

Ensuring Programmatic and Facility Accessibility in National and Community Service Programs

Accessibility Checklist

Discussions about accessibility frequently emphasize facilities and equipment - the “physical” factors that make a program accessible. There are many checklists that programs can use to assess their compliance with legal requirements for structures and devices. Accessibility of programs is less concrete and readily visible but equally important. For example, staff have the knowledge to use TTY machines or request interpreters; information for people with disabilities is available in a variety of formats and presented in a clear, understandable fashion; emergency procedures take account of individuals with disabilities; and in general, people with disabilities are able to equally access the programs and organizations in which they serve.

Under the law, it is not sufficient to simply respond to requests for assistance and accommodations from people with disabilities. When national and community service programs are designed, they are required to proactively anticipate the needs of people with various physical, mental, and sensory disabilities. This checklist provides guidelines for accessibility.

Through the use of this checklist, national and community service programs can help ensure they:

- comply with the law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act)
- create an environment that makes people with disabilities feel welcome; and
- design programs and services so that people with disabilities can fully participate.

Staff Knowledge (Complete the following section by answering each question with “yes” or “no”. If “yes”, please check box. If “no”, leave box blank).

- Staff recognize the importance of making people with disabilities feel welcome
- Staff have had basic awareness training on how to meet the needs of volunteers and members with disabilities
- Staff understand requirements to provide reasonable accommodations to volunteers and members or potential volunteers

- and members with disabilities, unless determined that providing such an accommodation would cause an undue hardship
- Staff understand the obligations of CNCS funded programs under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, including:
 - people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else to access program and become volunteers and members
 - services, programs and facilities must be readily accessible
 - services and programs must be delivered in a setting that is as fully integrated as possible (meaning that volunteers and members with disabilities serve alongside volunteers and members who are not disabled)
 - Staff understand that they must make reasonable modifications in services and programs to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities, unless determined that making these modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the program/organization
 - Staff understand that it is required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure that communication with volunteers and members and potential volunteers and members with disabilities is as effective as communication with other individuals, unless this would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service or activity
 - Staff is aware that they cannot decide that an action, which would allow program access by a person with a disability, is unfeasible. Such decisions must be made by the designated senior staff member (or by consulting the CNCS EO Office and/or the National Service Inclusion Project).
 - Staff have been trained in emergency evacuation procedures for people with disabilities, including the evacuation of persons with mobility impairments
 - Staff know how to procure and use various equipment and materials for assisting people with disabilities, including the telecommunications device for the deaf (TT/TTY/TDD), accessible work stations, accessible materials, etc.

Disclosure of Disability

- When working with volunteers and members with disabilities, staff discuss specific task and accommodations as it pertains to the individuals need to perform the essential functions of the position
- Staff who are working with volunteers and members with a disability get documented permission from the individual before discussing information about his/her disability with other staff or external individuals (e.g., service sites, other service agencies)
- After documenting permission and specific information to be disclosed, when working with volunteers and members with disabilities, staff may provide information to other staff about an individuals disability only as needed
- Private space is available for confidential discussion of disability-related issues
- All discussions about a disability between volunteers and/or members and other individuals take place in private; if discussions are by phone, calls are made in an area where the caller cannot be overheard
- Policies and procedures are in place, known to all and disseminated to ensure that staff do not disclose information about a person's disability to others

Accommodation Requests

- The program has documented procedures and guidelines for handling requests for reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures
- A staff member has been designated as a point person/resource to assist in accommodation requests, accessing external resources and acquiring assistive technology or products
- The program posts clear procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations and modifications in public areas, and includes them in writing in outreach materials

Recruitment and Orientation

- Every volunteer and member is offered assistance completing forms and application materials
- When signing up for orientation or an interview, everyone is asked whether they will need assistance or accommodations to participate

- If a person needs assistance in filling out the application or other forms, this is done one-on-one in a private room, where the individual's responses will not be overheard
- Information in an interview/orientation session is explained slowly and clearly, with plenty of time and opportunities for questions
- Clearly understood procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations and modifications are included in writing and reviewed verbally
- A list of auxiliary aids and services for communication, assistive technology devices, and material in accessible formats is made available

Welcoming Service Environment Indicators

- People with disabilities are in integrated settings; people with disabilities participate fully in all programs and activities alongside people without disabilities
- All service members and volunteers are routinely asked if they will need some type of accommodations or special assistance to perform their service
- All service members and volunteers are routinely offered the option of meeting with staff in private offices
- Information is presented in a way that is understandable to people who have limited or no reading skills
- Information that is presented orally is also available in writing for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and for people whose learning style requires reinforcement of items in writing
- Quiet work space is available for people with Attention Deficit Disorder and hearing impairments to thoroughly read and comprehend information and materials

