

## Holding an Accessible Meeting ~ Responsibilities and Procedures

Task	Responsibility	Procedure	Cost
<p><b>Provide 'Notice of Accommodation of Special Needs'</b></p> <p>(Meeting participants are responsible for informing the city clerk or the meeting convener of their special needs)</p>	<p><u>Advertising committees of council meetings:</u> Notice of accommodation of special needs appears in the footers of newspaper ads. The city clerk will be responsible for collecting contact information of the person(s) requesting alternate formats.</p> <p><u>Other public meetings:</u> The meeting convener will be responsible for ensuring that a notice of accommodation of special needs is affixed to, or integrated in, information promoting the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting convener will be responsible for collecting contact information of the person(s) requesting alternate formats.</p>	<p><u>Meeting sign-in or attendance sheet:</u> Include this statement – "Information discussed or presented at this event is available in alternate formats. Please speak with the committee clerk or the meeting convener."</p> <p><u>Simple requests for alternative format:</u> The committee clerk or meeting convener will handle requests if they are part of an existing administrative procedure (i.e. providing material in an electronic format – attachment to an email)</p> <p><u>Complex requests:</u> Forward complex requests to Barry Kaplan, Accessibility Coordinator, ext. 3182. (i.e. provision of Braille or audio transcriptions)</p>	<p>Depends on the nature of the request.</p> <p>The City's accessibility coordinator will arrange and pay for Braille and audio transcriptions.</p> <p>Contact Barry Kaplan, Accessibility Coordinator, ext. 3182.</p>
<p><b>Room Set-up</b></p>	<p><u>Committees of council:</u> The city clerk (or delegated staff) will be responsible for using their "best efforts" to ensure the meeting room set-up is accessible.</p> <p><u>Other public meetings:</u> The meeting convener is responsible for using their "best efforts" to ensure the meeting room set-up is accessible.</p>	<p><u>Room set-up drawing:</u> Provide Facilities Management staff with a simple sketch showing the preferred arrangement of chairs, tables, sound system, etc. Detailed information is found later in this document.</p> <p><u>Walk-around:</u> Before the meeting begins, do a walk-around to determine if the accessible requirements have been met. If not, make whatever adjustments are reasonable.</p>	<p>None</p>

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<p><b>Reserve the Assistive Listening System</b></p> <p>An Assistive Listening System (ALS) is an FM transmitter and microphone and seven receivers and headsets packaged in a portable case.</p>	<p><u>Committees of council meetings:</u> The city clerk will be responsible for set-up and take down of the ALS for meetings within City Hall.</p> <p><u>Other public meetings:</u> The meeting convener will be responsible for pick up, set-up, take down and return of the ALS.</p>	<p><u>Booking the ALS:</u> The ALS must be booked through the Clerk's Office (Carolyn Aylesworth, Secretary at ext. 1212).</p> <p><u>Operating instructions:</u> Included with the ALS and are <b>included in this document</b>. You can also arrange for training sessions with Barry Kaplan, Accessibility Coordinator, ext. 3182.</p> <p><u>Handling headphones:</u> Place headphones used at the meeting in the "To Clean" bag and return with the ALS to the Clerk's Office.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Hire a Sign Language Interpreter (SLI)</b> (upon request of a meeting participant)</p>	<p><u>Committees of council:</u> The committee clerk is responsible for communicating the need for an SLI to the City's accessibility coordinator.</p> <p><u>Other public meetings:</u> The committee clerk is responsible for communicating the need for an SLI to the City's accessibility coordinator.</p>	<p><u>Lead time for booking an SLI:</u> Allow a minimum of four days to book an SLI with the Canadian Hearing Society.</p>	<p>The City's accessibility coordinator will arrange and pay for the SLI.</p> <p>Contact Barry Kaplan, Accessibility Coordinator, ext. 3182.</p>

## Holding an Accessible Meeting ~ Overview

**Pre-Registration:** Pre-registration for the event allows for special accommodation planning. Knowing what resources will or will not be needed (i.e. sign language interpreters) can save time and money. If you do not have enough time to assess accommodation needs, prepare to accommodate any accommodation need.

### Site Selection:

- Do a walk-through of the potential site assessing parking and pathways from the parking areas to the main entrance. Are there enough spaces, are they close to the entrance, is there a passenger drop-off area?
- Determine the location of the nearest bus stop and pathways to the main entrance.
- Assess meeting rooms, elevators, and washrooms.
- In winter, ensure that pathways are clear of snow and have been sanded or salted.
- Ensure that the public address system used in the meeting room can connect with the assistive listening system.
- Microphones can be heavy to hold for a person with limited upper body strength. Provide microphone stands or hands-free microphones. If using microphones during the meeting, make them available in as many areas of the meeting room as feasible. Manage tripping hazards of microphone cables with adhesive tape, or use wireless microphones.

