 to 34 inches) reachable by mobility device users and in an accessible location
- Space for service animals

### **Visual**

- Signs (with Braille and tactile characters, sans serif or simple serif large type fonts, sentence case, and good contrast) that direct attendees to all rooms

- Mounted signs designating permanent rooms and spaces with tactile characters that contrast with their backgrounds and Braille
- Well-lit rooms and adjacent areas

### **Auditory**

- Good acoustics and a functioning auxiliary sound system
- Public address (PA) system
- Location of all audio/visual equipment in an area that does not block paths of travel
- Prominent, well-lit, visible space for interpreters to stand (e.g., raised platform with a dark, solid color background)
- Clear lines of sight to interpreters

### **Seating**

- Barrier-free seating aisles that are wide enough (36 inches) to accommodate mobility devices
- Seating rows that are wide enough for attendees to walk through
- Accessible, integrated seating throughout the row
- Preferred seating for persons with visual and hearing impairments in the front rows
- Adequate number of spaces for mobility devices dispersed to allow location choices and viewing angles equivalent to other seating, with clear lines of sight
- Space on the side of or under seats for service animals

## VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

Just as with in-person meetings and events, virtual meetings and events must be accessible to people with disabilities. When planning a virtual meeting or event, consider accessibility needs from the start. Selecting the right platform is key. It must be accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities. Features to look for are platforms that provide real-time captions or otherwise support captions, allow individuals to magnify screen content, can be navigated by a keyboard only, and thus provide keyboard shortcuts and support screen readers and interpreters.

### Virtual Workshops and Events Checklist

#### Ensure that the platform:

- Is accessible for people with disabilities
- Is compatible with assistive technologies used by people with disabilities (e.g., screen readers for blind persons, screen enlargement applications, closed-captioning, cognitive aids including computer devices, etc.)
- Has real-time automated captioning and/or supports manual captioning by a third-party vendor
- Allows ASL Interpreters to stay visible throughout your event
- Has simple keyboard shortcuts for users who may not use a mouse
- Has a chat, note, Q&A, or other features for participation that is fully accessible
- Allows for computer-based and phone-based audio listening/speaking
- Has customizable interfaces so that anyone using screen readers or screen magnification can adjust the video windows as needed
- Provides good video quality, including the ability to show two screens at once

### Virtual Workshops and Events Best Practices

Below is a list of best practices to help ensure that virtual meetings are accessible.

- Include a statement on the website, registration, and all other communications that ask attendees to specify their accessibility/accommodations needs, give a deadline for requests, and provide the name, email address, and phone number of the individual to contact.
- Ensure that the individual hosting the meeting is trained on how to set up and implement the platform's accessibility features.
- List in all event communications accessibility/accommodations that we will provide, without the need for attendees having to request, captioning.
- Consider your audience and language level. Use plain language when appropriate. Ask attendees if they can hear everyone or if anyone is speaking too quickly.
- Have a staff person monitor the chat or Q&A function for accessibility issues that may arise during the event and read aloud the author and questions or comments to be addressed. The host may also offer an outside contact point, such as an email address,

for anyone who is not able to access the in-platform functions and monitor it before and during the program.

- Advise everyone orally and in the chat or Q&A function about the accessibility features/ accommodations being offered and how to use them at the start of the event, including captions. Do a check of access features. Invite attendees to raise access concerns during the event and instruct them how to do so.
- If there are any barriers or extra steps to joining the event, such as passwords or requiring the user to input information to join, make sure all attendees know and understand how to do so and provide assistance
- Offer the option for people using chat and/or Q&A functions to have their messages read aloud.
- Offer different ways that individuals can access the event, including via the Internet and dial-in.
- Provide all materials and PowerPoint slides in an electronic format, share via email or the chat function, post on a website before the event, and create a short URL.
- Announce at the start of the event how to access copies of materials and share the link on the presentation's first page and in the chat/Q&A function, and read it aloud.
- Provide CART (real-time captioning) for all events, even if the virtual platform generates automatic captions, as these are often unreliable. Captioning creates a transcript of the event that can be used by everyone, including those who attend the live event.
- Describe all images and videos for blind/visually impaired individuals, as well as for those joining by phone.
- Sharing your screen is not accessible for blind persons, so send or post materials electronically on a web page in advance of the event. On the day of the event, provide a link to the materials in the Q&A or chat function and add a visual description.
- Sharing a video is not accessible for blind and/or deaf and hard of hearing persons. Ensure the video is captioned and describes what is happening during the event.
- Allow people to turn off self-view if it is distracting to them.
- Have the event host show the person presenting, along with the active ASL interpreter.
- Advise attendees to stay in gallery view so they can see all presenters and the ASL interpreters at the same time.
- Avoid flashing or strobing animations in presentations or other materials.
- For people who read lips, ensure that presenters have their cameras on and are well-lit.
- Ensure that the environment behind presenters is not distracting. If it is, use a virtual background, but note that some can wash out faces.
- Eliminate background noise by muting everyone except for the person speaking. At the start of the meeting, instruct attendees how to mute and unmute themselves.
- Allow only one person to speak at a time. This will also help the captioner(s) and ASL interpreter(s) more accurately interpret.
- Have each person say their name each time they speak so that attendees, captioners, and interpreters know who is speaking.

Ensure that any voting, polling, or other forms of participation are accessible. Provide alternative ways for attendees to participate.

