NACDL is the Association of the Nation's Criminal Defense Bar. This project is supported by Grant No. 2019-YA-BX K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. Which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crimes, and The SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this program are those of the presenters and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the US Department of Justice.

>> Monica Milton: Okay, let's go ahead and get started. Thank you for joining us today's webinar, Accessibility and universal design for Legal Professionals. My name is Monica Milton. I'm a black woman with sandy brown hair and I'm wearing a tan shirt. I serve as the Council for Public Defense and Special Projects at NACDL and we're so excited to welcome everyone to today's program. This program is part of our Strengthening the Sixth Grant, which is part of DOJ's commitment to help ensure our Sixth Amendment rights are protected in our legal system. Our partners in this work are the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the National Center for State Courts, and Research Triangle Institute International. So on behalf of our entire team we're excited to be partnering with RespectAbility to bring you this program. This program will include ASL interpretation and we may take brief pauses in the program as necessary to allow changing of the interpreters. We would like to take a moment to thank our interpreters for their work today. We will also be utilizing live captioning services. If you wish to access it please enable your captioning function. So I'm going to keep my intro short we're gonna we have a lot of content to get to. The bios for our wonderful speakers can be found on our webinar's homepage. So first I'll introduce Graciano Petersen, who is the Director, the Senior Director of Talent Culture and Training at RespectAbility. And Ariel Simms, RespectAbility's President and CEO. So I will turn it over to our esteemed speakers for our program.

>> Graciano Petersen: Thank you so much Monica for that wonderful introduction. And I'm going to pull up a series of slides here to share with you all. And when we can go ahead and get started, since we already have been introduced. But I am Graciano Petersen, Senior Director for Talent Culture and Training here at RespectAbility. And I am joined by Ariel. Ariel you mind introducing yourself.

>> Ariel Simms: Hi everyone. This is Ariel Simms. My pronouns are they/them or she/hers. As Graciano mentioned, I am the President CEO of RespectAbility. I am a white nonbinary individual with red hair. I'm wearing a dark suit today in front of a gray RespectAbility virtual background and very glad to be here with all of you. And I'll turn it back over to Graciano.

>> Graciano Petersen: Absolutely yes, and I'm a Black man wearing dark rimmed glasses. I'm wearing a gray blazer and a red shirt today. I'm very happy to be here with you all. I'm going to walk you through the introduction of our content today. RespectAbility is a diverse disability- lead nonprofit, just to let land you on sort of how we came to some of this knowledge that we have as an organization. Our mission is to fight stigmas and advance opportunities, so people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of community, right. That definitely includes how they're represented and how they deal with the criminal legal system. So today's learning objectives, we hope that by the end of this session, legal professionals will be able to explain the concept of accessibility. Including legal requirements when working with disabled individuals. Articulate the basics of reasonable accommodations processes and general best practices. Be able to describe key principles of universal design and Plain Language. And apply them to various practices and approaches in legal settings. Implement five actions to support accessibility and broader disability inclusion efforts; including in their office, agency, and firm practices. And finally name at least three resources that can support them in improving accessibility, including access needs for disabled individuals and clients. Alright, so hopefully we'll able to get through all of this for you all today and give you a nice engaging way to talk a little bit more about accessibility and disability inclusion more generally. To get us started, I want to find out from you all, so if you wouldn't mind sharing in the chat, how would you define accessibility? Let's break this word down. What is accessibility? See a few people are beginning to share in the chat, but what is, how would you define accessibility? Okay, access to tools that help one perform daily functions or job functions. Accessibility allowing all persons to participate. Okay, having the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. Usability by as many people as possible. Ability to be included. Okay, equal access to functions of government and public functions. Having equal opportunity to participate. Okay, allowing everyone who wishes to participate equally. Okay, removing barriers to community. Ease of use. Inclusion and belonging. Being recognized and honored. Making information activities or environment sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible. Okay great, so we have the right audience here, because there's a lot of folks who are who definitely understand accessibility, have a good grasp on what accessibility is, and sort of what we are trying to achieve here, right? So what we're going to be talking about is accessibility and of course beginning with accessibility from the start. Okay, so for us we have the standard definition of what accessibility is and also what it means to us, right. So accessibility is the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, IT, programs, and/or services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them, right. We like to take this a step further by saying that we want to also be ensuring that your intended audience can fully participate and/or act on the information that is being shared. And one of the key tenets to access, is that access does, will, and definitely can, benefit everyone, right? So if we think about accessibility first, it will hopefully get to a place where everybody is fully included. Accessibility is important for every single person, right, and there are a few things that have been designed for the disability community that we now know are just great things for everyone, right. If we think about curb cuts in the sidewalk, right. You know, those little divots that people use to get their bike up on the curb, get a stroller that they're pushing up on the curb, or just so they don't have to step up and down off of the curb. Those curb cuts were really there for, were created to make it easier for people with mobility issues to get around. But they're now, they're a huge benefit to everyone, I can't imagine sidewalks without them, and when they don't have them, I get really annoyed, right, because I need to use them all the time. So curb cuts are example of one great thing that has been created for accessibility for people with disabilities, but is really beneficial to all people, right. When we think about accessibility being important for everybody, we have to remember a couple of numbers and percentages that are really impactful when we think about accessibility. 