ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T

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2023 Public Health Preparedness Summit

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

LEARN METHODS TO ENSURE COMMUNICATIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS.

PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T (DO THIS NOT THAT).

PROVIDE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR AGENCIES TO USE TO ENSURE THEY ARE BEING INCLUSIVE IN THEIR COMMUNICATION.

WHAT OTHER TOOLS CAN BE USED TO SUPPORT INCLUSION OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY?

ACCESS & FUNCTIONAL NEEDS

Access and Functional Needs demographics: Individuals with access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to people with <u>disabilities</u>, <u>older adults</u>, <u>Limited English Proficiency</u>, <u>children</u>, and persons with <u>limited access to transportation</u>.

Q: Is there a person designated in your organization who is knowledgeable in basic accessibility principles and related laws/regulations?

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE U.S.

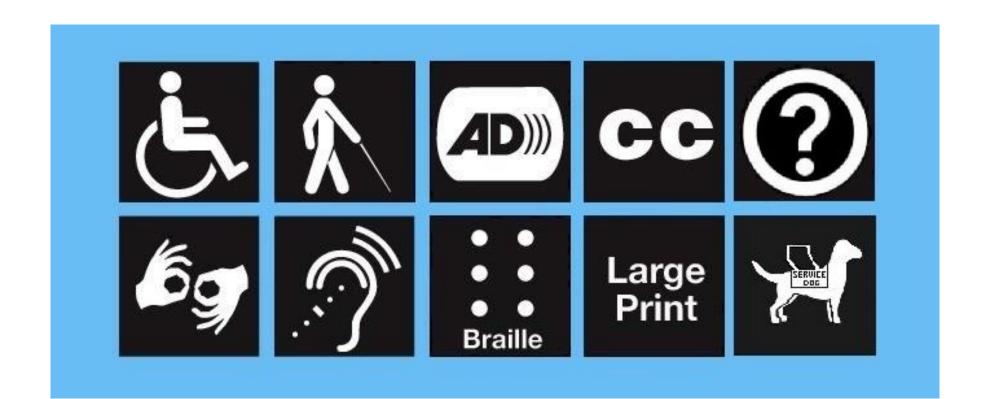**+/- 61 million** adults in the US live with a disability.

The percentage of people living with disabilities is highest in the South

- **27% (one in 4) of adults in the U.S. have some type of disability**
- 12.1% have a **mobility** disability with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs
- 12.8% have a **cognitive** disability (difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions)
- 7.2% have an **independent living** disability with difficulty doing errands alone
- 6.1% are **deaf** or have serious difficulty hearing
- 4.8% have a **vision** disability with blindness or serious difficulty seeing
- 3.6% have a **self-care** disability with difficulty dressing or bathing

- Disabilities can start at any stage of life.

- https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/index.html

- **Percentage of people with disabilities:**

- For the entire state of Virginia, the overall percentage of people with disabilities is **11.9%.**

  - The county with the highest percentage of people with disabilities was **Dickenson** (33.7%).

  - The county with the lowest percentage of people with disabilities was **Arlington** (6.1%).

2023 State Report for County-Level Data: Prevalence | Annual Disability Statistics Compendium (disabilitycompendium.org)

ACCESSIBILITY BEST PRACTICES

The COVID-19 pandemic has "unmasked" the fact that accessibility is critical for health and wellbeing.

Accessibility is lifesaving.

Accessibility must be "baked in."

This includes...

⭐ **COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION**

⭐ **DIGITAL SPACES**

PHYSICAL SPACES

TRANSPORTATION

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION:

THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE MUST BE OBSERVABLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONVEYED IN A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE WAY

PERSON WITH AFN NEEDS A CHANNEL TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS

STAFF NEED TRAINING

DIGITAL SPACES:

[SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE](#) FOR DIGITAL DOCUMENTS & MESSAGING CREATIVES

DESIGN FOR AN AUDIENCE WHO CANNOT SEE OR HEAR THE MESSAGE, AND WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND MEDICAL JARGON, AND WHO DON'T USE ENGLISH AS THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE

COGNITIVE EASE OF ACCESS:

GIVE CLEAR INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THEIR EXPERIENCE AND HOW IT WILL BE DONE. EXPLAIN ALL THE STEPS.

THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN DIFFERENT FORMATS AND IN [PLAIN LANGUAGE](#).

A VISUAL STORYBOARD CAN HELP TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING. GIVE PEOPLE THE TIME THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION. KNOW THAT YOU MAY NEED TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER FOR A RESPONSE. PATIENCE IN ALL CASES IS THE KEY.

AUTONOMY IS IMPORTANT: DON'T ASSUME THAT YOU KNOW SOMEONE'S NEEDS BETTER THAN THEY DO. ADDRESS THE PATIENT, NOT THE INTERPRETER OR SUPPORT PERSON.
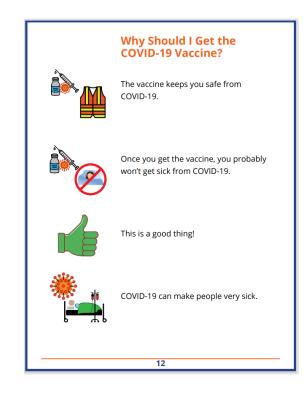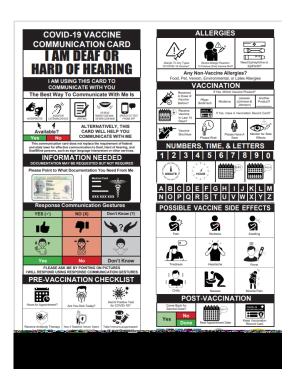
plainlanguage.gov

COVID-19 VACCINE COMMUNICATION CARD

I AM DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

I AM USING THIS CARD TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU

The Best Way To Communicate With Me Is

INTERPRETER · ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE · WRITING · LIP READ REMOVE YOUR MASK OR HEAR CLEAR MASK · SPEECH TO TEXT PHONE APP

Available? Yes No

ALTERNATIVELY, THIS CARD WILL HELP YOU COMMUNICATE WITH ME

This communication card does not replace the requirement of federal and state laws for effective communication to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind persons, such as sign language interpreters or other services.

INFORMATION NEEDED
DOCUMENTATION MAY BE REQUESTED BUT NOT REQUIRED
Please Point to What Documentation You Need From Me

Medical Card — XXX XXX XXXX

Response Communication Gestures
YES (✓) · NO (X) · Don't Know (?)
Yes · No · Don't Know

PLEASE ASK ME BY POINTING ON PICTURES
I WILL RESPOND USING RESPONSE COMMUNICATION GESTURES

PRE-VACCINATION CHECKLIST
Have An Appointment? · Are You Sick Today? · Had A Positive Test for COVID-19?
Receive Antibody Therapy · Have A Weakened Immune System · Take Immuno-suppressant

ALLERGIES
Allergic To Any Types Of COVID-19 Vaccine? · Severe Allergic Reaction To Previous (First) Vaccine Shot? · Need Epinephrine or EpiPen©?

Any Non-Vaccine Allergies?
Food, Pet, Venom, Environmental, or Latex Allergies

VACCINATION
Received A Dose of Vaccine Before? · If Yes, Which Vaccine Product? Pfizer-BioNTech · Moderna · Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) · Another Product?

Receive Vaccine In Last 14 Days? · If Yes, Have A Vaccination Record Card?

Vaccine Shot Now · Please Wait · Monitor For Side Effects · Please Have A Seat

NUMBERS, TIME, & LETTERS
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
MINUTE · HOUR · DAY · WEEK
A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

POSSIBLE VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS
Pain · Redness · Swelling
Tiredness · Headache · Fever
Chills · Nausea · Muscle Pain

POST-VACCINATION
Come Back for Second Dose? Yes No Done · Next Appointment Date · Keep Vaccination Record Card

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Why Should I Get the COVID-19 Vaccine?

The vaccine keeps you safe from COVID-19.

Once you get the vaccine, you probably won't get sick from COVID-19.

This is a good thing!

COVID-19 can make people very sick.

12

I Speak...
Language Identification Guide

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Everyday Words for Public Health Communication

TECHNOLOGICAL EASE OF ACCESS:

MAKE SURE THE MATERIALS ARE READABLE WITH A SCREEN READER BY SOMEONE WHO HAS LOW VISION OR IS BLIND.