# MATERIALS

## Promotional and Registration Materials

### Alternative Formats

Promotional and registration materials are fundamental for communicating about the accessibility of in-person or virtual workshops or events. These materials should be offered in alternative formats that are accessible to persons with disabilities, such as large print and electronic files. Printed and digital text should be in sans-serif fonts, such as Helvetica, Verdana, or Arial.

Include a statement in registration materials that lets attendees know that alternative formats are available upon request.

Sample statement: “The materials for this workshop are available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact [name, email address, telephone number (including TTY)] by [deadline date].”

## Promotional and Registration Materials Checklist

- Provide alternative registration options (online, telephone, text, email)
- Include a statement that the workshop/event is accessible
- Include a request for accommodations statement
- Inquire about personal care attendants and service animals
- Designate staff to handle accommodation and accessibility requests if possible
- Include an accessibility link for the workshop/event on the website in a prominent place
- Identify any barriers that cannot be eliminated and ways they have been mitigated
- Offer materials in alternative formats (e.g., large font, electronic)
- Ensure that the fonts used are sans-serif

## Workshop/Event Materials

Planners must ensure that all attendees have equal access to the in-person or virtual workshop or event materials provided, whether in print or digitally, so they can fully participate. Accordingly, it is essential to offer all materials in alternative formats. Doing so will not only expand the pool of potential attendees but also demonstrate our commitment to accessibility. When setting the deadline for receiving all materials, remember to factor in the time it will take to produce the alternative formats.



# Persons with Visual Impairments Checklist

## *Text Format*

- Use a 16-point font size when possible, but if that is not practical at least 14 point
- Avoid highly stylized typefaces
- Use easy-to-read fonts with clearly defined letters and clear spacing between the letters, such as sans-serif fonts (e.g., Helvetica, Verdana, Arial)
- Avoid underlining or italicizing large volumes of text
- Avoid using blocks of capital letters for more than a couple of words
- Spell out numbers

## *Layout*

- Align all text on the left, rather than centered or right justified
- Use one-inch margins
- Avoid columns
- Avoid lines of text longer than six inches (for persons using magnifiers)
- Do not hyperlink URLs because underlining reduces readability
- Do not place text directly over or wrap text around an image
- Use at least 1.5 spacing between lines of text paragraphs

## *Contrast and Color*

- Ensure good contrast between the text and background colors
- Use black text
- Use cream instead of white paper for printed materials
- Use a single solid color for documents with a colored background

## *Paper*

- Choose a matte rather than a glossy finish
- Avoid using thin paper, which can bleed images and text from the reverse
- Print on one side

# Presentation Checklist

## General

- Announce when the meeting begins and ends
- Build multiple breaks into the schedule, preferably 5-10 minutes every hour
- Avoid the use of flashing lights and loud sounds
- Ensure that the presentation area and screens are viewable from all areas of the room
- Allow space for interpreters
- For large events, allow people with relevant disabilities to enter the room and find seats before the general audience
- Provide all materials (papers, PowerPoints, agendas, slides) in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, electronic, audio CDs, etc.) and in advance of the workshop/event
- Make electronic versions of materials available in plain text, rich text, or Microsoft Word formats and post on the website
- Make materials available in advance to interpreters and other support personnel to familiarize themselves with the materials and ask any questions

## Structure

- At the start of the meeting, introduce the interpreter(s) and other service providers
- At the start of the meeting, orally describe the room layout and location of restrooms, emergency exits, break rooms, and food/beverages
- Provide an overview of the presentation at the start and a summary of the key points at the end
- Allow for regular breaks (about every hour) for attendees, service animals, and access service providers such as interpreters, notetakers, and readers
- Ensure that the virtual environment behind the presenters is not distracting. If it is, use a virtual background, but note that some can wash out faces.
- Eliminate background noise in virtual meetings or events by muting everyone except for the person speaking. At the start of the meeting or event, instruct attendees how to mute and unmute themselves.
- Allow only one person to speak at a time. This will also help the captioner(s) and ASL interpreter(s) more accurately interpret.
- Have each person say their name each time they speak so that attendees, captioners, and interpreters know who is speaking.

## Presenter

- Always face the audience or camera
- Use a microphone or test how you would sound on a virtual platform
- Keep hands and other objects away from your mouth when speaking
- If interpreters are being used, do not walk while speaking
- Be visible to everyone; stand in good light or make sure your camera is on you and well-lit

- Do not stand in front of a window or bright screen in order to avoid the silhouette effect
- Speak in well-modulated tones and at a pace that allows interpreters to interpret accurately
- Keep the presentation clear, simple, concise, and organized
- Use simple language; avoid acronyms, jargon, and idioms
- Give attendees enough time to process information by pausing between topics
- Use multiple communication methods to accommodate different learning styles (verbal information, pictures and diagrams, text, auditory)
- Check in with attendees to ensure that the presentation is understood and clarify if needed
- Avoid using gestures and visual points of reference
- When reading directly from the text, provide an advance copy in print and digital format and pause slightly when interjecting information not in the text
- Describe verbally all visual materials (e.g., slides, charts, PowerPoints, etc.)
- Provide captioning for all videos

### **Q&A/Audience**

- Instruct attendees to wait to be called on, not to interrupt, to speak one at a time, and to speak clearly into the microphone
- Provide attendees with the option of writing their questions ahead of time, which the presenters can then read before responding
- Repeat questions posed by people in the audience before responding
- Reserve seats in front of the presenter for persons with visual, hearing, and processing impairments