

Northwestern University
Accessible Event Guide

**your
accessible
event
starter pack**

This guide is intended to provide event organizers and campus administrators with the tools necessary to proactively plan events that are accessible to all attendees.

Often overlooked,
accessibility
is important to consider when
planning your event.

Take a look through this guide to determine
what steps you should take to ensure your
event can be enjoyed by all.

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ensuring accessibility

our mission

Northwestern University is committed to providing accessible programming on and off campus. Northwestern University is responsible under federal and state laws to ensure access for all participants.

Event Advertising & Registration

1 Registration

The event registration process must be accessible to everyone. Ensure that your event website and online registration forms are accessible to individuals who use assistive technology.

[Visit Northwestern's Digital Accessibility website for additional resources.](#)

2 Contact Info

Provide both phone and email contact information on event registration and advertisements so that attendees can use their preferred method of communication to ask questions about the event.

3 Accommodation Requests

When advanced registration is required, event organizers should offer attendees an option to request accommodations such as sign language interpreters. Deadlines for accommodation requests should be properly indicated in all registration materials.

Accommodation requests received after the designated deadline may not be refused. Reasonable efforts should be made to provide the requested accommodations.

4 Available Services

For large events (i.e., Commencement), where hundreds or thousands of participants can be expected to attend, organizers may find it easier to accommodate communication access services and not require an accommodation request deadline.

Event materials should clearly indicate any aids or services that will be available. (ex. "Sign language interpreters and captioning will be available at the Convocation ceremony.")

5 Accessibility Statement

Northwestern University Event/Program Accessibility Statement

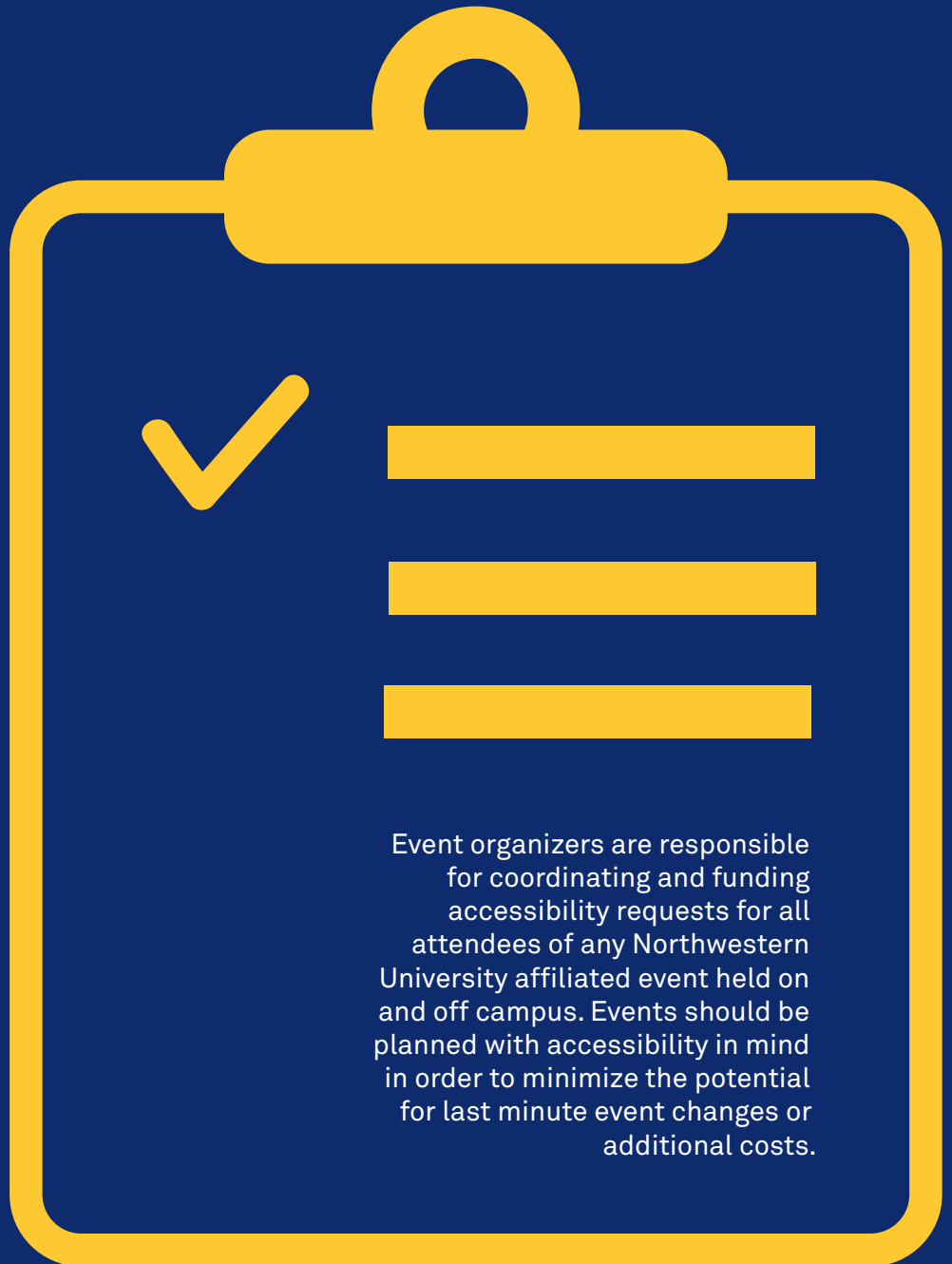
The following statement should be used in all event registration forms, fliers, digital and print communications, public service announcements, or any other method used to inform the public about an event, must also include the following accessibility statement. If food is being served, we recommend replacing the third sample accommodation listed in the statement with "adjustments due to dietary needs".

