National Association for Music Education

Conference and Event Accessibility Guidance
October 28, 2024

Consistent with NAfME's values of inclusivity, this document has been prepared to offer guidance for all NAfME and NAfME-affiliated conferences and events. This document focuses on accessibility practices to promote inclusive meeting and gathering environments. This guidance includes ADA accessibility in addition to further recommendations for greater inclusivity. Observing this guidance will ensure that those with disabilities participating in NAfME and NAfME-affiliated conferences and events can experience the same level of services that participants without disabilities enjoy, or, to the extent that NAfME can demonstrate that a specific accommodation is not feasible, to provide an equivalent experience to the maximum extent possible.

NAfME thanks the Society for Music Teacher Education for their contributions to this guidance:

- Ann Marie Stanley, Chair
- Tami Draves, Chair-Elect
- Sean Powell, Immediate Past Chair
- Sommer Forrester, Eastern Division Rep.
- Shannan Hibbard, North Central Division Rep.
- Peter Hamlin, Northwestern Division Rep.
- Angela Munroe, Southern Division Rep.
- Don Taylor, Southwestern Division Rep.
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- Christopher Baumgartner, ASPA Coordinator
- Brian Weidner, Communications Chair
- Colleen Conway, *Journal of Music Teacher Education (JMTE)* Editor
- Annamarie Bolino, NAfME National Executive Board (NEB) Liaison
- Jacqueline Henninger, Board Advisor

NAfME affirms the requirement to provide accessible meeting spaces and auxiliary aids and services for attendees with disabilities. The following guidance provides information to assist with ADA compliance.

- Physical Accessibility
  - Wheelchair accessibility throughout the venue and in each session space
  - Availability of elevators and ramps
  - Accessible restrooms
  - Adequate space in meeting rooms for mobility devices
  - Proximity of lodging to conference venues
  - Up-front seating for those who are deaf or hard of hearing or who use wheelchairs
  - Ample aisles and aisle space

- Transportation Accessibility
  - Ease of access from major airports or train stations
  - Availability of accessible public transportation
  - Accessible parking facilities
  - Shuttle services between conference venues and hotels

- Technological Accessibility
  - Reliable, complimentary Wi-Fi access available for all participants with technology support available
  - Availability of assistive listening devices
  - Capabilities for closed-captioning or sign language interpretation
  - Accessible presentation equipment and materials
  - Handheld and stationary mics available at podium, while moving, or while seated
  - Microphones for audience participation

- Dietary Accessibility
  - Ability to accommodate various dietary restrictions and allergies
  - Clear labeling of food items
  - Options for diverse cultural and religious dietary needs

- Communication and Information Accessibility
  - Clear, accessible conference website and materials
  - Multiple formats for information dissemination (e.g., print, digital, audio)
  - Availability of information in multiple languages if needed
  - Consider electronic posters if that would enhance accessibility.
  - Include a statement about NAfME's desire to be inclusive of people with disabilities.
  - Include a statement that the event preparations have been reviewed by NAfME's Equity Committee.
  - Provide contact information for the accommodation point person.
  - Photographs should include a caption describing the picture for the blind and visually impaired who use screen readers.
  - Recommend live transcription apps.
  - Provide the option of a sign language interpreter for deaf attendees. If funds are tight, offer to provide an interpreter upon request.
  - Allow attendees to request accommodations.
  - When funds are limited, identifying attendees' needs early will allow planning committees to find the lowest-cost accommodations, including by negotiating with service providers.

- Emergency Preparedness
  - Clear emergency procedures that account for attendees with disabilities
  - Trained staff to assist in case of emergencies

- Feedback Mechanisms
  - Systems in place to receive and respond to accessibility-related concerns before and during the conference

NAfME affirms other considerations for promoting inclusivity, including financial affordability. It is recommended that Association constituencies and affiliates take these into consideration in meeting planning, noting that these are not legally required and that it may be unrealistic to achieve every item on the following checklist.

- Accommodations
  - Range of lodging options to suit different budgets and needs
  - Availability of rooms with accessible features
  - Proximity of accommodations to conference venues

- Sensory Considerations
  - Availability of quiet spaces for attendees who may need breaks
  - Good lighting and acoustics in meeting spaces
  - Options for attendees with sensory sensitivities
  - Scent-free environment (request this of attendees)

- Financial Accessibility
  - Overall cost considerations for attendees
  - Options for reducing expenses (e.g., shared accommodations, meal plans)
  - Availability of scholarships or reduced fees for students or early career professionals

- Inclusivity and Cultural Accessibility
  - Welcoming environment for attendees from diverse backgrounds
  - Consideration of local laws and policies affecting marginalized groups
  - Availability of gender-neutral restrooms
  - Respect for diverse cultural and religious practices

- Virtual Accessibility
  - Potential for offering some remotely accessible content
  - If used, consider quality of virtual platforms and ease of use for remote attendees
  - Thoughtfully consider human infrastructure, cost, and distribution platform when making decisions to develop virtual attendance options

- Materials
  - Handouts, slides, and other material in accessible formats
  - Accessible materials provided in advance
  - Make media fully accessible, including audio and video used in sessions and recordings of sessions provided afterward

- Accommodation Point Person
  - Person responsible for providing accommodations when needed
  - Publish a phone number available during the event so attendees can reach someone to resolve issues as they arise

NAfME recommends the following guidance for presenters in promoting inclusivity. It is recommended that NAfME representatives who speak at NAfME and NAfME-affiliated conferences and events take the following into consideration, noting that these are not legally required. NAfME acknowledges that this guidance has been derived from recommendations offered by the University of Kansas.

- Prior to welcome and keynote addresses, verbally describe locations of emergency exits, food/beverages, and restrooms, as well as where attendees can locate a staff member.

- Announce the start and end of the presentation.

- Inform attendees at the start of any activity (such as those that require reading or writing or moving about the room) and ensure there are accommodations so that everyone can fully and equally participate.

- Avoid the use of strobe lights, unnecessary or unusually loud sounds, and strong scents.

- Avoid the use of any inaccessible tool, device, or app that is not compatible with screen readers, as well as non-accessible ice breakers.

- Articulate all information included in slide presentations and describe all materials such as slides, charts, and videos in detail.

- Ensure all videos are captioned.

- When reading directly from text, provide an advance copy and pause momentarily when interjecting information not found in the original text.

- Periodically check in with participants to ensure they are following the presentation.

- Avoid covering the mouth. If a mask needs to be worn, consider a clear mask.

- Use a roving microphone for the audience to ask questions. Repeat questions posed by participants in the audience before responding. If a microphone is not available, the presenter should repeat the question prior to answering.

- Allow for written questions.

- Ensure enough space on the PowerPoint or screen for captioning.