

WORKSHOP



PLANNING WITH PURPOSE: CREATING ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE EVENTS

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Planning with Purpose: Creating Accessible and Inclusive Events

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Presented by Elizabeth Ralston, MPH

About Elizabeth

- ★ I am a consultant who guides organizations in the strategic development of an accessibility road map, with an emphasis on equity and inclusion
- ★ I help organizations expand their capacity to engage their audiences through powerful storytelling, program delivery, and strategic outreach, all with an eye on accessibility.
- ★ Public Health and Nonprofit background
- ★ Individual with lived experience of disability: deafness
- ★ **Fun Fact:** Served in Peace Corps Malawi



Creating an Open Learning Environment

- Approach with curiosity
- Speak your truth
- Recognize privilege
- Listen and pause for understanding
- Assume best intent
- Confidentiality
- Stay engaged
- Take care of access needs

Today's learning objectives

By the end of our session, you will:



Warm up

Show of hands:

Small (Fewer than 100)

Medium (100-500)

Large (500-1000)

Really big (Over 1000+)

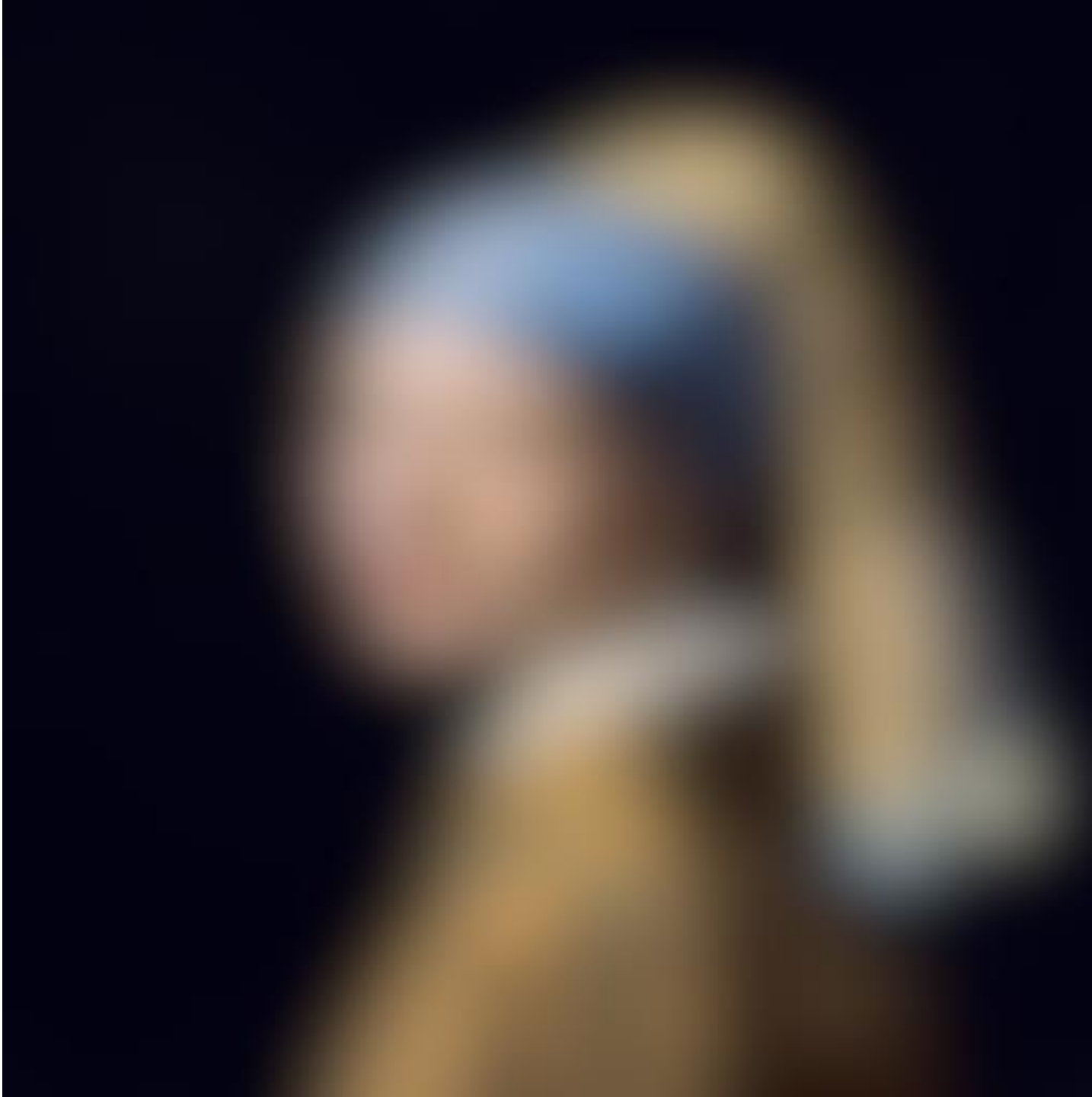
Warm up

What are your organization's strengths when incorporating accessibility into events?

