



Cultural Access  
Collaborative

# Welcome!

Please keep your cameras off and stay muted. To see only presenters and ASL interpreters, click the three dots on your image in Zoom and select "Hide Non-Video Participants."



**\$5 Suggested Donation**

**<https://bit.ly/supportcollab>**

**CulturalAccessCollab.org**

# Cultural Access Collaborative

We believe arts and culture are for **everyone**. Our mission is to empower Illinois' cultural spaces to become more accessible to visitors with disabilities.

## 4 Pillars:

- Professional Development
- Accessible Equipment Loans
- Access Calendar
- Network

# Program Accessibility

- Real-Time Captioning provided by Efficiency Reporting



- ASL Interpretation provided by First Choice Interpreting
- Please use Chat for Question Submission
- Please Chat with hosts for Tech and Access Support

# Open Door Arts



**Portia Brown**

Director of Operations



Arts & Culture  
**Accessibility Hub**  
A PROJECT OF OPEN DOOR ARTS



**Dani Rose**

Director of Cultural Access

# Assessment to Action

A process & tools to improve access: Part II

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Cultural Access Collaborative  
April 9, 2026



Arts & Culture  
**Accessibility Hub**

A PROJECT OF OPEN DOOR ARTS

# Who We Are



**Portia Brown,**  
**she/her**  
Director of Operations



**Dani Rose, she/her**  
Director of Cultural  
Access



**The Linde  
Family  
Foundation**



**Thank you our  
supporters funders!**



# About us

**Open Door Arts**, an Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation, is a Massachusetts-based arts and culture organization that increases **access, representation, and participation** of people with disabilities in our arts and cultural community.

# Access Improvement Cycle





Arts & Culture  
**Accessibility Hub**  
A PROJECT OF OPEN DOOR ARTS

[ArtsAccessHub.org](https://ArtsAccessHub.org)

Learn ▾

Assess & Plan

Find an Expert

Training & Certification

**Providing arts and culture organizations with information, resources, training, and experts to increase accessibility**





**Assess**

# You can't grow what you don't know



## Assessment helps you:

- Figure out what's going well and celebrate
- Identify areas for growth
- Understand what your legal responsibilities are
- Create common language and understanding within your team

# Tools to Help

## Arts & Culture Accessibility Self-

### Assessment

- Fully digital, self-paced
- Addresses 5 areas of organizational accessibility:
  - Organizational Approach
  - Space
  - Access Services
  - Communication
  - Programming
- **Additional resources:** glossary, legal responsibilities identification tool

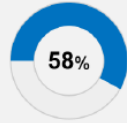
# Reading Your Report

# Reading your Report

- Read with curiosity
- Scores vs indicators
- Identify areas for improvement

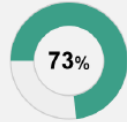
# Reading your Report

## Organizational Approach



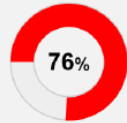
Your section score for Organizational Approach is 58%

## Space



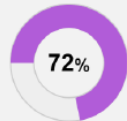
Your section score for Space is 73%

## Access Services



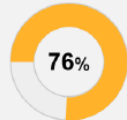
Your section score for Access Services is 76%

## Communication



Your section score for Communication is 72%

## Programming



Your section score for Programming is 76%

# Reading your Report



## SECTION DETAIL: ACCESS SERVICES

Below you will see individual scores for each of the 9 sub-sections of the Access Services section.

### Guidance and Assistance

Your score for guidance is 65%



### Seating

Your score for seating is 90%



### Sign Language Interpretation

Your score for sign language is 83%



### Captioning

Your score for captioning is 63%



### Audio Description

Your score for audio desc. is 80%



# Reading your Report



## SECTION DETAIL: COMMUNICATION

Below you will see individual scores for each of the 4 sub-sections of the Communication section.

### Communication with and about People with Disabilities

Your score for comm. with is 79%



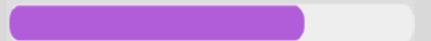
### Communicating Access Offerings and Policies

Your score for communication is 72%



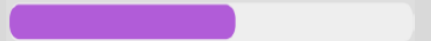
### Materials

Your score for materials is 73%



### On-Site Communication

Your score for on-site comm. is 56%



# Ask yourself some questions

- What patterns show up across categories?
- Are results stronger in policy vs. practice?
- Which areas surprised you? Which confirmed what you knew?



