Accessibility Basics: Ensuring Access for Everyone

Delaware Division of the Arts
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National Endowment for the Arts
Today’s presentation

• Background on disability
• Accessibility requirements for organizations
• Accessibility basics
• Arts programming for and by people with disabilities
• Creative aging
National Endowment for the Arts

• A public agency dedicated to advancing artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities.

• Awards more than $115 million each year to arts organizations of all sizes in all 50 states and U.S. territories.
NEA Office of Accessibility

The technical assistance arm of the NEA to make the arts accessible for people with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and people living in institutional settings.
Disability in the United States

- People with disabilities are the largest minority group in the US
- 40 million Americans with disabilities
- 12.8% of US population has a disability
- Nearly 30% of families have a person with a disability

Source: US Census Bureau
2016 American Community Survey
Aging in the United States

• Aging population
  - 77.3 million baby boomers*
  - 10,000 turning 65 every day
  - By 2030 we will have more people over 60 than under 30
  - The 55+ age group controls more than \(\frac{3}{4}\) America’s wealth

Source: US Census Bureau
*Born between 1946-1964
Age Distribution of Disability in the US Population, 2015

Source: American Community Survey, 2015
Equity includes disability

- Accessibility is an **organizational asset**
- Young people have grown up expecting access and accommodation
- Disability is a vital and often overlooked part of the diversity and equity conversation
- Disability provides a unique perspectives in artistic creation
- **Disability arts** is a growing field – grants, residencies, convenings
Access vs. Inclusion

**Access** = can people access a program?

**Inclusion** = can people enjoy it with their family and friends?

“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.” - Vernã Myers
Communicating About Disability
## Person First Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say…</th>
<th>Instead of…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person with a disability</td>
<td>The disabled, handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person without a disability</td>
<td>Normal, able-bodied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with..., person who has...</td>
<td>Suffers from..., victim of...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair user</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who is blind or has low vision</td>
<td>The blind, the sightless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a psychiatric disability, mental illness</td>
<td>Crazy, emotionally disturbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a physical disability</td>
<td>Crippled, lame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a cognitive or intellectual disability</td>
<td>Slow, retarded, Downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal, unable to speak</td>
<td>Mute or dumb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other tips

Avoid words like...

• “Handicap” ➔ Use “disability” or “accessible”
  (Person with a disability, Accessible parking/restroom)

• “Special” ➔ Implies something is different;
  Doesn’t promote inclusivity

• “Challenged” or “impaired” ➔ Implies something is broken or not working
What is a Disability?

The Rehabilitation Act and the ADA define an individual with a disability as a person who meets one of the following criteria:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities*
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Is regarded as having such an impairment

*Major life activity examples:
Seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working, etc.
Review of Accessibility Laws
U.S. Legal Framework for Accessibility

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs:

- Conducted by federal agencies (e.g., NEA events)
- Receiving federal financial assistance (e.g., grantees, state arts agencies, etc.)
U.S. Legal Framework for Accessibility

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**

Prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities and transportation. (Amended in 2008)

**Title II** – **State and local government** services (state-run arts agencies, city/county-run arts agencies)

**Title III** – **Public accommodations & services**, private organizations, commercial facilities, transportation (museums, theaters, historic sites)
Key Requirements for Cultural Organizations

• **Non–discrimination**

• **Equal opportunity** (and the provision of any reasonable modifications, auxiliary aids, or services necessary to achieve it such as sign interpretation, audio description, etc.)

• Basic standards of **architectural access** (such as entrances, restrooms, etc.)

• **Equal access to employment**, programs, activities, goods and services
Accessibility Basics

Photo by Tom Olin, July 26, 1990
Physical Accessibility

• Ground-level/no-step entry, ramped access, and/or elevators to facilities and outdoor space
• Accessible and clear paths of travel throughout the facility
• Wheelchair accessible auditorium seating, counters, workspaces, meeting spaces
Physical Accessibility

- Wheelchair accessible
  - display cases, exhibit areas, counters
  - classrooms, studios, and workspaces
  - wheelchair accessible restrooms and water fountains
  - stages and back stages
- Directional signage for accessible entrances, restrooms, etc.
Program Accessibility

• **Vision** – Alternate formats for print materials (large print, Braille, audio), audio description, tactile opportunities, sighted guides

• **Hearing** – Assistive listening devices, sign language interpretation, real-time captioning

• **Brain-based** – Quiet hours, sensory-friendly programming, warnings for strobes, smoke, etc.
Electronic Accessibility

• Websites
  - Screen-reader navigation, tab-controlled
  - Alt-tagged photos
  - Captioned videos
• Video and film
  - Open or closed captions
  - ASL interpreted videos
  - Audio described videos
• Mobile Apps and Video Games
Non-apparent Disabilities

• Mental health conditions
  ✓ Anxiety, panic disorders, depression, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

