

	<b>Effective Date:</b>	10-01-2015
	<b>Policy #:</b>	G-01
	<b>Supersedes:</b>	<b>09-12-2011</b>
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## **PURPOSE**

The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) plans and sponsors meetings and events attended exclusively by LARA staff as well as those attended by individuals and organizations outside the department. In addition, LARA plans portions of and co-sponsors meetings and events with other organizations and individuals outside the department. In keeping with federal and state disability rights laws, it is the intent of this policy to standardize the department's planning of and participation in meetings and events to ensure accessibility for all participants.

## **POLICY**

### **LARA sponsored Meetings and Events**

Events and meetings planned and sponsored entirely by LARA will be accessible, whether attended by LARA staff, individuals from outside the department, or both. This policy includes but is not limited to meetings open to the public, conferences, educational events, press conferences, staff training and retreats. "Accessible" means that all who are qualified to attend will be able to attend, participate in all activities, and have access to information in the needed alternative formats in a timely manner that allows full participation during the event. At a minimum, the site will be barrier-free, and additional accommodations will be provided upon request with advance notice.

Event announcements should be made sufficiently in advance or at least the number of days necessary to receive and respond to requests for accommodations. These announcements should include a statement similar to the following:

*"The meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Individuals attending the meeting are requested to refrain from using heavily scented personal care products, in order to enhance accessibility for everyone. People with disabilities requiring additional accommodations such as information in alternative formats in order to participate in the meeting should contact the LARA Office Services, Americans With Disabilities Act coordinator at 517-373-1860.*

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### **Meetings and events planned and sponsored by others outside LARA**

When LARA staff participates in an event planned and/or sponsored by another organization, the portion of the event presented by LARA staff should be accessible, and LARA staff will advocate for accessibility and provide technical assistance to increase accessibility at the entire event.

A LARA bureau participating in the meeting or event is responsible for implementing this policy. Questions on this policy may be directed to LARA Office Services, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator at 517-373-1860.

### **PROCEDURES**

These procedures and resources pertain to meetings and events sponsored and planned in whole or in part by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). These procedures will be revised and updated as approved by the LARA ADA Coordinator.

#### **Meeting/Event Planning Procedures**

1. **Know your audience.** Do you know all the persons (and their abilities) coming to the event? Is it an event only for those invited or registered, or is it an event open to the public without pre-registration? If you know the audience, this will help with planning, but remember that (for example) anyone could suddenly need to use crutches on a temporary basis. If people register for your event, you have the opportunity for them to alert you to their accommodation needs and you can provide precisely what is requested. Otherwise, you need to prepare for the unknown by having an accessible site, materials on hand in alternative formats and a sign language interpreter if needed.
2. **Site selection.** If possible, the bureau planning the meeting or event should conduct an onsite visit of the location or proposed location to determine accessibility, including factors such as parking, meeting rooms, elevators, restrooms, and others which may have an effect on participation in the event. If it is not possible for bureau staff to do an on-site visit, staff from a partner

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organization (such as one of Michigan’s Centers for Independent Living) may be able to provide information about the proposed location based on a visit or past experience.

3. **Transportation, parking and getting into and around the facility.** Think about approaching your event or meeting from private automobiles, taxis, or public transportation. Any barriers in the event location? Are there enough accessible parking spaces for the event? Any security issues that require advance arrangements for guest parking? Are there accessible paths of travel (with ramps, curb cuts and elevators where needed) from the parking area to meeting rooms to restrooms to other sites for the event, including a minimum 36 inches of clearance through doorways for the path of travel.
4. **Access statement.** In press releases, advertisements, publications and other information about the event, include a statement such as this:

*“The meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Individuals attending the meeting are requested to refrain from using heavily scented personal care products, in order to enhance accessibility for everyone. People with disabilities requiring additional accommodations such as information in alternative formats in order to participate in the meeting should contact the LARA Office Services, Americans With Disabilities Act coordinator at 517-373-1860.”*

Before sending this out, it is important to verify that the site actually is accessible and that there is adequate handicapped parking as estimated for your event. The deadline for requesting additional accommodations or alternative formats must allow time for participants to find out about the event and for you to respond to requests. If there isn’t time to receive and respond to specific requests for accommodations, staff need to be prepared for any accommodation need.

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5. **Have a generous timeline.** Publicize the meeting early enough (10 days in advance recommended) for people needing accommodations to request them, and for you to provide them. Know when people will actually receive the meeting announcement.
  
6. **Seating.** Designate barrier-free seating locations for people with disabilities dispersed throughout the seating area. Have adequate open spaces for individuals using wheelchairs, seats with a clear view of sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, and seating close to the podium or stage for individuals with limited vision. Room layout should allow full participation in planned activities. For example, if activities require moving from table to table, allow enough space between tables for people using a wheelchair or mobility aids.
  
7. **Accessible information throughout the event.** This includes speeches, PowerPoint and other presentations, flip charts, hand-outs, films, videos and other information. For example, accommodations may include sign language interpreters, assistive listening systems, and/or real-time captioning for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. People who are blind or visually impaired may need materials in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, audiotape, and/or a computer disc. The information should be available during the event, and not sent after the fact.