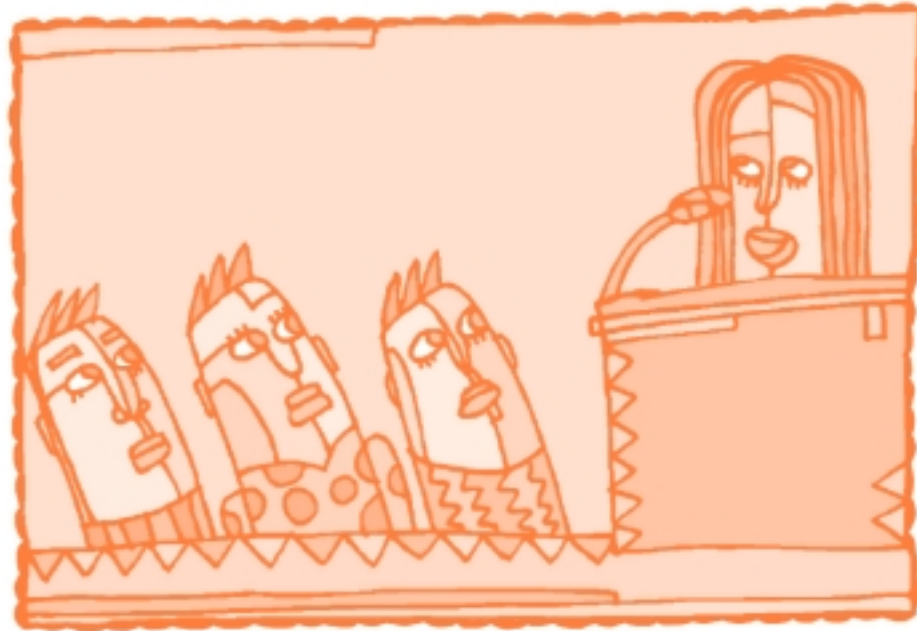


MAKING ACCESSIBILITY REAL:

A Guide for Planning Meetings, Conferences and Gatherings



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A project of:



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PART ONE: Introduction

The mission of the HCBS Resource Network is to bring together the federal government, states, and persons with all types of disabilities of all ages to expand access to high quality, cost-effective, consumer-directed home and community-based services and supports. To achieve our mission, we believe that all of us must improve our understanding of how to make our discussions, meetings and conferences more accessible to everyone. The ultimate success of our collective efforts will depend upon whether we can find ways to include individuals with a wide range of disabilities in all aspects of our work.

Disability and chronic health conditions are far more common experiences for people than we might appreciate. Many functional disabilities and chronic health conditions are invisible. Individuals with invisible or unrecognized disabilities are too often forgotten as we plan meetings and conferences.

We have developed this guide to help ourselves think more broadly about the term “accessibility” in the context of planning for meetings and conferences. Given the uniqueness of each person, it is not possible to anticipate the individualized needs of every person by creating a checklist or other made-to-order document. Others have created authoritative and extensive technical guides on accessibility. See, for example, June Isaacson Kailes’ and Darrel Lynn Jones’ 1993 work for the Independent Living Research Utilization Project (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living in Houston: *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings*.¹ **Our publication does not eliminate the need to refer to these other authoritative sources to understand the technical requirements for an accessible meeting.**

Our goal is to add to these existing resources. We have tried to identify a generic approach to the development of improved accessibility

strategies and to stimulate conversations on the inclusion and participation of everyone in meetings and gatherings of all types. This guide provides common sense strategies to help improve the accessibility of all meetings and conferences for everyone. It is designed so that meeting planners and participants can pick and choose those strategies that are appropriate and feasible for each particular meeting. We hope our suggestions will stimulate new discussions and new ideas for improving inclusion strategies.

What do we mean by “accessibility”?

The dictionary defines accessible as “easily approached or entered.” However, this definition is especially limiting when we consider that a meeting is not “accessible” simply because a person can enter the facility easily. A sense of “belonging” is necessary for accessibility to be fully realized. Belonging in this context means having a sense that you are in the right place and feel comfortable participating, rather than being just a spectator; this kind of belonging requires respect and equity. This means that the physical accommodations must be appropriate for all the participants and that the materials, the pace of a meeting and the time allotments for different activities must respect differences among individuals.

Our goal is to present both specific and general strategies that will promote new common sense approaches to improving accessibility for everyone. In keeping with this theme we ignore — as much as possible — approaches based on particular disabilities or chronic conditions. Instead, we approach the issue in terms of the *functional needs* of people. By functional needs we mean simply that on any given day and in any given place, individuals may experience situations that limit their ability to participate fully unless some adjustment to their external environment is made.

