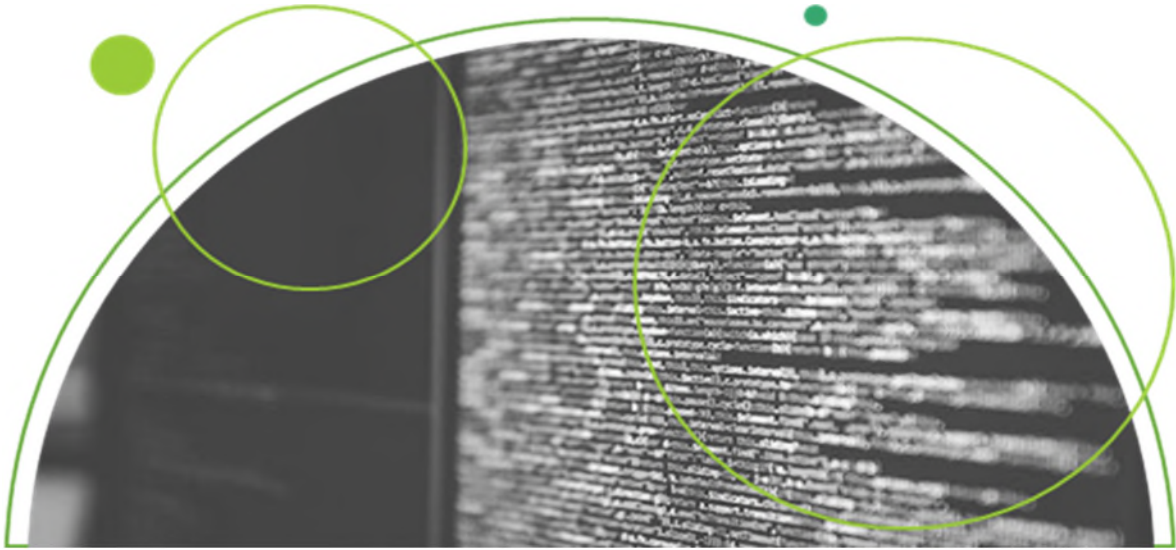**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**
Office of Departmental Equal Employment Opportunity

Guide For Planning an Accessible Virtual or Pre-Recorded Meeting or Event

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Pre-recorded Meeting or Event

1. INTRODUCTION:

Accessibility is the foundation on which employers ensure people with disabilities are fully included. Ensuring individuals with disabilities feel included and have equitable access enables HUD to establish a diverse and equitable workforce and better meet the Department's mission to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. The practices discussed below are both legally required and also necessary to support HUD's efforts to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment and serve the American public.

BACKGROUND:
Federal law prohibits discrimination in employment and requires that individuals with disabilities have equal access to information and communications. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, covers federal employees and contractors, federal programs, and federal agency communications. Under the law, HUD must proactively make electronic and information technology accessible for employees and the public, as well as provide reasonable accommodations in federal employment and federal program contexts.

In addition to the Rehabilitation Act, two executive orders and HUD policy also guide the Department's efforts in this area. Executive Order 14035, "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce" establishes that it is federal policy to cultivate a diverse federal workforce, remove barriers to equal opportunity, and advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across the federal government. EO 14058, "Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government," requires federal agencies to improve their customer service to the public.

Relatedly, the HUD Policy on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Accessible Technology sets the Department's internal policy on how it will implement the requirements for electronic and information technology for employees and the public.

SCOPE:
This guidance applies to both internal and external meetings and events held by the Department that are held virtually or are pre-recorded. HUD is required to make electronic and information technology (also known as information and communications technology) accessible for employees and the public. In addition, HUD is required to provide reasonable accommodations to employees, contractors, and those participating in federally funded programs.

This guidance should be referenced when planning virtual or pre-recorded meetings or events, including those involving the Secretary or other dignitaries. Many meetings or events, even those with smaller audiences, may have attendees with disabilities who benefit from accessible practices — even if they do not request them beforehand.

2. PURPOSE:

This guidance explains how HUD employees can ensure accessibility for virtual and pre-recorded meetings or events so that people with disabilities can participate equally. This guidance details the steps for meeting and event organizers, speakers, and participants to take before, during, and after the meeting or event to ensure equal access and participation for people with disabilities.

