

## **STEP 3: Designate an Accessibility Coordinator for Your Organization**

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### **Guidance on Designating an Accessibility Coordinator**

**Each organization should appoint a staff member to serve as its Accessibility Coordinator.** The Accessibility Coordinator should help lead the organization in its efforts to comply with the ADA. Under the Arts Endowment's 504 Regulations it is required that "a responsible official be designated to coordinate the [grant] recipient's efforts in connection with Section 504" (S1151.42). This person should also sign the completed self-evaluation. Further, there are requirements for an ADA Coordinator under the ADA's Title II for state and local government.

**A job description should be developed that demonstrates language that empowers the position:** "must," "shall," "may," "required".

**Example:** The Accessibility Coordinator should serve as an in-house consultant to staff and board in ensuring that all meetings, activities and events sponsored by your organization are accessible.

**The Accessibility Coordinator should serve as consultant to board and staff in educating members of your organization about access issues, and should ensure that planning for access is incorporated into all organizational decisions, as needed.** The Executive Director and board members, with assistance from the Accessibility Coordinator, should provide leadership in implementing access throughout your organization.

**Example:** To support the efforts of the Accessibility Coordinator and advance accessibility within your organization, it is recommended that compliance duties for other staff be clarified **in the Accessibility Coordinator's job description:**

A. Executive Director's responsibilities: oversee and insure that access mission, goals and budget are implemented within the agency and by its grant recipients.

B. Board responsibilities: development of mission statement and access policy, appointment of board liaison and documentation of grievance procedure.

**Example:** Some state arts agencies suggest drafting a 504/ADA (Accessibility) job description for board liaison(s) and/or trustee(s) responsible for access oversight: "Appointing a board member to work with staff on access is a must. If you don't have board involvement, there could be a leadership void."

The Accessibility Coordinator may come from a number of different professional backgrounds, services or programs from within an agency. The ADA/504 Coordinator can be someone who comes to the position out of interest and may acquire information and expertise through training, conferences, consultation and use of resources such as this *Guide*.

**Although the Accessibility Coordinator is the designated contact/access facilitator, accessibility must be everyone's responsibility if access to the arts is to be inclusive and effective.**

**Example:** Each staff member should perform a portion of the "Arts and Humanities Accessibility Checklist" (See Step 6) for his/her particular area and work with his/her constituents to encourage and assist access.

**Accessibility Coordinators should consider using access consultants.**

**Quite often, financial limitations will not permit adding a new position. The Accessibility Coordinator's duties may be assigned to a staff position that currently exists.** In most cultural organizations, the Accessibility Coordinator has other agency responsibilities that limit the amount of time he/she able to spend in this area.

**Example:** The duties of the Accessibility Coordinator do not necessarily have to be limited to access for older individuals and people with disabilities. Some agencies include access responsibilities in the job description of a Cultural Diversity Program Director or the Arts in Education Coordinator.

**Example:** In addition to the Accessibility Coordinator, some agencies train their entire staff to be access advocates.

**As mandated by the ADA, job descriptions should provide an in-depth analysis of the essential functions of the position.** Job descriptions may be developed in the following manner:

**Example:** Job Title: **Accessibility Coordinator**  
Definition:  
Equipment/Job Location:  
Essential Functions of the Job:  
Additional Examples of Work Performed:  
Required Knowledge and Abilities:  
Qualifications:

### **Standard Job Description for the Accessibility Coordinator (formerly called the 504/ADA Coordinator)**

The following job description for an Accessibility Coordinator is meant to serve as a guide for all cultural organizations, including state, regional and local cultural agencies. When preparing your organization's job description, be sure to consult with the appropriate department in your state, e.g., Division of Personnel Services.

