

## **Philadelphia Welcomes Everyone: Promoting Effective Communications and Physical Accessibility**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all public sites to be accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes public vaccination and testing facilities and services. Please note that providing access is a critical component to equitable vaccine distribution. This checklist highlights considerations to promote effective communications and physical access at all sites.

### **Handouts/Signage**

- Print handouts should be in plain fonts (Arial, Calibri, Verdana) in a reasonable size ( $\geq 12$ pt), using high contrast colors (black/white) to allow for easier reading. Large print copies ( $>16$  pt.) or the ability to view in a large print format should be made available.
- Instructions should be clear, concise, and step-by-step in chronological order.
- Dense text should be broken with headings, bullets for easier reading.
- Signage should be easily readable with large print, high contrast (black/white, dark blue/white, yellow/black) on a non-glare finish, no italics, plain fonts (Arial, Calibri, Verdana).
- Be prepared to provide supplemental communications in addition to any written communications such as visual cues, written formats, communications boards, gestures, etc. It is critical to ensure full understanding.

### **Pre-Registration/Scheduling (via internet or phone)**

- Ask about disability or other communications-related accommodations on a pre-registration form, so you can be prepared and have these accommodations in place.
- Accommodations to list on a pre-registration form can include: American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter; captioning; other. Or leave a text field so people can declare their accommodation
- If using the phone to call those on a waiting list, review resource below for communicating with people who are deaf or who have hearing loss.

### **Check-In/On-Site Registration**

- Post clear signage denoting the accessible path to check-in.
- An accessible route should be at least 36 inch wide, free of stairs, modest inclines, smooth and slip resistant.
- All events should offer accessible parking clearly marked, level, and include an access aisle large enough for mobility devices. There should be easy and direct access to curb cuts.
- If the site does not have curb cuts, or if there are elevated thresholds, portable ramps at least 36" wide should be made available.
- Confirm any disability-related accommodations in advance and ask about access needs during on-site registration.
- If an ASL interpreter is required but not available on-site, use Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). Do not rely on family, friends, or others in line to interpret.
- To aid in communication have the following available: a paper communication board, an iPhone or tablet communication app, white boards, pen/paper.

**Waiting Areas**

- All walk-up events should include multiple options/places for individuals to sit while waiting and not lose their place in line.
- Accessible restrooms should be available and include 1) an accessible toilet stall with at least 60 in. in diameter of clear space to allow for a wheelchair turning; 2) higher toilet; 3) grab bars for transfer to the toilet.
- If a portable restroom is available, an accessible portable restroom must be provided.

**Education/Consent**

- Always ask for a person's communication or learning preferences.
- If ASL or language interpretation is needed, ensure all educational material as well as process information are provided using the preferred communication/language.
- Be aware that masks can make communication more difficult. Make available clear face masks/coverings for workers so that individuals with hearing loss, speech disabilities, or others all can see facial expressions and mouth movements to assist in understanding communications.
- Some people may use alternative communications, gestures, personal assistive listening or speech generating devices, or support professionals to communicate. See Signs of Respect, below.
- Identify and be prepared to move to a quiet space to communicate with individuals who have hearing loss, sensory needs, or difficulty communicating with loud noises or distractions.
- Be prepared to ask questions and provide instructions using various methods such as visual cues, written formats, communications boards, gestures, etc. Provide consent form or other educational materials in alternate formats (large print, electronic, speech-to-text, etc.) and be prepared to read documents aloud and assure understanding.

**Vaccination/Testing/Observation Areas**

- Provide items such as white boards, pen and paper, communication boards, or communication apps on a table or phone to assist with communications.
- Provide clear information including step-by-step follow-up instructions and descriptions. Adapt communications methods as necessary (such as visual cues, written formats, communications boards, gestures, etc.).

**Signs of Respect**

- Speak to the individual directly, in an age-appropriate manner.
- Ask first if assistance is needed, do not assume.
- Allow extra time for communications and full understanding; do not rush.
- Allow service animals to accompany individuals; do not touch, play with, or distract the animals.
- Do not touch or move a person's personal mobility or communication devices.