

Intro to Cultural Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities

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Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium

We believe everyone deserves access to Chicago's rich arts and culture. We empower Chicago's cultural spaces to become more accessible to visitors with disabilities.

- CCAC & Steppenwolf Accessible Equipment Loan
- Professional Development workshops
- Access Calendar
- Network with colleagues

Today's Focus

1. What is disability and why is this important?
2. How do we get started?
3. What types of services can we offer?
4. How do we communicate accessibility?
5. What's next?

What is “disability?”

ADA Definition:

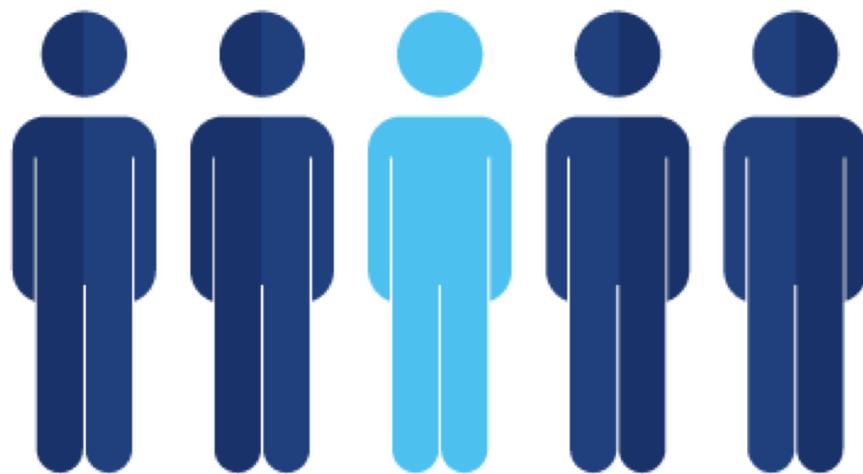
Someone who has, has a record of, or is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (eating, breathing, walking, talking, seeing, etc.).

What is “disability?” continued

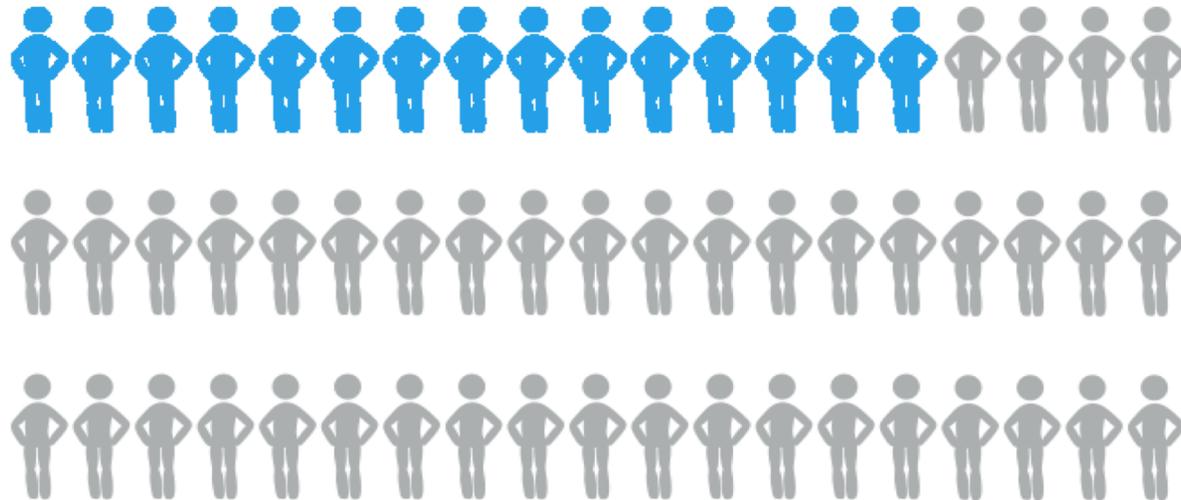
- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines **disability as a contextual variable**, dynamic over time and in relation to circumstances.
- One is more or less disabled based on the interaction between the person and the individual, institutional and social environments.