20% of people in the US are deaf or hard of hearing. That's 48 million Americans. Okay, more than 1 million people in the US are blind and more than 12 million have low vision. More than 5 million people in the US are English language learners, right. So it's likely that more than 40 million Americans have a learning disability, though many are undiagnosed or don't identify with the disability community, right. If we're adding all of these numbers up, right, we're getting pretty close to 100 million Americans who are needing us to think about accessibility when we're designing all of our programming, and ways to be inclusive for them. So we have to make it accessible. If something is accessible, your target audience can participate, they can understand, and they can engage or take action. And of course there are some common types of access needs when we're thinking about that. We can think about a physical or mobility access, right. Having those curb cuts on the sidewalk. Really great example of how we've tried to address that in society generally. Sensory access. Whether it be auditory, visual, olfactory, and environmental stimulation, right. Those are different things that people might not have full access to. We've thought about different kinds of sensory access in designing this programming today, right. This is why we have ASL interpreters, right, as well as CART, right. Depending on how you are trying to access us, you have the ability to do so, okay. We are, we have also think about cognitive access, right. That's one of the harder ones to sort of, to navigate sometimes in spaces, because we don't like to change our language, right. To make it as accessible as it could be, right. And that includes how we think about communication access, including language considerations as well, right. Making sure that people of different backgrounds and representation within English language learning, are able to access our language as well, right. So make it accessible. We're making accessible, we're thinking about how we can get to a place where everybody can engage or take action. So Ariel you're going to walk us through some more of the legal considerations for that accessibility conversation.

>> Ariel Simms: Absolutely. Thank you so much, Graciano. So of course we know our primary audience today and for the overall webinar series is legal professionals. So, you know, I think as lawyers and other kinds of legal professionals, we're always wondering: What are the legal considerations? What are the legal implications when we're talking about a particular topic? So I'm going to run you through some of the legal considerations that impact a lot of different legal professionals. And we're going to look at a few different titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act or the ADA. And if you're here from a federal system don't worry this also applies to you. Just a different law. In that case we're talking about the Rehabilitation Act. But when we're talking about how these civil rights laws are applied in practice, we generally apply them the exact same way. But imagine most of you, the rumor here, from state and local systems, private practice perhaps, working in a firm setting. So we're going to focus on the Americans with Disabilities Act. But just to note, for those of you who work in the federal system, we're not leaving you out. All this information will apply to you as well. So I mentioned Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act, are two civil rights laws here in the US, that help enforce the rights of people with disabilities. Now like any good law, it's got lots of sections, lots of titles, lots of things that put the requirements in place for making sure that when we are working as legal professionals, working within legal systems, that we can do what we need to to make systems, processes, and procedures more accessible. So we're going to talk about two particular titles because one's really important for how we think about how we're working externally. How we're informing the systems that we're working within. And the other really gets to working within our own organizations. Whether you work in a firm, or an agency, an organization. That's really what we're going to kind of focus on with the other piece of the ADA. So I'm going to start with Title II. And Title II of the ADA applies to public entities. And this includes courts, court personnel, court actors, judges, and of course attorneys. So AKA legal professionals are very often covered by Title II of the ADA. Now Title II also does some really wonderful things and puts in place some different systems, and mechanisms, and tools to help us do our jobs better as legal professionals. One of the requirements is that any public entity that has more than 50 individuals within it, you've got to have a designated ADA coordinator. And this is somebody that has specialized knowledge who can help an entity with compliance considerations and issues. So often you'll find this particularly, it's usually easier to find in things like courts, in bigger court systems, in other parts of the other parts of legal systems it can be a little bit trickier. And sometimes people don't even know that this is a requirement, so they don't have a designated person. But it's something that you can also take back and advocate for within the systems that you're working within. Now Title II and the overall ADA is very much focused on civil rights, right, it's a civil rights law. It's about how we prevent discrimination by enforcing rights. And I see we have a slight technical difficulty with our slides. Those will come back in just a moment. But in the meantime I'm going to continue to talk to you about Title II, and then we'll talk about Title I. So under Title II, a couple of things. Because it's a civil rights law, my overall law is a civil rights law, we're always thinking about what does it mean for us not to discriminate against a protected class. And in the case of the ADA and the Rehab Act, the protected class we're talking about people with disabilities. Now in our, when we are looking at