

# Accessibility

## Objective

An event that is accessible and enjoyable for people with all kinds of abilities.

## How Tos

- Check that event spaces and accommodations, if used, are compliant with the accessibility checklist. Talk with the building or facilities manager to find out if they are compliant with the Americans With Disability Act (ADA). Ask them to give you a tour to show you the compliant features. (The accessibility checklist can be very useful.)
- In publicity, outreach and registration materials, mention which facilities are accessible. Note as well if some are not.
- Design your registration form to allow participants to specify accessibility needs. (See sample registration form.)
- Prepare for persons who may need the following in as many ways as possible: wheelchairs, American Sign Language interpretation, large print materials, assisted listening devices, close captioning and fragrance-free seating areas.
- Include a question in your evaluation asking participants if they felt that this objective was fully met. If not, why not, and how might you improve next time?

## Helpful Resources

- Take advantage of the accessibility checklist provided in this guide. Check out the great resources on United Methodist Disability Ministries website at [www.umdisabilityministries.org/ministry/umw.html](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/ministry/umw.html).
- A simple accessibility checklist: [www.doitmyselfblog.com/2008/a-checklist-for-planning-an-accessible-event](http://www.doitmyselfblog.com/2008/a-checklist-for-planning-an-accessible-event).
- An accessible event handbook: [www.eventsevents.com.au/downloads/Accessible\\_Events\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.eventsevents.com.au/downloads/Accessible_Events_Guide.pdf). (Note, this is designed for an Australian audience but is helpful for everyone regardless of nation.)
- Don't forget to utilize the 2014-2015 United Methodist Women mission study *The Church and People with Disabilities: Awareness, Accessibility and Advocacy*.



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## **Fast Facts**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, nearly 1-in-5 Americans—about 57 million people—has a disability. More than half report that the disability is severe.

People with disabilities often have brilliant insights others without disabilities don't. Those who are blind often have very astute hearing and listening skills and those who can't walk often see the world through new perspectives. It's important to value these insights as we seek the full human spectrum in our diversity.

► *Did you consider that many of the improvements to public spaces made for people with physical disabilities have made all of our lives easier, such as for parents with children in strollers?*

## **Policy Foundation**

*The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2012 #3002, "United Methodist Implementation of the United Nations' Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities and the Americans With Disabilities Act":*

Urges all our congregations and agencies to implement and enforce the provision of the Standard Rules, the ADA, and all disability-related programs within every area that members of The United Methodist Church reside with the same vigor and interest as they would any other law affecting their able bodied constituency. This includes, but is not limited to the provision of accessible buildings, bathrooms and parking; telephone access; hymnals and literature in large print and other alternative formats; closed captioning of all audiovisual media; amplification, assistive listening devices, and/or professional American Sign Language interpretation or other indigenous sign language interpretation and real-time captioning when needed.

## Accessibility Checklist

The following checklist is intended to help you identify common accessibility issues at your meeting. It is by no means an exhaustive list but intended to help proactively accommodate for those with varying levels of physical ability.

### Access into and within buildings

- Safe, well-lit and accessible entry for wheelchairs, scooters and walkers, including push-button doors with handles at lower heights.
- Ramps are nonslip and not steep in slope.
- Hand rails are available on ramps and steps.
- Level surfaces free of cobbles.
- Customer service areas have wheelchair access through a continuous line of travel.
- Elevators have enough room for wheelchairs and scooters, with buttons at chair-level with Braille signage.
- Adapted washrooms with wide doors, grab bar.
- Table and chair arrangements are not be fixed and have wheelchair clearance.
- All access should be dignified.

### Transport

- Wheelchair accessible parking and drop off close to entries.

### Information and signage

- Information and services available in alternate formats (Braille, sign language).
- Signage available in alternate formats, with high contrast (large print, Braille, no use of red and green together).

### Guest rooms

- Desks at wheelchair level with clearance underneath.
- Adequate room to maneuver wheelchairs and scooters.
- Roll-in showers.
- Accessible amenities such as coffee service, irons/ironing boards, soaps/shampoo (at chair-height).
- Auditory assistance devices for phones, entertainment.
- Audiovisual includes consideration of captioning.

### Food and beverage

- Accessible banquet lines/buffets.
- Cups with handles.
- Waiter service.