Outdoor event accessibility goals

- Make your event a **welcoming and inclusive** experience:
Going beyond ADA compliance
- Provide excellent **customer service** to EVERYONE!
- Treat disabled patrons with the **same courtesy** as anyone else
- Create **multiple ways** of accessing experiences and information

Defining accessibility





How did you feel as I was showing you this piece of art?

ac·ces·si·bil·i·ty
/əˌkʌsəsəˈbɪlədē/

Noun

the quality of being able to be reached or entered.

the quality of being easy to obtain or use.

the quality of being easily understood or appreciated.



If something is inaccessible-- there are barriers to information, knowledge, use, and entry.

Access is CUT OFF.

Barriers and Opportunities

Your journey to an Outdoor Event

Scenario: You are a person with a disability.

What barriers would you encounter?



Barriers to Participation

Location

Transportation

Physical

Socioeconomic

Communication

Attitudinal

The goal: identify and remove barriers so community members can access our programs.

Planning for accessibility

**Organization
level**

**Preparation for an
Accessible Event**

Organizational level



Creating an Accessible Event



Ways to prepare

1. Understand your audience
2. Planning questions
3. Determine accessibility goals
4. Determine your budget
5. Do a site visit
6. Convene disability advisory group
7. Communications are accessible
8. Who are your partners and who will you outreach to?
9. Registration process is easy and people can ask for accommodations
8. Train your team
9. Designate roles
10. Evaluate

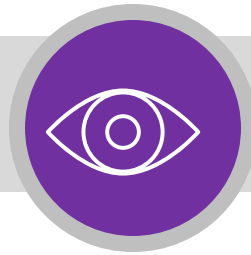
Understanding your audience



Understanding your audience



Hearing



Vision



Neurodiverse



Mobility

It is not one size fits all!

Types of disabilities

Physical

Hearing

Vision

Neurodiverse

ADHD

Autism

Dyslexia

Down
Syndrome

Non-apparent

Anxiety

Chronic pain

PTSD

Traumatic
brain injury

Disability intersects with socio-economic status, geography, gender, race, ethnicity, and age.

Accessibility should be built into the planning process from the very beginning!

It is a practice and a standard to integrate into every part of your planning process.



**EVERYONE
BENEFITS!**

It's a Journey, not a Destination!



Questions to Ask During the Planning Process

Are we reaching the communities we want to serve?

Are people with disabilities and intersectional identities included in the planning and design of the event?

What is the terrain like? How will the event impact existing structures (e.g. curb cuts)

Are marketing and communication practices accessible?
Are the materials using inclusive language?

Questions (con't)

Have we examined our own biases and assumptions towards people with disabilities?

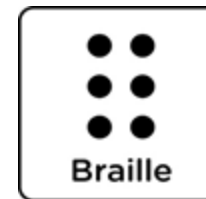
Are people with disabilities given enough time to ask for accommodations?

What training do we need for staff and volunteers?

Are access providers booked well in advance?

What is the accessibility budget?

