

Making Your Presentation Accessible For People With Disabilities

Your Responsibility Is To Include Everyone In Your Audience:

Each presenter should consider the needs of people with visual, hearing, and mobility impairments when designing their programs. These considerations will not only benefit people with disabilities, but will make the information more accessible to everyone. If possible, visit the room in which you will present in advance to insure the following:

1. For people with mobility and orthopedic impairments:

Make sure that your central aisle is clear of obstacles (including power cords and microphone cords) and will allow for free movement of a wheelchair or scooter. Make certain that there is adequate space for a wheelchair (2'X4') with good sightlines for viewing and/or participating in your presentation or workshop. Note: You should move a chair or two to provide a place for a wheelchair user rather than have someone sit in the aisle.

2. For people with visual impairments:

Again, be certain that the center the aisle is free of obstacles. Have one set of handouts available in large print (use **18 pt. bold**). Use clear, vivid, legible, high contrast handouts and transparencies. Make all of your transparencies available as handouts, as well as anything you plan to write on an easel. Make certain that during your presentation you refrain from using nonspecific visual points of references or gestures when explaining key points or concepts (i.e. "as you can see over here"). Adjust lighting when requested. Bring a diskette with your handouts/transparencies- using Windows 95 or 98. By doing so some conference organizers can provide a copy to anyone relying on voice output devices. Some conference organizers can also provide you with one copy of your material in large print.

3. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

If sign language interpreter(s) are present, they will consult with you about where they need to stand. You should keep in mind that the interpreter is merely a vehicle for communication, and that you should address the deaf audience member directly. Make eye contact with the deaf individual when he or she is signing and the interpreter is voicing. Try to control background noise as much as possible, asking participants with questions or comments to speak in turn and not over one another. Make certain to repeat back any questions asked of you.

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Last Modified Monday, April 7, 2003