discrimination in the context of systems, and processes, and procedures, discrimination can show up different ways. It might not be that we are doing anything intentional, right, to infringe on the rights of a person with a disability, but it could be that that is the impact of a particular policy or practice. But there are other ways too that we can think about discrimination in the system. You know, I like to use the term overt for things that are direct. Let's say, you know, you are working with an individual with a disability and you're like, "you know, I'm going to treat you differently because you have a disability," and as a result you harm that individual. That would be an example of overt discrimination. And last but not least, failure to modify. And this comes up because one of the ways that we really enforce and protect rights, around accessibility, around access and effective communication, is to modify the way we usually do things. So some kind of more legal language should describe some of the things that we're going to be talking about today with a focus on Title II. Now I also want to talk to you about Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, because Title I applies to employers. And any employer that has more than 15 employees. So as you can imagine, this covers a lot of different organizations, firms, agencies, all kinds of entities out there who are also employing people. And if you're employing more than 15, you're also covered by Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. And Title I says "employees with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations that help them perform the essential functions of their jobs. But also that they get to access employment at the same level as those without disabilities." So what are reasonable accommodations? We tend to describe these as modifications or adjustments to a job, to a work environment, or one of my favorite ways to describe it, the way things are usually done. So the way we usually do things in an office. The way we usually do things when we're hiring. The way we usually do things when we're recruiting. The ADA comes into play and we have to think about ensuring that our overall processes are going to be accessible internally, inside the organizations that we're working within, to make sure employees with disabilities have the same opportunities. Okay, so that's some of the legal background and considerations. How does this kind of translate into rights and responsibilities? So on the right side of things, the probably the easiest way to describe the rights that people with disabilities have, are two fold. One- the right to effective communication and two- equal access to programs and services. So when we say effective communication, we mean communication that is just as effective for those without disabilities. And then access to programs and services. Access that is just as equal to what folks without disabilities would expect when they're encountering programs and services. So this is the language we use to describe these rights. And I'll refer you back to the first webinar in our series, where we did a deep dive and what does it mean to provide effective communication? What does it look like to think through accessibility with programs and services? And we also spent a little bit more time thinking through what auxiliary aids and services look like. And reasonable accommodations, which is language we tend to use in the employment space, or modification when we're talking about programs and services. So I will point you back to that. We'll spend a little bit more time talking about accommodations today, but if you want a deeper dive, especially into effective communication, please check out the first webinar in this series where we spent a lot of time talking about what it means to effectively communicate as a legal professional working within various legal systems, processes, and procedures. Okay, so let's talk more about accommodations. Now accommodations, as I mentioned, we can be talking about this in a couple of different ways. Typically when you hear the word accommodation, it means provide. A lot of people I think folks mentioned this earlier, people are like oh things that help people do their job. Absolutely, that is one form of accommodation. The other, the other aspect of accommodation is to- what we tend to say accommodation in sort of general language and general consideration. But we might actually consider it a modification in legal language. But regardless you're pretty safe to use both. You can talk about accommodations you can talk about modifications. And the whole idea is to think about ways that we can change things, or adapt how we typically do things to make sure that people can have access. Now when we're talking about providing something that will help enable access, we're also talking about the need to really individualize it for somebody. There's some things that help a lot of people, like for example, we're providing captioning on today's webinar. That's what we might call something like a universal accommodation because it's an accommodation that helps a lot of people, whether they're disabled or not. And so it's something that you'll tend to notice, especially if you're working with disability-lead groups, and community organizations. We often do this as a default for our events, and webinars, and services, and all kinds of things because it's something that can help. But the other important piece of this is around how do you accommodate individuals? How do you take into account individual needs? And in the space that we're talking about, also thinking about personal preferences. And we have a saying in the disability community that, you know, if you know somebody with X disability, you know one person with X disability. Something we also talk about in the autism space, I'm somebody who identifies as autistic, we say this a lot you've met one autistic person, you know one autistic person. Knowing about somebody's disability label, or their diagnosis, or how they describe it doesn't help you understand what they might need, because every individual person, even if they have the same disability label, might need something different for them because their disability experience can vary. Now sometimes with accommodations it's not just about changing how we typically do things, it's also about sometimes offering things, or putting things in place to support them. So for example, getting different types of technology or software in place to support somebody's participation, to support how they're showing up in a workplace, etc. Now some other examples of accommodations. Now the list we're going to share, this is by no means all-inclusive, there are