¹ Please see Part Six for information on obtaining this document.

PART TWO: Attitudes Happen

Individuals with disabilities will tell you that one of the more painful and effective barriers to their full participation in community life comes from attitudes displayed by people everyday.

Many people express pity, scorn, discomfort, and disgust when they encounter an individual with a disability. Anyone who is treated this way feels angry, shamed, blamed, pitied, child-like and dependent, or invisible. None of these are positive feelings that make an individual want to participate.

This guide to accessibility will not eradicate the reality that some people have these attitudes and behave in ways that are exclusionary. However, we do hope that by creating more awareness about how to have accessible meetings and gatherings that we contribute to the elimination of negative attitudes and behaviors toward individuals with disabilities.

PART THREE: Understanding Appropriate Accommodation

Before we offer specific strategies for making meetings and conferences accessible to all participants, we will share our position on the idea of appropriate accommodation.

Have you ever stopped to consider all the accommodations that are made for people to attend a meeting or a conference? Someone thought to develop an appropriate agenda or curriculum and to provide you with audiovisual or printed materials. Someone made sure there were tables and chairs, a registration area, lighting, microphones, bathroom facilities, parking and refreshments. These are “appropriate accommodations” for individuals without disabilities that we take for granted. For individuals with disabilities, “appropriate accommodations” means nothing more, and certainly nothing less, than the basic accommodations that most of us take for granted when we attend meetings and conferences. Individuals with disabilities simply require a different set of environmental accommodations that enable each individual to participate actively and meaningfully.

The following are some examples of appropriate accommodations that you may not have considered previously:

- Participant A won't use the facility's chairs because she will bring her own — she needs a space at the table.
- Participant B doesn't need microphones — instead, he uses a qualified interpreter who can sign. For the interpreter to be effective, Participant B needs good lighting to see the interpreter and presenters must speak in a way that allows the interpreter to translate accurately.
- Participant C cannot attend unless the meeting is scent-free, otherwise she will become ill.

- Participant D needs his materials ahead of time — he has difficulty organizing information and needs to review the materials before he comes if he is to participate.
- Participant E needs the materials ahead of time so he can read them and assimilate the information. He will also want to invite a friend to the meeting to help ensure he understands all of the conversation.
- Participant F needs the materials in an alternate format and she will need access to an electrical outlet at the meeting for her PC.
- Participant G has recently come to this country and is still learning English. She will bring a language interpreter. The interpreter will need good acoustics to be able to hear the speakers. The pace of the speaking must be modulated so that there is time for accurate interpretation to occur.
- Participants H-Z have other needs. How can we know what they are?

One way to ensure that we have shown respect for everyone is by asking individuals directly what their needs are. The key to this asking is in the listening that follows.

The registration and follow-up segments of a conference or meeting provide excellent opportunities for establishing relationships and making people feel welcomed as full participants. Building these relationships engenders confidence that it is okay for every participant to ask for accommodations that will allow them to participate fully.

On the following pages we have created a set of suggestions for making meetings and conferences accessible for every participant, including presenters. More detailed information is available on every topic presented here. Please refer to Part Six of this paper for a list of relevant resources, including information on standards for hotels as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

A note on choosing a facility for your next meeting or conference: Although all hotels are required by the ADA to make their facilities accessible for people with disabilities, hotels across the country are in various stages of compliance with the Act. We recommend that before choosing any location for your next event, you conduct a site visit to determine its level of accessibility and appropriateness for your group. **Never assume that a facility is accessible just because the facility staff says it is.**

PART FOUR: Strategies for Making Accessibility Real

In the following sections, we provide a series of actions we can take to ensure that every meeting is truly accessible. The first section is dedicated to helping meeting and conference planners identify the needs of both participants and presenters. Second, we offer general guidance for making meetings and presentations accessible, even when the specific needs of participants may be unknown. The third section provides a series of recommendations for making meetings accessible for individuals with specific functional limitations.

Section One: Identifying Accessibility Needs of Participants and Presenters

In order to identify the specific needs of individuals attending each meeting/conference, we recommend asking participants about their needs at the time of registration. A sample registration form has been included in Appendix A. Note that registration forms themselves must be accessible; be prepared to provide the registration form in alternate formats. The registration form should query participants and presenters about dietary restrictions, services and materials they require in order to participate effectively, and whether they require a fragrance-free environment. It is important to indicate a deadline for submission of the registration form so that planners have adequate time to arrange the necessary accommodations.

In addition to asking participants about their needs for the conference itself, all participants should be provided with a hotel reservation form which outlines how many accessible rooms are available and what amenities are included with such rooms. Such forms must be approved by the hotel and include their specific policies. An example of a hotel registration form is provided in Appendix B.