3. PROCEDURES:

3.1 Before the Meeting or Event

3. 1. A. Organizers:

- Before all virtual meetings or events, provide clear steps on how event attendees or participants may request auxiliary aids or services (such as interpreters or closed captioning), or other accommodations (prior to the meeting or event) unless an undue burden. Instructions on how to request an interpreter can be found in the resources section of this guide.
  For example, here is a common accommodations statement:

  "If an accommodation is required participate in this event, please submit your request at least five days before the event to (Name of Office/POC)." Be sure to include an email address for a point of contact who can access and address the participant(s') request.

- Ensure event registration has clear instructions on how the registrants can add a support professional, personal assistant, or interpreter to their registration.

- Be sure that any marketing materials (text, graphics, and images) are 508 compliant. For example, marketing materials should not be exclusively graphics or an image, as that will often fail to convey the contents of the event to individuals with visual impairments that rely on screen reader technology. Additional information on creating accessible documents is available on HUD@Work on the Section 508 page.

- Review meeting/event material before the scheduled event date to ensure information is 508 compliant.

- Familiarize yourself with the accessibility features of your chosen platform, including captions, keyboard navigability, and the display of interpreters. Make sure that your platform has a telephone call-in option. The resource section of this guide includes additional details on accessibility features of Microsoft Teams.

- Provide registrants with a calendar invite and then send a confirmation email message and, if appropriate, follow-up with email messages that include:

  - Meeting or event details.
  - Instructions for accessing the meeting or event.
  - A list of what attendees should bring with them.
  - Information about how to request accommodations.
  - A point of contact for any questions about accessibility.

- Send accessible electronic meeting materials (including copies of any presentation documents) in advance of the meeting or event to all participants unless an undue burden. This provides participants who use screen readers or have processing challenges with an opportunity to review the information ahead of time.

- Schedule short breaks if the meeting or event is scheduled to run longer than one hour.

- Have at least one dedicated staff member available at the meeting or event to manage all accessibility matters and ensure that attendees are aware of the point person. Designate primary and backup points of contact at the meeting or event. Make sure that staff member(s) or team is familiar with common accessibility needs, such as screen-reader software and captions.

- Contact the Department's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) before your scheduled meeting or event if you wish to use its technical support for speakers and participants as set forth below. OCIO can advise on its capacity to provide support. Contact information is provided in the resource section below.

3.1.B. Speakers:

- Provide speakers with resources on creating accessible presentations and

workshops. Additional information on accessible documents is available on HUD@Work on the <u>Section 508 page</u>.

- Inform speakers of virtual or physical backgrounds and lighting preferences that may help reduce distractions.

- Remind speakers to talk at a reasonable pace to support effective interpretation by interpreters.

3.1.C. All Participants:

- Provide participants with accessibility guidance in the meeting invite to include the following:

  - Instruct attendees, in advance, to state their names and organizations clearly.
  - Type their full name in during meetings/events for individuals who may be using screen reading devices or closed captioning.
  - Recommend that speakers orally describe any visual information intended to be conveyed as part of the presentation such as slides, pictures, graphics, or demonstrations.
  - Remind participants to speak deliberately where necessary to support effective translation services.
  - Remind participants to mute their computer/telephone if they are not speaking to avoid distractions.

3.2 <u>Pre-Recorded Meetings or Events</u>

3.2.A. Organizers:

- If the meeting or event has a public "launch" during which you expect a large audience to view the meeting or event, request technical support (e.g., Production) for any issues in real time.

- Include instructions for accessibility features when marketing the meeting or event.

- Ensure that any video clips embedded in the meeting or event have captions and audio descriptions, and that an audio description version of the pre-recorded meeting or event has been created prior to the scheduled event. It is a best practice to ensure that American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation is included with the published version of the recording.

- Explain in the marketing information that the meeting/event is pre-recorded.

- Provide information on how to request an ASL interpreter if it is not already included in pre-recording.

3.3 <u>During the Meetings or Events</u>

3.3.A. Organizers:

- Explain in the meeting invite that the meeting or event will be recorded. If you plan to post the recordings online, be sure to also video record the ASL interpreters and keep a transcript and captions.

- Keep the designated technical help staff member or team, and such staff member or team's backup, on standby to assist with any technical needs. Let all attendees know how to get assistance early and often. Communicate with attendees by both chat and audio
- If important information is being sent through a chat, read the information aloud to the group, as well.

- Admit interpreters and captioners to virtual meetings first.

- Spotlight ASL interpreters alongside speakers or explain to participants how to pin them.

- Make sure that external participants from outside HUD are able to enter the <u>Teams</u> or WebEx session at least 30 minutes prior to the event. Interpreters and captioners may come from external providers.