General Communication Requirements

- The program has taken appropriate steps to ensure that communication with service members and volunteers (potential and current) with disabilities is as effective as communication with others
- Staff members ask all service members and volunteers if they need information in alternative formats, or need help understanding information
- Staff inform all service members and volunteers that accommodations are provided upon request

- The program has a procedure for responding to requests for auxiliary aids and services
- The program has identified a source for sign language interpreters, and can respond in a timely manner to interpreter requests

Materials

- The program has basic/essential materials in alternate formats (large print, Braille, audio-tape, text on computer disk, etc.) and has also identified resources to quickly obtain other materials in alternate formats upon request
- Materials are available in formats that account for a variety of learning styles, and are also accessible to people who have limited or no reading skills (e.g., pictures, videos, audio-tapes)
- Paper materials are presented in contrasting colors (e.g., black and white)
- Videos for service members and volunteers are closed-captioned
- The program's website is fully accessible to people with disabilities and “Bobby” approved. [A free service that analyzes web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities — www.cast.org/bobby]

Evacuation Procedures

- There is a mechanism for ensuring that people who are deaf or hard of hearing are aware of an activated fire or smoke alarm
- There is an established emergency evacuation procedure that addresses the needs of people with disabilities, including persons with mobility impairments

Marketing Materials and Outreach

- Marketing materials mention people with disabilities as one of the groups that are encouraged to apply
- Pictures and graphics in marketing materials include positive images of people with disabilities as service members and volunteers
- The program indicates that it is an “equal opportunity program” and that “accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities” in recruitment brochures and other materials. These materials also indicate the telephone number of the program's TDD/TTY or relay service

- As part of its efforts to increase the number of service members and volunteers with disabilities, the programs do outreach to people with disabilities. This includes such activities as:
 - Advertising in media that targets people with disabilities
 - Sending notices about the program to community groups, organizations and associations that people with disabilities participate in
 - Consulting with community groups, organizations, and associations about ways in which the program can improve its outreach and services to people with disabilities
- Off-site presentations to the general public are held in locations that are fully accessible for people with disabilities

Record Keeping Requirements

- The disability status (when known) of all service members and volunteers and applicants is stored in a way that ensures confidentiality

Facilities Checklist

The following checklist was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's One-Stop Disability Initiative to ensure that the facilities of One-Stop Centers are physically accessible and welcoming for people with disabilities and comply with ADA requirements for physical accessibility.

Editor's note: A few additional items have been added to the original USDOL version of this checklist

Part 1: Entrance Accessibility

People with disabilities should be able to arrive on the site, approach the building, and enter the building as freely as everyone else. At least one path of travel should be safe and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Path of Travel

- Is there a path of travel that does not require the use of stairs?
- Is the path of travel stable, firm, and slip-resistant?
- Is the path at least 36 inches wide?
- Can a person with a visual disability detect all objects protruding into the path with a cane?

Note: In order to be detected using a cane, an object must be within 27 inches of the ground. Objects hanging or mounted overhead must be higher than 80 inches to provide clear headroom. It is not necessary to remove objects that protrude less than 4 inches from the wall.

- Do curbs on the pathway have curb cuts at drives, parking, and drop-offs?

Ramps

- Are the slopes of ramps no greater than 1:12?

Note: Slope is given as a ratio of the height to the length; 1:12 means that for every 12 inches along the base of the ramp, the height increases one inch. For a 1:12 maximum slope, at least one foot of ramp length is needed for each inch of height.

- Do all ramps longer than 6 feet have railings on both sides?
- Are railings sturdy, and between 34 and 38 inches high?
- Is the width between railings at least 36 inches?
- Are ramps non-slip?

- At the top and bottom of ramps and at switchbacks, is there a 5-foot-long level landing at every 30-foot horizontal length of ramp?

Parking and Drop-Off Areas

- Are an adequate number of accessible parking spaces available (8 feet wide for car plus 5-foot striped access aisle)?
For guidance in determining the appropriate number to designate, the table below gives the ADAAG requirements for new construction and alterations. For lots with more than 100 spaces, contact ADAAG (see the “Access Board” listing at the end of this section):

Total spaces:	Required # of accessible spaces:
1 to 25	1
25 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to 100	4

Note: Check your state building code for parking requirements. State codes can be more stringent.