Equal vs. Equitable vs. Inclusive Design





1 in 5 Americans has a disability



**77.3 million Baby Boomers make up
25% of U.S. population**

Customer Service Language: People-First Language

DO SAY	AVOID SAYING
People with disabilities	The disabled, handicapped
She uses a wheelchair	She is wheelchair-bound
People who are blind, low vision	The blind
People who are deaf, hard of hearing	The deaf, hearing impaired
He has a cognitive disability	He has special needs
Accessible seat/ parking	Handicapped seat / parking

Avoid Euphemisms

- “Different abilities”
- “Differently-abled”
- “Special Needs”
- “Handi-capable”
- **If you mean disability, just say disability**
- **#SayTheWord**

Language Guidance

- Customer service default should be People-First.
- Language is fluid and changing.
- Some disabled people prefer Identity First language (i.e., autistic person).
- Be aware of nuance (i.e. “Deaf” vs. “deaf”)
- In conversations, ask individuals – what’s your preference?

Beyond Compliance

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act

Accessible = easy to reach, enter,
speak with, or use.

- Instead of ADA seating / ADA restroom, say **accessible seating**

5 Reasons to be Accessible?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

5 Reasons to be Accessible

1. It's in our mission.
2. Disability affects all of us.
3. Makes good business sense.
4. It's the right thing to do.
5. It's the law.

It's in our mission.

Most arts and culture organizations' missions include:

**diversity, inclusivity, belonging,
accessible, everyone, all**

Disability affects all of us

- Anyone may become disabled at any time due to accident, illness, genetics, aging, etc.
- As we age, we're more likely to develop a disability or multiple disabilities.
- One in three families has a family member with a disability.

Makes good business sense.

- Discretionary income for working-age people with disabilities is about \$21 billion (Source: Americans Institute for Research, 2018).

It's the right thing to do.

- Everyone has the right to participate fully in the cultural life of their community.
- As empathetic humans, being inclusive and considering experiences different than our own is essential.

It's the law.

- Section 504 of the Rehab Act, 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 1990
- Revised ADA Regulations, 2010
- Effective Communication Regulations, 2011
- Chicago Human Rights Ordinance
- Cook County Human Rights Act
- Illinois Human Rights Act

“Compliance” vs. full inclusion

- Spirit of the ADA is to go above the bare minimum.
- Compliance is not the ultimate goal – full inclusion is.
- Inclusion remains ongoing. We’re never 100% compliant and then finished in our work.
- Accessibility is an extension of good customer service/hospitality.

How do we get started?



**KEEP
CALM
AND
MAKE IT
ACCESSIBLE**

KeepCalmAndPosters.com

Your organizations can foster access and inclusion by:

- Allocating and leveraging resources
- Establishing and implementing policy
- Giving or taking authority
- Lead by example and action

Good questions to ask

- Can *everyone* truly experience and engage with us?
- Does a person with a disability feel like they are treated the same as someone without a disability?
- Does our staff have the tools needed to be successful?
- Does a person with a disability feel considered, or like an afterthought, in our space?

1. Evaluate the places your guests interact with you.

Venue

- Walk or roll the patron path. Consider physical access to and in.
- Information and content access: Is information provided with only sighted or hearing guests in mind?

1. Evaluate the places your guests interact with you.

Online

- Can someone who is deaf or blind engage with us like everyone else?
- Can visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing engage with us like everyone else?
- Is there access information available online with a contact person identified?

2. Survey your audience and prioritize.

- What does our **existing** audience need most? Let's start providing accommodations for them right away or create a plan to get those established.
- What features would **grow** and **diversify** our audience down the road?

