ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY

The following resources are provided to assist your organization, theater, performance space, or art venue in creating accessible marketing materials, documents and publications. This resource was created to assist arts organizations to be able to ensure access to audience members, visitors, patrons, artists, performers, and staff with disabilities. Please note resources are provided for informational purposes only and do not denote an endorsement by the NADC.

Keep in mind:
• Accessibility benefits all – Individuals with visual, hearing, physical and cognitive disabilities.
• Accessibility is a way to build diverse audiences and organizations.
• Make accessibility part of your long-term plan
• Involve individuals with disabilities in your planning process
• Conduct an access survey of your venue or space
• Build partnerships in your community

PROMOTING YOUR ACCESSIBILITY

Some key things to keep in mind:
• Use plain language, avoid jargon
• Use text and visuals
• Include access services in all promotional materials and websites
• Produce an access service brochure
• Market your services to targeted groups

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Accessibility Planning and Resource Guide for Cultural Administrators
This is the online companion to the printed text Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrators Handbook (2003). The guide provides guidance to cultural administrators on how to achieve accessible and inclusive programming for everyone, including individuals with disabilities and older adults. It is designed to help organizations comply with section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and in making access an integral part of an organization including staffing, mission, education, and programs beyond.

Assistive Listening Devices for People with Hearing Loss – A Guide for Performing Arts Settings
The Kennedy Center for the Arts is committed to creating educational programs, and effective resources for the arts community. They launched an initiative to create a series of practical guides about access and universally useable arts programs and facilities. This guide provides resources about Assistive Listening Devices to assist performing arts venues to provide access to audiences who are hearing impaired.

**Audio Description for People with Vision Loss – A Guide for Performing Arts Settings**
The Kennedy Center for the Arts is committed to creating educational programs, and effective resources for the arts community. This guide provides resources about Audio Description to assist performing arts venues to provide access to audiences who are visually impaired.

**Cultural Access Network Project (CANP)**
The New Jersey Theatre Alliance created the CANP to create a series of practical guides about access and universally useable arts programs and facilities for seniors and individuals with disabilities. CANP serves as a role model for other states to follow to model accessibility in their programs and facilities. For additional information on developing a long term ADA Compliance plan go [here](#).

**Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook**
This was designed not only to help organizations comply with Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act but to assist in making access an integral part of planning, mission, programs, meetings, budget and staffing.

**Online Guide to ADA Standards**
The ADA Standards establish design requirements for the construction and alteration of facilities subject to the law. These enforceable standards apply to places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and state and local government facilities. The ADA standards are federal guidelines. Organizations should also check their local and state regulations to ensure they are meeting state requirements as well. For additional information about California Guidelines you can go [here](#).

**Texas ADA Online Toolkit**
This toolkit was created by the Texas Commission on the Arts and covers: Fundraising, Development, Programs and Exhibitions, Accessibility Resources, and Cultural Tourism.

**The Tarjan Center Accessibility Guidelines**
These Accessibility Guidelines aim to give guidance when creating internal and external print and electronic documents such as: outreach and marketing materials; resource lists, reports, briefs that will be distributed and posted; newsletters and periodic publications; tables and spreadsheets; presentations and handouts; emails and listserv announcements; web resources, electronic forms, and websites; lectures and conference presentations.

**BROCHURE DESIGN**
Designing brochures, calendars, books, labels, etc., with accessibility in mind is an interesting challenge. There are two excellent brochures produced by Lighthouse International that give guidance on accessible publication design: “Making Text Legible: Designing for People with Partial Sight” “Effective Color Contrast: Designing for People with Partial Sight and Color Deficiencies”.

Copies are available for a small fee from: Lighthouse International

ACCESSIBILITY SYMBOLS

Disability Access Symbols
Use Disability Access Symbols to highlight auxiliary aids, and access services available. Note: when using symbols make sure to place them where general information is given about the organization or program. The symbols should be displayed prominently. Make sure to integrate symbols into the design of an ad, brochure, or flyer whenever possible.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLISTS

Brief Accessibility Checklist
The information included in this checklist is a good tool to assist organizations in making their organization and project inclusive to everyone. The checklist includes a link to a wide variety of resources.

