

GOTV + ORGANIZING ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY

Women's March believes in the importance of inclusive spaces. That's why we've committed to making our organizing and GOTV efforts accessible, and why we ask all members of our network to do the same. This guide provides suggestions for event accessibility, including physical access, program access, and social interaction with people with disabilities.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

You should always seek an event or office space that has at least one entrance without steps and that a wheelchair can roll into, has an accessible ADA restroom and at least two accessible parking spaces. Here are some types of repurposed locations or properties that are usually good:

- Locations in Malls or Strip Malls
- Newly Built Restaurants and Pubs
- Schools and College Campuses
- Libraries
- Car Dealerships
- Any building with newer construction

General guidelines for choosing an accessible location:

- Accessible Parking Spaces are important for drivers with disabilities. Many of their vehicles use technology like lift arms that reach a few feet from the car to navigate their exit and entrance of the vehicle. If a location is accessible but does not have an accessible parking spot, you can use cones to save two spaces as one accessible space.
- Accessible Entrances and Common Spaces often determine whether or not a person can enter the building safely and participate in the event. A person should be able to walk into the space without using steps, and a wheelchair user should be able to roll into the building without encountering a bump greater than one inch. The doorway clearance should also be 32" inches wide from inside the door frame with the door open.

The common space should also have about 36" or 3-feet of passage or clearance space. We suggest using the yardstick trick when you set up the space. Place the middle of a yardstick at your hip, and make sure you can maneuver around the space without the yardstick touching anything.

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- **Accessible Restrooms** make life easier for everyone; who doesn't like more room and some helpful bars! But for people with disabilities it is often the difference between being able to use the bathroom or not. An accessible restroom has: 1) a doorway at least 32 inches wide; 2) at least 42 inches of mobility device rotation space; 3) an accessible stall with a door at least 32 inches wide, grab bars 33"-36" high next to the toilet, a seat 17"-19" high from floor, a stall interior that is 60" wide; 5) a sink without a cabinet or obstruction below it so a person can roll their wheelchair under the sink. If the soap and hand towels are not reachable from a seated position in a wheelchair, just add a new bottle of hand soap and paper towels in a reachable position on the sink counter. If there is a single use private restroom, it must meet the requirements of the accessible restroom stall.

PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

Program access is also important for people with disabilities to participate in organizing events like phone banks, canvasses, fundraisers, large rallies, and outreach opportunities. In order to know what you will need to provide your disabled participants, you should get an RSVP with a reasonable accommodations request. To collect reasonable accommodation requests, you can add this language to your invite or RSVP:

"To request a reasonable accommodation, please call [INSERT OFFICE OR FIELD REP'S PHONE NUMBER] at least [# DAYS] days in advance."

It is reasonable to give a one-week deadline in advance of the event for requesting most accommodations. Reasonable program modifications should address the person's needs in order to participate. If you offer a selection of options, let the person with the disability choose which one works best.

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Typical Program Modifications Disability

Possible Modification

Deaf or Hard of Hearing
(HOH)

- Live Captions (Reserve in Advance)
- American Sign Language Interpreter (Reserve in Advance)
- ASL Placement: should be on the same plane as the speaker and clearly visible to the Deaf, must be able to see the interpreter from their waist-up, and the speaker's face, in the same field of vision.
- Find a volunteer who speaks ASL to volunteer their time to interpret

Blind or Low Vision

- Accessible Materials Emailed in Advance or provided on a thumb drive*
- Standard materials in 14pt Arial font
- Large Print (Materials in 20+pt font)
- Sighted Guide

Chemical Sensitivity: Strong
Scents products or
Chemicals

- Provide Dust or Painters Masks

Dexterity (Trouble standing,
walking)

- Provide seating and assistance with standing
- Provide scribe to help them write (or ask them to bring a friend)

General Assistance

- General Assistance
- Provide a Personal Attendant

*Accessible materials for the blind should be the text ONLY (no graphics or pictures etc.) in a word doc or rich text file. Graphics or pictures can be replaced with an image description.

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ACCESSIBLE SOCIAL INTERACTION AND LANGUAGE

An essential part of program access and accessibility in planning is making sure that your social interaction and language is appropriate and inclusive. This can make or break the disability community's experience with and impression of you. Like any other community, seniors and people with disabilities want to be the originators of language about them.

Guidelines for interacting with people with disabilities:

- Look at and speak directly to the person, not their interpreter or personal attendant.
- Do not touch or lean on someone's wheelchair or mobility device. Just like your legs get you around, so does someone's mobility device; it's a part of their person.
- Do not treat people with a disability as "special" or "inspirational." People with disabilities are just like anyone else and performing a simple task should not be made into a heroic accomplishment.

Guidelines for talking about disability:

- Do not refer to a person's disability unless it is relevant. For example, don't ask "What's wrong with you?" or refer to the "girl in the wheelchair".
- Use "disability" rather than "handicap" to refer to a person's disability.
- Use "disability" instead of "special needs" or "challenged." The needs of people with disabilities are the same as everyone else, they are just provided differently.
- When talking about or referring to an object use the word "accessible," for example, "accessible parking space."
- Don't portray people with disabilities as overly courageous, brave, special, or superhuman. This makes it sound like it is unusual for people with disabilities to have talents, skills, or to live life like everyone else.
- Don't use "normal" to describe people who don't have disabilities. It is better to say "people without disabilities" or "non-disabled" if necessary to make comparisons.
- Older generations tend to prefer people-first language: people with disabilities. Younger generations tend to prefer disability-first language: disabled person.

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Outdated Language

Words you should **NOT** use when describing or talking about a person with a disability

- Crazy, insane, Hyper-sensitive, Spastic, spaz, unfit, Schizophrenic
- Cripple, cripp, gimp, lame, Handicapped, physically challenged, special needs
- Retarded, slow
- Victim, stricken, Poor, unfortunate, Suffers from (an illness or disability)
- Wheelchair-bound
- Brain damaged
- Dwarf, midget
- Dumb, deaf-mute
- Visually Impaired
- Deformed
- Normal
- Not disabled, not disabled enough

Respectful Disability Language

Words you **SHOULD** use when describing or talking about a person with a disability

- Mental Health disability
- Disabled, People with disabilities
- Cognitive or Intellectual disability, learning disability, developmental disability
- Person living with...
- Wheelchair user
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Little person, Someone of short stature
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Blind or Low Vision
- Person with dexterity issues
- Non-disabled
- Invisible disability, Hidden disability

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ENGAGING VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REV UP CAMPAIGN: WWW.AAPD.COM/ADVOCACY/VOTING/.