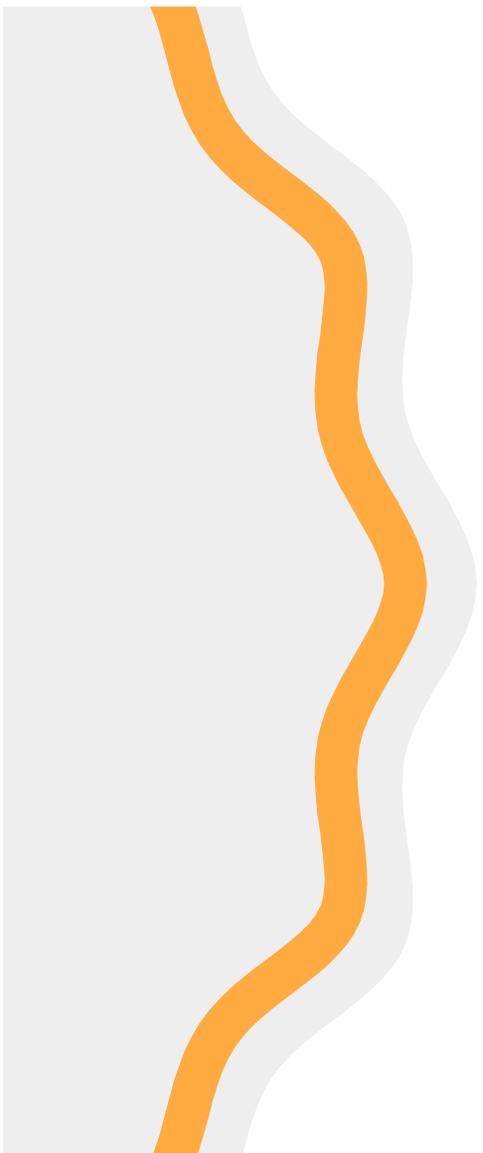
3. Institute best practices.

- Guests should never feel that accessible accommodations are burdensome, confusing, or charitable.
- It is presented as basic and no different from needing a restroom or a chair to sit in.
- There is no “one-size fits all” solution.
- Talk to colleagues in other organizations, and talk to guests. Learn from colleagues in other cities.

What types of services can we offer?

Effective Communication

- The ADA requires cultural organizations make it possible for individuals with speech, hearing and vision disabilities to understand what is said or written and can communicate effectively.
- The goal is to ensure that communication with people with disabilities is as effective as communication with people without disabilities.
- We must provide auxiliary aids or services in the individual's **normal methods of receiving communication** when providing services (sign language, captions, etc).



**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR
HEARING ACCESS**

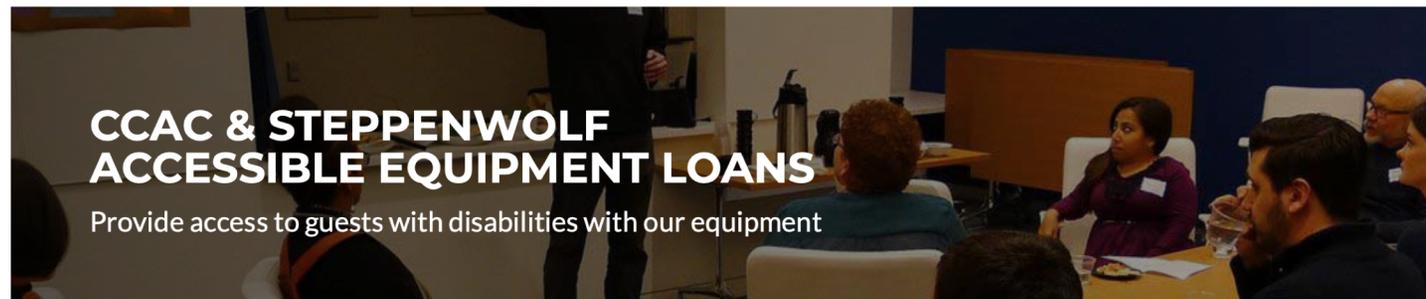
Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)



- ALDs amplify the sound being picked up by a microphone and lessen ambient noise.
- The ADA requires ALDs are available for events when microphones are used.
- One can wear the device with headphones or a neck loop.
- A **neck loop** is compatible with hearing aids and cochlear implants that have T-Coil Switch.
- Cost varies. FM transmitter and 12 devices costs around **\$3,000**.

You can **borrow** an ALD kit from CCAC & Steppenwolf's Accessible Equipment Loan Program for free for short-term use!

Check out Theatre Development Fund (TDF)'s National Open Caption Initiative (grants due May 31).



To support cultural organizations as they grow their audience, CCAC and Steppenwolf Theatre Company are pleased to offer short-term accessible equipment loans to Chicago-area cultural organizations. The CCAC & Steppenwolf Accessible Equipment Loan Program is made possible through funding by the [Michael and Mona Heath Fund](#).