- **Establish an Access Advisory Committee.** Create and staff an advisory committee that includes people with various disabilities, staff and board members.
- **Educate [your organization] on access issues.** Work with the Access Advisory Committee to develop and conduct periodic awareness seminars and training for staff, board, panelists and grantees.
- **Conduct a self-evaluation and create a transition plan.** Work with the Access Advisory Committee to conduct evaluation of [your organization's] policies, programs, services and facilities to identify where access improvements are needed. Create a self-evaluation document and transition plan (if needed). Use this evaluation to eliminate any physical, programmatic and policy barriers, as required by law.
- **Insure that access issues are integrated into the daily operation of [your organization],** including budget, policy, education and public information. Insure that the staff implements access considerations in their specific area of specialization, including funding guidelines, panels and other meetings.
- **Educate and assist contractors and grantees** (including service groups) in implementing access services and policies. Work with grantees/constituents to organize and convene access education seminars as separate meetings or as a part of other meetings. The ultimate goal is to make access part of all education efforts.

- **Budget for accessibility.** Work with staff and board to ensure access accommodations and services are budgeted, and are provided for in all activities undertaken by [your organization] and by its grant recipients. You may also work with staff to develop special funding initiatives that encourage and assist grantees with accessibility.
- **Develop and implement a grievance procedure** for dealing with any complaints, and keep staff and board members updated on its progress. (See Step 5).
- **Ensure representation on staff, board and panels.** Encourage the inclusion of individuals with disabilities from arts and humanities disciplines (such as artists, museum professionals, librarians, media makers) and cultural administrators. Encourage staff and others to consider qualified individuals with disabilities for staff, panelists and board members.
- **Outreach.** Maintain good working relationships and attend meetings of organizations representing people with disabilities and older adults.
- **Act as a resource/referral, and develop resource lists.** Working with your Access Advisory Committee to research and compile a directory of access services and equipment within your locality would be helpful to staff, grantees and others. Update resources list periodically or as needed.
- **Ensure that the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan are implemented,** and update staff and board on its progress, through ongoing work with your Access Advisory Committee (See Step 4).
- **Follow up.** Meet with staff on a regular basis to discuss access issues, including panel composition (representation of people with disabilities on panels), budget, the state of access among constituents/grantees, access needs within [your organization], new access developments/technologies, and universal access to programs and activities. Work with staff to ensure that services are appropriately provided to board, staff, panelists, grantees and applicants.
- **Use the appropriate sections of this *Guide*** to assist with implementation.

## **Best Practices: Sample Accessibility Coordinator Job Descriptions**

## Ohio Arts Council Job Description for Accessibility Coordinator

- ◆ Serves as the agency's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for the State of Ohio and also serves as agency liaison to organizations, institutions and government agencies;
- ◆ Administers the 504/ADA program as outlined by the NEA;
- ◆ Collects and maintains 504/ADA regulations and supplementary materials, correspondence and documentation of the compliance procedure;
- ◆ Works with staff and board to clarify responsibilities under 504/ADA;
- ◆ Works with Artists with Disabilities Network Ohio which serves as OAC's ADA advisory committee;
- ◆ Must develop and maintain good working relationships with people and artists with disabilities, as well as organizations representing people with disabilities;
- ◆ Must keep 504/ADA resource materials updated and distributed to staff;
- ◆ Generates and updates a pool of people with disabilities who could serve as panelist;
- ◆ Ensures that access issues are integrated into the daily operations of OAC;
- ◆ Ensures that access accommodations and services are included in agency budget;
- ◆ Conducts workshops on accessibility to the field as needed to staff;
- ◆ Provides sensitivity training to staff, board and the field periodically;
- ◆ Orientates all new staff regarding OAC policies on 504/ADA;
- ◆ Attends meetings in the field sponsored by organizations, agencies, etc., on topics dealing with accessibility;
- ◆ Keeps staff and board updated on programs sponsored by arts organizations, agencies both locally and nationally that are programmatically accessible to people with disabilities;
- ◆ Serves as the initial contact person for ADA grievances.

## **Florida Arts Council Job Description for the Access (ADA/504) Coordinator**

- Designated to coordinate the grant recipient's efforts in connection with Section 504 (S1151.42).
- Designated to monitor ADA's Title II for state and local government.
- Serves as consultant to Division staff, Florida Arts Council, and the constituency about access issues.
- Implement policy recommended by the ADA Resolution Committee and approved by the Florida Arts Council.
- Represents agency at national, state, and regional conferences, including the Governor's ADA Working Group.