**Access Statement:** In media releases, advertisements, publications and other information about the event, include a statement such as:

"The meeting site is accessible. Individuals attending the meeting are requested to refrain from using heavily scented personal care products. People with disabilities requiring additional information in alternate formats should contact (name) at (contact information) at least three workdays before the event."

**Have a Generous Timeline:** Publicize the meeting at least 10 days in advance. Know when people will receive your announcements. Allow for a longer lead time for people to register and/or contact you about special needs.

**Seating:** Designate barrier-free seating through the seating area. Have adequate open space for people using wheelchairs, seats with a clear view of sign language interpreters and seating close to the podium or stage for people with limited vision. If some of the meeting activities involve moving from table to table, writing on a flip-chart, or moving to a microphone location to speak to the group, allow enough space between pieces of furniture.

**Accessible Information:** Be prepared to provide alternate format material before the event. This includes all speeches, slide presentations, flip-charts, videos, etc. in large print, Braille, audiotape or digital audio file.

## **Holding an Accessible Meeting ~ Refreshments and Additional Services**

### **Serving Staff, Room Arrangement:**

- Be aware that self-serve meals or buffets may present obstacles for some people who are visually impaired or people with a physical disability. Well-trained catering service staff can provide assistance to participants who require additional help. If catering staff is not present, ensure that someone is assigned to assist those who need help getting food.
- Make sure there is room for everyone to maneuver safely between tables. When you look at the venue, think about how the room will be when there are lots of people moving around and sitting at tables.
- Consider having a number of food and beverage service areas spread around the venue. Having a closer service point is helpful for disabled persons. Multiple service points also mean shorter lines for everyone – helpful when meeting breaks are short.

### **Dietary Issues:**

- Make available non-sugar (dietary) beverages, juices and water for people with dietary concerns such as diabetes.
- Ensure that alternatives to pastries and cookies, such as fruits or vegetables, are available for people with dietary concerns.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to indicate their dietary needs on any registration form or invitation to an event where meals are being served.

### **Utensils, Condiments:**

- Where beverages are being served, make bendable straws and lightweight cups available within easy reach of individuals in wheelchairs or scooters. Provide a choice of cutlery and crockery. A mug with handles may be easier for use by some disabled people.
- Individual packages of condiments and milk can be difficult to open for a disabled person. Consider using mild jugs or condiment dishes for these items.

### **Other:**

- If your event is going to be long and crowded, consider providing a quiet room for resting. Some people with mental health issues or fatigue will welcome provision of the quiet room.
- A quiet room may be welcomed by others attending your event, such as those wishing to pray during the day. Check the calendar for religious festivals to prepare to accommodate event participants.
- When you draft your event program, include enough refreshment breaks and ensure they are long enough. Some disabled persons may need more time to eat a meal and visit the restroom. You may need to allow exercise time for assistance dogs. Stick to the timings announced in your program.
- Remove sticky labels from fruits and vegetables. People with low/no vision may not see the labels and accidentally ingest them.

## **Holding an Accessible Meeting ~ Canadian Hearing Society Tips**

- Have only one person speak at a time
- Avoid side conversations – in sign language or spoken word
- Speak clearly at a moderate pace with pacing that allows the interpreter to complete interpretations before replying or asking questions
- Avoid rustling papers or moving objects on the table to reduce unnecessary noise (use coasters under cups or water bottles)
- Establish good sightlines for deaf and hard of hearing individuals
- Avoid gum chewing during meetings
- Keep a 'speaker's list' to ensure everyone who wants to contribute to the meeting has the opportunity to do so
- Schedule short breaks in all meetings to allow interpreters and those who are deafened and hard of hearing the opportunity to rest
- Determine if there are support people or assistants with a meeting participant. Clarify their role (e.g., should documents be circulated to the assistant or the participant?)

## **Holding an Accessible Meeting Information for Using the Assistive Listening System (ALS)**

**Likely Users:** People who are hard of hearing or people transcribing the proceedings or taking notes

### **Contents of the ALS:**

In the black carrying case, you will find foam cut-outs containing the following:

- 1 transmitter
- 8 receivers
- 1 lapel microphone
- 1 conference microphone

Behind the latched compartment in the top of the carrying case, you will find the following:

- 6 in-ear headsets
- 2 neck-loops
- 1 wire antenna
- 1 mini to 1/4" adaptor
- 1 mini to mini extension wire
- Extra non-reusable (non-chargeable) AA batteries
- Instruction booklets

### **How to Set Up:**

- Before your presentation or meeting, determine what type of microphone best suits your needs (refer to guidelines on the next page)
- With the power switch in the "off" position, plug the microphone into the transmitter; turn the power switch to the "on" position
- To ensure the system is working, take a receiver and in-ear headset and plug the headset into the receiver with the volume control turned to "0"; gradually increase the volume while talking.

