

respect
ability

FIGHTING STIGMAS. ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES.

Accessibility and Universal Design for Legal Professionals

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Today's Facilitators



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Who We Are

RespectAbility is a diverse, disability-led nonprofit. Our mission is to **fight stigmas and advance opportunities** so people with disabilities can **fully participate** in all aspects of community.



Today's Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, legal professionals will be able to:

1. Explain the concept of accessibility, including legal requirements when working with disabled individuals
2. Articulate the basics of reasonable accommodations processes and general best practices
3. Describe key principles of universal design and plain language and apply them to various practices and approaches in legal settings
4. Implement 5 actions to support accessibility and broader disability inclusion efforts, including in their office, agency, and/or firm practices
5. Name at least 3 resources that can support them in improving accessibility, including access needs for disabled individuals and clients

Share in the Chat:
How would you define
accessibility?

Accessibility from the Start

What is Accessibility?

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.

Ensuring your intended audience can **fully participate** and/or **act on the information** being shared.

Access benefits everyone.

Accessibility Is Important For All

- Curb cut phenomenon
- 20% of people in the U.S. are Deaf/Hard of Hearing; that is 48 million Americans
- More than 1 million people in the U.S. are blind and more than 12 million have low vision
- More than 5 million people in the U.S. are English language learners
- It is likely that more than 40 million Americans have a learning disability, though many are undiagnosed or don't identify with the disability community

