



Accessibility Toolkit for Venues & Destinations

*A Guide for Event
Service Professionals*

Our Mission

ESPA is dedicated to elevating the event and convention service profession and to preparing members, through education and networking, for their pivotal role in innovative and successful event execution.

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ESPA has created the Accessibility Toolkit as a downloadable resource guide that hotels, convention centers, CVBs, destinations and venues can use as a tool to assist in ensuring events are inclusive and accessible to all guests so that everyone has a sense of belonging.

This is a living document and will evolve; it is not assumed to be all inclusive. For example, the need for inclusive accommodations for guests who are neurodivergent has become more prevalent in recent years. Neurodiversity is the diversity or variation of cognitive functioning in people—for example people who are autistic, dyslexic, and dyspraxic.

ESPA welcomes input on other areas to be incorporated into the document. Parties should be aware of local and state laws which may impact accessibility requirements or restrictions.

What to Expect in this Document

The checklists are designed sequentially, from a guest's arrival at a destination airport, to ground transportation, lodging, meeting venues and offsite venues. There is also a resource list that can be customized to include local businesses. The toolkit was created with the input of ESPA members who work in convention and visitors bureaus, hotels and convention centers, along with contributions from meeting planners. This document is consistently being revised to include the ever-evolving needs of event professionals to effectively host and service events that also include non-obvious impairments; dietary, visual, sensory, neurodivergent and mobility limitations as a focus in the event service profession.

The Accessibility Toolkit editable version is readily available to all ESPA members on the members-only website. Non-members can email info@espaonline.org to receive a copy. Anyone who elects to use the information to create and build their own customized resource is requested to credit Event Service Professionals Association on their material.



Travel





Travel



Airport

- Does your airport have a website with specific details of Accessibility/ADA options?
- Does your airport have visual paging with display monitors?
- How do people using wheelchairs get from the airport to the hotel?
- Does your airport provide continuous skycap wheelchair service from the curbside to the airline counter and to the gate?
- Does your airport have courtesy trams inside the airport to move people between gates and concourses?
- Are airport shuttles equipped with wheelchair lifts?
- Is there an outdoor relief area for service dogs in the airport?
- Is the area where transportation (public or private) can be accessed approachable without leaving the main terminal? If not, what options does someone in a wheelchair have to get to the transportation facility outside the terminal?



Transportation

- Do rental car companies offer vans or other vehicles with a chairlift or stowage?
- Are there "black car" or limo companies that can accommodate mobility devices?
- Are there car services such as Uber or Lyft that can accommodate wheelchair stowage?
- Does your city have taxis or vans that can carry wheelchairs or scooters?
- How do I rent a van that has a wheelchair lift?
- Does the city bus service accommodate wheelchairs?
- Does the city bus service accommodate electric scooters?
- Does the city bus service have announcements at each stop? Digital display?
- How many wheelchairs can be accommodated by your charter shuttle coaches?
- Are service dogs allowed on city buses?
- Are service dogs allowed on charter coach shuttles?



Lodging





Lodging



Accessibility

- Does your hotel website offer specific details about Accessibility/ADA options?
- When was your hotel last updated to meet amended ADA standards?
- Does the front desk have a check-in area low enough for someone in a wheelchair to sign documents?
- How are your staff trained to assist people with hearing, sight or mobility challenges (TTY/Braille)?
- How many handicap-accessible guest rooms are there on property?
- In what way are the guest rooms accessible?
- How many guest rooms have roll-in showers?
- How many of the roll-in showers have built-in benches?
- How many hotel guest rooms have grab-bar accessibility in the bathrooms?
- Are the bathroom shower controls accessible from the shower bench?
- Are all meeting rooms accessible to someone using a mobility device or crutches?
- How many public restroom stalls have grab-bar accessibility?
- Does your hotel offer ramps to allow someone access to the podium/stage? Do the ramps also include railing?
- Does your facility have an evacuation chair that provides an alternative solution to assist a person using a wheelchair down the stairs if the elevator is not functioning or a fire is in progress?