ALSO ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE INTERNET/AREN'T COMPUTER LITERATE CAN REGISTER OR ACCESS PROGRAM ELEMENTS, FOR INSTANCE VIA A TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER.

PROVIDE A METHOD FOR THE PUBLIC TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS AND/OR TO RED-FLAG ISSUES/BARRIERS

Tableau
https://help.tableau.com/current/pro/desktop/en-us/...

Best Practices for Designing Accessible Views - Tableau

If you are having difficulty accessing information on this page or website, please email us at Accessibility@vdh.virginia.gov.

EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

➢Established ASL-to-ASL direct communication access for the Vaccinate Virginia call center. Virginia is the first state in the nation to do this for a vaccination information line

➢Language services are available for people who speak languages other than English

LANGUAGE ACCESS:

INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) OR WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING/DEAFBLIND MAY NEED TO UTILIZE INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES (PROVIDED EITHER VIRTUALLY OR ONSITE), AND/OR BE PROVIDED TRANSLATED VERSIONS OF STANDARD DOCUMENTS SUCH AS FORMS AND INFORMATIONAL HANDOUTS WHICH ARE TRANSCREATED (TRANSLATED IN A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE WAY) INTO LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH. DON'T RELY ON AUTOMATED TRANSLATION APPS.

Q: Do you know the name of your spoken language interpreting/translation vendor(s)? Do you know how to find a sign language interpreter?

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION:

INTERPRETER SERVICES AVAILABLE AT THE SITE (ONSITE, VIRTUAL, TELEPHONIC)

LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, READ-ALOUD

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSLATION OF MATERIALS

ACCURATE CAPTIONING

DIGITAL SPACES:

SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE FOR DIGITAL DOCUMENTS & MESSAGING CREATIVES

USING PLAIN LANGUAGE (4TH-5TH GRADE READING LEVEL)

SCREEN READER COMPATIBILITY

PHOTO IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS/ALT TEXT

ACCURATE CAPTIONING

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT of VIRGINIA

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Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Virginia

SHARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   Friday, April 16, 2021

EDVA Reminds Community Partners That the Americans With Disabilities Act Applies to COVID-19 Related Services

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia announced today that it will be providing the attached Dear Colleague Letter reminding community partners that are involved in the COVID-19 pandemic response that the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") applies to their services.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe and distressing impact on people with disabilities who, through no fault of their own, have faced additional barriers... Parekh, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virg... behalf of those who are not provided equal access because of...

GSA Section508.gov
Buy. Build. Be Accessible.

Civil Rights Act (1964)

This act, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964, prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal. It was the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction.

ADA.gov
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

Justice.gov › U.S. Attorneys › Eastern District of Virginia › Press Releases › U.S. Attorney's Office Reminds Healthcare Providers of ADA's Effective Communication Requirements

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Attorney's Office Reminds Healthcare Providers of ADA's Effective Communication Requirements

Friday, April 14, 2023
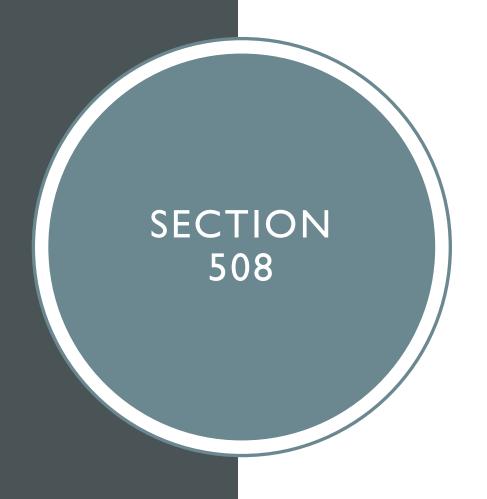
For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Virginia

Share

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia announced today that it has sent a Dear Colleagues Letter reminding healthcare providers of the effective communication requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To strengthen awareness and understanding of these requirements, the U.S. Attorney's Office is inviting the public, including personnel at healthcare providers, to an informational meeting that will be held on June 6, 2023, at 1 p.m.

