

Making On-Campus Events Accessible at the Washington College of Law

I. Introduction

Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that anyone with any type of disability is welcome and able to attend an event, and fully participate in all associated activities at the Washington College of Law.

Advanced planning is extremely beneficial to ensure that disability-related accommodations, if requested, can be carried out in a timely manner and that all aspects of your event are accessible. An accommodation for one person can benefit more than just the person requesting that accommodation: it can create a more universally designed event. The Office of Student Affairs is available to answer any questions or assist with providing necessary accommodations.

II. Marketing of Your Event, Pre-Event Planning, and Registration

For all advertisements and event materials, contact information for a point person or the organization should be included. This information is important for attendees or participants to know how they can request accommodations. The following is a suggested statement for advertising materials: “If you would like to request a disability-related accommodation or accessibility information, please contact [NAME] at [PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL ADDRESS]. Requests should be made by [date at least two weeks in advance of the event, if applicable].” We also suggest that you ensure all flyers are machine readable for those who are blind or visually impaired. You can use the accessibility checker for Word Documents and PDFs at <https://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/tips-for-faculty-how-tos.cfm>.

Review your event and the nature of all associated activities to assess whether barriers exist for participants to fully engage. Consider the needs of attendees who may have mobility, vision, auditory, or learning differences.

We strongly suggest that event organizers create a registration form that includes a field for attendees to request accommodations by a certain date (usually two weeks in advance), especially if film and media will be shown at the event.

III. Guidance in Responding to Accessibility Requests

If an attendee or participant requests an accommodation and you need assistance understanding or carrying out the accommodation, the Office of Student Affairs can be a resource.

Examples of aids and services that your group might have to provide for attendees:

i. Route planning to event site

A map demonstrating accessible routes on campus is available at <https://www.wcl.american.edu/here/our-campus/maps/>. Please consult this resource to plan routes for your event. Student Affairs is available should you have trouble. If your event is after hours (after 8 pm or on the weekend), please consult WCL Facilities to ensure that doors and elevators are unlocked and ready.

ii. Accessible event location and room set-up

Things to consider include whether stairs are necessary to access event space, whether one must enter through a non-automatic door to access the event space, if bathrooms in the building are accessible, and if the room has ample space between furniture and paths of travel. Contact the Office of Student Affairs for guidance or for support in requesting a room change if possible.

iii. American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or Real-Time Captioning (CART)

Either an event organizer or attendee must make a formal request through the Office of Student Affairs, two weeks prior to the event if possible. If ASL interpreters or CART providers are present at an event, please make sure that area of room is well-lit for viewing purposes.

iv. Closed Captioning (CC) for film and media

Check to see if the film or media you are showing has captioning. If it does, watch to make sure it is accurate. Some platforms such as YouTube have CC, but it is poor in quality. The WCL Media Control Center can assist with captioning short and long materials. The longer the film or media clip, the longer it may take to prepare. Generally, MCC requires at least two weeks' notice for captioning requests. For video, any events sponsored or streamed by WCL need to have

captions, whether they're live or on-demand. On-demand captioning costs \$1 per minute after the video is edited, while live captioning costs \$150 per hour for the duration of the event.

If you have questions about funding for these services, please contact the Office Student Affairs (studentaffairs@wcl.american.edu).

v. Assistive listening devices

Sounds and speaking should be amplified for attendees with auditory needs. To request assistive listening devices, please contact the Media Control Center (mcc@wcl.american.edu) and copy the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@wcl.american.edu) in advance.

vi. Materials in an alternative format such as enlarged print, Braille, or electronic version

1. Ensure all participants can read handouts, PowerPoint slides, and resources by creating accessible online documents or alternative format hard copy documents. Contact the Office of Student Affairs for support.

Examples of aids and services that are personal in nature and WCL may not be required to provide:

- i. Hearing aids
- ii. Wheelchairs
- iii. Personal transportation services to/around campus
- iv. Personal assistants
- v. Parking passes

Examples of other inclusivity considerations:

i. Food

If serving food, ask if any attendees have any food allergies that need to be accommodated during the registration or RSVP process. If guests are bringing their own food, make sure that food allergies are accommodated by informing guests to avoid bringing certain foods. Some allergies are so severe that simply being in the same room or cross contact might trigger anaphylaxis.

ii. Providing Trigger Warnings

If discussing a particularly sensitive topic, such as one that discusses violence, assault, and other similar topics, consider providing a trigger or content warning to accommodate participants with conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.