“

Northwestern University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all events and programs. Accommodations such as sign language interpreters, accessible seating, and presentation materials in alternate formats are provided upon request. Please contact [program/event contact] at [program/event contact's email address] or [program/event contact's phone number] by [date*, typically at least one week in advance]. Every reasonable effort will be made to implement accommodations in an effective and timely manner.

”

Event Planner Responsibility



Event organizers are responsible for coordinating and funding accessibility requests for all attendees of any Northwestern University affiliated event held on and off campus. Events should be planned with accessibility in mind in order to minimize the potential for last minute event changes or additional costs.

Designating a Point of Contact for Accommodations



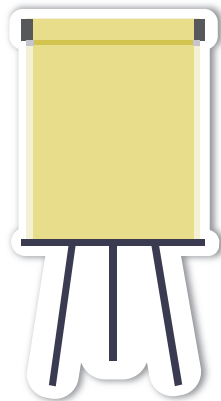
The Northwestern University department or organization sponsoring the event should identify a contact person who is knowledgeable about the event details and will coordinate all accommodation requests. The name, phone, and email address of the contact should be included in the Accessibility Statement for each event (see previous page).

Event Materials

Presentation Materials

Program materials including PowerPoint presentations and printed handouts that are distributed at the event should be made available in alternative formats: large print, audio, electronic format (Word doc is preferred), or in Braille per attendee request. Whenever possible, meeting materials such as handouts, evaluations, and flyers should be available in electronic format (.doc, .txt., etc.) prior to the event.

- 1 Large print materials (18-point font Sans Serif type, e.g., Arial) and other alternate formats should be provided upon request.
- 2 If flip charts, easels, or dry erase boards will be used, read aloud the information, including images, to assist audience members who cannot see the board. Verbally describe any visual aids or graphical information.
- 3 If there are evaluations or other forms that are to be filled out during or at the conclusion of the event, a reader and/or scribe should be provided for a person who is unable to complete printed materials independently. Or provide them in an accessible electronic format.



Multimedia/Audiovisual Materials

- 4 Any films or videos used must be captioned and presenters are encouraged to describe visual aids utilized in their presentation.
- 5 Audiovisual or multimedia presentations (especially videos) should have captions/subtitles so individuals with hearing impairments can access the information.
- 6 Supply microphones to amplify talks and events. Remind speakers at the beginning of the session to use the mics.

Programmatic & Venue Accessibility

1 Location

The building location and event space or meeting room should be accessible to all attendees. Choose a location with accessible pathways, entrances, ramps, and elevators.

3 Interpreters/Captioning

Attendees who are Deaf or hard of hearing may need reserved seating near the speaker, interpreters, or captioning.