- Are 16-foot-wide spaces, with 98 inches of vertical clearance, available for lift-equipped vans?
Note: At least one of every 8 accessible spaces must be van-accessible.
- Are the accessible spaces closest to the accessible entrance?
- Are accessible spaces marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility?
- Are there signs reading “Van Accessible” at van spaces?
- Is there an enforcement procedure to ensure that only those who need it use accessible parking?

Entrance

- If there are stairs at the main entrance, is there a ramp, lift, or alternative accessible entrance?
Note: Do not use a service entrance as the accessible entrance unless there is no other option.
- Do all inaccessible entrances have signs indicating the location of an accessible entrance?
- Can the alternate accessible entrance be used independently?

- ❑ Does the entrance door have at least a 32 inch clear opening (for a double door, at least one 32-inch leaf)?
- ❑ Is there at least 18 inches of clear wall space on the pull side of the door, next to the handle?
Note: A person using a wheelchair needs this space to get close enough to open the door.
- ❑ Is the threshold level less than 1/4 inch, or beveled, up to 1/2 inch high?
- ❑ Are doormats 1/2 inch high or less, and secured to the floor at all edges?
- ❑ Is the door handle no higher than 48 inches and operable with a closed fist?

Note: The “closed fist” test for handles and controls is as follows: Try opening the door or operating the control using only one hand, held in a fist. If you can do it, so can a person who has limited use of his or her hands.

- ❑ Can doors be opened without too much force (maximum is 5 lb.)?
Note: You can use a fish scale to measure the force required to open a door. Attach the hook of the scale to the doorknob or handle. Pull on the ring end of the scale until the door opens, and read off the amount of force required. If you do not have a fish scale, you will need to judge subjectively whether the door is easy enough to open.
- ❑ If the door has a closer, does it take at least 3 seconds to close?
- ❑ Is the entire front desk or at least a section of the front desk at a height where customers in wheelchairs can see over the desk comfortably and have face-to-face conversation with staff?

Emergency Egress

- ❑ Is there sufficient lighting for egress pathways such as stairs, corridors, and exit routes?

Part 2: Access to Goods and Services:

Ideally, the layout of the building should allow people with disabilities to obtain goods or services without special assistance. Where it is not possible to provide full accessibility, assistance or alternative services should be available upon request.

Horizontal Circulation

- ❑ Does the accessible entrance provide direct access to the main floor, lobby, or elevator?
- ❑ Are all public spaces on an accessible path of travel?
- ❑ Is the accessible route to all public spaces at least 36 inches wide?
- ❑ Is there a 5-foot circle or a T-shaped space for a person using a wheelchair to reverse direction?

Doors

- ❑ Do doors in public spaces have at least a 32-inch clear opening?
- ❑ On the pull side of doors, next to the handle, is there at least 18 inches of clear wall space so that a person using a wheelchair can get near to open the door?
- ❑ Can doors be opened without too much force (5 lb. maximum)?
- ❑ Are door handles 48 inches high or less and operable with a closed fist?
- ❑ Are all threshold levels less than 1/4 inch, or beveled, up to 1/2 inch high?

Rooms and Spaces

- ❑ Are all aisles and pathways to all goods and services at least 36 inches wide?
- ❑ Is there a 5-foot circle or T-shaped space for turning a wheelchair completely?
- ❑ Is carpeting low-pile, tightly woven, and securely attached along edges?
- ❑ In routes through public areas, are all obstacles cane-detectable (located within 27 inches of the floor or protruding less than 4 inches from the wall), or are they higher than 80 inches?
- ❑ Do signs designating permanent rooms and spaces, such as rest room signs, exit signs, and room numbers, comply with the appropriate requirements for accessible signage?

Note: Mount signs on the wall, on the latch side of the door.

Controls

- Are all controls that are available for use by the public (including electrical, mechanical, window, cabinet, game, and self-service controls) located at an accessible height?

Note: Reach ranges — The maximum height for a side reach is 54 inches; for a forward reach, 48 inches. The minimum reachable height is 15 inches.

- Are the controls operable with a closed fist?

Seats, Tables, and Counters

- Are the aisles between chairs or tables at least 36 inches wide?
- Are the spaces for wheelchair seating distributed throughout?
- Are the tops of tables or counters between 28 and 34 inches high?
- Are knee spaces at accessible tables at least 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 19 inches deep?

