



Accessibility TipSheet Staff Training Resources

From the Access Office

A very clear theme runs through the “thank-you” letters the Kennedy Center has received over the years from patrons with disabilities, their families, and friends: every single one thanked us for the way in which they were treated by staff.

Investing in staff training is one of the most important accommodations we can provide to our patrons with disabilities. Training staff should be right up there at the top of our priority lists but exactly how you train your staff, who will be trained, how much time and how often the training sessions will be is up to you.

This TipSheet identifies sources for materials, handouts, and videotapes.

1) Use good materials and handouts to support the training.

Easter Seals:

[Disability Etiquette](#)

[Myths and Facts about People with Disabilities](#)

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability and Employment Policy (US DOL ODEP):

[Communicating With and About People With Disabilities](#)

[Providing Quality Services to Customers with Disabilities](#)

2) Always have a knowledgeable person with a disability involved in the training.

A knowledgeable patron with a disability who can articulate their personal perspective or experience will be very helpful. The emphasis is on “knowledgeable” ... just having a person with a disability participate is not enough. You need to identify people who have experience in training, know the issues, and, ideally, have experience with your venue.

The following list of organizations may be able to recommend the right person for your training. Be sure to interview the person, ask to observe him or her conducting a training, and check around with other people in the disability community to make sure s/he is reputable. You should not have to spend a lot of money to hire a consultant unless you choose to hire someone to conduct the trainings on your behalf.

[Independent Living Centers](#)

The ILRU defines independent living centers as “consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide an array of independent living services.” The ILRU has an online of centers and related organizations that is searchable by state.

[American Council for the Blind](#)

The American Council of the Blind is the nation's leading membership organization of blind and visually impaired people.

[Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

The Hearing Loss Association of America is the nation's largest organization for people with hearing loss and it exists to open the world of communication for people with hearing loss through information, education, advocacy, and support.

3) Focus on giving your staff the knowledge and practical skills to assist your patrons.

Take the advice of Carmen Jones from Solutions Marketing Group: “I’m more interested in staff with practical skills, rather than awareness and sensitivity.” Do they know where the accessible restroom is and what the shortest, easiest route with no steps is? Do they know where the assistive listening devices are and how they work?

About TipSheets

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