

## ADA

### ***Specifics of the Law***

- Include provisions in your meeting contract that clearly define the responsibilities of the meeting facility and the meeting sponsor, and a hold harmless clause to protect each in the event of failure by the other to meet these responsibilities.
  - The facility should assume responsibility for ensuring that it meets the ADA Accessibility Guidelines.
  - The meeting sponsor is responsible for advising the facility if any special accommodations are needed, and for ensuring that meeting areas over which it has control are in compliance.

### ***Definitions of Disability and Compliance***

- By law, a person with a disability is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more activities of daily life.
- The ADA mandates that reasonable accommodation must be made to enable a person with a disability to participate in a meeting. it is not a reasonable accommodation if:
  - Making the accommodation poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
  - Making the accommodation means making a substantial alteration in the manner in which business is conducted.
  - Making the accommodation represents an undue financial or administrative hardship.

### ***Implications for Meetings***

- Understand that meeting managers must ensure that the program is accessible, and facilities must ensure that the building and appropriate spaces are accessible.
- Provide all staff with written instructions concerning any special requirements of attendees.
- Include ADA compliance as a budget line item.
- Know your attendees well; do not assume that all attendees with disabilities will remember to ask for accommodations or that non-disabled attendees will bring only non-disabled guests and family members.

### ***Accommodating People with Disabilities***

- Rely on direct communication with the person with a disability, with utmost sensitivity for that person's needs.
  - Include a section on hotel and meeting registration forms for attendees with disabilities to identify themselves and describe their needs prior to the meeting.
  - Conduct personal follow up with individuals with special needs, and document the outcome of your communication.
- Allow room for wheelchairs in room setups, with a choice of seating throughout the room for wheelchair users.
- Contact the people who request services for the hearing impaired to be certain you are providing the correct accommodation, which may include sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, preferential seating, oral interpreters, and real-time captioning.



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- Provide appropriate accommodations for the blind or visually impaired; for instance:
  - Inspect corridors, lobbies and other public areas to minimize the number of obstructions.
  - Ensure that all print materials, including signage, registration forms, and programs, are available in alternate media, such as large print, Braille or audiotape.
  - Ensure that areas are available close to the property for guide dog relief.
  - Provide tactile maps of the exhibit hall for attendees who are visually impaired.
- Expect to accommodate people with other types of disabilities, such as those with chronic health conditions who require a smoke-free environment; people on certain medications who need an in-room refrigerator; or attendees with special dietary needs.

### ***Where to Get Help***

- Communicate with the person requesting accommodation about his or her specific needs.
- Access other information about accommodating persons with disabilities through the Office on the Americans with Disabilities Act or the disability service office at a local college or university, or seek legal advice.