# Plan



# Preparing to Move Forward

**Creating an accessibility plan will help you:**

- Create concrete plans for improvement
- Develop a timeline
- Assign responsibilities within your team and determine need for external partners/consultants
- Determine a budget (if needed)
- Create and maintain an accountability system
- Track progress



# Tools to Help

## Accessibility Plan Process & Templates

- Google Doc & Google Sheet
- Step-by-step guidance to creating a working Accessibility plan (that meets requirements for a Transition Plan)
- **Go To:**
  - [artsaccesshub.org/assess-plan/](https://artsaccesshub.org/assess-plan/)
  - Scroll to Planning tools Click Google Sheet

# Tools to Help



**arts & culture  
accessibility  
self assessment**  
A PROJECT OF OPEN DOOR ARTS

**Accessibility Plan Tool by Open Door Arts**

Category	Item	Description of Issue	Plan for Improvement	Planned Completion	Person(s) Responsible	Apx. Cost	Funding	Priority Level
Organizational Approach	Hiring materials	Hiring materials missing accessibility information	Add salary, inclusion statement, and description of "essential job functions" to hiring materials	February 2026	PBrown-HR	None	NA	High



**Learn**

# Knowledge Before Action



LEAR  
N

**Learning will help ensure:**

- The what, why and how of accessibility
- Actions will be meaningful and effective
- Misinformation, assumptions and mistakes are avoided



# Tools to Help

- **“Learn” Topic pages**- detailed implementation, best practice, and legal information on 50+ topics
- **Glossary** - with definitions of 200+ access terms
- **Over 400 Resources**

# Tools to Help

## **Essentials**

Prepare and establish a strong foundation of knowledge and practice from which all your accessibility work can grow and thrive.



## **Spaces**

Ensure your physical spaces meet accessibility requirements and best practices so they can be enjoyed by everyone.



## **Services**

Support your audiences, employees, and participants by offering accessibility services thoughtfully and effectively.



## **Communication**

Communicate accessibly and effectively in-person, online and in printed materials to reach your intended audience.



## **Programming**

Design performances, exhibitions, workshops, and events that reflect accessibility at every stage.



 **Searchable Topic Database**



 **Full Topic List**



# Tools to Help



## Spaces

Care and Convenience Features

Historic Spaces

Physical Features

Renting Space to or from Others

Sensory Features

Signage and Wayfinding

## Specific Spaces

Classrooms, Meeting Rooms, and Studio Spaces

Food Service

Galleries, Collections and Exhibits

Gardens and Outdoor Spaces

Live Displays, Habitats, and Tanks

Office and Staff Spaces

Shops and Retail

Theaters and Auditoriums

# 50+ in-depth topics



LEARN

## Access Services

<p><b>Services</b></p> <p><b>Assistive Listening Systems</b></p> <p>Assistive Listening Systems (ALSs) enhance sound accessibility for d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals by using microphones, transmitters, and receivers to improve listening experiences in public spaces.</p> <p><a href="#">Read More</a></p>	<p><b>Services</b></p> <p><b>Audio Description</b></p> <p>Audio description provides narrated visual descriptions for individuals who are blind or have low vision, which enhances accessibility during live performances, exhibits, and media displays.</p> <p><a href="#">Read More</a></p>
<p><b>Services</b></p> <p><b>Captioning (open, closed, CART)</b></p> <p>Captioning converts spoken language and audio cues into written text, ensuring accessibility for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. It can be applied to in-person, virtual, live, and recorded events to enhance inclusivity and comprehension.</p> <p><a href="#">Read More</a></p>	<p><b>Services</b></p> <p><b>Large Print</b></p> <p>Large print is an accessible communication aid that provides printed materials in a larger, easy-to-read font. It supports individuals with low vision, ensuring that they can access information in both physical and digital formats.</p> <p><a href="#">Read More</a></p>