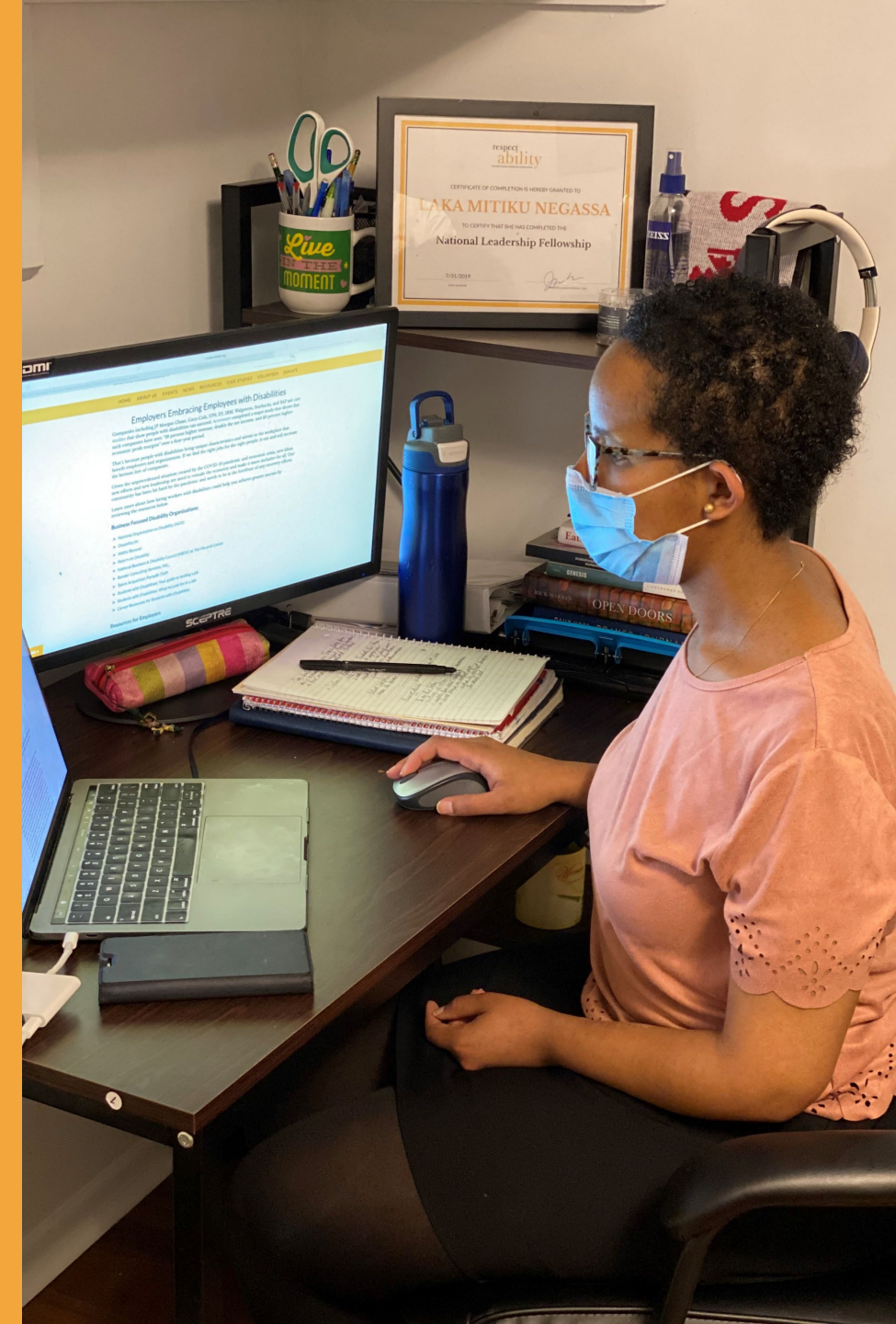
Make It Accessible

- If something is accessible, your target audience can:
 - **Participate**
 - **Understand**
 - **Engage or take action**
- Common types of access needs
 - Physical/mobility access
 - Sensory access (auditory, visual, olfactory, and environmental stimulation)
 - Cognitive access
 - Communication access, including language considerations

Legal Considerations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Title II of the ADA
 - Public entities, including the courts, court personnel, and court actors, including judges and **attorneys**
 - ADA Coordinators
- Anti-discrimination and reasonable modifications
 - Overt, disparate impact, and failure to modify



Title I of the ADA

Employees with disabilities are entitled to **reasonable accommodations**

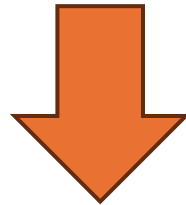
Reasonable accommodations are **modifications or adjustments** to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done

These modifications or adjustments **help disabled people perform the essential functions** of their jobs and/or create equal opportunity in employment

Rights and Responsibilities

- **Rights**

- Effective communication
- Access to programs and services



- **Responsibilities: Anti-Discrimination**

- Auxiliary aids and services
- **Reasonable accommodations (or modifications)**

Accommodations

- Some programming will require participants to request reasonable accommodations
- Individualized inquiry, taking into account personal preferences
- This may require offering and securing technology or software



What Are Examples of Accommodations or Supports?

- Flexible working hours
- Scheduled or frequent breaks
- Captioning or CART
- Large-print materials
- ASL interpretation
- Changes to team communication practices (i.e., using Zoom phone messaging over email)
- Assistive technology/software
- Durable medical equipment



Accessibility for Legal System Participants

- All people must be informed and aware of their rights, and potential consequences in the criminal legal system
- In order to make the process accessible for those with a variety of access needs:
 - Make sure all universal design principles are in place
 - Ascertain what other accommodations a person may need



Share in the Chat:
What things can you make
accessible?

What Should Be Accessible?

- **Everything!**
 - Digital resources
 - Print resources
 - Communications and information
 - Processes
 - Meetings and events
 - Meeting and event materials
 - Venues and physical spaces
 - Virtual spaces

Accessibility How-To

Accessibility Formula



**Universal
Design**



**Individualized
Accommod-
ations**



ACCESS

Universal Design Principles

- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Simple and Intuitive
- Perceptible Information
- Tolerance for an error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach and use

Resource Accessibility

To ensure content is as accessible as possible, check content for the following:

FLAC

- **Font**
 - Always sans serif, **readable** size
- **Links**
 - Embedded and descriptive
- **Accessibility Checkers**
 - Flags major errors and also gives warnings and tips
- **Color**
 - Contrast/conveying information

Plain Language

- Communicating in a way that your audience can **understand the first time**
- A general movement toward understandable information
- Resources
 - [Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#)
 - [www.PlainLanguage.gov](#)

General Principles of Plain Language

- Well-organized/easy to follow main ideas
- Speaks to the reader (“You”)
- Active voice
- Present tense
- Short sentences
- Familiar words
- Use lists and tables to simplify information
- Images to enhance meaning

Ensuring Accessible Programming

At your first planning meeting, make sure to:

- Confirm that all event locations are accessible.
 - Make sure that there are people in charge of accessibility checks with venues and online platforms.
- Make it easy and comfortable for people to request accommodations beforehand; include this phrase in **every** registration form:

"Do you need any accommodations to fully participate in this event?"