### **If no Sound is heard:**

- Ensure the "channel select" switch on the back of the receiver is set to "3"; try again
- Unplug and replug the headsets into the receiver; try again
- Try a different receiver; try again
- Change the batteries on the transmitter; try again
- Inform participants of the availability of the ALS
- Ask those who want to use it, to come up and select the type of headset they need

## **Holding an Accessible Meeting Using the Assistive Listening System**

### **Microphone Selection**

#### **For a Presentation:**

- Use the lapel microphone (the small silver cylinder object with a spring clasp)
- Attach the microphone to your clothing at chest level
- If possible clip the transmitter to your belt or place in a pocket

#### **For a Meeting:**

- Use the conference microphone (the small black plastic triangle-shaped object)
- If possible, place the conference microphone on a sound absorbing coaster or book
- Locate the microphone as close to the centre of the group as possible
- With the permission of the group, turn off equipment that generates constant noise or vibrations, such as air conditioning and laptop computers, which could be picked up by the microphone
- If using a laptop, try reducing noise by placing the laptop on a book, or several coasters
- Ask meeting participants to avoid rustling papers, tapping pens against the table, and settling coffee mugs or drinking glasses on the table without using a coaster

### **Tear Down**

- Ask those who used the receivers, headsets and neck-loops to return the units to the carrying case
- Coil the cables of the headsets and neck-loops and place them individually in a plastic bag
- Ensure that all units used at your presentation or meeting have been returned
- Return the Assistive Listening System to the clerk's office. The clerk's office will charge the batteries of the transmitter and receivers and clean the headset

## **Holding an Accessible Meeting ~ Ontario Interpreting Service Rates**

### **Interpreting Rates**

#### **Category A**

- Social service transfer payment agencies
- Not-for profit agencies/organizations with a charitable registration number
- Consumer organizations

**Base rate:** The fee is \$100 per interpreter for up to two hours of service. After that, \$50 for every hour or part of, per interpreter

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#### **Category B**

- Hospitals
- School boards, public and private educational institutions
- Government departments, agencies, boards, commissions
- Police services
- Private sector corporations and businesses including banks and insurance companies
- Professional associations and unions

**Base rate:** The fee is \$110 per interpreter for up to two hours of service. After that, \$55 for every hour or part of, per interpreter

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### **Travel Costs**

**Travel time:** Wherever possible local interpreters will be assigned to appointments. However, where travel to and from the interpreters normal pace of residence and an assignment involves a total of more than two (2) hours, travel time will be charged at 50 percent of the hourly interpreting rate minus the two hours. This is in addition to the mileage claimed for distance traveled.

**Mileage:** Mileage will be charged at 36 cents per km, minus the first 50 km (round trip)

**Additional Travel Costs:** Other reasonable travel costs, such as public transportation, can be charged when applicable. Meals, accommodation, airfare and other extraordinary charges (i.e., considerable parking costs) will be negotiated at time of booking.

**Cancellation Policy:** 2 full business days before the appointment to avoid being billed for interpreting services.

#### **To book an interpreter, contact:**

Jesina Smith  
Canadian Hearing Society-Belleville  
Phone: 1-866-966-8995  
Fax: 613-966-8365

#### **For billing and invoicing, contact:**

Shelley Scott/Debbie Oakley  
Canadian Hearing Society-Kingston  
Phone: 1-866-544-2765  
Fax: 613-544-1975

## Holding an Accessible Meeting ~ Resources

The following resources are intended to provide meeting, conference and other event organizers with practical guidance to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities:

### **The Accessibility Directorate:**

- Guide for Planning for Accessible Meetings  
<http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/english/accessiblemeetings.htm>
- Guide to Multiple Formats for Communications  
<http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/english/multipleformats.htm>

### **The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat:**

- Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings and Conferences  
[http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/TB\\_852/gpimc-gprci\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/TB_852/gpimc-gprci_e.asp)

### **The Centre for Accessible Environments:**

- Make Your Conference Accessible Guide  
<http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/index.html>

### **The Canadian Hearing Society:**

- Get Connected to Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing People: A Guide for Service Providers and Businesses  
<http://www.chs.ca/info/access/busguide/eng1.html>

### **For more information, contact:**

Barry Kaplan Accessibility Coordinator  
Sustainability & Growth Group  
Planning and Development Department  
Phone: 613-546-4291 ext.3182  
Email: [bkaplan@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:bkaplan@cityofkingston.ca)