## Each offers:



**Art by disabled artists**



**General Overview**



**Key Terms**



**Implementation**



**Legal Requirements**



**Learn More**



**Experts**



# Connect

# You don't need to act alone

**Other people and organizations can support you in your process:**

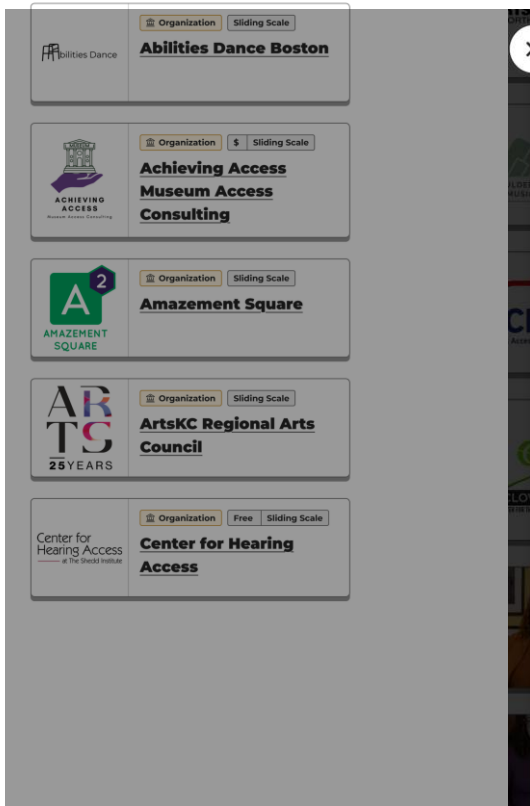
- Accessibility Experts
- User/Experts
- Human/Disability Services organizations
- Disabled artists
- Peers
- **People with disabilities**

# Tools to Help



- **Expert Directories** - connect with individuals and organizations that provide consultation and/or access services to support your work
- **Disabled Artists** - to collaborate and contextualize

# Tools to Help Expert Directory



EXPERT

Individual \$



## Cheryl Cumings

Workforce Development Manager and Coach

Cheryl Cumings is the Workforce Development Manager at the Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. in Seattle, Washington. In 2005, Cheryl Founded and led a nonprofit in Boston, MA offering an after school and career exploration program for blind and low vision middle and high school students. Services provided are staff and access assessments, staff training, planning of accessible conferences, program evaluation, and coaching.

Identifies as a person with disabilities, disabled, or as a disability led organization

### Types of Expertise

- Answer a quick question
- Provide Advising or Consultation
- Provide Training
- Provide workshop facilitation

### Contact Information

[cscummings@comcast.net](mailto:cscummings@comcast.net)

### Related Hub Topics

- [Defining Disability](#)
- [Employment of People with Disabilities](#)
- [Evaluation and Feedback](#)
- [Sighted Guides](#)
- [Staff Training](#)

# Tools to Help Connect to Artist



CONNECT



*The World Landmark Buildings by Gregory Blackstock*



*Untitled by Daisy Patton*



*Gold Wheelchair by Gordon Sasaki*



# Implement



IMPLEMENT

# Accessibility is a permanent collection

## Do it and then keep doing it!

- Keep reflecting, collect feedback
- Repeat the cycle- the work continues!
- Progress over perfection



IMPLEMENT

# Tools to Help

**On the hub you'll find:**

- templates
- tip sheets
- podcasts
- resources

# Tools to Help



## IMPLEMENT

Jump to: [General Overview](#) [Key Terms](#) [Implementation](#) [Legal Requirements](#) [Learn More](#) [Experts](#)

### Learn More



While external resources have been vetted and reviewed, the Hub does not have ownership or oversight of these external resources. If you'd like to add or suggest resources or if you encounter any issues, [please let us know using this form](#).

PDF/Doc

#### Sample Job Description

Template for creating a job description that represents accessible employment best practices

Website

#### A to Z: Job Descriptions

Addresses formulating a job descriptions and accommodations processes in accordance with guidance from the EEOC

Website

#### Service Animals as an Employment Accommodation

Information for employers about requirements for accommodations related to service animals

Website

#### Adjusting for Access: Reasonable Modifications in Policies, Practices, and Procedures

Overview of the ADA's reasonable accommodations regulations and exceptions for fundamental alterations, with examples



# Quick Tour

# Thank you!



Arts & Culture  
**Accessibility Hub**  
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TheHub@OpenDoorArtsMA.org