U.S. Access Board
They are responsible for developing the minimum guidelines and requirements for standards issued under the ADA and other laws addressing accessibility in facilities and communication.

ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Listening Devices: Assistive listening devices (ALDs) amplify and clarify sound by cutting down or eliminating ambient noise. Infrared assistive listening systems are installed in all theaters and headsets may be used at any seat. Headsets with induction neckloops are available for patrons who use hearing aids and cochlear implants with a "T" switch (taken from the Kennedy Center from the Arts).

The Kennedy Center Tip Sheet on Radio Frequency (RF), Induction Loop (IL), and Infrared (IR) Assistive Listening Devices
These tip sheets provides general tips and questions to ask yourself before purchasing an Assistive Listening System, as well as links to publications with detailed information.
**Audio Description (AD):** AD is technology that enables movie patrons who are blind or have low vision to enjoy movies by providing the spoken narration of a movie’s key visual elements, such as the action, settings, facial expressions and scene changes. AD fills in information about the visual content of a movie where there are no corresponding audio elements. For information about Title III of the ADA requiring movie theaters to provide AD go to the Department of Justice’s website [here](#).

**APAP-Metlife Foundation – Audio Description**
This is a video commentary about Audio Description and how it is used.

**The Audio Description Project Website**
The website collects and provides information on audio description in all its forms; live theatre, television, movies, DVDs, and more.

**The Metropolitan Washington Ear, Inc.**
This organization provides reading and information services for blind, visually impaired and physically disabled people who cannot effectively read print, see plays, watch television and films or view museum exhibits. The organization provides audio description services and trains audio describers.

**The Visual Made Verbal: A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description.**
This guide offers the first overview of audio description (AD) – its history, its application in a wide range of genres, and techniques for training describers. AD makes the visual images of theater, media and visual art accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. You can purchase the guide online.

**Closed Captioning (CC):** Closed movie captioning is written displays of a movie’s dialogue and non-speech information such as the music, the identity of a character, who is speaking, and other sounds or sound effects, made available only to those movie patrons who request it. When requested, the captions are delivered via individual captioning devices used by patrons at their seats. Closed movie captioning does not result in captions being shown to all patrons by being displayed on the screen itself. For information about Title III of the ADA requiring movie theaters to provide CC go to the Department of Justice’s website [here](#).

**APAP Metlife Foundation – Captioning Video**
The Association of Performing Arts Presenters, in partnership with the MetLife Foundation, created this video to teach about Captioning.

**American Sign Language:** American Sign Language is a visual language. Sign language is not a universal language, each country has its own sign language, and regions have dialects much like many languages spoken all over the world.

**Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf:** To find an interpreter for your event go to this registry and search their database for a certified interpreter in your state.
COMMUNICATING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Kennedy Center for the Arts: Tip Sheet on Staff Training
This Tip Sheet identifies sources for materials, handouts, and videotapes.

Communicating with People with Disabilities – A Video Tutorial
This video tutorial created by the National Service Inclusion Project provides effective ways to communicate with people with disabilities.

Disability Awareness and Effective Communication
This is a resource that provides suggested examples of how to effectively communicate with individuals with disabilities.

Disability Sensitivity Training Video
Produced by D.C. Government this is a great video about Disability Sensitivity.

Effective Interaction: Communicating with and About People with Disabilities in the Workplace
This resource created by the Office of Disability Employment Policy provides examples of appropriate and inappropriate phrases to describe people with disabilities.

CREATING ACCESSIBLE ONLINE TICKETING

ADA Great Lakes: Tip Sheet on Accessible Ticketing
These principles are designed to provide a framework for cultural organizations to develop accessible ticketing for people with disabilities.

SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCES

Sensory Friendly Performances
Sensory-friendly performances are designed to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to all families with children with autism or with other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities.