Vertical Circulation

- Are there ramps or elevators to all levels?
- On each level, if there are stairs between the entrance and/or elevator and essential public areas, is there an accessible alternate route?

Stairs

- Do treads have a non-slip surface?
- Do stairs have continuous rails on both sides, with extensions beyond the top and bottom stairs?

Elevators

- Are there both visible and verbal or audible door opening/closing and floor indicators?
Note: one tone = up, two tones = down.
- Are the call buttons in the hallway no higher than 42 inches?
- Do the controls outside and inside the cab have raised and Braille lettering?
- Is there a sign on the jamb at each floor identifying the floor in raised and Braille letters?
- Is the emergency intercom usable without voice communication?

- Are there Braille and raised-letter instructions for the communication system?

Lifts

- Can the lift be used without assistance? If not, is a call button provided?
- Is there at least 30 by 48 inches of clear space for a person using a wheelchair to approach to reach the controls and use the lift?
- Are controls between 15 and 48 inches high (up to 54 inches if a side approach is possible)?

Part 3: Telephones

There are a variety of considerations in ensuring that the phone system is accessible to people with disabilities, including phones available for use by customers.

Telephones

- If pay or public use phones are provided, is there clear floor space of at least 30 by 48 inches in front of at least one?
- Is the highest operable part of the phone no higher than 48 inches (up to 54 inches if a side approach is possible)?
- Does the phone protrude no more than 4 inches into the circulation space?
- Does the phone have push-button controls?
- Is the phone hearing aid compatible?
- Is there a phone adapted with high-grade amplification for use by customers with moderate to severe hearing loss, located in a quiet area, away from ambient noise?
- Is the phone with volume control identified with appropriate signage?
- Is one of the phones equipped with a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTY/TDD)?
- Is the TTY/TDD available for customers to call into the center as well as for customers to use for calling employers (if the One-Stop has phones that customers can use for calling employers)?
- Is the location of the TDD identified by accessible signage bearing the International TDD Symbol?

- Is there a hands-free speakerphone with large keypad available for use by individuals who have difficulty holding a receiver and/or dialing numbers?

Part 4: Usability of Rest Rooms

When rest rooms are open to the public, they should be accessible to people with disabilities.

Closing a rest room that is currently open to the public is not an allowable option.

Getting to the Rest Rooms

- If rest rooms are available to the public, is at least one rest room (either one for each sex, or unisex) fully accessible?
- Are there signs at inaccessible rest rooms that give directions to accessible ones?
- Is there tactile signage identifying rest rooms?
Note: Mount signs on the wall, on the latch side of the door. Avoid using ambiguous symbols in place of text to identify rest rooms.
- Is the doorway at least 32 inches clear?
- Are doors equipped with accessible handles (operable with a closed fist), 48 inches high or less?
- Can doors be opened easily (5 lb. maximum force)?
- Does the entry configuration provide adequate maneuvering space for a person using a wheelchair?
Note: A person using a wheelchair needs 36 inches of clear width for forward movement, and a 5-foot diameter clear space, or a T-shaped space, to make turns. A minimum distance of 48 inches, clear of the door swing, is needed between the two doors of an entry vestibule.
- Is there a 36-inch-wide path to all fixtures?

Stalls

- Is the stall door operable with a closed fist, inside and out?
- Is there a wheelchair-accessible stall that has an area of at least 5 feet by 5 feet, clear of the door swing, OR is there a stall that is less accessible but that provides greater access than a typical stall (either 36 by 69 inches or 48 by 69 inches)?

- In the accessible stall, are there grab bars behind, and on the side wall nearest to, the toilet?
- Is the toilet seat 17 to 19 inches high?

Lavatories

- Does one lavatory have a 30-inch-wide by 48-inch-deep clear space in front?
Note: A maximum of 19 inches of the required depth may be under the lavatory.
- Is the lavatory rim no higher than 34 inches?
- Is there at least 29 inches from the floor to the bottom of the lavatory apron (excluding pipes)?
- Can the faucet be operated with one closed fist?
- Are soap and other dispensers and hand dryers 48 inches high or less and usable with one closed fist?
- Is the mirror mounted with the bottom edge of the reflecting surface 40 inches high or lower?

Signage

- Signage should be designed so that it is useful for people with disabilities.
- Is all signage 60 inches above the ground?
- Are signs on doors on the same side as the doorknob?
- Is signage well lit, using uniform lighting (e.g., not spotlights), with illumination coming from behind or beside the text or sign?
- Is signage in clear contrasting colors (e.g., black and white)?
- Is signage in Braille?