**www.ArtsAccessHub.org**

@ArtsAccessHub

**www.OpenDoorArtsMA.org**

@OpenDoorArtsMA

# The Morton Arboretum



**Mariam Murphy**  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator

The

**HUB**

EVERYTHING  
you need



All in  
**ONE**  
place

...and it's  
**FREE!**

All Topics >

Spaces

Specific Spaces >

## Gardens and Outdoor Spaces

Category

Spaces

Specific Spaces

Content Creators/Editors



Ken Darsney



Katie Samson



Sunset at Kaimana Beach by Megan Bent

## **General Overview**

Arts and culture organizations should consider many factors when designing accessible gardens and outdoor spaces. We recommend visiting the [Physical Features](#), [Sensory Features](#), and [Care and Convenience Features](#) sections of The Hub to learn more about accessibility requirements and best practices relevant to all spaces. Gardens and outdoor spaces provide a wonderful opportunity for everyone, including people with disabilities, to appreciate the natural world, tap into sensory experiences, and build community through shared interest. This section will discuss accessibility considerations for physical features such as paths of travel, surface materials, places of rest, and wayfinding, as well as other sensory and environmental factors to consider when designing accessible gardens and outdoor spaces.

## **Key Terms**

- [Truncated Dome](#)
- [Detectable Edges](#)



## Implementation

- ⊕ **Plan and Prepare**
- ⊕ **Pay Attention to Outdoor Pathway Surfaces**
- ⊕ **Create Accessible Routes**
- ⊕ **Empower Sensory and Cognitive Accessibility**
- ⊕ **Enable Rest and Comfort**
- ⊕ **Create Effective Wayfinding and Information Systems**

 Website



### **Designing Accessible Outdoor Spaces in Communities**

Suggestions based in principles of universal design, including information about wayfinding, equipment, and assessment/improvement.

 PDF/Doc



### **Trails for All People**

Addresses management practices, legal requirements, and accessibility considerations for inclusive trails

 Website



### **The Universal Garden**

Short article describing how a service coordinator worked with her local ADA Center to transform a community garden into an accessible garden space

 Website



### **Designing Gardens Accessible to All**

Overview of creating accessible gardens, with a focus on garden beds and tools for maintaining them



All Topics



Services



## Preparation (“Know Before you Go”) Materials

Category

Services

Content Creators/Editors



**Kait Pascall**



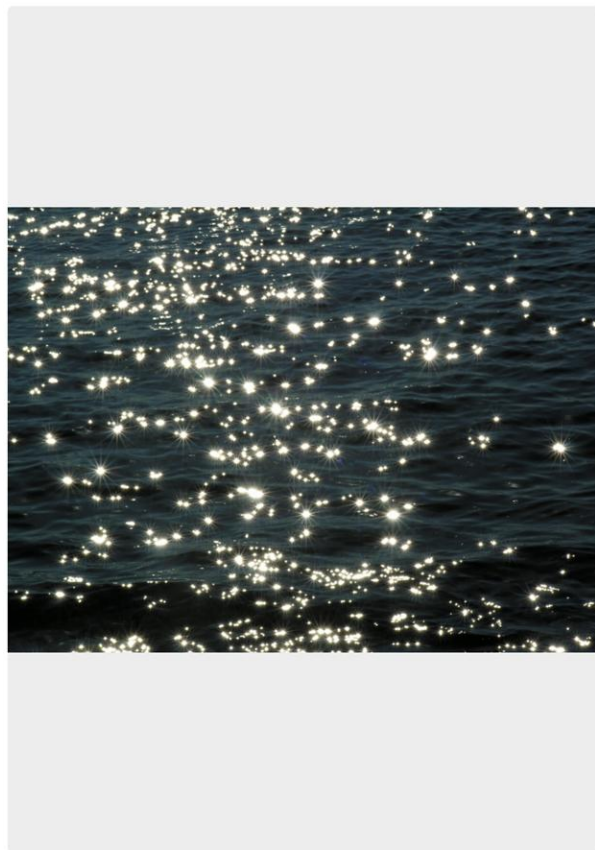
**Katie Samson**



**Elise Schaffer**



**Roger Ideishi**



Animation by [Heidi Swevens](#)

## **General Overview**

“Know Before You Go” materials provide visitors with detailed information before their visit, including about various access needs. These materials can be shared through accessible PDFs, videos, social narratives, or tip sheets. Whatever the format, they help visitors prepare by offering essential information on accessibility features of the space, such as wayfinding and navigation, sensory elements, and access services and programs offered. These materials are based on the concept of priming, which shows that preparing individuals in advance allows them to process information at their own pace, reducing anxiety and frustration. Tools like visual schedules, sensory maps, and pre-visit guides can be tailored to specific needs and can provide visitors with a clearer understanding of what to expect. Sharing this information in multiple formats benefits everyone, ensuring a more inclusive and welcoming experience for all visitors.