Types of Accessibility Offerings

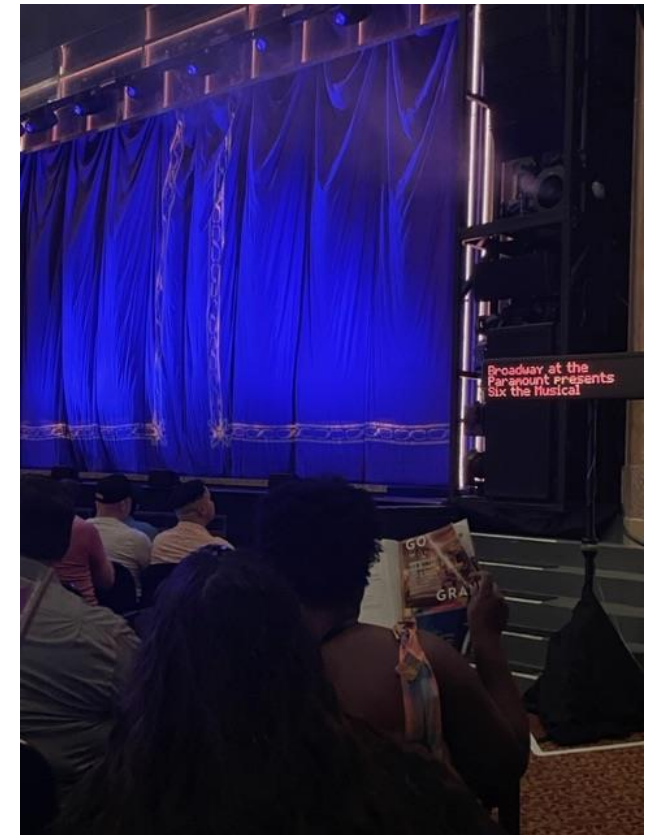


LOOPED AUDITORIUM



Switch hearing aid to t-coil

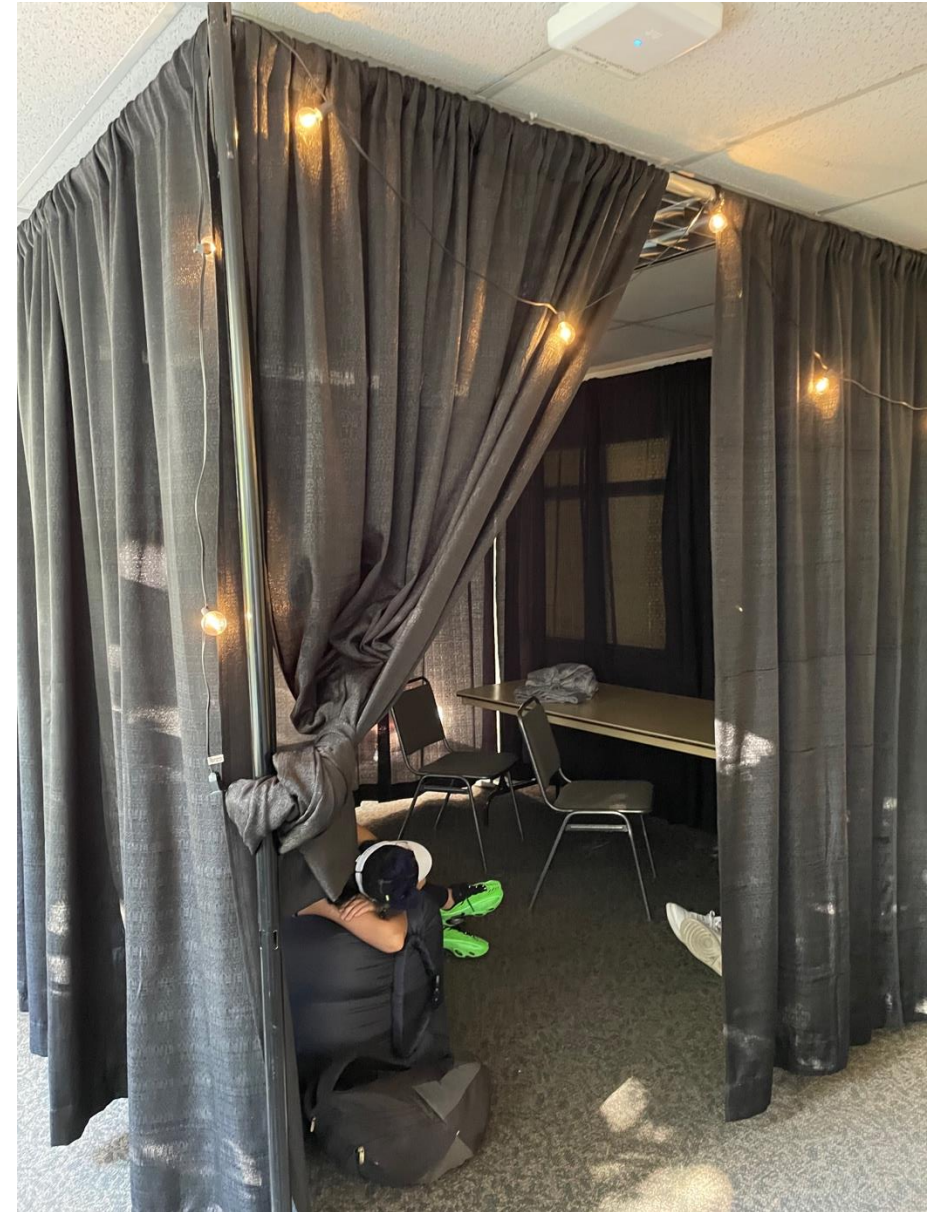
Captioning



Interpreters



Quiet space



Accessibility booths



Map with access symbols



Access Volunteers



Viewing platforms and mobi mats for uneven terrain




Photo by Syren Nagakyrie, Disabled Hikers


Signage





BUMBERSHOOT FESTIVAL SCHEDULE					
SATURDAY SEPT 2ND					
STAGES:	FOUNTAIN	FISHER	MURAL	KEXP	VERA
1:00		PRESSHA 1-1:30 PM	LONG DARK MOON 1-1:30 PM		
2:00	MORGAN AND THE ORGAN DONORS 1:25-1:55 PM	THE DIP 1:55-2:35 PM	CHONG THE NOMAD 1:40-2:20 PM		SCARVES 1:40-2:20 PM