Section Two: General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Physical Space

Notes

Prior to booking any conference space, conduct a site visit to the hotel or conference center to be sure that the facility will meet the needs of meeting attendees and presenters. Note that all hotel rooms labeled “accessible” are truly accessible, and some are more accessible than others. Use a site survey tool to guide you through the site inspection. (Information on some of these tools is provided in Part Six).
Never assume that a hotel or conference center is ADA compliant just because they state that they are.

Choose a meeting/conference location which provides the following:

- Fully accessible meeting rooms with good lighting and acoustics
- Meeting areas large enough to provide space for interpreters, ample room for individuals using mobility aids to maneuver, and sufficient space for all participants
- Clear signage and maps
- Limited stimuli environment (consider the “busyness” of carpeting and wall coverings)
- Multiple sets of outlets in the meeting rooms for individuals using laptops or other electronic aids

Reserve a quiet space close to the main meeting area where participants can take breaks from the meeting or conference.

General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Organization of Meeting Materials	Notes
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Meeting/conference registration packets should include:

- A notice that provides detailed local information on the availability and costs of: transportation, home health agencies that offer personal assistants, medical equipment vendors and durable medical equipment vendors; (See Appendix C for a sample list)
- A questionnaire regarding the attendees' preferred format for printed materials (Braille, large-type, computer disk, cassette tape), as well as their need for interpreter services and dietary restrictions;
- A map of the meeting facility with indicators as to where specific events will take place;
- Information on transportation to and from the conference/meeting site; and
- A copy of the emergency evacuation plan for the hotel/meeting site.

General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Organization of Meeting Materials

Notes

(con't)

Design of conference evaluation forms:²

- Create the evaluation form in several alternate formats (including Braille, audio cassette, large print and diskette).
- Offer assistance in completing the evaluation. At registration and throughout the conference, announce that assistance is available and ensure people are designated to provide assistance.
- Having alternate format copies will give participants time to review the evaluation questions in advance. They will appreciate this and it will make things go faster as they work with an assistant to complete the evaluation.
- Put the evaluation on-line and allow participants to complete it when they return home.

Design of conference/meeting materials:

- Tab and index conference packets.
- If feasible, color code different sessions, being cognizant that certain color combinations, like black on blue, are very difficult to read.
- For longer conferences, provide a list of accessible restaurants, including their location, type of cuisine, cost, type of ambience and degree of accessibility.

² Independent Living Research Utilization Program

General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Organization of Meeting Materials

Notes

(con't)

Whenever possible, mail meeting/conference materials to participants in advance of meeting. In addition, or when pre-mailing materials is not possible, offer an opportunity for participants to check-in and receive materials the night before the meeting.

Alternate-format materials:

- Well in advance of meeting/conference, establish a reliable source for Braille and large-print materials.
- Once aware of participants' needs for alternate-format materials, be sure to provide all meeting materials in these formats, including flyers, menus and directions.
- Package and organize alternate materials in a manner similar to that provided to other participants. For example, if material is tabbed or organized in separate packets, do the same for the alternate materials.
- List room name and location next to each session in the index.

Use nametags that hang around the neck instead of those requiring pins or clips. Print the nametags in at least 20 point font.

General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Presentations

Notes

Presenters should adhere to these guidelines when speaking:

- Keep the presentation clear and simple.
- At the start of the session, provide an overview of the presentation. At the end, provide a summary of the key points.
- Present key concepts in multiple ways. Keep in mind that people learn in a variety of ways. Consider presenting information using visual, auditory and tactile approaches.
- Plan presentation to allow for a Q&A break every 30 minutes.
- Use well-modulated tones and a moderate pace.
- Avoid acronyms — use real words.
- When interpreters are being used, do not walk while speaking. Also, speak at a pace slow enough to allow the interpreter to translate accurately.
- When addressing an individual that is using an interpreter be sure to speak directly to the individual, not the interpreter.
- Always use the microphones/amplification system provided.

General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Presentations (con't)

Notes

Presenters should adhere to these guidelines for visual aids:

- Limit slides and overheads to 3 bullets per page.
- Create slides that are uniform in color, font and layout.
- When using graphics (such as charts and pictures), explain each in words and allow extra time to look at each slide/overhead once you are finished discussing it. Remember that individuals using interpreters cannot look at the slide when they are watching the interpreter.
- Audio descriptions and closed-captioning must be provided for all videos.
- Either provide alternate formats of all visual aids, or deliver such materials to the meeting sponsors in advance of the conference so that the materials can be reproduced in the necessary alternate formats.
- Avoid flash graphics and sudden noises.