The following equipment is available to borrow at no charge to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in the Chicago area:

Stationary Audio Description Kit

- Includes stationary FM transmitter, headsets and portable induction hearing "neck" loops, and stenographer mask.
- Facilitating delivery of live audio description by a trained Audio Descriptor, this equipment benefits visitors who are blind or have low vision in a stationary performance or lecture setting.

Stationary Assistive Listening System

- Includes stationary FM transmitter, headsets and portable induction hearing "neck" loops.
- When connected to your organization's PA system, transmits mic'd sound directly to headsets (or neck loops) and earphones worn by guests who have

American Sign Language Interpretation (ASL)



- Sign language comes in many languages.
- **Don't assume** a language or interpretation preference.
- Set parameters for guests to be able to **request** what they need.
- Think about the **sight lines** someone needs to see the interpreter comfortably in seats or on a tour.
- Consider about what information your frontline **staff** needs to know when communicating about ASL with guests.

American Sign Language Interpretation (ASL)



How much does this cost?

- A live event interpreter tends to cost between **\$50 and \$150 per hour**.
- Learning a script for a performance costs around **\$450 flat rate**.

Open Captions

- Open Captioning displays dialogue and describes other relevant sounds on a screen above the stage or to the side of the stage.
- Captions often are typed in real-time by a professional captioner in the venue.
- Open Captions provide access for people at any stage of hearing loss and can benefit many others.
- CART (Communication Access Real-Time Translation) or DIY captions for scripted events.
- Cost may be around \$150 per hour for CART.

Open Captions



How is that different from closed captions?

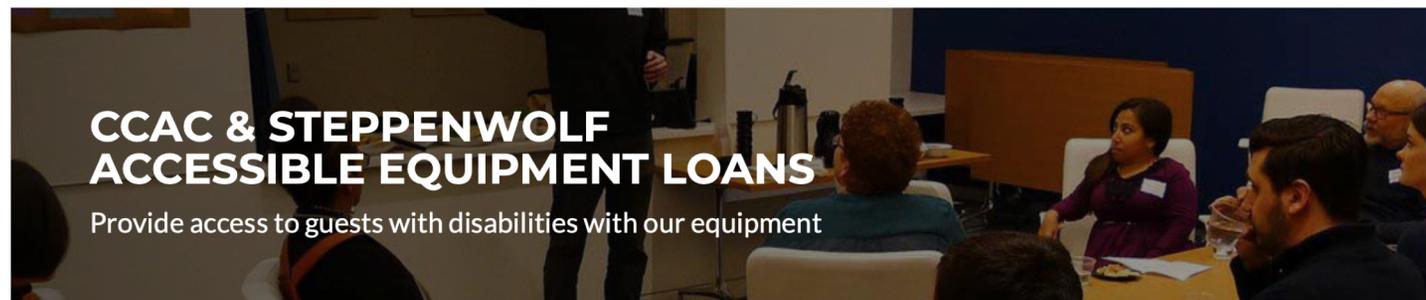


Closed captions are visible to fewer people, usually on a device like a television or YouTube video. They can be turned off or on.

Open captions are visible to everyone in a big room no matter their seating preference. They cannot be turned off.



Borrow a TV screen or a projector & screen for captions from CCAC and Steppenwolf's Equipment Loan Program.



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**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL ACCESS**

- 6.4% of Illinois population have a mobility disability
- People may use wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and powered mobility devices (or no assistive device at all!)

Don't:

- Lean or hang on a person's wheelchair
- Push a person's wheelchair or mobility device unless asked

Do:

- Try to sit or put yourself at their eye level for conversation
- Ask people if they need assistance or options

Mobility Disabilities: Accommodations

- Accessible entrance and route throughout patron experience
- [ADA ticketing regulations for seats](#)
- Proper reach ranges & wheelchair clearance for exhibit
- Seating with and without armrests throughout experience
- Wheelchairs available for visitors
- Accessible restrooms
- Family/all gender restrooms
- Communication of physical access



A decorative orange wavy line runs vertically down the left side of the slide, starting from the top and ending near the bottom. It has a soft, blurred shadow behind it.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR VISUAL ACCESS

Sighted Guide

Staff Training: Teach front line staff the basics of sighted guiding for visitors who are blind or low vision.



