

PCMA Greater Midwest Chapter: Event Planning Timeline for Digital Accessibility

Accessible Events: How and when to incorporate accessibility into your virtual event planning schedule or calendar.

Keep these four steps as your baseline guide.

1. Understand, plan for, and clearly state what accessibility features you are including in your event planning and budgeting.
2. Clearly state on your website, registration, and any FAQs what accommodations you are able to provide.
3. Clearly state the time frame or notice required to guarantee these accommodations.
4. Provide clear and easily found contact details for the person or team that will be able to respond to accessibility inquires and accommodation details.

Accessibility needs to guide every part of meeting and event planning. These considerations for accessibility should be part of your first plans put in writing, even before seeking a venue or platform, speakers, sponsors, or any other aspect of event planning. Positive outcomes are possible when meeting planners focus on accessible events by seeking advice early and often in their planning processes. All attendees benefit from accessible meetings, content, and platforms.

- 20 Weeks (or more depending on your calendar)
 - What accessibility features support your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement or your strategic goals for inclusion for:
 - People of all abilities
 - People with disabilities
 - Disabled people
 - What accessibility features are you budgeting for to be delivered as part of your program? What individual accommodations are you budgeting for that will be unique to the number of people requesting accommodations?
 - Be sure that you understand what the late/rush fees are for these services due to the trend towards late/last minute registrations for virtual events
 - Website accessibility including your registration and payment pages
 - CART Captions

- One captioner per room or engagement area
 - If your program allows attendees to float or choose their sessions and you have a request for captions, you will need to provide captions in all areas or remove your attendee's ability to choose.
- Automated Caption Services
- Closed caption for video content
- Sign Language Interpretation
 - Interpreters do not sign more than 45 at a time, so for one hour, you will have two interpreters
- Document remediation
 - Documents, Presentations, Spreadsheets, PDFs
- Review possible platform delivery partners
 - In your RFP be sure to ask
 - What is your accessibility statement
 - Do you have a VPAT?
 - What level of WCAG do you meet?
 - Having a VPAT does not mean they are accessible, it will tell you what they do and do not support.
 - A VPAT is only valid at the time it is issued. Any changes in code/content may change their accessibility.
 - Is your platform accessible for people using assistive technologies?
 - Can someone engage all of the features using only a keyboard?
 - Does your navigation/engagement require sight and a mouse?
 - Does the platform use an overlay or plugin as their effort to "enhance" accessibility
 - Hint: that means their own platform is not accessible. Accessible websites do not need personalization profile overlays to "make" the site more accessible.
 - Captioning
 - Does your caption display meet DCMP Closed Caption standards?

- Do you support live CART captioning by a third party with an API token?
 - Do you support automated captioning by a third party with an API token?
 - If not, does your platform provide automated captions?
 - What level of accuracy does your automated caption service provide?
 - Are caption displays available in every room/engagement area?
 - Sign Language Interpretation
 - Can all of your presentation areas allow a sign language interpreter to be displayed or pinned IN ADDITION to the content or other speakers?
 - Many platforms have a limited number of display boxes or screens.
 - What is your time frame for fulfilling accommodation requests?
 - 30 days is a widely accepted time for accommodation requests
 - Many services and support cannot be sourced on short notice
 - If an attendee has an accommodation need and does not request in advance, you are not obligated to provide the accommodation
 - Your clarity in stating what you provide and what is available and by what date is VERY important here.
- 15 Weeks
 - Ensure your marketing and publicity including social media includes accessible content
 - No auto-play videos
 - Alt-text for any images
 - This includes when you display an image that includes text
 - AI cannot identify image content or if the automated text is relevant
 - Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is only for characters, not images.
 - Set your anticipated budget for the accessibility features you will include
 - Captioning
 - Sign Language Interpretation
 - Alternative or remediated documents

- Braille
 - Large Print
 - E-Text
 - Captioned video & or audio descriptions
 - Contact your accessibility vendor partners to secure pricing and availability
 - Integrate their timeframes and deadlines into your planning.
 - Placeholders or suggestions are in this outline.
 - Identify your accessibility or accommodations key contact for the event
 - Plan to include accessibility needs in your outreach to speakers or presenters, sponsors, and other VIP attendees
 - Remind presenters that their materials must be in an accessible format or provided to you 30 days in advance to make time for document remediation
- 12 Weeks
 - Ensure your website or webpages about the event are accessible
 - Update your website or webpages with accessibility information that is provided
 - Display the available accommodations and allow for open format responses for additional/other considerations
- 10 Weeks
 - Book contracts for live CART and Sign Language Interpreters based on your included accessibility features
- 8 Weeks
 - If your registration is open, follow up with accommodation requests
- 6 Weeks
 - Consider a tech run through with your platform delivery partner
 - If you are including or anticipating captions and sign language interpretation, these partners should be part of your tech run through
- 4 Weeks
 - This is often the deadline to secure individual accommodation requests for captions, sign language interpreters, and alternative media formats
 - In COVID you will have late and last minute registrations.

- Your budgeting for and planning for accessibility vendors is VERY important for this consideration
 - Provide speakers/presenters with how to be inclusive guidelines
 - Will things be drawn, displayed, demonstrated, pointed to, or saying things like 'you can see that..'
 - Integrate complete descriptions for those who are blind, low vision, or joining audio only
 - Review all speaker/presenter, VIP, and attendee accommodation requests
 - Contact each person with an accommodation request to ensure you can make your event as accessible and equitable as possible
 - You've planned for this (see above)
 - Request all speaker materials and content
 - Review for accessibility
 - Send for remediation as needed
 - Braille requires up to 30 days
 - Large print requires several weeks to produce and consider shipping times if needed hard copy
 - Captioning video content requires several weeks
 - Accessible digital media can require several weeks time
- 2 Weeks
 - Last check with accommodation requests
 - Entering late/rush fee for production of accessible materials
 - Captioning and sign language interpreter partners will benefit from having your materials in advance of your program
 - If your content has a unique vocabulary or terms this is very important
 - Sign language interpreters if matched to an individual will need to know details.
 - Plan to contact the person requesting the accommodation with any questions your interpreting service may ask
- Week Prior
 - Review and confirm all accessibility vendor terms and dates/times
 - Ensure your accessibility key contact has emergency contact information for these vendors or service providers

- Send remediated/alternative media to those who requested the content
- Determine your accessibility emergency plan
 - Room monitors for each session/program should know who to contact and what to anticipate
- Day Of Event
 - Work your plan!
 - Have a great event.
 - Enjoy knowing that all attendees have the opportunity to engage without human-created barriers.