Dietary Needs

- For event professionals servicing group events, how do your food service providers address individual allergies and dietary restrictions? What do you need from the meeting planner?
- What is your hotel policy for providing accessible menus related to religious/cultural requests and observances?
- How are food and beverage options and ingredients being communicated to the attendees during event meal functions?
- Does your hotel have a separate banquet kitchen to prepare menu options for attendees with airborne allergies, religious or cultural requirements?
- Are your banquet servers trained to address food allergy issues including cross-contamination at buffet tables?



Dining

- Are your restaurants and outlets accessible to someone using a wheelchair or scooter?
- Is the buffet or serving line height set low enough for someone in a wheelchair to reach all items?
- Does your restaurant offer Braille menus or staff to read the menu to visually impaired guests?
- Is there a charge for gluten-free, lactose-free, kosher, etc. meal options?



Lodging

Gender Identity

- Are you using gender neutral pronouns in addressing a person in the group or asking for preferred pronouns ahead of time?
- Does your hotel offer gender-neutral restrooms? If so, how is the availability of these restrooms communicated to attendees?

Medical

- Does your property have AEDs available onsite? Is your staff trained to use them?
- What is the hotel process should guests need AEDs?
- Does your hotel have an emergency “Epi-Pen” for anaphylaxis? When is the expiration date on it?
- How close is the nearest hospital, walk-in clinic, and/or Urgent Care?

Meeting Space

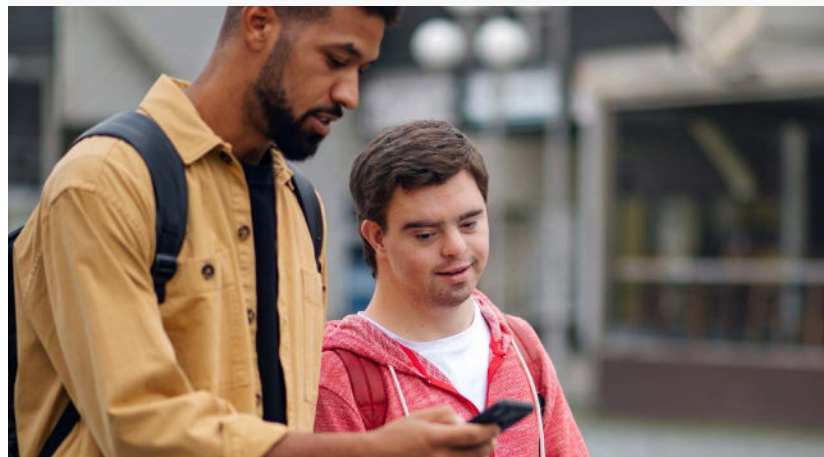
- What floor is the hotel meeting space located on and are there low thresholds for mobility devices?
- Can someone using a mobility device access all meeting rooms in the venue via ramp or lift?
- Are there any meeting rooms that are only accessible by stairs?
- Does your hotel offer a lactation suite? If so, does the space have an electronic lock and/or peephole? Are there features to ensure privacy in the space?
- In your hotel, how many public restroom stalls have grab-bars for accessibility?

Neuro-Divergent

- Does your property use scented cleaning products?
- Does your property offer any guest rooms that have been cleaned with unscented products?
- Are there unscented guest room amenities (soap, shampoo, etc.) if requested?
- Does your hotel offer a Low Sensory Room? If so, does the room have an electronic lock and/or peephole? Are there features to ensure privacy in the space?
- Does your convention center offer event space with natural lighting?

Safety

- What is the hotel policy in an emergency for guests with disabilities? How will staff assist guests with disabilities to exit the hotel safely without elevator use?
- How do your hotel staff communicate emergency escape routes to hearing/visually impaired guests from guest rooms and from the event space?
- Are handrails installed in emergency exits via stairwells?





Lodging



Service Animals

- Is there an outdoor relief area for service dogs? Are litterbags provided?
- Does the hotel allow comfort animals (not required by law) and does staff know the difference between comfort and service animals?



Transportation

- If your hotel offers shuttle service, is your bus equipped for people who may use a wheelchair or motorized scooter?
- If your hotel offers shuttle service, how would someone who is hearing impaired contact you for airport pick up?