Audio Description



- For people who are blind or low vision
- Provides additional narration that describes key visual components and unspoken action of a piece of visual media or live performance.
- This narration is transmitted via ALDs



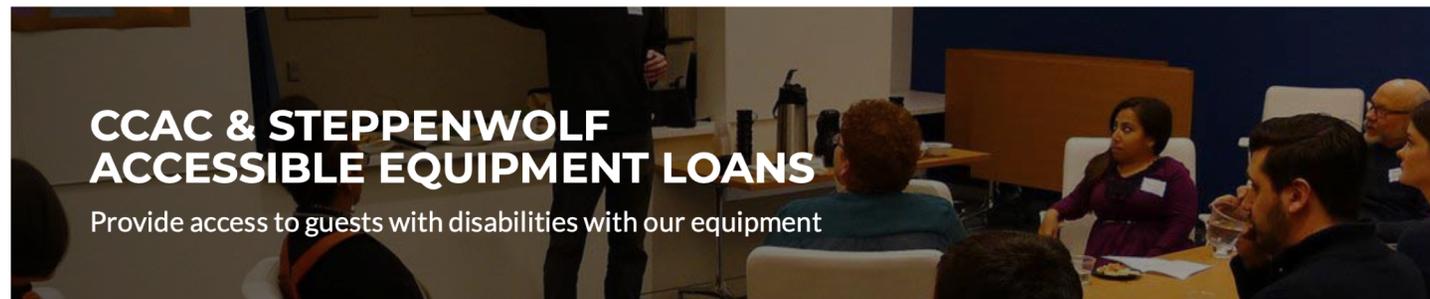
Touch Tours



- Provide access to the stage and set before a performance to firm up the descriptive information.
- Typically led by a staff member who describes the visual artistic choices, guests will explore the space, and may like to handle selected props, costumes, and furniture.



Audio description equipment can be **borrowed** from CCAC and Steppenwolf's Equipment Loan Program.



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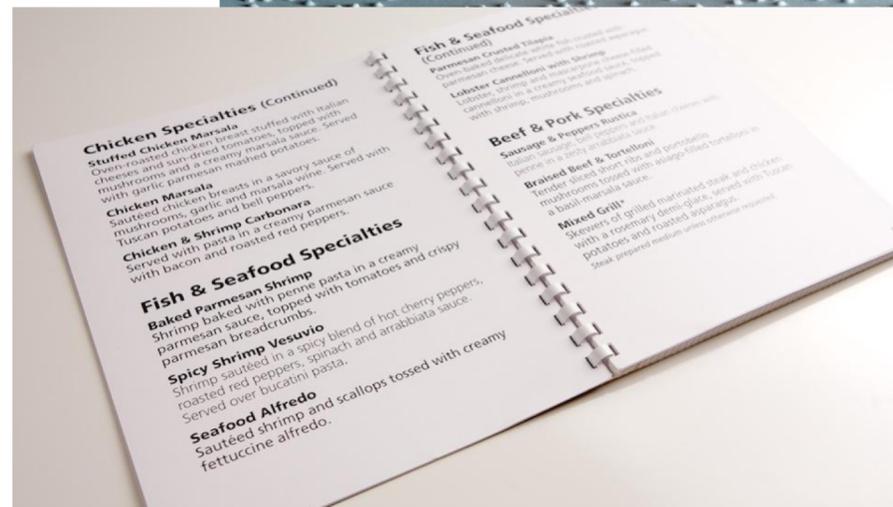
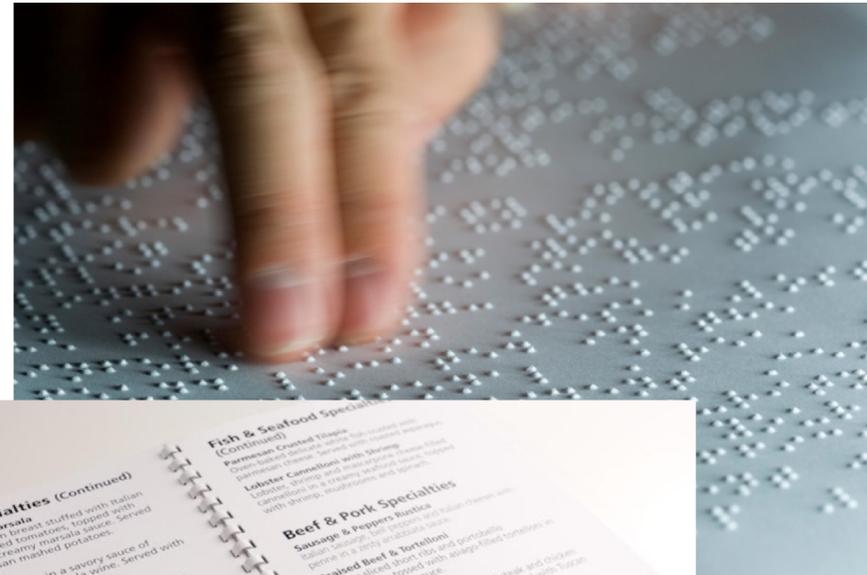
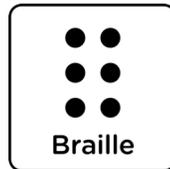