- Enable captions or live transcription at the start of every Teams or WebEx session, and make sure that captioners have access to the captions feature. While Teams does offer automated captioning, this service is not accurate enough for someone relying on the captioning alone. If you are providing external captions, provide the link so that the attendees can view the captions in a separate window.

  o External captions are needed to provide individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing an accessible way to participate in the meeting/event.

- Remind users that they may need to adjust their own automated caption settings to view the live captions.

- Review the features of the platform (including accessibility features like captions) at the start of every session.

- Provide a phone number for participants to call into virtual meeting rooms. Telephone options may be more accessible for individuals that may have vision impairments.

- Make sure that interpreters, captioners, and those who need them are in the same breakout rooms.

3.3.B. Speakers:

- Do not use any flashing objects, moving objects, or animations during the session.

- Specify a process by which participants are to ask questions or speak, such as by raising hands virtually or in person.

- Recommend that the speaker gives an oral description of themselves before starting the presentation.

- Recommend that speakers orally describe any visual information intended to be conveyed as part of the presentation such as slides, pictures, graphics, or demonstrations.

- Repeat any questions or comments made by audience members for all to hear and ensure that such questions or comments are translated into ASL and captioned.

- Keep your camera on, if possible, to engage participants and allow participants with certain disabilities to better process the information.

- Ensure good lighting so that your face is clearly visible without shadows.

- Make sure that your virtual background does not contrast with your face so that you are visible to people with vision impairments.

3.3.C. All Speakers and Participants:

- Speak directly to anyone using ASL rather than to the interpreter.

- Speak to participants in the same tone. State their names and organizations clearly.

- Type their full name in during meetings/events for individuals who may be using screen reading devices or closed captioning.

- Describe orally any visual information such as slides, pictures, graphics, or

demonstrations.

- Mute computer/telephone if they are not speaking to avoid distractions.

3.4 <u>After the Meeting or Event</u>

- Make sure that all follow-up email messages, resources, and websites are accessible. (Consult the resources below for more information about meeting and events accessibility and technology.)

- Provide follow-up contact information for attendees (email and telephone contact information). Reiterate the points of contact for the meeting or event.

- Provide any notes, slides, or materials distributed at the meeting in digital form to attendees.

- Survey attendees about their experience and record any feedback received on accessibility problems.

<u>Resources</u>

HUD Resources

- HUD's <u>508 Accessibility Statement</u> (includes access to additional resources)

- Information on how to request assistive technology can be located at <u>Assistive Technology Program</u>.

- To access information on HUD language services, visit <u>Language Assistance Services</u>.

- <u>HUD Policy on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Accessible Technology</u>.

- OCHCO's <u>Reasonable Accommodation Branch</u>.

Section 508 Resources

- <u>Guide for Creating Accessible Meetings</u>

- <u>Creating Accessible Digital Products (PowerPoints, PDFs, etc.)</u>

ADA National Network Resources

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) National Network offers tips and advice on organizing and running accessible conferences and events in its A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities.

Microsoft Resources

- Introducing Sign Language View for Teams Meetings. Introducing Sign Language View for Teams Meetings - Microsoft Community Hub

- Accessibility tools for Microsoft Teams. Accessibility tools for Microsoft Teams - Microsoft Support

Request Forms

- Request for Interpreter Services form. Addendum A. (Page 12)

- Creating Accessible Digital Products (PowerPoints, PDFs, etc.)

Addendum A

Request for Interpreters Form

Please provide five full business days' notice for any interpreter request.
Interpreter Requests are for HUD Headquarters only.
Submit to: Interpreterservices@hud.gov

Current date:

Requestor's Information:

- ☐ Name
- ☐ Extension
- ☐ Email address

Event Information:

- ☐ Date of Assignment
- ☐ Event Start time
- ☐ Event End time
- ☐ Event Topic/Description/Legal
- ☐ Assignment Location / Platform

Video Communication n/Conference information:

- ☐ Conference ID Number
- ☐ Voice Call-In Number
- ☐ Password (if required)

Dress Code:

- ☐ Casual
- ☐ Business Casual
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Business Formal
- ☐ Formal

Participants with Hearing Impairments:

Legal matters must have legally certified interpreters. Examples: Depositions, union grievances, and mediations
Will the interpreter be broadcast or recorded for use at another time?
To ensure coverage for your request, are you flexible with the date and/or time of your request?

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