2 Arrangement

The room, seating, and aisle spacing should be arranged so that attendees who are blind or have low vision or use a wheelchair or other mobility devices can move about safely and independently. The minimum width requirement for aisles is 36 inches, and if the aisles are longer than 200 feet, then they must have at least 60 inches to provide clearance for passing. The space required for a wheelchair to make a 180-degree turn is a clear space of 60 inches.

4 Tables/Desks

If tables or desks are used, ensure that adjustable height options are available.

5 During Event

Event organizers should be available during the event to inform attendees about the location of accessible restrooms, elevators, building location, and room set up.

6 Wheelchair Locations

The number of chairs removed for wheelchairs depends on the total seating (see table on next page); Wheelchair locations should be integrated with the general seating areas. Companion seating should be available next to wheelchair locations.



Wheelchair Seating Locations

Assembly areas with fixed seating, e.g., theaters, stadiums, etc. and temporary seating must provide a range of **built-in seating locations** so people using wheelchairs can choose where to position themselves to view activities or performances.

Capacity of Seating in Assembly Areas	Number of Required Wheelchair Seating Locations
4 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 150	4
151 to 300	5
301 to 500	6
501 to 5000	6, plus 1 for each 150, or fraction thereof
5001 and over	36, plus 1 for each 200, of fraction thereof

The number of wheelchair locations required is related to seating capacity and, with some exceptions, must be dispersed within conventional seating areas so patrons have a choice of ticket price.



Accommodation Budget

Accessibility and accommodation costs should be included as a budget item for all meetings, conferences, and events on campus. The accommodation funding source(s) should be determined during the planning stages of the event.

On-Site Registration/ Day of Event

Registration staff should be informed about how to provide accommodations and where to obtain services.



Event staff should understand the general obligation to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Staff should be prepared to offer assistance and answer common questions such as:



“Where is the accessible restroom or drinking fountain?”



“Where is the nearest accessible parking location?”



“Where is the accessible entrance?”



“Where is the seating for individuals who are Deaf/hard of hearing?”

Sign Language Interpreters

Departments and campus partners are encouraged to arrange interpreters for all NU programs and events. Attendees that request accommodations for an event should be asked about their preference of communication access. Every attempt should be made to meet that specific accommodation request.

Requests

Requests for sign language interpreters can be made by contacting an interpreter referral agency. Interpreter requests should be initiated about two weeks in advance of the event date in order to ensure that communication access is available to all attendees. If a request is made just a few days before the event, a good faith effort should be made to secure interpreters.

Each NU department or organization must set up their own customer account in order to book an interpreter. Please contact the interpreter agency to find out more about setting up a customer account, billing information, and interpreter requests.

Be sure to have all relevant event information on hand when submitting the interpreter request.

- 1 Date of event
- 2 Start/end time
- 3 Location – address, building, room
- 4 Type of event and important details
- 5 On-site contact name and contact information

Resources

Chicago area Interpreter resources:

Five Star Interpreting
www.cairs.net/
312-895-4300

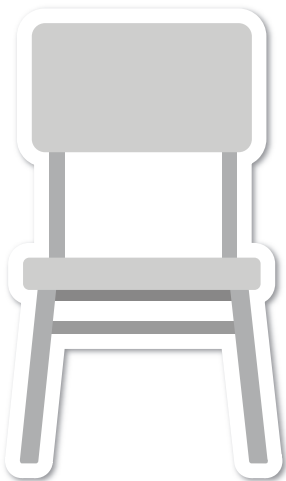
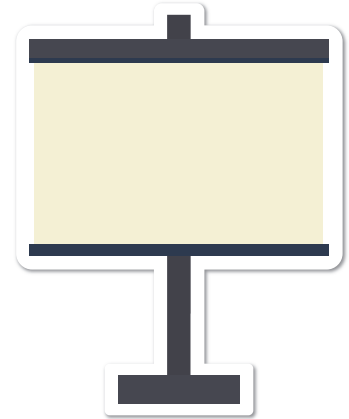
Deaf Communication by Innovation (DCI)
www.Deafcomm.net/
773-857-7709

Chicago Hearing Society (CHS)
www.chicagohearingsociety.org/
773-248-9121

Event Planning/ Space Considerations

1 Presentation Materials

- Request presentation materials from the speaker a few days in advance.
- Send materials to the interpreters prior to the event.
- This provides the interpreter(s) with advance notice of important topic and schedule details.



