# Guidelines for Site Accessibility at Virtual Events

As virtual events continue to expand, it is important to understand potential barriers that can arise for people with disabilities. There are a variety of platforms available for hosting events, and they do not all approach accessibility in the same way. Understanding the pros and cons of your chosen platform will assist you in finding solutions. Check out the platform your organization is planning to use and see how it meets the following points:

» Does it provide automated captioning or text transcription?
  o While some platforms provide automated captioning, the accuracy can vary depending on the sophistication of the technology and the number of speakers and qualities of their voices. Try out the setting before committing to it as your captioning option. It may work fine for some events, such as smaller meetings or events where one person is doing most of the speaking, but it could be insufficient for others.
» Does it function with CART?
  o Some situations, such as panel discussions or other events with a variety of speakers and voice types, may require Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART), which is provided by a person with specialized equipment and can provide more accurate captions.
» Does it allow captions in the "breakout" rooms?
» Does it allow you to "pin" or "anchor" a sign language interpreter?
» Can participants enlarge the size of the captions?
» Can participants change the ratio of screen imagery, so they can make the interpreter window larger or the screen image larger?
» Do screen readers function throughout?
» Is there the option for someone to call in if they do not have a computer?
» Are there any tablets, computers, or laptops that are known to have difficulty integrating with this platform?
» Does access to the chat, reactions, or any other functions change from device to device? If so, share that information when you go over housekeeping at the beginning of the event.

For a deeper look at platform functionalities and accessibility, see this resource from the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Tips for Hosts and Facilitators of Virtual Events

» Ask each speaker to briefly describe themselves.

» Go over housekeeping rules at the beginning, both verbally and in written form on screen. Assign a staff member to repost them in the chat for latecomers.

» If you plan to record the event, announce this so that people can decide whether to keep their cameras on.

» If you want people to rename themselves for any reason, (i.e., dividing them into breakout groups by number) walk them through the process step by step.

» Review all functions participants need to use upfront, unless the event is a recurring meeting.

» Every time the speaker changes, identify them or ask them to identify themselves. This includes any speakers in a question-and-answer period. This will help with the clarity of the captioning and assist people who are blind or have low vision to keep track of the conversation and speakers.

» Have tech support available for people who need assistance.