General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Presentations (con't)

Notes

Educate speakers about your requirements of them well in advance of the conference/meeting. (A pamphlet entitled "Guidelines for Speakers" is available from the HCBS Resource Network.) Also, explain what types of functional impairments guests have so that speakers can prepare an appropriate presentation.

Always inquire whether the individuals invited to speak at the meeting/conference have any accommodation needs, e.g. ramp, podium, type of microphone.

Ensure that the presentation area is well lighted and that the interpreter can still be seen when the lights are dimmed.

Additional Guidelines for Planners

Notes

Provide a list of necessary requirements to all conference vendors.

When in doubt, ask the individual participant what is needed.

When interpreters are appropriate, be sure they are available for all conference events, including social events, so that all participants can network.

Section Three: Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences acute sensitivity to everyday chemicals	<p>When registration forms indicate that one or more individuals experiences environmental illness, issue a written statement requesting that all meeting participants/presenters refrain from wearing perfumes or scents to the meeting.</p> <p>Do not choose a facility that has scheduled renovations during the conference. Contract with the hotel that no non-emergency renovations will take place during the conference.</p> <p>Ensure that conference space is smoke-free, including the area immediately outside the entry to the hotel/meeting space.</p> <p>Ask hotel staff to avoid using caustic or scented cleaners and scented air fresheners several days before the conference commences in areas where meeting participants will be located and in designated guest rooms.</p> <p>Provide plenty of fresh air through open windows and/or by opening air intakes of mechanical vents.</p>	
Experiences fatigue easily	<p>Choose site location close to airport and/or other travel gateways, including public transportation.</p> <p>Arrange access to wheelchairs and scooters to help people move themselves around the conference site.</p> <p>Provide a break room close to the meeting area where individuals can rest between or during meeting sessions.</p> <p>Offer regular break times throughout the conference.</p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences low visual acuity	<p>If one or more participants will be bringing a service dog, be sure hotel/ meeting place has an easily accessible area to walk service dogs.</p> <p>Prior to conference, establish a reliable source of Braille and large-print materials.</p> <p>Prepare all materials in alternative formats. This may include using large fonts, Brailing printed materials or using audio cassette tapes or CD-R disks.</p> <p>If Braille renditions of materials are needed, be sure speakers get the information prepared in time for the Braille transcription to be completed (also applies for other alternative formats).</p> <p>Orient individual to the meeting site upon arrival.</p> <p>Provide appropriate lighting during all presentations.</p> <p>Use large-font signage or station staff to direct individuals to entrances, meeting rooms, etc. If participants use Braille, provide directions to breakout rooms, bathrooms and elevator in Braille.</p> <p>Offer the assistance of a guide.</p> <p>Remove barriers in hallways; ask hotel cleaning staff to be cognizant of where cleaning carts are left.</p> <p>Offer to read menus aloud.</p> <p>Have moderator make an announcement of when session will begin.</p> <p>Require speakers to describe verbally any graphics used.</p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
<p>Experiences diminished peripheral vision</p>	<p>Orient individual to the meeting site.</p> <p>Remove barriers in hallways.</p> <p>Offer reserved seating directly in front of speakers.</p> <p>Remind presenters to maintain a clear line of sight when speaking to individuals one-on-one.</p>	
<p>Uses supports to maximize mobility</p> <p><i>(Some individuals may experience difficulty walking but choose not to use supports).</i></p>	<p>Before reserving a conference/meeting site, ensure that ramps are installed at all access points and that there are multiple elevators.</p> <p>Choose site on mass transit lines or have wheelchair van transportation available.</p> <p>Ensure that hotel has a wheelchair accessible registration counter or inform hotel staff that they will need to come around the counter to assist some guests.</p> <p>Reserve accessible rooms and inform participants of the amenities provided in such rooms (number of beds, roll-in shower). See Part Six for information on standards for accessibility.</p> <p>Arrange meeting rooms with access to tables throughout the area.