2 Set-up

- Consider the room set-up.
- Each interpreter will need a chair and should be located in close proximity to the speaker and in view of attendees.
- Events lasting more than 60 minutes will require two interpreters.
- Seats should be reserved for individuals who request sign language interpreters. The reserved seats should be located near the front and near the interpreters.

3 Lighting

Keep the event space well lit so that the interpreter and any visual aids are easy to see.



4 Captions

Ensure that presenters utilize closed-captioned videos and consider using the auto captioning within PowerPoint or Google Slides.

CART or Real-Time Captioning

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is an instant translation of the spoken word into text. CART reporters typically use a stenotype machine, notebook computer, and real-time software. CART is a form of communication access primarily used by individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Requests

Requests for CART reporters can be made by contacting a local CART transcription service. CART requests should be initiated about two weeks in advance of the event date in order to ensure that communication access is available to all attendees. If a request is made just a few days before the event, a good faith effort should be made to secure CART services.

Each NU department or organization must set up their own customer account in order to book a CART provider. Please contact the agency to find out more about setting up a customer account, billing information, and CART requests.

Be sure to have all relevant event information on hand when submitting the CART request.

- ① Date of event
- Start/end time
- Location – address, building, room
- Type of event and important details
- On-site contact name and contact information

Resources

CART provider resources:

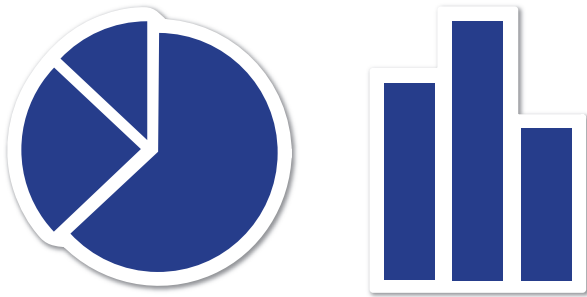
HRI-Cart
877-372-2278
operations@hricart.com
www.hricart.com

Illinois Court Reporters Association
ILCRA Professional Members List
www.ilcra.org/sitepage.asp?page=cart-providers

Event Planning/ Space Considerations

1 Presentation Materials

Request presentation materials from the speaker a few days in advance. Send these materials to the CART reporter prior to the event. This provides the reporter with advance notice of specialized vocabulary and names to be used in a presentation.



2 Set-up

Consider the room set-up. CART reporters will need a desk or table that is located close to an electrical outlet for their equipment with a strong wireless signal. Seats should be reserved for those individuals who request CART. Reserve seats next to the CART reporter and near the front for those individuals who request CART.



3 Lighting

Keep the event space well lit so that the interpreter and any visual aides are easy to see.

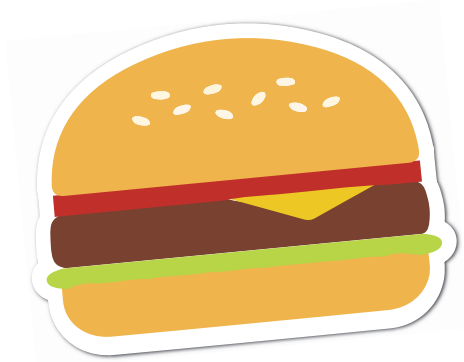


4 Captions

Ensure that presenters utilize close captioned videos and when possible utilize the auto captioning using PowerPoint or Google Slides.



Food Allergies and Dietary Accommodations



Long-Range Planning:

- 1 Where will the event be held? (On/off campus?)
- 2 Will the event hosts serve food/beverages?
- 3 Who will supply the food/beverages for the event?
 - Do/can they provide options free of the common allergens?*
 - Do/can they post ingredients for all food/beverage choices?
 - Do/can they post common allergens for all food/beverage choices?
- 4 If no to any in #3:
 - Did you inquire as to the possibility of the vendor providing these requirements?
 - If the event is catered, did the caterer verify that they would be able to provide allergen-free food choices for the event?
 - If no, is there another food/beverage vendor or caterer you can choose who will meet those requirements?