• Medical conditions
  ✓ Epilepsy, multiple sclerosis

• Chronic Pain

• Dyslexia
Website Accessibility Information

Website accessibility information should include:

- A statement of accessibility
- Available accommodations and contact information
- Links to resources, effective practices, grievance procedures, etc.
- Information on accommodations and programming for older adults, veterans, people/children with autism, etc.
Requesting an Accommodation

Include information on all materials for process for requesting an accommodation:

“If you need accessibility accommodations, please let us know no later than <date> so that we will have sufficient time to make the arrangements.”
Resources

- NEA Accessibility Resources
  https://www.arts.gov/accessibility/accessibility-resources

- Delaware Division of the Arts accessibility resources
  https://arts.delaware.gov/resources/delaware-creative-aging/

- VSA Delaware http://vsadelaware.org

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf http://rid.org/

- Mid-Atlantic ADA Center http://www.adainfo.org/

- Web Accessibility Initiative http://www.w3.org/WAI/
Artists with Disabilities
NEA Investment for Artists w/ Disabilities

- 28 Statewide forums (2002-2013)
- 2016 Deaf Theater Roundtable
- 2016 Online policy dialogue
- NEA grant support for disability arts

Deaf West Theatre
Spring Awakening
Outcomes

- Professional opportunities
- A voice for artists
- Networking/professional development
- Action by service organizations
Barriers to employment in the arts

- Inaccessible studio and performance space
- Limited opportunities for arts education, training, and mentoring
- Perceptions of ability and talent
- Need for benefits
- Lack of support for arts careers from disability sector
- Need for funding
New Initiative

Toolkit to Promote Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities

• Online resources, webinars
• Resources for:
  - Artists, students, arts administrators, etc., with disabilities
  - Arts organizations and arts service organizations
  - Disability service and employment organizations
• Launch in 2018

Art Beyond Sight
Bringing Art & Culture to All
NEA Grant Funding

for professional and community-based artists with disabilities
Deaf West Theatre, *Spring Awakening*  
FY14 $20,000  
Los Angeles, CA
The Anderson Center, Deaf Artist Residency
FY 16 $10,000, Red Wing, MN
Barak adé Soleil, Dancer

3 Arts
FY17 $15,000, Chicago, IL
Axis Dance Company
FY17 $20,000, Oakland, CA
CREATIVE FORCES
NEA MILITARY HEALING ARTS NETWORK
Creative Forces

• Arts therapy and community-based arts programs for active duty service members and veterans
• NEA partnership with DOD and VA
• Addressing Post-traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury
• 11 sites, 1 tele-health program
Creative Aging
Rapid changes in aging

Life Expectancy in the U.S.

Source: The Atlantic
Rapid changes in aging

- 65+ age group growing faster than total U.S. population
- 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65 every day
- Fastest growing population: those over age 85

Source: 2010 U.S. Census
Paradigm Shift

A time of loss → A time of asset building
State Arts Agencies Community of Practice

- Community of Practice for State Arts Agencies in Arts, Health, and Aging
  - 40 states participated from 2013-2016
  - Peer mentoring and state arts/aging agency partnerships resulting in:
    - Grants, teaching artist training, partnerships, asset mapping, webinars
- **New website coming in December!**
Delaware – Creative Aging Workshop

- December 2016, co-presented by the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), the Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities, and the Modern Maturity Center
- Convened artists, arts organizations, community groups and aging-services community
- How to engage meaningfully with older adults through the arts
- [https://arts.delaware.gov/resources/delaware-creative-aging/](https://arts.delaware.gov/resources/delaware-creative-aging/)
NEA Grant Funding
in Creative Aging
Alzheimer’s Poetry Project
Santa Fe, NM
FY17  $10,000, Literature grant
Let your imagination soar.

Start telling stories

TimeSlips opens storytelling to everyone by replacing the pressure to remember with the freedom to imagine.

Start a Story

Her name might be Gloria Jean.

She looks happy.

By: Karen

Read more

Timeslips
Milwaukee, WI
FY16 $15,000 Multidisciplinary grant
Elders Share the Arts
Brooklyn, NY
FY16 $15,000 Arts Education grant
Engage, Inc.
Burbank, CA
FY17 $15,000 Presenting grant
Resources

Best Practice Directory
• Online searchable directory of 100 programs
• Promising, field tested, and research validated practices

Teaching Artist Training Toolkit
• Online curriculum for teaching artists to work with older adults
• Eleven lessons that include resources, program examples, and arts engagement exercises
• Concluding self-evaluation

www.creativeaging.org
NEA Grant Opportunities

• **ArtWorks** Deadlines
  - February 15, 2018
  - July 12, 2018

• **Challenge America** Deadline
  - April 12, 2018

• Full guidelines: [www.arts.gov/grants](http://www.arts.gov/grants)
Contact

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www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/accessibility