

# CREATED EQUAL: AMERICA'S CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

The Abolitionists ❖ Slavery by Another Name ❖ The Loving Story ❖ Freedom Riders

## 6. Making Programming Accessible for All Audiences

### The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (PL 101-336), effective since July 1992, guarantees that people with disabilities shall have equal access to employment, public services and accommodations, transportation, and telecommunication services. As public service providers, sites must make reasonable efforts to give disabled people the same access to information, programs, and resources enjoyed by those who are not disabled. [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

Welcoming and inclusive events are achievable with advance outreach, clear communication, detailed follow-through, and most of all recognition that access improves the event for everyone. A diverse audience increases opportunity for meaningful exchange.

### Promoting the Event

Promotion materials should invite prospective attendees to contact staff to request specific accommodations. It may take 3-4 days to schedule an interpreter, so ask patrons to make their requests at least one week prior to the event.

### Developing Accessible Programming

To welcome all audiences and be mindful of individual needs, you'll want to consider the following:

- Are the parking lots, entrances, signage, restrooms, and meeting spaces accessible for all visitors and presenters?
- Is the seating arranged in order to accommodate wheel chairs and interpretation?
- Is public transportation an option?
- Will you need to hire sign language and/or oral interpreters? Will you need additional lighting for the interpretation? Will any members of your audience need amplification?
- As much as possible, share advance information with your interpreting team.
- If handouts will be distributed, can you offer large print or Braille versions if requested in advance?
- For audience Q&A sessions, remember that interpreters need microphones, too.
- For group discussions, it is important that all participants are able to see each other.
- Are staff and volunteers aware of accessibility features at the venue?

### Resources

For additional information about developing, promoting, and implementing inclusive arts and humanities programming, visit: <http://www.arts.gov/resources/Accessibility/pubs/index.html>.

Resources for working with sign language interpreters:

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

[http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard\\_Practice\\_Papers/Drafts\\_June\\_2006/Professional\\_Sign\\_Language\\_Interpreter\\_SPP%281%29.pdf](http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/Drafts_June_2006/Professional_Sign_Language_Interpreter_SPP%281%29.pdf)

Gallaudet University

[http://www.gallaudet.edu/GIS/For\\_Clients/Additional\\_Information/Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/GIS/For_Clients/Additional_Information/Frequently_Asked_Questions.html)