



# **SHELTER GUIDE FOR HOSTING INDIVIDUALS WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS**

**Many disabilities are not visible or immediately clear. Ask them what they need, and work with them to find a reasonable accommodation.**

## ***People with Limited or No English Proficiency***

- Use language cards to determine the language
- Know the process for call-in language interpretation
- When using an interpreter, keep eye contact with person who you are talking to, not interpreter

## ***People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing***

- Speak slowly and clearly facing the individual
- Offer paper and pencil for written communication
- Make all info given orally available in writing as well
- May need a sign language interpreter

## ***People with Disabilities that Affect Speech***

- Pay attention and be patient
- Tell them what you heard and ask for clarification as needed
- Offer paper and pencil
- Be open to using assistive speech technologies

## ***Pregnant Women***

- Some pregnant women may not need help; ask them what they need
- Make sure they have plenty of water
- Prioritize seating
- Make sure they know location of all restrooms



## ***People with Cognitive Impairments***

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- Need extra time to process and respond
- Be patient, employ teamwork
- May lack social norms
- Escort them to a quieter environment if needed
- If without a caregiver, consult with shelter director

## ***People with Mental Health Conditions***

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- May be confused or exhibit unusual behavior
- Remain calm, offer reassurance
- If agitated or delusional, bring in behavioral health
- Call security if there is a risk of danger

## ***People with Mobility Impairments***

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- Set up furniture with at least 3' of space around
- Tell them where to find accessible facilities
- Offer assistance, let them say what they need
- Make sure all paths are clear and do not move someone's mobility device

## ***People with Service Animals***

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- Service animals must be under control of handler at all times
- Permitted anywhere in facility
- Separate those with allergies/asthma from animal
- Notify shelter director if not properly trained



## ***People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision***

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- Introduce yourself and explain the surroundings
- Avoid phrases like “over there”
- Talk to them in a regular tone and do not shout-- they are not deaf
- Warn them of objects that they might need to know about
- Ask if they need help and do not touch them unless they ask. Not everyone needs help, and that’s okay
- Make sure large print communications are available, and that printed information is presented verbally if it cannot be read
- Assign the person(s) to a location that is easily accessible, such as on the fringe of sleeping stations

## ***People Who are Deafblind***

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- Ask the person what his or her preferred method of communication is
- They may want to communicate on a phone or iPad. If they are pointing and using gestures, be attentive to this
- Though they might, do not assume that they can see or hear you
- The person may need an in-person sign language interpreter (video remote interpreting will not work)
- Have braille communications available, if possible
- If alone, consult the shelter director