When Congress passed the ADA, it recognized that discrimination against individuals with disabilities persists in critical areas, including health services, which often involve high stakes communication. Through the ADA, Congress established a national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities by providing strong and enforceable standards. In support of these goals, the ADA and its implementing regulations require covered entities, including healthcare providers, to furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services to individuals with communication disabilities without imposing a surcharge on the individual, including qualified sign language interpreters, computer-aided transcription services, and effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Why should AFN considerations be "baked into" your Concept of Operations?

Because accessibility is not optional… it's the law.

SECTION 508

- Section 508, an amendment to the United States Workforce Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is a federal law mandating that all electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the federal government be accessible to people with disabilities.

- 508 Compliance involves developing website, document, and presentation content that can be used by people with limited vision or blindness, deafness, seizure disorders, and other disabilities.

SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE

Ignoring the accessibility needs of your audience can lower your page views, limit your website statistics, and narrow (if not isolate) your target audience.

More importantly, it can prevent access to vital information.

Don't assume that the Information Technology and Communications/Marketing vendors that you are working with are versed in accessibility; be explicit about accessibility expectations included in Scope of Work considerations.

GSA Section508.gov
Buy. Build. Be Accessible.

WHAT DOES 508 COMPLIANCE AND ACCESSIBILITY ENTAIL?

There are a number of ways in which you can make your site accessible for people with disabilities. These are some of the major features of 508 compliance:

Closed Captioning and Subtitles
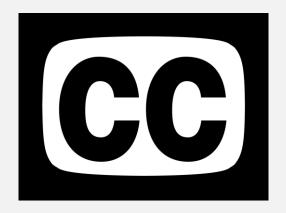
Screen Reader Capability

Accessibility with the keyboard
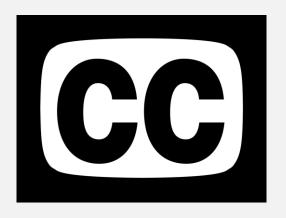
CLOSED AND OPEN CAPTIONING

- Closed captioning is text included to provide people who are Deaf and hard of hearing access to audio content for video files with audio components. Closed captioning can be turned on or off by clicking the "CC" option.

- Open captions appear automatically and are displayed without clicking a caption option.

- Captions are commonly used for TV, movies, and video for years, providing a transcript of the spoken words on the screen.
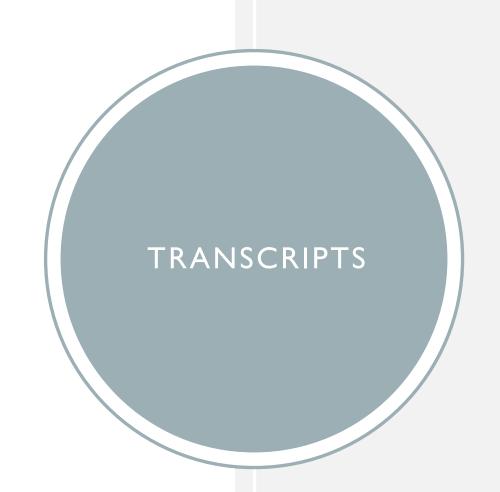
CAPTIONING ACCURACY
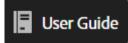
Captioning is sometimes auto-generated through voice recognition software, for instance on platforms such as YouTube. Auto-generated captions are commonly inaccurate depending on the sophistication of the software. **Auto-generated captions should be edited for accuracy of content, grammar and spelling** in order to avoid #captionfails. Captions can also be manually entered. Captions should include all spoken message content which **match the audio without omissions.**
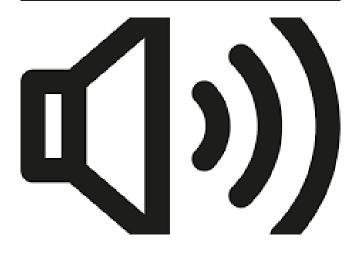
Captioning alone may not be accessible to people who are deafblind (those who have degrees of both vision and hearing loss). Transcripts of the full audio content should also be provided in order to provide access for people who use braille readers along with other assistive technology.

TRANSCRIPTS

SCREEN READER CAPABILITY

Websites should be built with the ability to be accessed with a screen reader. Many visually impaired people, as well as those with cognitive and/or learning disabilities, use screen readers to read aloud the text found on webpages.

These screen readers convert digital text into synthesized speech, pairing with documents and spreadsheets.