 - Offer and provide accommodations when requested
 - Assign/provide contact information of whomever is responsible for accommodations



In-Person Meetings

- Audiovisual needs
 - Captioning/CART
 - ASL Interpretation
- Mix of table heights and seating options
- Chair space/navigation for wheelchair/mobility aid users
- Quiet room/sensory room – space for a break
- Food labels with ingredients listed
- Breaks



Best Practices for Virtual Meetings

- Each person should say their name every time they begin speaking
- As a general rule, any individual not speaking should be on mute
- Give them an option to share thoughts if others are doing so verbally (chat box)
- Read chat messages aloud
- ASL interpreter video stays on the entire time
- Have 10-minute breaks every hour or so

www.respectability.org/accessible-virtual-events

Additional Best Practices

- Share materials in advance, including agendas, and notes/summary afterward
- Presenting information in multiple ways
- Audio description of visual information, including you!
- Moderator/facilitator to help ensure full participation, including access check-ins
- Language considerations
- Evaluate meetings and events/solicit feedback
- Accessible transportation
- Childcare considerations (for longer events/meetings)
- Access plan/policy, including preferred access service providers

Access Services

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

- Live transcriber – third-party captioning service
- Provide names, proper nouns and technical vocabulary for more accurate captioning
- Can be for platforms like Zoom or in-person on a separate screen or individual tablet



Note: Automatic captions using Artificial Intelligence (AI), while improving, will have more errors

Benefits of Live Captioning

- Greatly eases the cognitive load of a meeting or event
 - People who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing
 - People who have Learning Disabilities and slower processing
 - People whose first language is not English
 - Everyone! – Universal Design



Benefits of ASL Interpreters

- If Deaf/hard of hearing individuals want to fully participate, ensure ASL interpreters for active participation
 - **Note:** ASL and English are two different languages
- Share names of presenters and materials ahead of time so interpreters can become familiar with the materials



Live Audio Description

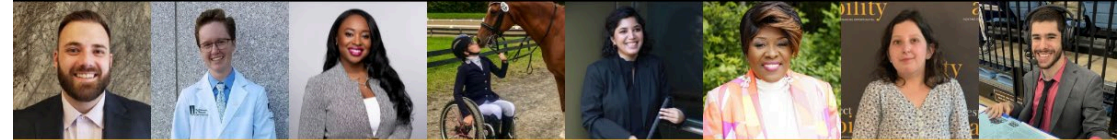
- Speaker should describe what is on screen (PowerPoints or other visual aids)
- **NOTE:** Even if you made the PPT accessible, people will not be able to use screen readers for the PPT being shown on screen (whether virtual or in-person) – send copy prior to event.
- If video clips do not include audio description, the speaker should explain the visuals prior to showing the video
- [Resource on audio description](#)

Continue Your Disability Inclusion Journey

Continue your learning:

- [Disability 101: Ensuring Best Practices in Disability Inclusion](#)
- [Best Practices: Recruitment and Retention](#)
- [Creating a Welcoming, Inclusive and Accessible Organization](#)
- [Ensuring Accessible In-Person and Virtual Events](#)
- [Living with a Disability in an Inaccessible World](#)
- [Mental Health & Wellness in the Workplace](#)
- [Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy](#)

Nothing Without Us.



Disability Training & Consulting Bureau

Email JakeS@RespectAbility.org
for more information

Equity and Access Webinar Series

- Disability 101
- Disability History
- How to Ensure Accessible Events
- How to Recruit, Accommodate and Promote People with Disabilities for Paid Employment, Volunteer Leadership and Board Positions
- How to Ensure A Welcoming Lexicon and Inclusive Storytelling
- How to Ensure Accessible Websites, Social Media and Inclusive Photos
- Premium Skills Workshop in Social Media Accessibility
- How to Ensure Legal Rights and Compliance Obligations

Watch Recordings, Download Transcripts and PowerPoints:

<https://www.respectability.org/accessibility-webinars/>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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