North Carolina Arts Council

Arts For All People

North Carolina Arts Council

Demystifying Accessibility Planning

Jamie Katz Court, Music and Dance Director, Accessibility Coordinator

Access Check-in

Session Overview

- Context
- Best practices
- Audit & Remove immediate barriers
- Plan – what next?
- Implementation – try it!
- Iterate & try new things
- Resources

Q&A – Safe space for asking your questions

Before we begin…

What do we mean when we say "accessible?"

Get in, get around, and engage meaningfully with the program.
~Betty Siegel, Kennedy Center

Before we begin...

- **1 in 4 persons has a disability – many are not visible**
- Disability can include mobility/physical, blind/low vision, Deaf/hard of hearing, sensory conditions, as well as less visible conditions like anxiety, ADHD, chronic illness/pain, PTSD, dyslexia, neurodivergence and more
- Major health conditions, including diabetes, multiple sclerosis, cancer, HIV, mental health conditions,

Context: Disability Fast Facts

Credit: Diane Nutting, Accessibility & Inclusion Consultant

Context: Disability Fast Facts

- **Anyone can acquire a disability – temporarily or permanently – at any time!**

- American with Disabilities Act – has been law for 35 years

- Contractual requirement with N.C. Arts Council

- Your organization's accessibility plan does not need to be perfect!

Planning + progression = WIN

Background

- Inclusive vs adaptive design (or integrated vs add-on)

- Assume your audiences & stakeholders will move, communicate, engage, and process in a variety of ways

- Be intentional

- Consider what would be an equitable experience for participants with and without disabilities

Best Practices

Credit: Diane Nutting, Accessibility & Inclusion Consultant

- What is your organization currently doing?

- Who is already participating in your events?

- Keep in mind – you may not know who's using your accommodations during your programs!

- Who is doing the audit? Board? Staff? Volunteers? Mix?

Step 1: Accessibility Audit

- Audit your organization's facilities, spaces, & structures, AND those you **utilize for programming**, including spaces you rent, public spaces, etc.

- Assess communication access, materials, protocols & procedures, outreach

- Examples: alternative formats for grant guidelines; are your programs held in accessible spaces? Can quiet spaces be designated?

Step 1: Accessibility Audit

Step 2: Remove Immediate Barriers

- Does your organization's website provide accessibility information and contact person for your current programs?

- What improvements can be made right away?

- Examples: know before you go guides or emails; large print materials (programs, grant guidelines); assistive listening systems (for hard of hearing), accessibility volunteers, quiet spaces/hours

- Where to start: Who is already in your audience? What are your core programs?

- Plan should include training & expectations – staff, board, volunteers

- Assign specific time frames for implementation – and it's okay if they change!

Step 3: Develop a plan

- SMART(IE) Goals
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Realistic
  - Time-bound
  - Inclusive
  - Equitable

Step 3: Develop a plan

- Designate point person/people for various elements
- Plan may span multiple years
- Trick question: who is responsible for accessibility at your organization?

**Step 3:
Develop a plan**

Step 4: Implementation

- COMMUNICATION: at the foundation: How is accessibility shared with stakeholders AND public-facing personnel?

- TRAINING: If someone asks you or your team a question about an accommodation or access need, do you, your colleagues, volunteers, board members, know the answer, or know how to find the answer?

Reflect, Iterate and Try New Things

- Build on your successes
- Learn from what doesn't work
- Be creative – accessibility can be both creative and fun!

Resources

- Arts Access: artsaccessinc.org

- Southeast ADA Center: adasoutheast.org

- North Carolina Assistive Technology Centers: ncdhhs.gov/divisions/eipd/north-carolina-assistive-technology-program

Resources & Examples

- Kennedy Center:
  kennedy-center.org/visit/accessibility

- SouthArts:
  southarts.org/resources/accessibility

- Access Smithsonian – Resources for Museum & Gallery Professionals:
  access.si.edu/museum-professionals

- Arts Councils:
  Wilson Arts:
  wilsonarts.com/accessibility

  Metro Regional Arts Council (St. Paul MN):
  mrac.org/accessibility-resources

Resources

SouthArts – Accessibility Grant

Grants of up to $2,500 for organizations to make arts programs accessible to persons with disabilities. **Application Deadline: March 5, 2025**

NC Arts Council LEAD Grant

Grants of $3,500 for organizations to send a representative to Kennedy Center's Leadership Exchange in Arts & Disabilities Conference (Aug. 18-22, 2025, Cleveland, OH) and participate in monthly learning community. 10 organizations will be selected, priority to those in Tier 1 & Tier 2 counties. **Application Deadline: May 1, 2025**

Include a line item for accessibility in EVERY grant you apply for!

Depending on the grant, these funds can be used for sign language interpreters, assistive listening systems, large print and/or Braille materials, audio describers, captioning, sensory friendly kits, expanded hours to host quiet hours...and more!

Q&A

Jamie Katz Court

Music & Dance Director, Accessibility Coordinator

919-814-6502; jamie.katzcourt@dncr.nc.gov

THANK YOU!