## **Key Terms**

- [Neurodiversity](#)
- [Preview guide or Pre-visit guide](#)
- [Sensory map](#)
- [Social narratives or Social Stories™](#)
- [Visual Schedule](#)

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## **Implementation**

 **Include Key Information in Pre-Visit Materials**

 **Follow Best Practices for Creating and Organizing Pre-Visit Information**

 **Share Pre-Visit Information Across Multiple Channels**

 **Consider Examples of Pre-Visit Materials**

 **Centering the Community and Experts**

 **Include Key Information in Pre-Visit Materials**

When putting together pre-visit materials for your organization, include some key pieces of information to allow visitors to anticipate how they will navigate your space. These include:

- **Location details:** Parking, entrances, and directions (highlight accessible parking and entrances) as well as distances from parking or public transportation to entrances.
- **Locations of key places:** Provide information about key spaces (e.g., special exhibits, performance space, etc.) and their location and distance from the entrance. Maps and floorplans can assist with wayfinding and space navigation.
- **Restrooms and changing areas:** Accessible restrooms, changing stations (and adult changing stations if you provide them), and nursing rooms.
- **Hours of operation:** Include peak times, specific hours designated to visitors with sensory sensitivities, and any mask-only hours.
- **Ticketing and registration:** Provide information on how to purchase tickets (online or on-site), entry requirements, self-check-in, and add-on pricing (e.g., guided tours, parking, additional exhibits).
- **Information desk location:** Indicate where your information desk is located or where to find staff who can answer accessibility-related questions. Staff may also be able to assist with borrowing equipment or accessing services such as large print or braille guides, sensory kits, etc.
- **Rest areas:** Provide information about the location of rest seating, relaxation spaces, or quiet spaces/sensory rooms for visitors who may need a break, as well as places where gallery stools can be borrowed. These should also be included in sensory maps.
- **Sensory considerations:** Note any exhibits or places in your venue with sensory triggers (e.g., bright lights, loud noises, crowding expected, etc.).
- **Rules and expectations:** Outline any behavioral guidelines or expectations for specific spaces or times, allowing visitors to make informed decisions. Consider whether certain rules are necessary.
- **Service animal information:** Indicate where service animal relief areas are located. Share your policies regarding emotional support animals (for more information, see the Hub page on [Service Animal Accommodations](#)).
- **Health and safety information:** Share any sanitization and cleaning protocols, mask requirements or recommendations, and other health protocols or expectations.
- **Food and beverage options:** Provide information on available food and beverage options, including in-venue offerings and nearby restaurants. Specify policies regarding bringing your own food or snacks and whether refrigeration is available for medication.
- **Shaded areas and cooling stations:** Highlight shaded or cooling stations available for visitors who may need relief from heat or to cool down, including water fountains.
- **Schedule of events and activities:** Include a clear schedule of events and activities.

# Thank you!

[MariamMurphy@mortonarb.org](mailto:MariamMurphy@mortonarb.org)

# Q&A



# Upcoming Programs

## Co-Creation with the Disability Community

- **May 7th 3:30pm - 4:30pm CT**
- **Hybrid Program!**
- **In Person: Lincoln Park Zoo  
Pepper Family Wildlife Center  
2101 N Lincoln Park W, Chicago, IL 60614**
- **Virtual: Zoom**
- **Join Lincoln Park Zoo staff sharing about their model and practice of co-creating interpretive signage with people with disabilities.**

## Resources



**PD Resources**



**Survey**



Cultural Access  
Collaborative

# Thank you for joining us!

This session has now ended



**\$5 Suggested Donation**

**<https://bit.ly/supportcollab>**

**CulturalAccessCollab.org**