



How do I make sure my prevention program works for everyone?

Prevention Professional Edition

Start with a plan.

Inaccessible programs don't just inconvenience people. They cut them out entirely. People with disabilities, neurodivergent youth, and families navigating chronic illness, trauma, or language barriers are part of every community you serve. If they can't get in the door, understand your materials, or take part, they're not being served.

More than one in four adults in the United States has a disability. That number rises when you include people who don't identify as disabled, but still navigate mental health conditions, chronic illness, sensory differences, or learning challenges. Your program is already serving them—the question is if it's working for them.

Accessibility improves outcomes for everyone, not only people who disclose a disability. Plain language, captions, clear signage, flexible participation options, and consistent microphone use all benefit the whole room. Good access design is good program design.

The biggest barrier is usually timing, not cost. Making accessibility changes at the last minute almost always costs more or works less well than building accessibility in from the start. Our online toolkit's 0-to-90-day roadmap shows you where to begin.

You don't have to do this alone. Disabled people, neurodivergent people, and peer specialists are your best resources. Involving them in designing and reviewing your programs surfaces problems you didn't know existed and builds trust with the communities you're trying to reach. Compensate that expertise.

Fast Facts



1 in 4

U.S. adults live with a disability. That number is higher in many communities that prevention programs already serve.



Remove barriers. Reach more people.

Remember, good access design is good program design. Better access. More people served.



2.7x

PA adults with disabilities are more likely to have a substance use disorder, yet face more barriers to getting help.

DO & DON'T

Do put an accommodation statement on every event notice, registration form, and program flyer before you know whether anyone will need it.

Don't wait for someone to ask before considering access. By then, the barrier has already done its work.



Start by making accessibility part of your planning process before you book the venue, design the materials, or send the invitation.

PAStart.org

Start Making Accessibility A Priority

Use the toolkit to build your own **Action Plan**.

1

Not Sure Where to Begin?

- Use accessible templates for your docs and slides.
- Review one venue and one digital channel using our online audit tools.
- Designate a visible budget line for accessibility.

2

Don't Know How to Respond to Accommodation Requests?

- Acknowledge every request quickly and assign one person to own it.
- Confirm the plan with the participant before the event begins.
- Build a workflow that includes how to improve next time.

3

How Can We Do More?

- Start using our online audit checklists.
- Identify your two or three highest-priority barriers and assign owners to each.
- Bring in a reviewer or peer specialist to check your work.

4

How Can We Measure Our Progress?

- Build an annual accessibility review cycle into your planning calendar.
- Track what changed, what improved, and what barriers remain.
- Share results with your leadership and your community.

Tips For Success

- Name an accessibility lead. Use accessible templates from the start.
- Ask for feedback. Then use it.
- Treat accommodation as standard practice.
- Budget for accessibility.
- Check the entire venue, not just the ramp.
- Train your staff and volunteers.
- Fix barriers before the next event.

Now That You Know, Where Do You Start?

These facts matter—but acting on them matters more. The online version of this toolkit gives prevention professionals practical tools to put into action, including:

- Accessibility checklists
- Policy templates
- Accommodation statement templates
- Staff training resources
- Real-world prevention examples

Design for accessibility from the beginning, not as an afterthought.



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