Sensory Friendly Programming for People with Social and Cognitive Disabilities Guide
This guidebook created by the Kennedy Center for the Arts is intended to help you identify the qualities and resources to consider when creating a relaxed and friendly theater experience for persons with sensory, social, and learning disabilities. The guidebook offers options and is a starting point for implementing sensory friendly performances recognizing theaters have different sizes, capacities and commercial or non-commercial needs.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Institute for Human Centered Design
Institute for Human Centered Design is committed to advancing the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experiences for people with disabilities. They
have expertise in legally required accessibility and promote best practices for universal
design.

APAP- Metlife Foundation Universal Design Video
This commentary is about Universal Design.

APAP- Metlife Foundation – Planning for Access Video
This commentary is about planning for access for individuals with disabilities.

Accessible Exhibition Design
This resource by the Smithsonian Accessibility Program provides information on how to
create an accessible exhibition.

Tactile Touch Tours
Art Beyond Site provides information about tactile experiences for people with
disabilities, provides examples, and tips for giving a touch tour.

The Kennedy Center for the Arts: Tip Sheet on Universal Design Resources
The Kennedy Center created this Accessibility Tip Sheet to provide online resources for
information on university design.

Examples of Museums That Model Accessibility:

The Tactual Museum
This museum is accessible to people with disabilities. They provide a touch tour for
individuals with visual impairments.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET)
The MET is exemplary in providing access for visitors with disabilities. They offer touch
tours, and workshops for individuals with visual impairments. For individuals with
developmental disabilities and autism they offer multisensory workshops that include
tactile opportunities and art making activities. They are a great example of model
accessibly.

The Museum of Fine Arts
The museum is committed to accessibility for all visitors. They offer tactile tours for
visitors who are visually impaired. They offer interactive tours for visitors with
disabilities. They offer onscreen text transcriptions and headphones that are compatible
with t-coil hearing aids for individual with hearing impairments. They are a great
example of model accessibly.

ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSIST WITH ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND
INFORMATION
Accessibility Office at the Kennedy Center
The award-winning Accessibility Office at the Kennedy Center strives to make the cultural arts accessible to people with disabilities by removing barriers and providing opportunities. The Office focuses its efforts on accessibility services for patrons and visitors with disabilities; professional development for cultural administrators; and career opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities.

Leadership in Exchange in the Arts (LEAD)
The Kennedy Center offers the annual Leadership Exchange in the Arts (LEAD) Conference where experienced and new professionals come together to explore practical methods for implementing accessibility in cultural environments. At the LEAD conference resources and knowledge is shared to develop the best practices and experience accessibility in action.

Department of Justice (DOJ)
The DOJ provides a wealth of informational resources on the ADA as well as technical assistance through their ADA information line.

The Institute for Human Centered Design
The Institute for Human Centered Design (Adaptenv) is an international non-profit organization committed to advancing the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages and abilities through excellence in design. Their educational, consulting and design work is very diverse. See their monthly newsletter to learn about current projects.

The Job Accommodation Network
JAN is a toll-free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations and the employability of people with disabilities. They also offer free product and vendor information pertaining to services for individuals with disabilities (i.e., oral interpreters, captioning, Braille). This information is provided at no charge to employers, rehabilitation professionals, and people with disabilities throughout the United States.

The National Endowment for the Arts' Office for Accessibility (NEA)
The NEA is the advocacy-technical assistance arm of the Arts Endowment to make arts accessible for people with disabilities and older adults. The NEA provides technical assistance to individuals and organizations in this area.

Pacific Disability and Technical Assistance Centers
The Pacific Disability and Technical Assistance Center is one of 10 federally funded regional resource centers on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They provide information, problem solving assistance and referrals for implementing the ADA.

The Access Board
The U.S. Access Board is a federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility
guidelines and standards for the built environment, transportation, communication, medical diagnostic equipment, and information technology.

**State Arts Agency and Regional Arts Organization 504/ADA Coordinators**

This is a list of the ADA/504 Coordinators for each state's arts council or commission. Each state varies in the kinds of services they provide to facilitate access. State arts agencies increase public access to the arts and work to ensure that every community in America enjoys the cultural, civic, economic and educational benefits of a thriving arts sector.