



Virtual Event Open Access Quick Guide

Open Access refers to accessibility measures that are built proactively into an event, and do not need to be requested on a case-by-case basis. **See below for the Virtual Event Checklist** to help guide your event materials and live event best practices.

Virtual Event Checklist

Before the Event:

1. Determine the Meeting/Event Size

- Meetings/Events should include an access statement identifying the event coordinator and their contact information for individuals who may be interested in making an access request.
 - **50+ Attendee Events.** CART (live captions) for virtual events with 50+ attendees, and/or events with expected attendance from the general public: Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription (CART) utilizes a captioning service to transcribe speech into real-time captions and can be linked via software into WebEx Events.
 - **150+ Attendee Events.** CART *and* ASL interpretation for events with 150+ attendees, and/or events with expected attendance from the general public: ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters communicate between spoken English and ASL. Frequently, ASL interpreters work in teams, switching off periodically.

2. Publicity: Include Access Information & Access Contact Information

- Make sure every flyer, email, and event listing offers access information (weblink, dial-in, teleconferencing platform captions, etc.) along with contact information of the event organizer for making access requests.
- When you send event registrants or potential attendees an event's log-in information (e.g. Webex link), be sure to also include information about how to participate by phone.
- For any posters or flyers, always include a text-only version. The text-only version should include all information conveyed on the flyer and a brief description of the important visual elements (an image description for the flyer).
- Use alt text and image descriptions. Descriptive links clearly identify what the link will do (i.e. Register to Vote by Mail vs. "Click Here" text).
 - [How to add alt text in Outlook](#)
 - [Alt text versus image description, with best practices](#)
- Use high color contrast in advertising materials.
- Provide electronic copies of PowerPoint slides, handouts, documents, or prepared remarks via email or chat in preparation for and/or during the event.
 - **Example:** "Access information: This event will take place on WebEx and will include a plenary webinar and breakout rooms. Event materials will be made available electronically at the beginning of the event. To request accommodations such as ASL or captioning, please contact the event organizer."

3. Prepare for CART/ASL at Your Event

- Visit the [contracted providers list](#) to review vendors and make arrangements, otherwise you can request CART Live Captioning or ASL Interpreting through CSD. Complete the [Interpreting/Captioning Request Form](#) to schedule open access, or to arrange services when an attendee makes a request through CSD. A valid org code number must be provided on the form for billing purposes. When CSD receives the form, they will send a confirmation of receipt, and coordinate service with the appropriate vendor. Updates will be sent as needed. Whenever possible, send the names of presenters and any presentation information/materials to CART provider or CSD two (2) days in advance to help ensure accuracy.
 - For basic information, refer to [CSD's ASL and CART Information Page](#).

- For questions about the form or billing, the event host should contact dsdat@uww.edu.
- Check that the closed captions are enabled on the back end of the WebEx account that created the event. Take care of this well in advance to avoid last-minute issues.
- Ensure that the CART provider has been “assigned to type closed captions” 10 to 15 minutes before the event begins.
 - [Set up captioner in WebEx](#)
- Ensure that ASL interpreters can be seen by participants.
 - Ensure that participants can identify ASL interpreters in order to communicate about pinning each other’s videos.
 - For “webinar” style events, contact the CSD two days before the event for the interpreters’ email addresses, and invite all interpreters as “panelists” so that they can turn on video as needed.
- Consider break-out room logistics in advance; WebEx only allows for one break-out room to have captions.
 - Announce which break-out room will have CART/ASL at the beginning of the event and request direct chat messages from anyone who will need these services.

4. **Respond to Any Accommodation Requests**

- Write back to acknowledge receipt and, if applicable, follow up to confirm services. If you don’t understand a request, try a quick internet search first. Then check to be sure you’ve understood or ask for more information. Focus your questions around the event logistics, rather than asking about disability status or diagnosis.
 - Remember: CART and ASL are NOT interchangeable and should be honored as distinct requests.
- Start the process of making arrangements immediately, especially if an access request involves ASL or CART captions. Ample time is needed to find available interpreters/CART writers, if needed. If the request is last-minute, make every effort to fulfill it. Acknowledge that the timeline is tight in a non-judgmental way and keep the attendee updated about whether you have received confirmation. You can also offer to provide a transcript of the event, before the event if available, or upon completion of the event.
 - Examples:
 - [Request for ASL] “Thank you for your interest in our event! I’ve put in a request for ASL, and I’ll let you know when it is confirmed.”
 - “Thank you for your interest in our event! I’ve put in a request for CART. Because the event is tomorrow, the timeline is a bit tight for finding a CART writer. I will keep you posted--please look for a final update tomorrow afternoon.”

During the Event:

5. **Make an Introductory Access Announcement**

- Notify attendees about access measures that are available and how to use them (e.g., if applicable, announce that there are captions and explain how to turn them on) before you start your meeting or event.
- Announce how to get to the access copies of any materials—share the link on the presentation’s first page and/or in the meeting’s chat and read it aloud.
- Encourage participants to say their name before they make a comment, or introduce speakers when it is their turn to talk. This will make it easier to keep track of the discussion (e.g., “This is [Name]. You mentioned X. Can you say more about that?”).
- Explain any guidelines for how eventgoers can participate using the chat function to structure discussion.

After the Event:

6. **Caption Recorded Videos**

- If your event was captioned live, the CART captions will be present in the recording, so your work is done!
- For any uncaptioned recordings, add captions by auto-generating captions and editing them.
 - [How to caption YouTube Videos](#)
 - [How to caption Zoom Videos](#)

Avoid the Following

- Don't send an attendee to The Center for Students with Disabilities when they make an access request for an event. Some people mistakenly assume that an attendee should arrange for their accommodations with the Disability Resource Center (students) or Human Resources (employees), as they would for the classroom or workplace. The event host is responsible for arranging accommodations and funding them.
- Don't deny accommodations because someone is not UWW-affiliated. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, all publicly offered events must be equally accessible to people with and without disabilities. For UWW's public events, this includes visitors to the University.
- Don't discuss the cost of accommodations with an individual making a request. If you have concerns about funding, contact the Disability Resource Center.

When in Doubt, Ask for Help

Contact the iCIT Help Desk for assistance with any access/accommodations-related logistics. The Help Desk may work in collaboration with the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) to review and respond to requests on a case-by-case basis.

helpdesk@uww.edu

(262) 472-4357

Andersen Library 2000

Resources:

[Captioning and Open Access Technology Procedure](#)

[Captioning and Open Access Technology Practice Directive](#)