Visual/Hearing/Language

- Are any of your staff trained in American Sign Language?
- Does your property own deaf or blind communications devices?
- Does the front desk check out assistive devices for the hearing or vision impaired, e.g., flashing alarms?
- Does the hotel have any guest rooms for hearing or vision impaired guests?
- How many guest rooms offer both mobility features and communication features for those with both mobility and hearing/visual impairment?
- Are there tactile (Braille) guest room number signs and elevator signs?
- Have all Braille signs been reviewed and confirmed as accurate by someone who reads Braille?
- Does your hotel employ multilingual interpreters or staff?



Convention Center Meeting Venue Sports Facility





Convention Center/ Meeting Venue/Sports Facility

Accessibility

- Does your venue website have specific details of Accessibility/ADA options?
- When was the venue last updated to meet amended ADA standards?
- Does your venue offer wheelchairs or motorized scooters and crutches on site in case of emergencies?
- How many restrooms have stalls which are wheelchair accessible?
- Does your facility have an evacuation chair that provides an alternative solution to assist a person using a wheelchair down the stairs if the elevator is not functioning or a fire is in progress?
- How do you train venue staff to assist people with hearing, sight and mobility disabilities?
- Sport facilities – Can your facility accommodate adaptive sports?
- Sport facilities – Do your courts have accessible flooring? i.e., should be stable, firm and slip resistant – such as rubber flooring for wheelchair users
- Sport facilities – Is there an accessible route to all public and common use areas including the playing field, locker rooms, dugouts, stages, swimming pools, and warm-up areas?

Dietary Needs

- How do your food service providers address individual allergies and dietary restrictions? What do you need from the meeting planner?
- What is your venue policy for providing accessible menus related to religious/cultural requests and observances?
- How are food and beverage options and ingredients being communicated to the attendees during event meal functions?
- Is there a charge for gluten-free, lactose-free, kosher, etc... meal options?
- Does your venue have a separate banquet kitchen to prepare menu options for attendees with airborne allergies, religious or cultural requirements?
- Are your banquet servers trained to address food allergy issues including cross-contamination at buffet tables?





Convention Center/ Meeting Venue/Sports Facility

Dining

- Is the event buffet height set low enough for someone in a wheelchair to reach all items?
- Is your staff trained to help someone who has visual impairments navigate the buffet line, a plated dinner, etc.?

Gender Identity

- Are you using gender neutral pronouns in addressing a person in the group or asking for preferred pronouns ahead of time?
- Does your venue offer gender-neutral restrooms? If so, how is the availability of these restrooms communicated to attendees?

Medical

- Is there a First Aid station in the venue? If so, is it well marked and easily accessible?
- How close is the nearest hospital, clinic or Urgent Care?
- Are there AEDs installed in your building? Is all your staff trained to use them?
- Does the venue have an emergency "Epi-Pen" for anaphylaxis? When is the expiration date on it?
- Sports Facilities - Do you have on-site certified medical personnel i.e., medics, physicians? Is the event organizer or the event venue handling the coordination of these personnel?

Meeting Space

- Do you have ramps to allow access to the stage/speaker's platform?
- Is there an extra cost to build a ramp to the stage?
- Do you have motorized lifts to allow access to the stage?
- Can someone using a mobility device access all meeting rooms in the convention center, including via ramp or lift?
- Are any meeting rooms in the convention center accessible only by stairs?
- Does your venue offer a lactation suite? If so, does the space have an electronic lock and/or peephole? Are there features to ensure privacy in the space?
- In your venue, how many public restroom stalls have grab-bars for accessibility?

Neuro-Divergent

- Does your facility use scented or unscented cleaning products?
- Does your venue offer a Low Sensory Room? If so, does the room have an electronic lock and/or peephole? Are there features to ensure privacy in the space?
- Does your venue offer event space with natural lighting?