all kinds of accommodations out there. And one resource we really want to point you to is the Job Accommodations Network or "JAN." And there's a website it's called askjan.org and we'll put that into the chat in just a couple minutes. You can find all kinds of information about the world of accommodations. Now sometimes we also use language like, "supports" because it's a little bit easier for people to understand, right. "Accommodations," it's a very legal term. And when we're working with folks outside of legal systems and contexts, people don't necessarily know what you mean by accommodations. So wanted to also just give a really practical tip of sometimes it's easier to talk about supports, or access needs, right. There are different ways you can kind of talk about this, and use terminology in different spaces that will help people understand that you are trying to make spaces, processes, procedures, more inclusive and easier for them to participate in. So some examples. Flexible working hours. So let's say we're talking about accommodations in the context of a workplace. This is like probably the number one accommodation that employers hear about from various types of disabled employees and it's something that we do a lot as a disability-lead organization is being flexible with working hours. And the idea that people can do their best work at different times of the day, but also just the reality of, especially if you work in a national capacity or across time zones, there might be others working even in different time zones that makes having this flexibility more important. Some other examples. Having breaks and making sure there are time for breaks. This is not again not in just in the workplace, this can be in anything. You know, think of the last, you know, for my attorneys out there, the last CLE presentation you went to that was three hours long. Did you get a break during the presentation? Chances are if you didn't, you probably were a little worn out by the end of that. And if you did, you were probably very grateful and it made it easier for you to, you know, enjoy the content being shared for your CLE presentation. Couple other examples. Having things like large print materials, providing things like captioning or ASL interpretation like doing on today's webinar, but we'll get into some more details of those kinds of access services a little bit later in the presentation. And also things like assistant technology and software. Okay, so let's talk about this in the context of legal settings. We can go ahead and move the slide, thank you. All right, so we spent a lot of time talking about this in webinar one, but it's worth reinforcing in this in this part of the series too, that we're often working with people who are going through, whether it's the criminal legal process, a civil legal process, they're interacting with us in some way and they have rights. Especially if they're disabled, they have rights that are going to impact how they should be moving through the legal system or process. And these rights come into play very often even if a person does not disclose their disability, doesn't openly identify as disabled, because there's language in our civil rights bills that say things like, you know, if you know, if they're considered to have a disability it still applies. So that's something to keep in mind too. But the other reality is and a theme you're going to be hearing throughout the conversation today is, access benefits everyone. So if we're changing our practices, we're making them more inclusive more accessible, we're also benefiting a lot more than just individuals with disabilities. So we're going to talk more about sort of how we create accessibility. And again, there are some legal considerations when we're talking about those with disabilities. But we're also talking about best practices and things that will help whoever you're working with in the context of a legal system process or procedure. Okay, so let's get ready for some participation in the chat. I want to hear from all of you who are joining us for the webinar- what kinds of things do you think you can make accessible? What kinds of things do you think you can make accessible? We'll give everybody a moment to think about that and put some ideas in the chat.

>> Graciano Petersen: And this is Graciano. Ariel while they're thinking, we did have a a question about reasonable accommodations. "Are some of the things that you mentioned would be considered reasonable accommodations?"

>> Ariel Simms: Great question. So when we're talking about accommodations in the employment space, I see that question is also wondering about like is $300 limit on accommodations is that reasonable. So an accommodation is reasonable if it does not pose a quote-unquote "undue burden on an employer to provide." And typically means a very significant financial expense. Or it's something that would kind of fundamentally change the nature of the position, the job, the role, something that would make it not the job that the employee was hired to do. So when it comes to something like $300, I'm here to tell you generally courts are going to find that is completely reasonable to be able to provide that to employees. Now the best news is when we're talking about a lot of accommodations, there's a lot of accommodations that can be provided at absolutely no cost. There are lots of free ways to provide accommodations and access for your employees. And again, I'll direct you to that website resource askjan.org, because it's going to give you all kinds of information about the most common types of accommodations, information about how to implement them, how to find different services, but at the end of the day there's a lot of I think myths that accommodations are often prohibitively expensive and that they're hard to do. I'm here to tell you, as a as a leader of a majority disabled organization, they are not. They are not, and we are cross-disability which means we have all kinds of disabilities and access needs represented in our organization. We also work across time zones, we're fully remote. There's all kinds of things. And it is not prohibitively expensive, and it doesn't have to be difficult to provide those kinds of things for your employees. Great question. Okay, I see we got some really great stuff coming in from the chat about, you know, an answer to the question: "What kinds of things can you make accessible?" We have examples like "websites, documents, PowerPoints, oral communication, how you set up courtrooms, meeting modalities..." Let's see what else do we have. "Treatment programs, substance use assessments, website materials, discovery." Excellent. You guys are on it. So the short answer to this question