

Office of Disability Services

Tipsheet for

Accessible Event Planning

This brief guide is meant to assist you in organizing programs and events at Barnard that are inclusive of the needs of students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) mandates that “reasonable accommodation” be provided in all college-sponsored programs and activities—and it is with this spirit that we provide the following suggestions. If you have any specific questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Disability Services in 105 Hewitt or call X44634 voice/TDD).

1. Advance planning is key

This is perhaps the most basic guideline to accessible event planning! In order to ensure that your on- or off-campus event is accessible to the greatest extent possible, always try to plan in advance. Please refer to the event checklist provided at the end of these guidelines.

2. Physical accessibility

Always make sure your event is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. While the Barnard campus is over 90% accessible, there are still a few inaccessible locations on both the Barnard and Columbia campuses. If you are unsure about a particular location, call ODS or Barnard Facilities Services at X42021. For Columbia access info, call the CU/ODS at X42388; for Teachers College access, call the TC/ODS at 678-3689.

3. Providing communication alternatives

In general, meeting/event materials should be available in alternative formats (Braille, large print, sign language, cassette, disk, etc.) if requested with by persons with disabilities. Event organizers should be flexible so that they can respond to attendees with disabilities whose needs may not have been known in advance (e.g., assisting a visually impaired participant with a reading program.)

4. Publicity

For all events with advance publicity, it is recommended the following statement be used:

“Barnard College is wheelchair accessible (or a statement that the specific event location is wheelchair accessible and where the closest accessible entrance is). If you have any specific disability-related needs, please contact (event coordinator) no later than one week prior to the event (tel#, email address) or the Office of Disability Services voice/TDD (212) 854-4634.”

5. Be flexible

Remember: there are usually many ways of providing accessibility to persons with a variety of disabilities—and sometimes the easiest strategy is to ask participants what works best for them.

Accessibility Checklist

- Is the event being held in a **wheelchair accessible** location?

- Are there wheelchair accessible restrooms nearby—and is this **info provided to all participants**?

- Have the **communication needs** of all persons with disabilities—especially those with visual or hearing impairments—been considered?

- Is info about disability and access included in all **pre-event publicity**?

- If refreshments are served, are there **non-caffeine and non-sugar selections offered**?

- If there are other disability-related questions or needs, are you **aware of campus resources** that can be used?