</p> <p>Leave room for an individual to have his/her chair/walker/service dog at the table.</p> <p>Remove barriers in hallways.</p> <p>Schedule additional time between sessions for individuals to move from one location to another.</p> <p>Avoid “buffet-style” meal service or provide assistants at the buffet table.</p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Uses supports to maximize hand mobility	<p>Serve food that can be easily managed (i.e. no spaghetti).</p> <p>Provide straws for beverages.</p> <p>Use tabs to divide presentation and meeting materials.</p> <p>Provide "roving" personal assistants.</p> <p>Use name tags that hang around neck instead of stickers or labels which require the use of pins.</p> <p>If possible, provide tote bags with long shoulder straps which can fit all meeting materials and handouts.</p> <p>Keep doors open until session begins and schedule staff person to open all doors at session end.</p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
<p>Experiences diminished hearing or does not hear</p> <p><i>(Some participants may be unaware of their hearing loss.)</i></p>	<p>Ask individuals what kind of interpreters they require or prefer and provide those interpreters for presentations, workshops and social gatherings.</p> <p>Provide interpreter with information about meeting and presentations before the event so that they can prepare.³</p> <p>Provide seating facing speaker and interpreter.</p> <p>Make space for interpreter to stand on a raised platform with a dark, solid color background.⁴</p> <p>Provide adequate lighting for viewing interpreters.</p> <p>In advance of the meeting, determine how the individual wishes to communicate and what, if any, assistive listening devices will be necessary to ensure their participation.</p> <p>Require audience to ask questions with a microphone; if none is available, have speaker repeat the question before answering it.</p> <p>Ensure that the hotel has accessible space for walking service-dog.</p> <p>Ensure that TTY phones and TV's with closed-captioning are available.</p> <p>Confirm that the facility uses both audio and visual alarms to alert participants of an emergency.</p> <p>Consider providing listening devices or provide information on where in the area these devices can be rented.</p> <p>³ Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. (1993). <i>A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings</i>. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living.</p> <p>⁴ <i>Ibid</i></p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Speaks slowly or has difficulty with verbal expression	<p>Allow sufficient time for the individual to articulate questions.</p> <p>Allow written questions.</p> <p>If appropriate, make interpreters available to facilitate communication.</p>	
Has dietary needs	<p>Ask about dietary needs on registration form.</p> <p>Ask if individuals have specific requirements (ex: refrigeration of meds).</p>	
Uses supports to absorb complex material	<p>Make materials available before conference.</p> <p>Offer companion during the meeting.</p> <p>Require speakers to be clear and avoid unnecessary "ACRONYM-speak".</p>	
Requires supports to organize and/or sequence information	<p>Remind presenters to focus on providing clear and organized presentations. All speakers should provide an overview and summary of their presentation.</p> <p>Offer assistance after each session to go over information with the individual.</p> <p>Tab and label materials clearly.</p> <p>Offer the materials before the conference.</p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
<p>Uses supports to store, absorb and retain information</p>	<p>Provide materials in advance when possible.</p> <p>Provide audio or video tapes of the session or allow taping.</p> <p>Repeat a question as it is answered, as in, "Where is registration? It is on the third floor, turn left (point to the left) off the elevator."</p>	
<p>Uses supports to assist with orientation and decision making</p>	<p>Provide handout at hotel check-in of registration time and location.</p> <p>Offer pre-registration and orientation to the facility.</p> <p>Change the color of the paper in the conference packet to indicate morning and afternoon sessions.</p>	
<p>Experiences periodic interference with electronic impulses of the brain</p>	<p>Avoid excessive or flickering lights, including flash photography.</p> <p>Have at least one staff person trained in seizure management.</p> <p>Ask the individual what stimuli create problems for him/her and when possible, eliminate such stimuli.</p>	
<p>Cannot read/has trouble reading</p>	<p>When presenting, use picture graphics whenever possible.</p> <p>When using textual materials during a presentation, provide overview of information verbally.</p> <p>Offer assistance of a staff person when reading is necessary.</p>	

Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences diminished auditory processing	<p>Speak clearly and slowly.</p> <p>Do not “talk down” as if to a child.</p> <p>Speak without subtleties, inference or colloquialisms.</p> <p>Look at the individual as you speak.</p> <p>Manage traffic in and out of the meeting room.</p>	
Experiences difficulty with the English language	<p>Invite the individual to bring a language interpreter.</p> <p>Inform the speakers to slow their pace for the interpreter.</p> <p>Offer materials in the individual’s native language.</p> <p>Ask if the individual has other needs (dietary, for example).</p>	
Experiences difficulty understanding the structure, format and purpose of the meeting unless it is laid out clearly beforehand	<p>Invite participant to bring a companion or offer a mentor to accompany the individual to answer questions and explain what is coming next.</p> <p>In advance of the conference, prepare individual for what will take place during the meeting, e.g. how many people will be in attendance, what will be going on during each part of the meeting. This is especially useful when done at the conference center/hotel the evening before the meeting begins.</p>	

PART FIVE: Summary

Our meetings and conferences are accessible when we create an environment that invites individuals to participate with a sense of belonging. We do best at creating this environment when we respect and welcome everyone. By encouraging respect and honesty, we will learn new ways to improve accessibility for all.

This document is a work in progress – a living document. In future versions we hope to broaden our focus to provide guidelines that work for additional types of gatherings in our communities. As America ages and individuals with disabilities or chronic health conditions participate fully in community life, including the workplace, it will be important for everyone to learn how to create accessible, participatory environments.

The HCBS Resource Network invites additional suggestions and comments from the public as well as other interested individuals and organizations. A user Feedback Questionnaire appears in Part Nine.

PART SIX: Useful Resources

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Useful Resources

Web-sites:

ADA – Conference Manual

www.acm.org/sig_volunteer_info/conference_manual/5-7-5DIS.HTM – The Association for Computing Machinery’s conference manual provides information on the Americans with Disabilities Act and describes how meetings can be made available to individuals with disabilities.

ADA Hotlinks and Document Center

www.jan.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm – The Job Accommodation Network provides extensive information about several issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, such as Supreme Court rulings, building accessibility guidelines, and technical assistance manuals.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Home Page

www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahomi.htm – The homepage for the Americans with Disabilities Act provides several links for various ADA related topics, including ADA design standards, enforcement, code certification, ADA business connections, status reports, new and proposed regulations, and the ADA mediation program.

Americans with Disabilities Access Strategies

www.thearc.org/ada/adachart.html – The Arc (the national organization of and for people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families) provides suggestions on how businesses can make themselves accessible to people with these disabilities.

Brain Injury Association of America

www.biausa.org – The Brain Injury Association of America provides useful information about brain injury prevention, research, education and advocacy in both Spanish and English. The website also hosts a national directory of brain injury rehabilitation services that range from rehabilitation centers to brain injury units, lawyers to neurophysiologists.

Disability Law Resource Project

www.dlrp.org – The Disability Law Resource Project (DLRP) is a resource for trainings, technical assistance and materials on the ADA. The DLRP is authorized by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to provide training information, materials, and technical assistance to individuals and entities that are protected or have obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Disability Resources Monthly

www.disabilityresources.org – Disability Resources monitors hundreds of publications, audiovisual materials, on line services and other information resources every month. The organization reviews and reports on the worthwhile materials they find in their on-line newsletter, Disability Resources Monthly (DRM). The site hosts an extensive database of disability-related resources which enables individuals to perform customized searches, as well as an on-line guide to disability resources on the World Wide Web. The site also has a section entitled, “Conferences and Meetings: Planning for Access.” This section can be found by under the letter “C” in the alphabetical directory on the site’s home page.

Useful Resources

ILRU (Independent Living Research Utilization)

www.ilru.org – The ILRU (Independent Living Research Utilization) program is a national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance in independent living. ILRU provides an on-line directory of Independent Living Centers located across the United States. These Centers can provide information regarding services and products necessary to make your meeting/conference accessible.

Lighthouse International – Effective Color Contrast

www.lighthouse.org/color_contrast.htm – Lighthouse International provides useful information on designing text materials for people with partial sight and color deficiencies. The article provides several examples of effective and ineffective uses of color in documents.

Medicaid Reference Desk

www.thedesk.info – This useful site provides information about Medicaid in plain language for people with developmental disabilities.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

www.healsoaz.org – The Human Ecology Action League of Southern Arizona gives guidance on preventing, coping with, and accommodating Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), including information about products that are safe(er) for people with MCS.

Ontario, Canada - Planning for Accessible Meetings

www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/english/accessiblemeetings.htm – This link from the government of Ontario, Canada provides useful information regarding planning accessible meetings.

Professional Development on Disability and Non-Coercive Practices

www.normemma.com – The website of Norma Kunc and Emma Van der Klift provides information on professional development related to disability and non-coercive practices. The site's articles include, "The Right to be Disabled," "Workplace Climate," and "Inclusive Education."

Quality Mall

www.qualitymall.org – This web-site is designed to provide individuals with disabilities with up-to-date information about person-centered supports. The site is divided into "mall stores" such as "Family Place" and "Housing Office" which are further broken down into "departments" where visitors can find information on positive practices related to issues such as family support and estate planning.

Regional Disability and Technical Assistance Centers

www.bcm.tmc.edu/ilru/dbtac/Links/regional.html – This link from the website of Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Medical Center, Texas, provides information about regional disability and business technical assistance centers. There are 10 regional centers serving states across United States.

The White House/New Freedoms Initiative

www.disability.gov – The on-line source for information about President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative for Americans with Disabilities.

PART SEVEN: About the Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network

The Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network was established in September of 1999 to bring together the federal government, states, and persons with disabilities of all ages to expand access to high-quality, cost-effective, consumer-directed home and community-based services. The Resource Network supports state efforts to engage in collaborative planning and policy development, and focuses on practical and immediate next steps to expand access to supportive services in ways that are realistic, equitable, and affordable.