3:00	WARPAINT 2:35-3:15 PM	JACOB BANKS 3:05-4:05 PM	SLIFT 2:35-3:05 PM		WHISPS 3:40-4:20 PM
4:00	MAJOR LEAGUE DJZ 3:55-4:45 PM	ANABEL ENGLUND 4:45-5:35 PM	SWEET WATER 3:30-4 PM	BREAKS & SWILLS 3:30-4 PM	TV STAR 3:40-4:20 PM
5:00			THUNDERPUSSY 4:30-5 PM	CHIMBINGUA RENAISSANCE 4:30-5 PM	RADIOACTIVITY 4:30-5:20 PM
6:00	RIDE 5:35-6:35 PM	DURAND JONES 6:35-7:25 PM	PUDDLES 5:15-6 PM	DAVE B 5:30-6:15 PM	GIRL TROUBLE 4:40-5:20 PM
7:00			MAYA JANE COLES 6:15-7 PM	REIGNWOLF 6:45-7:30 PM	SCREAMING FEMMES 5:50-6:30 PM
8:00	AFT 7:30-8:30 PM	BRITTANY HOWARD 8:35-9:35 PM	MATT AND KEM 7:15-8:35 PM	DESTROY BOYS 8-9 PM	HUNK & HIS PUNK 8:30-9:30 PM
9:00			SUNNY DAY 8:45-9:45 PM		


