

## Provide Access to Meetings With Advance Planning

Since you don't always know who will attend an event, all meetings should be planned for accessibility for people with disabilities and other access and functional needs. Advance planning can help ensure that accommodation needs are anticipated and addressed beforehand. As training events are planned, use these important principles and resources to help make all meetings accessible to any participant who wants to attend.

- **Realize that disabilities affect people in different ways.** Disabilities are sometimes visible and sometimes not; they can be permanent or temporary; they can affect people of any age; they can be severe or not. Be prepared to welcome everyone of all abilities. For a comprehensive view of disability in America today, visit <http://www.disability.gov/>.
- **Invite participants to make requests for accommodation on all communications.** Include a simple statement like the following on invitations, brochures, registration forms,

programs, and web sites: *For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations, please contact (insert name) at (include phone and e-mail address so those with a hearing or verbal disability can make inquiries). (insert number) weeks advance notice will allow us to provide seamless access.*

- **Promote accessibility with universal symbols.** There are twelve simple symbols that are used to promote and publicize accessibility for people with disabilities. All symbols are available for free download as TIFF files with explanations for their use at <http://www.graphicartistsguild.org/resources/disability-access-symbols/>.
- **Remove barriers to participation.** Making any event accessible to participants starts with the identification of potential barriers. States, agencies, and institutions provide excellent guides to this process. You can download the North Carolina guide at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh/pdfs/rbmeetingguide.pdf>.

## Provide Access to Meetings With Advance Planning, *continued*

### More Resources

If you need more information about accommodating participants with disabilities and other access and functional needs or meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many resources are available through federal and state agencies, as well as through institutional ADA offices. In addition to the sites previously mentioned, visit these sites for additional resources.

- **U.S. Department of Justice:** <http://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm>
- **National Network of ADA Centers:** [www.adata.org/](http://www.adata.org/)  
Provides links to ADA Centers in every region and state in the United States

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/TitleVI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2017, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by The University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.

For more information, please contact [helpdesk@theicn.org](mailto:helpdesk@theicn.org).

01/2017

