



TRELLIS

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Hosting Accessible Events to the Public

DISCLAIMER: This outline is a general guide. Be sure to contact an attorney if you have questions or specific issues that need to be addressed.

If you're in the business of hosting public events or you're thinking about putting one on, it's important to understand your obligations to provide accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Whether you're hosting a concert, a fundraiser, or a party in the street, under the ADA, "reasonable accommodations" must be made to any public event, even temporary ones.

The ADA states "A public accommodation shall afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations to an individual with a disability in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual." And there is more to planning an accessible event than making sure there are enough accessible parking spaces and restrooms (although these matter too!). An inclusive event means providing the opportunity for full participation in the event for all attendees – even in your advertising and registration of the event before it happens.

Below are a few requirements and considerations to note if you're putting on events for the public:

1. Pre-Planning

When you're in the planning phase, having accessibility at the top of mind and knowing what you need right from the beginning of the planning process can help you make sure you're looking for venues and locations, opportunities, and services to accommodate people with disabilities. What you will need depends on the type of event, the type of entertainment, and how people will interact with the space. Consulting with an expert who is familiar with providing accommodations and accessibility right from the start is a good idea so decisions can be made with intent and purpose rather than after the fact.

2. Ticket Sales

Under federal law, tickets for accessible seats must be sold in the same manner and under the same conditions as all other ticket sales, and the price for accessible seats cannot be any higher than the non-accessible seats in the same area. Tickets for accessible seats must be sold: during the same hours;; through the same methods of purchase; and during the same stages of sales (pre-sales, promotions, general sales, wait lists, or lotteries) as non-accessible seats. The ADA website describes the requirements on this here: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/ticket-sales/>.

3. Websites

Even if you're not in the business of hosting events, it is important to make sure that your website is accessible to people with disabilities, which is required under the ADA as well. For example, include accessibility statements at the top of your pages and ensure all the content on the website

accommodates reader devices to help blind users. Read more about website accessibility requirements in [this blogpost](#).

4. Actual Event Set-up and Day-Of Considerations

There are many requirements under the ADA for how your event is set up, from parking opportunities and location to access to stages, vendors, and restrooms. Know that ADA requirements are a *minimum* standard—they don't always necessarily match the needs of your event attendees, and you can always make something more accessible! Below are a few examples of legal requirements and considerations for your event day-of set up:

- **Signage.** You must provide signage that directs people with disabilities to accessible parking, entrances, seating areas, restrooms, and concession stands. Signage must also be placed in inaccessible places that direct a person to an alternative accessible route.
- **Restrooms.** The sizes of restrooms and how they are accessed are set by law. Temporary restroom setups must also meet ADA requirements and be placed in accessible locations.
- **Parking.** There are minimum standards and requirements for accessible parking. For example, you must provide one ADA parking space — with the appropriate widths and access lanes – for every 25 standard parking spaces.
- **Access Routes, Elevators and Ramps.** We recommend work with a person who specializes in the design of accessible spaces and can help you determine which accommodation makes sense for the specific event and reflects how people will move through the space.
- **Interpreters & Communication Devices.** Again, work with an expert to see what types of interpreter services you must and should employ given the type of event and who plans to attend.

5. Other Considerations

In addition to specific legally required accommodations, there are other things to consider to ensure people with disabilities can access the space and communicate effectively. We highly recommend working with an attorney or specialist in ADA event accommodations to make sure you're considering the experiences of everyone. The following resources provide additional insight and connections for making sure people with disabilities have access to your events:

- The federal ADA website's small business primer: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/title-iii-primer/>
- The ADA National Network of Information Guidance and Training on the ADA: <https://adata.org/guide/planning-guide-making-temporary-events-accessible-people-disabilities>
- This Definitive Mobility Guide from Meeting Professionals International: https://www.mpi.org/docs/default-source/pdf/certificate-programs/ada-mobility-guide-article-for-mpi.pdf?sfvrsn=47a06d55_2#:~:text=Signage:%20According%20to%20ADA%20guidelines,rou tes%20for%20people%20with%20disabilities