The Resource Network's projects are focused on linking the resources of centers of expertise in states and communities with those of advocacy and consumer groups through the dissemination and development of useful materials. Specific activities include maintenance of a web-site and resource inventory (www.hcbs.org), which together serve as a comprehensive resource for HCBS systems change. The Resource Network

has also developed a Consumer Direction Tool intended to encourage state officials and persons with disabilities to discuss options for expanding consumer direction in their programs. The Resource Network Project Board and staff regularly make presentations at conferences and meetings including the annual System Change Conference hosted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The Resource Network also serves as an advisor to the Community Living Exchange Collaborative and The Formative Evaluation Exchange.

The Resource Network is governed by a 14-member project board; half the members represent state agencies that operate HCBS programs and half the members are consumers that represent individuals with various communities.

PART EIGHT: Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Conference/Meeting Registration Form⁵

This registration form can be obtained in large print, on audio tape, or Braille by calling the following number: (____) ____ - ____ (voice/TYY). If you have difficulty writing or would prefer to register by telephone, please call the above number.

General Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Name for Name Badge: _____

Affiliation: _____

City/State: _____

I am bringing a personal assistant: yes no

Personal Assistant Name Badge: _____

Affiliation: _____

City/State: _____

Registration Fee Schedule:

Includes access to all sessions, one lunch and two coffee breaks

Early-bird registration fee: (Before _____ [date]): \$ _____

Regular fee: (By _____ [date]): \$ _____

Total Due \$ _____

Payment (Check appropriate form):

Check enclosed Voucher enclosed MasterCard/VISA

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Check, voucher or charge card information must accompany this form.

Additional Information:

Please check materials and services needed. (To ensure your request is fulfilled, registration must be received by [date]).

Interpreter Services:

ASL Oral Voice Signed Voice

Other, please specify:

Note taker Reader

Assistive Listening Device, please specify:

Printed materials:

Large Print Braille

Audio Cassette

Computer Disk:

3.5" CD-R

Orientation to the meeting site

Fragrance-free environment

I will be using a wheelchair at the conference. (This information is needed to project space accommodations for meals, receptions and workshops.)

Special diet requirements. Please specify:

Please return this form to: Meeting Sponsor, One State Street,
Anytown, USA 00000

⁵ Adapted from: Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. (1993). *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings*. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living.

Appendix B: Sample Hotel Reservation Form⁶

[Note: It is critical that the form also include information about the accessibility of the hotel. Hotel reservation forms must be approved by the hotel and include their specific policies.]

Reservations must be received by [date]

Hotel Sleepwell
One Main Street
Anytown, USA 00000
[Telephone number]

Room reservations are needed for the following nights:

Arrival Time: _____ a.m./p.m.

One person: \$____.____ Single bed Double bed

Two persons: \$____.____ Single bed Double bed

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Sharing room with: _____

Please reserve (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Room near the elevator
- Non-smoking room
- Accessible room: one bed two beds
- Room with operable windows

At this hotel, [percent] of the guest rooms have at least one grab bar on the tub wall and a small refrigerator.

There are [number] accessible sleeping rooms equipped with:

- grab bars in the tub and along side, as well as behind toilet
- 36-inch doorways

- five-foot turning radius in the bathroom
- lowered clothes racks, light switches and peep holes
- Five of these rooms have roll-in showers.

Additional sleeping room features for people with environmental illness include:

- [number] rooms with operable windows, two of which are accessible
- [number] "non-smoking" rooms, two of which are accessible

These rooms will be reserved and guaranteed on a first-come, first-serve basis, so please get your room reservations in early. If you must have an accessible room and they have all been reserved, the hotel will send you a list of nearby hotels with accessible rooms.

If you are not requesting a room which is designated as accessible, please check features you would prefer to have in your room:

- TTY suite with large living/sleeping area
- television decoders portable notification system (visual alarm)
- tub bench non-skid bath mat
- tub grab bar small refrigerator
- bathroom door removed in standard room so that a 24-inch opening becomes 27-inches

(The hotel's policies on room guarantees, check-in time, and acceptance of credit cards, travelers checks, and personal checks, can be included here.)

- Please guarantee my room
- One-night deposit enclosed or guaranteed to credit card (fill in):
- MasterCard VISA
- American Express Diners Club

Card Number _____ Expiration date _____

Signature _____

Please return this form to:

Hotel Sleepwell, One Main Street, Anytown, USA 00000

⁶ Adapted from: Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. (1993). *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings*. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living.

