

Resources to Help Ensure Accessibility of Your Virtual Events for People with Disabilities

Dear Arts and Culture Professionals,

Since the start of the current Covid-19 crisis, artists and arts and culture organizations have been proactive in reaching out to their audiences and communities with webinars, livestreamed performances, and virtual visual art collections and museum tours. We wanted to take this moment to remind cultural organizations of the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities are able to access these invaluable resources.

Below are some ways to create an inclusive experience for your virtual and digital events. Please let us know of other recommendations or needs from the field to better serve people with disabilities by emailing Accessibility@arts.gov. **The National Endowment for the Arts does not endorse any vendors**, but during this national emergency, the Office of Accessibility believes it is important to provide these resources to the arts community, including some examples of vendor options

Communication tip: Be sure to include contact information on your website or event registration for requesting an access accommodation.

Streamed and live-streamed performances

- Will the performance be live-captioned (preferred) or can the captions be included and synced up for later streaming?
 - Real-time captioning options:
 - Vendor examples - [National Captioning Institute](#), [CaptionAccess](#), and [Streamtext](#).
 - Other vendors are available via internet search.
 - Post-production and DIY captioning options:
 - Upload video to YouTube and use the platform to add captions. Be sure to edit them because auto-generated captions are not always accurate.
 - Vendor examples - [Rev.com](#), [Alternative Communications Services](#), and [ASLCaptions](#). Other vendors are available via internet search.
 - For more information see [How to Caption Your Videos](#) - by Tina Childress, See Hear Communication Matters Blog.
- Will you provide sign language interpretation in American Sign Language? (ASL) Many platforms allow sign language interpretation alongside the performance or discussion.
 - ASL interpreters can be found via the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#), or search for ASL interpreting companies that offer video relay or video remote interpreting services.

- Consider adding visual description of your performance videos for people with vision disabilities. The [American Council of the Blind](#) has information on audio description, and a [list of audio description vendors](#).

Virtual exhibitions and collections

- Will all images include alternative text for people who are blind or have low vision and use screen-reading software? Alternative text (also called “alt attribute”, “alt text”, or “alt-tag”) is a visual description of an image that can be added using image formatting tools to describe the image for screen-reader users. Social media platforms also allow users to add alt text to their images before they are posted.
- Ensure videos are captioned and consider adding visual description (see above).

Videoconferencing & webinars

- Will the webinar be live-captioned? Note: Since webinars provide a platform for people to ask questions and interact with the speakers in real time, live captions allow people who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate in real time.
- Are presenters making their material as accessible as possible? Be sure to:
 - Describe all images used in the presentation.
 - Use text that is high-contrast and in a large, legible font. Avoid italics and specialty or decorative fonts.
 - Balance the need to provide visual information for visual learners with the need to keep the text concise.
- Real-time captioning options:
 - Vendor examples - [National Captioning Institute](#), [CaptionAccess](#), and [Streamtext](#).
 - Other vendors are also available via internet search.
- Examples of platforms with accessibility features (please note that automated captions do not replace a live person captioning):
 - [Zoom – Accessibility](#) and [Zoom – Getting Started with Closed Captioning](#) (3rd party vendor required)
 - [Google Hangouts Meet Accessibility](#) (automated captions)
 - [BlueJeans](#) (automated)
 - [Jitsi Meet](#) (automated)
 - Other vendors available via internet search.
- For more information see [Captioning Options for Videoconferencing and Learning Management Systems](#) - by Tina Childress, See Hear Communication Matters Blog

Online Learning Events

- Do your students need accommodations, such as real-time captioning or ASL (American Sign Language) interpreting?
- Is there a convenient way for students to request accommodations via phone or email?
- Are videos captioned? See caption options above.
- Is the platform accessible for a person who uses screen-reading software, such as a person who is blind or has low vision?
- Have you communicated with the vendors of the online platforms to understand what their capabilities are for accessibility?
- [#DeafEdTips: E-Learning Accessibility](#) - blog by the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education