Convention Center/ Meeting Venue/Sports Facility

Safety

- In an emergency, how will your staff evacuate people with disabilities without using elevators?
- Are handrails installed in emergency exits via stairwells?
- How do venue staff communicate emergency escape routes to hearing/visually impaired attendees from event space?
- Does your venue have an internal security team? What is their emergency procedure and was this communicated to the planner?

Service Animals

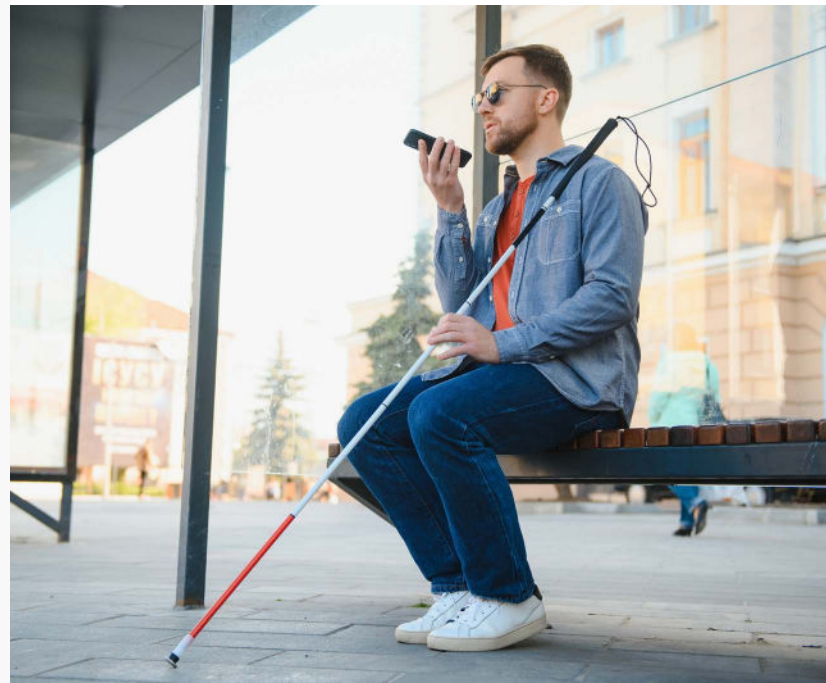
- Is there an outdoor relief area for service dogs? Are litter bags provided?
- Does your venue allow comfort animals (not required by law) and does staff know the difference between comfort and service animals?

Transportation

- Does your venue have an easily accessible drop-off location for people who use wheelchairs or electric scooters?
- Is there a location for buses to park while attendees are in session?

Visual/Hearing/Language

- Does your center have visual paging with display monitors?
- Does your convention center offer assistive listening devices for a person who is hearing impaired?
- Are there tactile (Braille) signs on meeting rooms, public access areas, elevators, etc.?
- Have all Braille signs been reviewed and confirmed as accurate by someone who reads Braille?
- How many of your staff know American Sign Language (ASL)?
- Do your escalators offer sound, for people who are blind, to notify them when to step off?
- Does your property employ multilingual interpreters or staff?