Appendix C: Sample List of Services (Include with Confirmation Letter)⁷

The following is an example of information included in the confirmation letter for an actual conference. The Resource Network makes no recommendations regarding the services noted.

Accommodations and Alternate Formats: *(This section serves as a follow-up to the questions posed in the registration form; it is not intended to replace those questions.)* If you require interpreter services, real time captioning, assistive listening devices, training materials in alternate format (i.e. Braille, audio, etc.) or any other accommodations, please contact [program sponsor's name] no later than [date] at [e-mail and telephone numbers, including voice, TYY and fax].

Hotel Arrangements: Hotel Sleepwell, One Main Street, Anytown, USA 00000, [Telephone number], [Web site]

Please contact the hotel directly for reservations and identify yourself as part of [group name] in order to receive the discounted rate of \$149.00 per night. The cut off date for the discounted rate of \$149.00 is June 1, 2001. If you do not make your reservation before that date your room rate will then be \$234.00 per night. Check in is at 4:00 p.m.; check out is 12:00 noon. The hotel will store baggage after check out upon request.

Travel Agent: We have had very good experiences with the following travel agent. However, please feel free to use whatever agent you feel most comfortable with. You are responsible for payment of your own airfare.

Super Travel
[telephone number]
[web site or e-mail address]

For further information on [city] you may access [provide web-site link to the local tourist board or other relevant organization].

Fragrance Free and Smoke Free Conference: Please note that this will be a fragrance-free and smoke-free conference. Participants are asked to avoid perfumes and other fragrances that could affect persons with environmental illness or chemical sensitivities. Please refrain from smoking in the conference and meeting room areas of the hotel.

Ground Transportation

Taxi: Taxis are available 24 hours a day at the airport. Taxi fare is \$30 from the airport. The taxis are not accessible.

Checker Cab [phone number]

Airport Shuttle: You may contact the airport shuttle at [phone number] for shuttle service from the airport to the hotel. For accessible transportation from the airport to the hotel, call 24 hours in advance to make reservations for a lift-equipped van. Tickets are available from ground transportation in the baggage claim area and pick-ups are every 20 minutes. One-way shuttle from the airport is \$18.00 or \$20.00 for the round-trip fare. Returning to the airport from the hotel, you will need to schedule enough time to reach the airport. The airport is approximately 35 minutes from the hotel.

Paratransit Service: XYZ Transportation operates a paratransit service which may be scheduled 24 hours in advance by eligible patrons registered with the system. For information and to schedule airport transfers, contact customer service at [telephone number].

Airport transfers may be scheduled several days in advance of a trip to ensure vehicle availability. You can also fax your information: name, address, hotel, and transportation needs to [fax number].

Bus: The local bus system has a pick-up and drop-off location at the airport and the hotel. Bus schedules are available by telephone at [phone number]. Generally, the bus runs twice an hour and the fare is \$1.75 per trip.

Parking: Hotel Sleepwell provides parking for hotel guests at \$8.00 a day in the covered parking lot and \$15.00 a day for valet.

Personal Assistance Arrangements: If you will be traveling with a personal attendant and require meals for them, please contact [program sponsor's name] no later than [date] at [e-mail and telephone numbers, including voice, TYY and fax]. Also, if you require personal attendant services during the conference you may contact the following agencies in the local area: *[List 2 or more home health or nursing agencies with their correct telephone numbers.]*

Equipment Rental and Repair: If you have specific equipment needs for your room, such as an electric bed, please coordinate these items through the Hotel Sleepwell at [telephone number].

You can also rent equipment from the following companies: *[List 2 or more equipment rental companies and their telephone numbers.]*

Van Rentals: *[List 2 or more van rental companies and their telephone numbers.]*

⁷ Reprinted with permission from the Independent Living Research Utilization Program.

PART NINE: Feedback Questionnaire⁸

The Home and Community Based-Services Resource Network and the authors would like to know your impression of this publication. Please use this form to tell us what you think.

The overall quality of this publication was:

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Was the level of content appropriate for your needs?

Yes No

Was the information provided useful?

Yes No

How did you or how will you use this information?

What part of this publication did you find the most helpful? Why?

What part of this publication did you find the least helpful? Why?

The level of detail in this was:

Too detailed Not detailed enough Well suited for my needs

I would have appreciated more information on (please specify):

Are there other topic areas you would like to see covered in future publications? Please describe, in detail:

The following information is optional:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with feedback.

The Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network

Boston College, Graduate School of Social Work

140 Commonwealth Avenue, McGuinn Hall, Rm. 602

Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

617.552.6728 (phone), 617.552.1975 (fax)

⁸ Adapted from Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. (1993). A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living.