SYMBOLS


Medical


Accessible Restrooms


Quiet Space


Accessibility Booth


Closed Caption


ASL


Accessible Parking Entrance


Bike Parking


Bar Service

Food Service

Beer Garden

Information Booth

Water Station

Producer's Circle

AREAS

Main Stage

Sighted guides and audio description

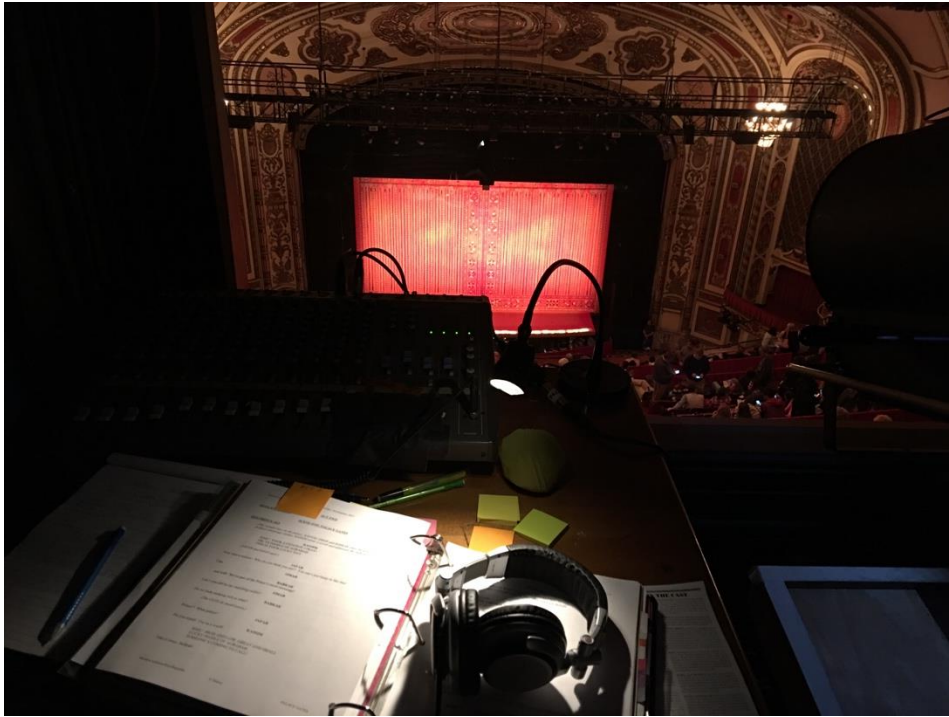


Photo provided by Bridget Melton, audio describer



Accessible dining options



Long lines at food truck



No seating at food truck



Food vendor with accessible purchase point

Additional accessibility options

- ✓ Mobility equipment loans (wheelchairs, scooters)
- ✓ Alternative format materials (Braille, large print, tactile maps)
- ✓ Allergen information from food vendors
- ✓ Service animal support (water station, etc.)
- ✓ Charging stations for wheelchairs (consider placement- near stage is ideal as opposed to far away)
- ✓ Performer accessibility support
- ✓ Inclusive evacuation and emergency plans

What are your accessibility goals?

Consult your budget

Bumbershoot example:

Half the stages
have captions/
interpreters

Improve access to
people with
mobility
challenges

Increase offerings
for people who
are neurodiverse
(e.g. quiet space)

Better marketing
regarding
accessibility

Worksheet: Individual Reflection D
Share in pairs

Site visit

- Consider the footprint of your event: terrain, intersections with the environment, scope
- Structures: what are you currently working with or need to build? Are they free of obstacles and cane detectable?
- Getting there and around: parking, pathways of travel, drop off/pick up areas
- Seating, viewing, rest areas and shelter from elements
- Accessible restrooms, also for family and companion
- Dining/Concessions: seating and purchase areas

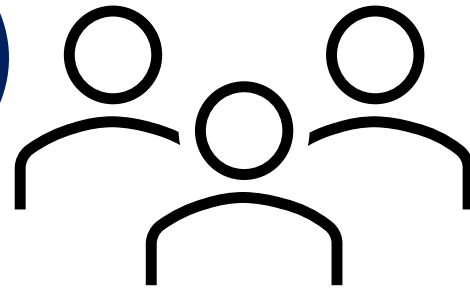
Convene a disability advisory group

Can get the
word out

Pay them a
stipend

Give valuable
feedback
during and
after

User experts



Communications

The ultimate goal: Eliminate the need for the attendee to figure out if the event is accessible: clearly communicate the accessibility offerings that have been put into place

Be sure your communication/marketing materials a) consistently talk about accessibility offerings and b) can be accessed by **ANYONE**.

Communications (con't)

Promotional material includes information on accessibility offerings consistently

Accessibility information is publicized well in advance

M
o
r
e



The event website uses a short URL. Dedicated accessibility page and way to request accommodation

All social media is accessible (alt-text for images, captioning for videos)

Communications (con't)

**Accessibility
Information is
publicized in
advance**

- ✓ **Outline offerings and how to get information**
- ✓ **Use disability access icons (wheelchair symbol, ASL and CC)**
- ✓ **“Know before you go”: email, newsletter, website**













Know Before You Go: What is in it?

☐ Information about what to expect

- Date/time of event
- Agenda
- Parking, Drop off
- How to get there
- Terrain
- Accessibility offerings (include Accessibility booth)
- Any content/sensory warnings (strobe lighting, sudden loud noises)
- Contact information for point person

Website example: Smithsonian Festival

*** Events marked with asterisks have selected accessibility services by request only. Please review the accessibility offerings in the event listing and be sure to indicate your request when you register.*

Time	Session	Type	Registration	Accessibility
Friday, June 25				
6–7 p.m.	Encuentro en el Smithsonian: Telmary Díaz	Story Circle	Streaming online	 
Saturday, June 26				
10–11:30 a.m.	Quechua Pom-Poms + Tassels	Community Workshop	SOLD OUT	  **
12–1 p.m.	Placemaking, Collective Care, and Culture: A Conversation with Global Practitioners	Story Circle	Streaming online	 
1–4 p.m.	Backstrap Weaving with Nilda Callañaupa, Part 1	Master Workshop	SOLD OUT	  **
2–3 p.m.	Languages of Home and Diaspora: Nourishing Palestine in Food and Verse	Story Circle	Streaming online	 
4–5 p.m.	Stories in Stone: Master Artisans on Tools, Technique, and Meaning	Story Circle	Streaming online	 

<https://festival.si.edu/accessibility>

ASL Welcome Video: Smithsonian Festival



**Don't be afraid to
overcommunicate!**

Group Discussion

How are your communications accessible? What are the gaps?