Budgeting

- 1 Will it cost more to have an event safe for individuals with food allergies?
If yes, how much more?
- 2 If attendees are purchasing their own food/beverages:
 - Can they purchase allergen-free meals?
 - How will they know they can purchase allergen-free meals?
 - How will they know the process and whom to contact?



Advertising/Contact:

- 1 How are the attendees notified regarding whom to contact in the event of disability accommodations and food/beverage allergies? Consider using Northwestern's recommended accessible events statement which you can find at:
www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/accommodations/accessible-events-guide/index.html
- 2 If you do not use the recommended accessible events statement:
 - Is the request process for accommodations clearly highlighted on flyers, posters, emails, websites, all materials, announcements, etc.?
 - Is the contact information accurate and current? Is the contact person aware of their role?
 - Is the process streamlined and (relatively) simple? Can it be accessed via multiple modes of communication (email, phone, online form, etc.)?
 - If an online form is used, is it accessible? (Google docs are NOT accessible for students who use screen-readers.)
- 3 If not the contact person, who will be responsible for the responding to the requests for accommodations and food/beverage allergies?

Event

- Will food/beverage choices be located near or away from other foods with allergens?
- Will there be someone knowledgeable regarding allergic reactions attending the event?
 - If yes, have they been trained to address allergic reactions?
 - If yes, do they know how to use an EpiPen or AUVI-Q?
- Will it be possible to accommodate last-minute requests for allergen-free food/beverages?
 - If yes, how much time will be needed?

*Common food allergens: eggs, fish, milk, nuts from trees (including hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, and Brazil nuts), peanuts (groundnuts), shellfish (including shrimp, mussels, and crab), soy, wheat/gluten. Nut oils and sesame seeds/oils are also commonly problematic for students with nut allergies.

The background is a solid blue color with several yellow paw prints scattered across it. The paw prints are stylized, with four distinct pads and a larger, irregularly shaped main pad. They are positioned at various angles and sizes, creating a playful and thematic pattern.

Service and Support Animals

Service Animals in Public Areas of the University

Service dogs must be permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all public areas of the University. For an individual to qualify to have a service dog on campus:

- The individual must have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The service dog must be trained to do specific tasks for the individual that are related to the individual's disability.

University employees cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability to determine whether a person's dog qualifies as a service dog. When it is not obvious what service the dog provides, University employees may make only two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a service dog, which are:

- Is the dog required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

University employees cannot require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task. Service animals are not required to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

Individuals with disabilities who require a service dog will not be denied access when another individual on the premises is allergic to dogs. In such instances, the person responsible for accommodations for the University event should consult with Northwestern's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance to determine if both parties can be accommodated.

Assistance Animals in Public Areas of the University

Assistance animals (such as emotional support animals) are generally not permitted inside public areas of the University. The use of an assistance animal in public areas may be allowed as a reasonable accommodation.


For the University policy concerning service, assistance, and other animals at Northwestern, visit:

policies.northwestern.edu/docs/animal-policy-final-012717.pdf

If permitted as an accommodation, assistance animals and their owners are subject to the same requirements and restrictions described in this policy that are applicable to service and other animals.

Additional Campus Resources



Northwestern University Facilities Management

-  847-491-5201 (Evanston)
-  312-503-8000 (Chicago)
-  facilities-management@northwestern.edu
-  www.northwestern.edu/fm/index.html



Northwestern Dining Services and Catering

-  847-467-6114
-  dineoncampus.com/northwestern/northwestern-catering

Campus Partner Directory

- ### AccessibleNU
-  847-467-5530
 -  northwestern.edu/accessiblenu

Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance

-  847-467-6165
-  northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office




Northwestern Digital Accessibility

-  northwestern.edu/accessibility/digital-accessibility

Northwestern Digital Accessibility Liaisons

-  northwestern.edu/accessibility/digital-accessibility/liaisons.html

Northwestern Parking and Transportation

-  847-491-3319 (Evanston)
-  312-503-1103 (Chicago)
-  www.northwestern.edu/transportation-parking

NUIT Communications

-  it-communications@northwestern