is- you can pretty much make anything accessible if you think about accessibility ahead of time, and you're willing to, you know, put some resources, and the resources could simply be time into thinking through what accessibility can look like. So we can go to the next slide because I can tell you as a disability-lead and a disability advocacy organization, we're also going to always say that everything should be made accessible. Things that can be should be, because again it's not only going to benefit those with disabilities, it's going to benefit so many other individuals. We had heard the example earlier of English language learners, you know, and how many of us are working with folks who may be immigrants, or refugees, or learning English for the very first time for some other reason. Very important and helpful to them. So really important to just think about that really lots of things that we do are going to benefit everybody. So this is not a comprehensive list, but these are some of the things that we're talking about when we say make it accessible. Digital resources, how you communicate, how you share information, your processes, meetings and events, venues, including physical spaces but also virtual ones. So these are all things that you can think about ahead of time of how to make accessible and make some practices to do things differently. So let's get more into the how to. How do we, how do we make something accessible? And I'm going to give you a very simple formula to think about. So here's the formula. Universal design, plus individualized accommodations, equals access. Universal design, plus individualized accommodations, equals access. It is that simple. Now there are lots of things that can maybe fall into how we make something individualized, and what accommodations people may need, but don't over-complicate it. There are so many best practices out there and there's so many resources for how we can make things accessible on the front end. So as long as you are putting into place best practices, and then you're giving individuals an opportunity to tell you what else they may need, you're going to create a far more accessible experience, document, tool, website, you know fill in the blank, than you've ever thought about before. So let's go into universal design and a little bit more about what does it mean to universally design something. Now I'll also direct you back to webinar one, where we introduce the concept of universal design, and we mentioned that it really started in architecture. Because it was about how we design, built environments, you know. When we're creating physical things in the world, how do we make them that everybody can enjoy them and use them? And since then, universal design has been adapted for all kinds of things, all the things that we' mentioned on that list, you know. For the digital world, for the physical world, for processes, for communication. You can apply these principles to pretty much everything. So I'm going to give you a rundown of the principles. There are seven. The first is equitable use. An equitable use just means users of all different abilities, backgrounds, resources, considerations can have an equitable experience. Not necessarily an equal one, but an equitable one. And accessing whatever it is they're trying to access. Second is flexibility in use. This means there is more than one way to access the information. So an example of this is, during this webinar, we're providing information. We're doing that in the form of sharing information verbally, but we also have slides that reinforce some of our key points. So we're providing information in different ways. Same information, different modes of presentation. The third principle is simple and intuitive. And for this one I always think of, you know, like think of the best airport you've ever been in and then think of like the worst airport you've ever been in. The worst experience. Chances are the best one it's because it's really easy to understand the airport, the layout, where you need to go, where you find your bags, and you get to your gate, all those kinds of things. And the worst airports tend to be the exact opposite of that. Not simple, not intuitive. All right, we have perceptible information as design principle number four. So making sure that the information is available in multiple formats. Coming back to our airport example, you know, we might have overhead announcements coming into play. We also have visual paging systems. We have signs. We have staff available at information desks to answer questions. There are lots of different ways that you can get information and interact with information. For example, in an airport. You can think about it on a website too, right. How are all the different ways that you're thinking about information on your website? Do you have print copy? Do you have images? Do you have videos? You know, things different ways that people can interact with the information. Number five on the list is a tolerance for error. Tolerance for error, AKA, you know, assume human beings will not be able to interact with whatever it is you're creating in a way without error. That we're going to make mistakes, and think about that ahead of time, right. What kinds of things would people, you know, expect? What kinds of things could they, what kinds of errors could they make? Low physical effort. And again the sounds like something that should only be in the physical world, but it also applies to the digital world. Like for example, navigating a website. And allowing navigation of a website using a keyboard instead of a mouse. Or using a mobility assistance device instead of a traditional mouse. So accounting for that, the lower the physical effort, the easier it is for people to participate and access what you're trying to create. And last but not least size and space is a really designed for the approach and use. So whatever it is you're creating, it's appropriate to the audience who's trying to use it and how they're trying to access the information. Okay, so that's universal design. And things that you can think through again. Pretty much anything on that list that we talked about. But I also want to give you some tips for resource accessibility. And when I say resource, I mean things like content, creating documents, creating presentations, putting together a video. What kinds of things will help it be more accessible? And for this I'm also going to give you an acronym- F.L.A.C. F-L-A-C. And, you know, my really terrible joke is if you don't make your resource accessible, you're gonna get FLAC. I know, it's not a great joke, but it's the joke that always comes to mind for this acronym. I invite you to think of better ones that you will remember in your work when you're thinking about making resources accessible. Okay, so F.L.A.C. The "F" in F.L.A.C stands for "font." When we're thinking about font, we want a "sans serif font" in readable size. Sans serif means it's not one of those fancy fonts that has tails on all the letters. It's a font like Tahoma, for example. Whatever we're using for our slide deck. Or Arial or Helvetica. Something that is sans serif, and the other piece with font is readable size. Did you know the minimum readable size for a regular document is size 14. Size 14 point. You know, we've been instilled with that it's 12 points. 