



Guidelines for Communication Access

Everyone has unique communication needs.

Here are suggestions to find out what a person might need to use your business or service.

- Welcome the person with a communication disability by smiling, saying hello and talking directly to them and not just the person with them.
- Ask the person what you should do when communicating with them. They may tell you or give you instructions to read. If necessary, move where you can see and read how to communicate with the person.
- Give the person enough time to communicate. It takes longer for a person with a communication disability to get their message across.
- Be willing to wait until you understand the person's message. Tell the person what you understand so far and if necessary, move to a quiet area; ask if you can guess or wait for them to repeat the message or tell you another way.
- If the person has difficulty understanding what you are saying, use everyday language and show pictures and objects of what you are talking about.
- Provide different ways for people to contact your organization, such as telephone, fax, email, text, TTY, relay services, online ordering. Be prepared to

communicate with people who use speech devices and assistants over the telephone.

- Make sure your signs are clear, easy to see and understand.
- If your services include meetings or public events, give the agenda ahead of time and ask the person how they will signal that they have something to say.
- Make sure your reading materials are easy to read and understand. Ask the person if they want assistance or if they want an electronic copy of your materials.
- Make your forms easy to read, understand and complete. Find out if the person wants assistance with writing or an electronic copy that they can use on a computer.
- If you have forms to sign, ask the person how they do this. They may use a written signature, an X, a stamp, an electronic signature or assistance.