**Mississippi Arts Commission  
Job Description for Arts Industry Program Director/Access (ADA)  
Coordinator**

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The Arts Industry Program Director, one of the five program direction positions at the Mississippi Arts Commission, has recently had its title changed to: ***Arts Industry Program Director/ ADA Coordinator***. Currently in recruitment, applicants for this position have been given an overview of job duties/expectations that include:

The Arts Industry Program Director/ADA Coordinator will show a strong commitment to Mississippi artists and arts organizations through grants administration, special initiatives, and technical assistance. Other duties include:

Providing staff leadership as agency ADA liaison; working with Very Special Arts Mississippi and other service organizations to build awareness of and opportunities for artists and audiences with disabilities.

## **Tennessee Arts Commission Job Description for Access (ADA) Coordinator**

The designated ADA Coordinator has these duties:

- 1) Survey the Tennessee Arts Commission and State Museum on a yearly basis to insure compliance with Affirmative Action policies, procedures, and regulations.
- 2) Investigate compliance and non-compliance to regulation.
- 3) Submit recommendations for policies, programs, regulations and procedures relative to Affirmative Action.
- 4) Make revisions to Agency's Affirmative Action Plan.
- 5) Monitor the hiring to see that equal employment practices conform to state policies.
- 6) Maintain information and records on EEO results and progress.
- 7) Disseminate information and records on EEO results and progress.
- 8) Counsel employees on promotion opportunities and encourage minority, persons with disabilities, and female employees to participate in promotional examinations.
- 9) Administer an employee relation program which deals with the relationship between management and individuals in such matters as supervisor-employee relations, communications, employee benefits, employee services, employee conduct, rights, grievances and appeals.
- 10) Provide a day-to-day advisory service to supervisors. Maintain a working relationship with State Department of Personnel in the areas of employee relations.



## **West Virginia Commission on the Arts Job Description for Access (ADA/504) Coordinator**

504/ADA Coordinator for WV Commission on the Arts has also been appointed ADA Compliance Officer for the WV Department of Education and the Arts.

### **Title II Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Officers**

Each department or other major organizational unit will designate an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance officer. Officers will participate in collecting information regarding his/her department's policies and practices; inform staff within the department of ADA requirements; participate in the overall planning and decision making to bring his/her department into compliance with the ADA; and serve as the contact person regarding ADA issues within the department.

#### Specific Responsibilities:

- Become familiar with the ADA and its regulations as they apply to his/her department;
- Conduct an internal review of their departments' policies, practices and activities including general nondiscrimination provisions such as equal opportunity to participate and benefit in the program(s), eligibility criteria for the program(s), integration of the program(s); communication such as the availability of auxiliary aids and services and the availability of printed materials in alternate formats such as Braille and large print; program and facility accessibility;
- Participate in the development of an action plan for making his/her departments' policies, practices, activities and facilities accessible to people with disabilities;
- Ensure clients his/her departments' services are aware of their rights under the ADA;
- Serve as his/her departments' contact person in the ADA;
- grievance procedure; and
- Serve on the State ADA Compliance Team.

Skills needed:

- Extensive knowledge of the programs and services of the appointing department;
- Extensive knowledge of state and federal laws which govern the departments' activities;
- Awareness of disability issues;
- Direct access to the head of the department; and
- Awareness of financial aspects of the department.

## Resources for the Accessibility Coordinator

### [National Association of ADA Coordinators](#)

NAADAC is a non-profit organization that educates entities regarding both the requirements and the opportunities of the ADA. They provide conferences and workshops for ADA Coordinators employed by both public and private employers.

### [State Arts Agency and Regional Arts Organizations 504/ADA Coordinators](#)

This is a list provided by the National Endowment for the Arts of all the Accessibility Coordinators of State Arts Agencies and Regional Arts Organizations in the United States and its territories. Their goal was to recognize and to demonstrate that it is much more valuable to educate about the ADA than to bear the costs of noncompliance litigation.