Verbal Description

- Similar to audio description, but in a museum/exhibit setting.
- Describes visual elements of works of art to help blind or low vision viewer visualize the work of art in their mind.
- Typically done with one or a small group of visitors.
- May incorporate multisensory elements.

Multiple Formats

- Important to offer key information and content in multiple formats, including Braille, Large Print and electronically in a readable PDF or Word doc.



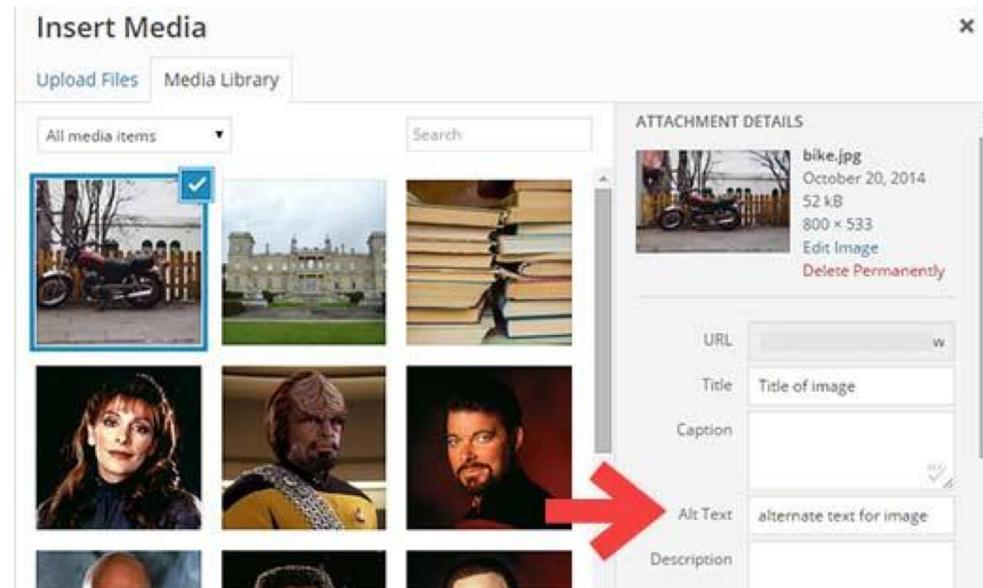
Design for visual access

Do

- Use alt text when uploading images to your website or e-blast

Don't

- Convey textual information within an image only





**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR
GUESTS WITH COGNITIVE
DISABILITIES AND THOSE ON THE
AUTISM SPECTRUM**

Communication with Guests Cognitive Disabilities

- 4% of Illinois population
- Autism spectrum, Down syndrome, Alzheimer's, sensory-processing disorders
- Use straightforward instructions. Avoid idioms.
- Speak directly to the person and be age appropriate.
- Listen attentively. Be patient and wait for the person to finish.
- Don't pretend you understand if you don't; ask for clarification or repetition.

Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Programs



A butterfly might land on me, and that is okay. Butterflies will not hurt me and it might tickle a little.

I can look at the butterflies, but I should not touch them.

All Audiences: Keep in Mind

- Build programs with guests with disabilities: “Nothing About Us Without Us.”
- No one-size fits all solutions.
- Create a way for guests to request accommodations
- If someone requests something you can’t do, have a conversation first. First response should never be “no.”
- Some accommodations are scheduled, others by request
- ADA prohibits passing cost on to visitors.