12 is accessible, 12 is accessible. Turns out minimum font size 14, 14 point. So it's something we think about in every resource, and then depending on the resource, we usually go from there too. So for example with PowerPoint, usually best practice is at least 24 point font. In terms of size. Okay, let's go to the "L" of F.L.A.C, which stands for "links." "Links." When you're adding links to a resource, whether it's digital, or you know, something else, make sure those links are embedded and descriptive. Embedded and descriptive. And the reason for that is lots of folks in the broader disability community, and otherwise, use tools that will read content aloud. We also call these screen readers, screen readers. But there's also things like, you know, text to talk, you know, text to type to text, and all kinds of different softwares and technologies that takes, you know, written information and translates it into audible information. And of course, vice versa. But when you have those kinds of tools and software, if you have links that are not embedded and not descriptive, it will read every single piece of the link. And you can imagine you've seen some pretty terrible links that are, you know, hundreds of characters long, it will read every single character of a link. Much better for that link to be embedded and descriptive. So instead, those tools will read it much more, much more easily. Okay the "A" in F.L.A.C is for "accessibility checkers." "Accessibility checkers." And this is something that is becoming more and more available. So whether you're using Microsoft products, or Google, or Adobe, like whatever it is, this is becoming much more common. And tech companies are competing with each other now, thank goodness, to make tools that will help you make something more accessible. So there's often in any particular program, there's an accessibility checker. You can click on it, it will review the resource that you're creating, and it will say, it will give you some of the big errors that it's finding in your particular resource. So we built this PowerPoint in Microsoft PowerPoint. We used the accessibility checker, and we also did a few other things to make sure that it was accessible broadly from the start. Okay, and last but not least is "C" in F.L.A.C, which stands for "color." And with color, there's a couple of things that you want to be aware of. One is that for when you have different colors, for example, in a presentation. You want to make sure that there is sufficient contrast between things, between that information. Things that are in the foreground versus the background, so people can distinguish between that and color. You also never want to use it as the only means of conveying information. And by that I mean, don't rely on color alone to signal that something is different or important. Because otherwise it's not going to be accessible to a significant portion of the population that may have some form of color blindness, and/or have visual acuity that makes it more difficult to distinguish between colors. And especially colors that don't have some other indicator of what information is important. So a couple of examples there. Okay, and last but not least, before I turn it back over to Graciano, I just wanted to talk to you a little bit about plain language. And plain language is really, plain language, when people hear this they're like "oh, that must be for people with disabilities." The answer is plain language is for everybody. One of the best definitions of plain language I've ever heard is- communicating in a way that your audience can understand the first time. And when you think about it this way, you know, I think generally speaking, we never want to communicate in a way that our audience cannot understand the information the first time, because that defeats the purpose of sharing information. So that's really what it's all about. But it's also lead to a broader movement of making information more understandable. Now there are a couple of resources here that I want to point you to. One of them is the Autistic Self Advocacy Network. They have some really great resources on both plain language, as well as easy read, which is a more specific way to make information accessible to those who need a different level of support with information. But plain language has also been a mandate of the federal government for a long time. Since they often are communicating with members of the general public. So the federal government also has lots of resources available at plainlanguage.gov. Okay, couple of just quick principles on plain language, and then I'll turn over to Graciano to start putting some all of this, putting it all together. What does it look like when you're hosting things like events or meetings, and you're getting ready to make those accessible. So some general principles of plain language. Content is well- organized and easy to follow. It speaks to the reader. And I will just flag that this is completely contrary to how we're trained as legal professionals. And we're never taught to use the "you," the "you voice," right. We're always writing in third person. It's considered more professional quote- unquote "active voice." Another huge challenge for us legal professionals. We love our passive voice. This is how we write, it's how we write in all kinds of legal writing. But it doesn't make it easier to understand. So we want to use the active voice instead of passive, present tense, short sentences, familiar words, using lists or tables or bullets to simplify information, and using images to enhance the meaning. So some general tips and practices when it comes to plain language. And again, I can hear all of you in the audience being like this is not how I was trained to write or communicate. I hear you it takes practice to undo all of the training that shaped you into the communicators you are today. But I invite you to really explore this, lean in and learn more, so that you can communicate more effectively with anyone that you're working with throughout the legal system. With that, let me turn that back over to Graciano.