Tours, Unique Venues & Attractions





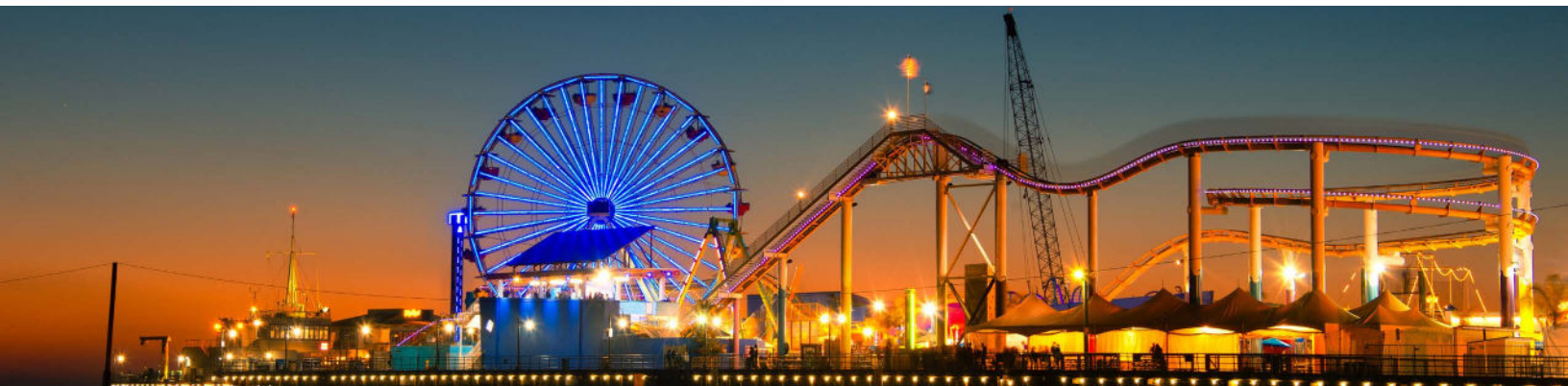
Tours, Unique Venues & Attractions

Accessibility

- Does your tour company and/or off-site venue have a website with a written policy of Accessibility/ADA options?
- Does your venue website have specific details of Accessibility/ADA options?
- Restaurants - Are buffets, cashier stands, other freestanding stations reachable by someone using a mobility device?
- Tours - Are staff or docents available to assist people with disabilities?
- Tours - Do all tour venues have ramps or handicapped access?
- Does your venue offer designated seating for people using scooters, wheelchairs or crutches, along with seating for accompanying guests?
- Does your facility have an evacuation chair that provides an alternative solution to assist a person using a wheelchair down the stairs if the elevator is not functioning or a fire is in progress?
- How do you train venue staff to assist people with hearing, sight and mobility disabilities?

Dietary Needs

- How do you accommodate dietary restrictions?
- For event professionals servicing group events, how do your food service providers address individual allergies and dietary restrictions? What do you need from the meeting planner?
- What is the venue or company policy for providing accessible menus related to religious/cultural requests and observances?
- How are food and beverage options and ingredients being communicated to the attendees during event or tour meal functions?
- Are your banquet servers trained to address food allergy issues including cross-contamination at buffet tables?





Tours, Unique Venues & Attractions

Dining

- Restaurants - Are menus available in Braille or large print?
- Are your restaurants and outlets accessible to someone using a wheelchair or scooter?
- Is the event buffet height set low enough for someone in a wheelchair to reach all items?
- Is your staff trained to help someone who has visual impairments navigate the buffet line, a plated dinner, etc.?

Gender Identity

- Tours - Are you using gender neutral pronouns in addressing a person in the group or asking for preferred pronouns ahead of time?
- Does your venue offer gender-neutral restrooms? If so, how is the availability of these restrooms communicated to attendees?

Medical

- Does your property have AEDs available onsite? Is your staff trained to use them?
- What is the hotel process should guests need AEDs?
- Is there a first aid kit that is easily accessible?
- How close is the nearest hospital, clinic or Urgent Care?
- Do you have an emergency "Epi-Pen" for anaphylaxis? When is the expiration date on it?

Meeting Space

- Do you have ramps to allow access to the stage/speaker's platform?
- Is there an extra cost to build a ramp to the stage?
- Do you have motorized lifts to allow access to the stage in larger spaces?
- Can someone using a mobility device access all meeting rooms in the venue via ramp or lift?
- Are any meeting rooms in the venue accessible only by stairs?
- Does your venue offer a lactation suite? If so, does the space have an electronic lock and/or peephole? Are there features to ensure privacy in the space?
- Sports Facilities- Are there paved or solid walkways for spectators to maneuver around the field or fields?
- Sports Facilities- Does your facility have accessible entrances and exits?
- Sports Facilities- What type of seating areas can accommodate a mobility device?

Neuro-Divergent

- Does your property use scented or unscented cleaning products?
- Does your venue offer a Low Sensory Room? If so, does the room have an electronic lock and/or peephole? Are there features to ensure privacy in the space?



Tours, Unique Venues & Attractions

Safety

- In an emergency, what is your venue policy to evacuate people with disabilities?
- Are your emergency exits well-lit and easy to identify?
- How do venue staff communicate emergency escape routes to hearing/visually impaired attendees from event space?