Service Animals

Welcome [trained service animals](#) and make considerations for visitors who are bringing them.



**How do we let people know we are
accessible?**

ACCESSIBILITY

steppenwolf

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[ENSEMBLE](#)

[MEMBERSHIPS](#)

[WATCH & LISTEN](#)

[EDUCATION](#)

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RESTAURANTS](#)

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POLICIES](#)

[THINGS TO
DO](#)

[HOTELS](#)

THEATER IS FOR EVERYONE

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY DISABILITIES

- Wheelchair accessible seats in our Downstairs, Upstairs and Garage Theatres
- A courtesy wheelchair, available on a first-come/first-serve basis through our Front of House office (312) 932-2445
- Accessible parking spaces in the parking lot next door to the theatre (accessible by a ramp with a non-slip surface)
- Wheelchair accessible restrooms in all of our lobbies
- In our Downstairs Theatre, wheelchair accessible seats and seats without stairs are available in the back rows of both the Main and Balcony levels
- In our Upstairs and Garage Theatres, wheelchair accessible seats and seats without stairs are available in the first row

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING

- Induction loop on both the main and balcony levels of the Downstairs Theatre
- Complimentary assistive hearing devices in our Downstairs and Upstairs Theatres.
- Open-captioned performances of our subscription and Steppenwolf for Young Adults plays
- American Sign Language-interpreted performances of our subscription and Steppenwolf for Young Adults plays
- ASL students from local universities who volunteer as usher for ASL-interpreted performances

Assistive hearing devices for the Downstairs Theatre are available at the book shop and information desk, located across from the box office in the main floor lobby

Induction Loop in the Downstairs Theatre

**CHICAGO
HUMANITIES
FESTIVAL**

-  **Auditorium**
(entrance with stairs) 
-  **Bookseller** 
-  **Auditorium**
(no-stairs entrance) 
-  **Elevator to balcony** 
-  **Restrooms** 

LOOPED AUDITORIUM



Switch hearing aid to t-coil



OC

304 | The Girl with the Purple Cane: Inclusive Style

[BACK](#)

Sun, May 1 | 12:30 – 1:30 PM
Chicago Athletic Association
Madison Ballroom
12 S. Michigan Ave. | Chicago, IL | 60603

- Members: \$12
- Public: \$15
- Students and Teachers: \$10

 [Click here to request an accessible accommodation for mobility, hearing, or vision.](#)

Madison Ballroom

Sun, May 1 12:30pm

[ADD TO BASKET](#)



[SEARCH PROGRAMS](#)

Search for shows



MAY 2017

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

[BROWSE BY : TOPIC VENUE](#)[Politics and Society](#)[Open Captions](#)[Arts and Culture](#)[Technology, Economy, and Science](#)[CHFNow](#)[BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!](#)

RESULTS FOR OPEN CAPTIONS:



This program is SOLD OUT

100 | Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant: Option B
In Conversation with Mellody Hobson

Fri, April 28 5:30pm

This event is sold out. Call 312-494-9509 for information about the wait list.

[More Info](#)[Add to Basket](#)

101 | An Evening with Marie Kondo

Fri, April 28 7:30pm

[More Info](#)[Add to Basket](#)

205 | Kimberly Drew: Curating Art in a Digital World

Sat, April 29 2:00pm

[More Info](#)[Add to Basket](#)[<< SEE ALL EVENTS](#)

Start budgeting and planning

Accessibility is achieved holistically by **ALL** these helpers:

- guest services/visitor services
- education
- development
- marketing
- programming / artistic direction
- finance and operations
- human resources

Do some outreach and partner up

- Sign up for CCAC's email list serv
- Promote your event's on CCAC's Access Calendar
- Connect with groups with disabilities (online and in-person)
- Connect to local agencies that serve these communities
- Partner with organizations that train staff, such as JJ's List
- Partner with artists with disabilities

Incremental Change is Key

- Accessibility and inclusion cannot happen overnight
- Identify low hanging fruit first
- Collaborate with colleagues at different nonprofits and get to know audience members with disabilities
- Being a small nonprofit is not an excuse
- [Staff training](#) is often a key component
- Creativity of arts organizations is an asset!