>> Graciano Petersen: Right, thank you so much for that Ariel. And I'm going to help you think about how we ensure accessible programming, right. If you're thinking about accessible programming or programming at all, and want to make sure that one of the principles is accessibility. Make sure you think about it at your first planning meeting, right. Accessibility cannot be an afterthought. It really needs to be at the forefront of the planning. So that you don't have to go back and make edits, you don't have to be, to kind of spend money essentially on making accessibility enhancements. But really thinking about ahead of time what do you need when accessibility is being thought about, right. One of the easiest ways to do that first is to confirm that all the event locations are accessible. If this is an in-person event, you have to do a visit and make sure that you are able to see the space and understand how the venue works and how it handles that situation, right. You can partner with an organization to help accomplish that as well. Or you can have a phone conversations with the venue about what the accessibility looks like in that space. Have them walk you through it also virtually with a camera, or what have you. But you want to make sure that you're asking the right questions to the people who are sort of in charge of that. Every venue is going to have somebody who's aware of the the layout, the space, how things work. And you know how accessible it is or isn't. You also want to make it very easy and comfortable for people to request accommodations beforehand, right. That means that on the registration form, you want to ask this very pertinent question, which is, "do you need any accommodations to fully participate in this event?" Or some version of that, right. It doesn't have to be exactly those words. But the point is that you are trying to get to a place of understanding for the people who are going to be in that space of what their needs might be to participate fully in the space, right. You're going to offer and provide accommodations when they are requested. And you got to also make sure you assign or provide a contact information whoever is responsible for the accommodations, right. That means it really can't be a general info "@" address. It can't be a generic address. It really needs to be some assigned to a certain person. And the reason being is that it's very demoralizing and discouraging for people with disabilities to sort of go through the info app, and sort of be filtered through just a regular person, just like a regular person who might not have the direct information for what they need, but somebody who is well versed in having a conversation around what their accommodation needs are. And could be. So again for in-person meetings, some additional things you want to think about is audio/visual needs, right. Just like we have captioning and ASL in this virtual space, you can also have it in an in-person meeting as well, right. You'll have a pair of interpreters depending on how long your event is. Maybe even a bigger team of interpreters who would be able to switch off and have, and be to interpret those conversations as they're happening live. You can have a person who is checking in remotely to do your captioning, but it appears live on a screen for everybody who is in the room to be able to access, right. One of the beauties of CART is to see them do it. Not only virtually, you expect it to be done virtually and at a distance, but you were in the room and that CART provider could be in the room with you, or they could be hundreds of miles away, and you're still having the same great access to the captioning because of how they work so well remotely, and in that space of making sure that you're using really great communication tools to get that accomplished, right. One of the things for in-person meetings is that there's always that one person who will come up to the mic and not want to use the mic because their voice carries, it's totally fine. If you are using CART, you're going to need that person to speak directly into the mic so that the CART provider is able to hear, right. So as much as they might protest about how audible they are, they're never that audible. So you always have to make sure that you're pushing using the mic. And not only for CART, but really in general, you have no idea the level of communication issues that somebody might be having in the room with the din of other things going around on around them. If they're using hearing aids, or if they just have generally their hearing is not full, they still need people to use the mic because it's helpful for them, right. A mix of table heights and seating options is really going to be very important. There is an image here on the screen that sort of reflects that idea. There are people in wheelchairs who are able to go to a buffet style setting for some food and serve themselves, because the table heights are accessible to them in their wheelchairs, right. Chair space navigation for wheelchair or mobility aid users is also really important. Still thinking about if somebody is a wheelchair user, they need to be able to navigate around the things that are in that physical space, right. That's going to be a very different idea for somebody who is not using a mobility aid of any kind. But if they're using mobility aid need some extra space. Quiet room or sensory room for those who get over simulated and might need a space for a break is really important. And also to like think about inclusion when it comes to people who are really restricted in what their dietary needs could be. Always have food labels with the ingredients listed, clearly labeled, and indicative of whether or not they fit into certain dietary restrictions. One thing that was already mentioned also is that pre-programming in breaks is essential, right. Because we don't know why someone might need the break. We don't need to inquire as to why they need a break, but having breaks is just helpful for folks who are navigating all kinds of disability things. When we take it to a virtual space, it's going to be some of the same things that we're talking about, right. But making sure that we are emphasizing a couple key things that might be a little bit different when we're in the virtual space that we might not think about. Each person should say their name every time they begin speaking, because one, it's helpful for our wonderful CART providers, like that we have today. They might be very used at this point to some of our voices, and they know who we are as we're speaking. But it's also just good for them to know that. Additionally, people who might be blind or low vision and not aware of who is speaking, because they were not aware of, they can't see who's speaking or whose Zoom box has highlighted to indicate that they're speaking. It's also a good rule for them as well, right. It's helpful to make sure that you're being fully inclusive by stating your name before you speak. And generally it's helpful to reduce the amount of additional noises, and then that comes into that space any individual who's not speaking should really be muted and on mute if they can be, right. There are some exceptions to this in in case there are, there are some access needs that might prevent you from being able to mute and unmute easily because you don't have that physical ability to do that. So we have to think about which