Service Animals

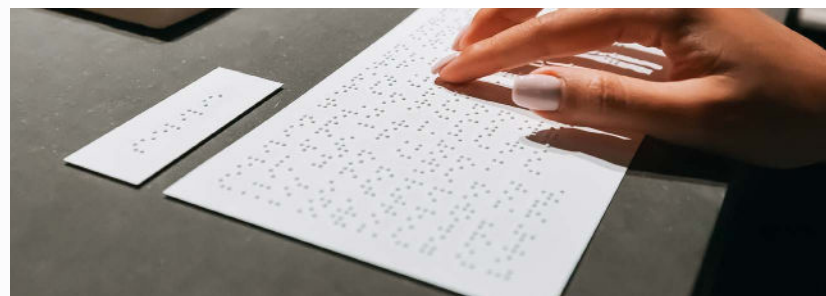
- Tours – Can you confirm compliance of service animals being allowed in the venue being visited by guests?
- Is there an outdoor relief area for service dogs? Are litter bags provided?
- Does the venue allow comfort animals (not required by law) and does staff know the difference between comfort and service animals?

Transportation

- Does your venue have an easily accessible drop-off location for people who use wheelchairs or electric scooters?
- Tours - If using a Tour Bus Company are vehicles handicapped accessible?
- Is there a location for buses to park while attendees are in session?

Visual/Hearing/Language

- Restaurants** - Do your servers offer to read the menu to people who are visually impaired?
- Tours** - Is there a staff member trained in American Sign Language?
- Museums** – Are there Braille or Large Print exhibit notes?
- Museums** - Are there headphones with commentary?
- Museums** - Do you offer a standard tour with a guide using ASL?
- Museums** - Are all areas of the exhibit accessible to people using mobility devices?
- Museums** – Are your films captioned for people with hearing impairment?
- Does your venue have visual paging with display monitors?
- Restaurants** - Do you have staff members who know ASL?
- Tours** - Do crosswalks at intersections have audible signals and/or vibrations?
- Have all Braille signs been reviewed and confirmed as accurate by someone who reads Braille?
- Does your company or property employ multilingual interpreters or staff?



Helpful Resources





Local Resources



This section includes a list of local resources you should be providing to event organizers:

- Large print format materials—recommend printers
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 -
- Closest drugstore to purchase hearing aid batteries
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- Veterinary contact information for service animals
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- Closest hospital, clinic or Urgent Care to the meeting site
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- Contact for city or state agency for health, human services, human rights, disability ombudsman, or other support network
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 -
- Local providers for wheelchairs, scooters, crutches and walker rentals
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 -
- Local transportation companies
 -
 -
- Local public transportation accessible options
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 -
- Local visual impaired assistance
 -
 -
- Local ASL and interpreter services
 -
 -
- Local pet therapy options
 -
 -



Additional Information Resources

Hearing assistive devices-rental companies' complete contact information:

<https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/hearing-assistive-technology/>

Braille translation service:

<https://www.brailletranslator.org/>

Sign language interpreters-how to contact and hire locally:

<https://aslservices.com/>

Meeting on a Level Playing Field:

<http://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm>

Tips about service/comfort animals:

<http://www.ada.gov/qasrvc.htm>

Association on Higher Education and Disability:

<https://www.ahead.org/>

Etiquette

<http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf> <https://longmoreinstitute.wordpress.com/2015/12/14/ten-access-blunders-that-the-nondisabled-make/>

Blog on Food Allergies, Chemical Sensitivities, Safe Dietary Practices

<http://thrivemeetings.com/category/registration/>

Air Travelers with disabilities:

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/06/05/air-travelers-with-disabilities-here-are-your-rights/>

Tips for planning accessible meetings:

<https://wheelchairtravel.org/hotels/ada-design-requirements/>

<https://www.theneuproject.com/>

<https://www.meetingsnet.com/corporate-meetings-events/who-and-why-behind-neu-project>

Society for Neurodiversity (S4Nd):

<https://www.s4nd.org/>

