

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR DEMOCRATIC GAIN  
BOSTON 2004  
ROOM ACCESSIBILITY

1. DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY.
  - A. SEATING – first row of the room, same side.
  - B. COMBINING INDIVIDUALS INTO SEATING GROUPS – even if they did not come together, guide them to the same section of the room, seating them in the first row, same side.
  - C. PLACE THE INTERPRETER IN THE LINE OF SIGHT OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBER – the interpreter should be in front of the seated participants, generally in the same line of sight as the main speaker, if possible. Sitting is preferable to standing, but if they insist, then the Interpreter can stand to the side of the room. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing should be able to view the speaker and the interpreter without having to look back and forth. For purposes of these meetings, and for reasons related to room size and other factors, the interpreters are not going to be standing next to the speaker.
  
2. WHEELCHAIR USERS.
  - A. SEATING –
    1. If they enter from the front – they should be seated in the first row, near the door, to permit early exit for any reason, including bathroom use. Remove as many chairs in the first row as necessary to permit the wheelchair users to enter, turnaround and adjust as necessary. After they are situated, replace chairs near the wheelchair user for their personal assistants if possible, in a way that does not obstruct exit. **DO NOT PUT THE WHEELCHAIR USER IN THE AISLE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE** – it obstructs other meeting participants and calls attention to the user. If they come in late, then do the best you can to pull a chair out of the way as far to the front as possible.
    2. If they enter from the rear – ask them where they want to sit – front or back. If they enter late, and the speaker has already started, ask them if they are ok with sitting in the back, and move chairs to permit it.
  - B. PERSONAL ASSISTANTS FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS - most wheelchair users will be accompanied by at least one other individual, and sometimes two. The personal assistants should be seated next to the wheelchair user.
  - C. POWER CORDS FOR MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIRS – some motorized wheelchairs might ask to power up while they are sitting there. If there are outlets near the front, make sure that any power cords do not pose a danger to other room participants. If there is not a way to do so safely, then find a power outlet near the room, and offer to let them power up there after the conclusion of the meeting.

For accessibility questions or problems, you can call Jim Reed, cell (602) 549-3495.