Outreach



Attending the event

If a ticket or sign up is needed, is the **REGISTRATION PROCESS** easy?

Is there a way to **ASK FOR ACCOMMODATIONS** easily? Be sure requests don't go to voicemail!

Be sure you have secured **ASL INTERPRETERS** and **CAPTIONER** in advance!

Training

Potential Topics:

Disability etiquette and Accessibility offerings



Volunteers



Staff



Vendors

Roles

Accessibility contact

- Monitor accommodation requests
- Other questions

Day-of point person

- Go-to for access providers
- Accessibility booth management
- Access volunteer coordination
- Go-to for any questions or concerns

Tech Support

- Troubleshooting any access issues (eg. Captioning on screen, assistive listening devices)

Accessibility is everyone's job!

After the event

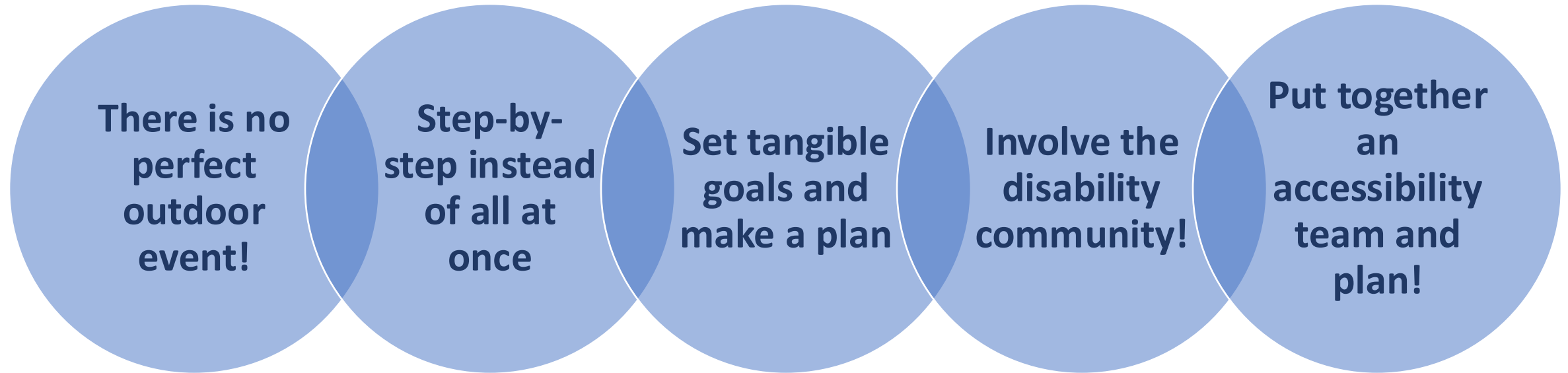
Invite **feedback** from attendees to find out about their access experience so you can improve for next time

Debrief with your team, including any access providers

Summarize lessons learned and integrate them into planning documents

Use the opportunity to learn!

Summary



Quotes

“This was my first big festival experience since before the pandemic, and my first time accompanying someone with special access needs, so you can imagine that I had a little anxiety about how things were going to go. I can't even begin to express what a relief it was to find services that far exceeded my expectations, and to observe a general run of show that was so well-oiled that I can't wait to return for future festival weekends.” **Patron**

“Thank you and your team from the bottom of my heart for making one of the most accessibility-friendly festivals I've ever been to. My family and I had a fantastic time yesterday and we're heading back today for even more fun. Bumbershoot is back and y'all have absolutely hit the mark so far.” **Patron with medical condition requiring them to leave/reenter several times**

Please fill out this survey!

<https://forms.gle/dtUenpnG6iCFK6EH9>



Resources

- [Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible \(ADA National Network\)](#)
- [Guide to Accessible Outdoor Events \(Accessibility Directorate of Ontario\) – based on Ontario standards](#)
- [American Society of Landscape Architects Universal Design Guide](#)
- [Smithsonian Folklife Festival Accessibility Information](#)

Wayfinding resource

- [University of Washington campus](#)
- **Captioners:** National Court Reporters Association's Online Sourcebook at ncrasourcebook.com
- **Interpreters:** Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: <https://rid.org/>
- [Food trucks for disability inclusion](#)

Sources

- Diane Nutting, Smithsonian Festival
- Cathy Rajcan, Realtime captioner
- Bridget Melton, Audio describer

Thank you!

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www.elizabethralston.com

UP NEXT:

ENJOY A BREAK!