

Frequently Asked Questions about Planning Accessible Programs

Am I required to provide accommodations?

All events that take place on the University of Northern Colorado campus must be accessible to eligible persons with disabilities. Also, adequate notice must be given so that eligible persons can make their accommodation needs known in a timely manner.

How much notice does a participant with a disability have to provide to be entitled to an accommodation?

There is no “cutoff” point after which the event sponsor has no obligation to provide accommodation due to short notice. An event sponsor is required to make a good faith effort to timely provide an appropriate accommodation upon request. What is considered a reasonable accommodation depends in part with the amount of time to secure the accommodation the event sponsor has been given. At the earliest stages of planning an event, a sponsor should consider how the organization intends to respond upon receiving a request for commonly requested accommodations, e.g., interpreters, captioning, wheelchair access, etc. On the other hand, requests for accommodation made only a few days before an event may mean that no qualified interpreters/captioners are available. Whenever an event sponsor becomes aware that the organization is going to be unable, for any reason, to satisfactorily respond to a request for accommodation to a University event, the event sponsor should immediately notify the Disability Resource Center.

We haven't received any accommodation requests yet for our event. Am I legally required to provide an accommodation (e.g., interpreters, wheelchair access, etc.) in the absence of a request from a specific individual with a disability?

Although in general the duty to be accessible is triggered by an actual person with a disability making a request for accommodation, the larger the number of folks expected to attend an event, the stronger the legal presumption that the event sponsor has planned in advance upon the possibility that such a request will be received and there is an expectation that the sponsor is "ready to go" when such a request for accommodation is received, even on short notice. It is therefore especially important that, even before an actual request for accommodation from an individual is received, the sponsor of a University event develops a plan for how to provide accommodations (e.g., to someone who is Deaf) with respect to an event held in one of the campus's large facilities. Thus, whenever possible public events should not be scheduled at a location that is not wheelchair accessible. Please note that public events scheduled to be held in facilities that are not wheelchair accessible are required to have an alternate wheelchair accessible location in mind should a request for wheelchair access be made.

If I need a sign language interpreter where do I go to get one?

To request a sign language interpreter or real time captionist for your on-campus event, contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements.

to attend (just as the sponsor bears all the other costs related to putting on the event).

What is the responsibility of the Services for Students with Disabilities in event planning?

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is funded to provide (and pay for) accommodations to enable students with disabilities to access their academic program. Due to its expertise acquired in the foregoing service, DRC is often asked for advice and assistance by other campus departments/units and student organizations when they receive a request for accommodation from an event participant with a disability.

The DRC is limited to providing “technical assistance” to sponsors of events who have been asked to provide a requested accommodation (e.g., many event sponsors don’t know how to arrange for a captioner or sign language interpreter at events they are putting on). There is no charge for this technical assistance. However, please keep in mind that the cost of the actual accommodation is billed to the event sponsor.

In other words, the cost of accommodating participants with disabilities is simply one of the many costs of putting on an event, such as renting a room, obtaining video/technology, and printing promotional materials.

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that event participants with disabilities are appropriately and timely accommodated always rests with the event sponsor. The DRC is simply a valuable resource to assist the event sponsor in fulfilling its responsibility.