All graphic or visual information presented (graphs, charts, clip art, etc.) should have visual description information attached (Alt text)

ACCESSIBILITY WITH KEYBOARD

- Users who have motor disabilities or who use screen readers can be dependent on keyboard-only visual indicators, which need to be programmatically indicated as well.

- This includes the need for programmatic indication of focus used by the browser to indicate where interactions should occur for assistive technology.

- For example, links, buttons or input fields can be controlled with the tab, arrow, or other keys rather than a mouse click to increase access for all.

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

A qualified sign language interpreter (SLI) is a professional who facilitates communication between persons who are deaf and those who are hearing.

An SLI interprets a spoken English message into a manual or sign language (typically American Sign Language [ASL]) or a signed message into a spoken language (typically English).

A Certified Deaf Interpreter is a Deaf person who is trained in intermediary interpreting between the Deaf person and the hearing interpreter.

SLIs can provide services onsite, through Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) services, or through Video Relay Services (VRS).

QUALIFIED SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has two resources posted on its website to assist you in locating a qualified SLI.
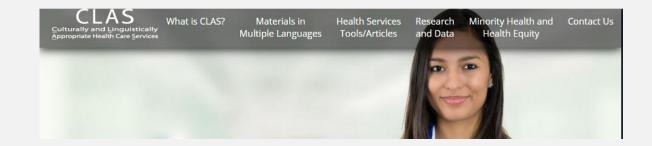
- One is the list of interpreters who participate in the agency's Interpreter Services Program Manual and Service Agreement.

- The second resource is a Directory of Qualified Interpreters. The Directory includes interpreters who may not have signed on to the Service Agreement yet.

VDDHH website

SPOKEN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

VDH has a Translation and Interpretation Manager in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and resources on their CLAS website

Contact Ana Trigueros-Merritt at

ana.trigueros-merritt@vdh.virginia.gov

CART SERVICES

- The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) describes Computer Assisted Real-time Translation (CART) services as "the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software."

- The text produced by the CART service can be displayed on an individual's computer monitor, projected onto a screen, combined with a video presentation to appear as captions, or otherwise made available using other transmission and display systems.

- CART Services may be provided on site or remotely.

HOW DO I FIND A QUALIFIED CART PROVIDER?

A list of Captioning vendors is available on the Virginia Higher Education Procurement Consortium website
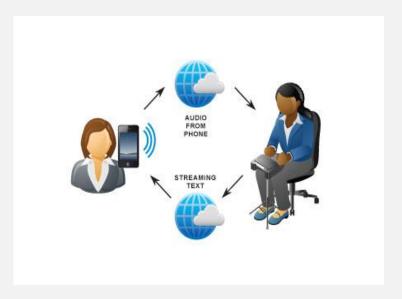

VHEAP Captioning Initiative

REMOTE CALL CAPTIONING

Specifically for captioning remote meetings on **conference call platforms** (e.g. CISCO, Zoom, Google Hangouts Meet) which utilize a dial in phone number, you may want to use Virginia Relay's Remote Conference Captioning (RCC). RCC is not available onsite.

RCC allows people who have difficulty hearing what is said during conference calls to have a clearer understanding of the conversation and participate in the call more effectively.

To request RCC services, complete the RCC Scheduling Request Form or call Virginia RCC Customer Care at 877-339-2665 (Voice). Request forms are vetted for eligibility.

The person scheduling the call must be a resident of Virginia; RCC is free for Virginia residents. Virginia Relay users are guaranteed access to RCC Services if scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. RCC Services may also be available for emergency situations with a two-hour notice.

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT?

Community partners can assist with vetting your accessibility capabilities through real-world testing and feedback, and training exercises.

To get your accessible messaging out to most effectively, involve community partner organizations and trusted messengers.

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

https://www.plainlanguage.gov/

Department of Justice 508 Compliance Facts

508 Compliance Checklist

Department of Homeland Security Language Access Materials

VDH Health Equity Guidebook for Testing and Tracing

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

[Emergency Responders Language Access and Effective Communications Checklist](#)

[Access and Functional Needs Resource Guide](#)

[Standards and Guidelines for Access and Functional Needs](#)

[National Center for Health Statistics](#)

[VDH Vaccination Site Accessibility Guidance](#)