modifications are going to work in a space depending on access needs, right. You don't always have to in a virtual space unmute to speak, right. If we can all offer the option for people to use the chat so they can express themselves there, that's also an option as well. But we also need to make sure that we're talking through what it looks like in case that access need interferes with another access need. For some people who might be using a screen reader, and having that chat message being read aloud during the meeting might be a distraction for them. All right, our ASL interpretive video would always stay on the entire time it's usually pinned for people who need that access. And again, 10-minute breaks every hour or so, right. So breaking for virtual meetings is also super important. Everything that I've mentioned here can also be found on RespectAbility's website under accessible virtual events. And something that we do all the time just like we're hosting you all here now, right. So we do recommend these things to think about your best practices in virtual meeting settings. Some additional best practices to share your materials in advance including agendas, notes, and also like a summary afterwards. When you share your materials in advance you allow people with low vision or who are blind access to the materials in a different way. For instance, this PowerPoint presentation is great if you're able to engage with it live in the Zoom, but if you are blind or low vision, you probably need to have that access beforehand so you can run through it with your screen reader, and figure out what's happening, and sort of position yourself in the whole experience of the information that's being shared, right. It's also really important to present information in multiple ways. It's one thing to have it on the screen in a PowerPoint presentation, but also to be talking about it too, it gets a at a different level of interpretation for different people. An audio description of visual information including you is really important. As you saw, everybody who spoke today was really good about describing themselves so that everybody could participate fully, right. And it's always great to have a moderator or facilitators to help ensure full participation, and be able to do some access check-ins, right. We have a couple people who are working behind the scenes today. Thank you for all those wonderful people working behind the scenes today to do some check-ins with our team of you all who are participating. Language considerations are really important. Making sure that we try to adhere to plain language as much as possible. Using language that is as accessible as possible. And to try to reduce the amount of things that we know are going to require a cultural burden to understand, right. Always evaluate your meetings, and think about how can we get some feedback, so that we can think about how we're growing and improving for the next time. If we have an in-person meeting, is transportation to the site accessible? Is there accessible parking? All of those things are going to be important as well. And also child care, right. For longer meetings and events, what's happening with people who might have children? And how are they going to get there? How are they going to be able to participate fully? And all of this can be covered and fully discussed if there's an access plan or policy that you all are working around, right. Including how, what are the preferred access service providers? And different things like that, right. When we think about access service providers we're talking about CART and ASL, particularly. So some of those access services like I said are CART, right. The "Communication Access Realtime Translation," or C-A-R-T, where we have a live transcriber through a third-party capturing service, right. In order to set them up for success, always provide the names of people who will be speaking, any proper nouns that will be repeated all the time, and any technical vocabulary that they might need to know so they have that accurate caption that they can go back to, right. So this is usually used on all of those virtual platforms like Zoom, but or Teams or whatever else. But it also can be in person or even on a separate screen or individual tablet, right. That's why we have the access link as well that was in shared in the chat, so that people can just use that link and access the captioning on an individual screen if they need to and not just in the Zoom. So automatic captions are fine, right, but they use artificial intelligence. And while artificial intelligence has been improving, sometimes there are errors, especially for someone like me who has a unique name. It's not always said the same way, or necessarily the right way. And so spelling can be very difficult for the captioner, but thankfully the captioner knows us, and knows how to spell my name. So my name I know will always be spelled correctly, but you know Zoom AI has given me a terrible, terrible names in the past. So, you know, usually just like stop at "Grace," or something like that. And just like the best approximation they can, of what they think my name might be. And some additional benefits of live captioning is that it greatly eases the cognitive load of a meeting or event, right. People who are deaf or heard of hearing, knowing that there are captions makes it a lot easier for them. Especially sometimes if they are instead forced to try to read lips or interpret based on what's on the screen or other things, right. People who have learning disabilities and slower processing also benefit from live captioning. So many of us are using captions on our TVs all the time, right. Because it's just super helpful to have the captioning on, same thing when we're in a meeting like this, right. The caption is just help, the captions are helpful to follow along, ease of processing and understanding. We might even get a deeper understanding if we're not only listening, but also reading as well, right. And for people whose first language is not English, it's super helpful for those folks as well. But as we said before, it's actually really helpful for everyone if we're thinking about universal design, all right. And so, just to close this out, of course we also have ASL interpreters as well who are on with us. And same things that we do for a captioner, and getting them prepped, would do the same thing for an ASL interpreter to bring them along. And same additional benefits. It just lowers the cognitive load, and all of those things. Also live audio description of what is on the screen is also very helpful for those who are visually impaired. All right, so if you would like to continue on your disability inclusion journey, we have one more presentation coming up on the 25th. And we'll also just hand it over to Monica to talk through what is next.

>> Monica J. Milton: Thank you Graciano, of course our CART providers, and Ariel for this excellent presentation. We do want to, and Randy if you could, drop the link in the chat for you to register for our next installment of this series. Which I believe is April 25th. So give you a minute to go ahead and click that link so that when we close out you don't lose it. So you can go ahead and register for that, and please do fill out the survey. By now that should be in your email. So thank you all for attending. I learned a lot from this presentation and I hope you all did too.