



# Tip Sheet: Hosting Accessible Virtual Meetings, Events, and Conferences

Virtual meetings and events have become more commonplace than ever. In many ways, virtual events can be more accessible, increasing opportunities for people who may not have been able to attend in person. But, to ensure people with disabilities can fully engage and participate, accessibility must be considered at all stages, from planning to follow-up.

## Planning the Event

**Tip: Hiring an accessibility consultant may be a good investment before hosting a large virtual event.**

- ✓ Factor both accessibility and accommodations into your event budget from the start.
- ✓ Designate an accessibility point person whom attendees can contact to request accommodations and ask any questions they may have prior to the event.
- ✓ When choosing a virtual platform, ensure that accessibility features are built in. For example, the platform should be able to accommodate screen-reading technology, captioning, and a sign language interpreter.
  - Offer instructions and training ahead of time to familiarize attendees with the platform’s features.
- ✓ Not everyone has access to a computer or reliable internet service, so offer an option to dial in via phone.
- ✓ Registration materials should include specific information about accessibility features that will be available, how attendees can request additional accommodations, and how they can access technology support, if needed.
- ✓ When developing event materials:
  - Avoid using media that include bright, flashing lights.
  - Use easy-to-read fonts and contrasting colors.
  - Add alternative text descriptions to images.
- ✓ Pace your event to allow people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities time to process and engage.
- ✓ Offer attendees an opportunity to log onto the platform 30 minutes ahead of time to allow for troubleshooting and technology support.
- ✓ Prior to the event, host a live run-through for presenters, captioners, and interpreters to identify technical issues and help everyone understand the flow of the event.

### During the Event

**Tip: Ensure that the accessibility point person's contact information is readily available to event participants at all times.**

- ✓ Just before the event begins, test the lighting and audio for both presenters and attendees.
- ✓ Include an introductory slide with accessibility information, such as how to access captions and engage with presenters (e.g., through chat, Q&A, email, private message).
- ✓ “Pin” or “spotlight” video streams from sign language interpreters to ensure that attendees can clearly see them at all times. Alternatively, if the platform enables attendees to choose which video streams they would like to expand, provide detailed instructions on how to do that.
- ✓ If the event platform does not automatically make live captioning visible, provide detailed instructions on how to access it (e.g., sharing a link to the caption stream and turning on the captioning feature).
- ✓ To prevent background noise, ask attendees to mute themselves when not speaking, or have the host mute them. Encourage presenters to turn on their cameras when speaking to support participants who benefit from facial expressions and/or lip reading.
- ✓ Presenters and attendees on video should describe themselves prior to their first time speaking and repeat their names each time they speak.

### After the Event

- ✓ Ensure any post-event materials are accessible (e.g., include captions and a transcript and use accessible file formats for digital materials).
- ✓ Offer an accessible method for attendees to provide comments on event accessibility and feedback to consider for future events.
  - Provide an email address and phone number attendees can use to provide feedback if they are not able to complete the survey.

To learn more about how to conduct accessible meetings, events, and conferences, whether virtual or in-person, visit the *Accessible Meetings, Events, and Conferences Guide* available at [ADAatYourService.org](https://www.ada.gov/ADAatYourService.org).

### Questions?

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