



# ACCESSIBLE MEETING GUIDE

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## Resources

### **Please find Braille Vendor:**

Keith W. Myers  
Executive Director, Horizon for the Blind  
[Keith.myers@horions-blind.org](mailto:Keith.myers@horions-blind.org)  
815-444-800 ext 213

### **Please find a list of ASL interpreters:**

Citibuy Preferred Vendor  
Preferred Interpreting Service, LLC  
Cody Firks 888-987-6309  
[Service@preferredinterpretingservice.com](mailto:Service@preferredinterpretingservice.com)

### Others

Hearing and Speech Agency  
Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Building  
[5900 Metro Drive](#)  
[Baltimore, MD 21215](#)  
[410.318.6780](tel:410.318.6780)  
[hasa@hasa.org](mailto:hasa@hasa.org)

Sorenson (CLOSED CAPTIONING)

#### **Jessica Newman**

#### **Eastern Region Account Manager**

P: [800-659-4783](tel:800-659-4783)

C: [917-657-0624](tel:917-657-0624)

VP: [646-350-2957](tel:646-350-2957)

E: [communityinterpreting@sorenson.com](mailto:communityinterpreting@sorenson.com)

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Purple Communications (CLOSED CAPTIONING)

#### **Maybelle Gambrill**

VRI Specialist

Purple, a Division of ZP Better Together, LLC

Phone: [800.900.9478 x3050](tel:800.900.9478) | Call/Text: [301.502.1207](tel:301.502.1207) | [purplevrs.com](http://purplevrs.com) | [signlanguage.com](http://signlanguage.com)

\*\*\*\*\*You may find additional vendors on Citibuy.

## Other Contacts

Anyone who needs help with accessible rooms, please contact Carole Young at [carole.young@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:carole.young@baltimorecity.gov)

Anyone who does social media or updates website is required to attend Website Accessibility Training, please contact Patricia Fuller at [patricia.fuller@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:patricia.fuller@baltimorecity.gov)

## Virtual Meetings: Accessibility Checklist & Best Practices

<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/commission-disability-rights/virtual-meetings.pdf>

With accessibility in mind, consider the following when planning your meeting:

- **Digital first:** Going forward, most meetings will see one or more attendees joining virtually.
- **Select a venue/format:** Determine if your meeting will be in-person, over the telephone, using a virtual meeting space, or a hybrid of two or more methods. Keep in mind that different venues require different planning and accommodation solutions.
- **Know your audience:** Because no two persons with disabilities experience their disability in exactly the same way, it's important to know who the audience is and [how people with disabilities use the web](#). If possible, those in charge of handling the accommodations for the meeting should speak with the person(s) with disabilities in question to inquire what the specific limitations are and what can be done to best accommodate their needs. Be sure to ask for accommodation needs upfront in the registration process. Ask for specific needs for captioning, ASL interpreters, etc. You will always need to plan for other unexpected accommodations, but it is vital to have an estimate of the audience's accessibility needs as part of your meeting planning.
- **Interactive features:** What communications tools and interactive features do you plan on using?
  - *Audio* information commonly includes human speech, music, and sound effects
  - *Visual* information would include video feed/profile image, screen sharing, documents, animations and videos
  - *Interactive features* may include chat, polling, Q&A, whiteboards, and breakout rooms
- **Platform accessibility:** Identify which of the features are accessible, and how you will accommodate equivalent access for attendees who are unable to access or use any features. Unfortunately, no virtual meeting platform is perfect. To select a platform to use for your meeting event:
  - Check with your agency/organization to identify which platforms you already have access to; and if you are co-hosting an inter-agency event, identify which platforms your partner agencies have access to
  - Engage people with disabilities to test and evaluate those platforms with you

- Implement meeting management strategies to compensate for weaknesses in your platform
- Utilize other accessible services where possible to compensate for weaknesses in your platform (e.g. separate captioning streaming website, hand raising tool, polling/surveys)
- **Platform availability:** Due to mission, security and other considerations, not all agencies use or allow the use of virtual communications platforms on their network.
  - Confirm that your attendees can access the platform selected for your meeting in some way (e.g., desktop, tablet, mobile, web browser).
  - Confirm that the availability and accessibility of features is available for the platform selected.
    - Platform features may vary depending on how attendees access your meeting. Typically, the client software (requiring download and install) is more feature rich than the web-based version of a communications platform. For example, automated captioning may be available on the client software version, but not available to those using the web-based version.
- **Onsite accessibility:** When hosting individuals in-person, your guests may require building access, auxiliary aids, and other services, which you will need to address before the meeting takes place:
  - Wheelchair access to the building entrance, meeting space, stages, lecterns, seating, tables, including registration, displays, food and beverage, and other services
  - Service animals, such as guide dogs, must be permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go
  - Ushers and guides who may provide oral or electronic descriptions/maps of meeting room layouts, emergency exit locations, and amenities prior to the beginning of the conference/presentation
  - High-contrast color and large print for materials, maps, books, signs, menus, forms, and displays
  - Real-time captioning, translators, ASL and foreign language interpreters, and note takers
  - Preferred seating for individuals making use of sign language interpretation. Take into account that the interpreter needs to be either next to the speaker/presenter or seated in a sight line to allow the deaf person to see the speaker/presenter beyond the interpreter
  - Assistive listening device availability for participants to improve the auditory reception of speech or sound information. These devices, which can be used alone or in conjunction with personal hearing aids, involve a microphone-transmitter unit,

**either worn by the speaker or placed close to the sound source and a receiver worn by the listener**

- **Adjustable room lighting to increase the contrast - and thus the visibility - of audiovisual materials**

## **Resources**

[Section 508 Create Accessible Meetings](#)

[PLANNING ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS AND EVENTS TOOL KIT](#)

[ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments](#)

[Guide to creating accessible and inclusive meetings, events, and conferences](#)