

Webinar Accessibility

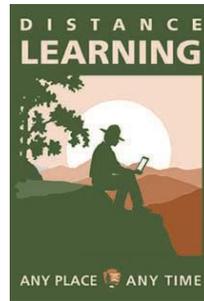


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Purpose

Developed by the L&D Distance Learning Group, this document outlines the accessibility best practices to consider when scheduling, hosting, and recording a webinar. The information in this document approaches webinars with accessibility in mind, and shares guidance on how to think about accessibility from the very beginning of the webinar planning process to its end.

Platforms

The webinar platforms most commonly used are:

- WebEx
- AdobeConnect

Each platform has its own unique features, some of which may or may not be accessible. It is the responsibility of the presenter to know their audience and decide which features can be used and make any accommodations possible.

For example, a visually impaired person might have difficulty participating in the live chat. Providing an email that will be monitored during the session enables them to still ask questions and participate in the discussion.

Scheduling a Webinar

In preparation for your webinar, take the following steps to ensure that your audience's accessibility needs will be met:

1. **Let participants know that accommodations are available.** Request that any participants needing special accommodations inform the presenter by a specific date.
2. **Always reserve a phone bridge for the webinar.** In the event participants can't connect to the webinar, they can still listen to the presentation and conversation.
3. **Provide all session materials to participants a few days prior to the scheduled webinar.** Session materials include:
 - a. Meeting agenda
 - b. Reference material links and handouts
 - c. Presentation slides (for those with accessibility needs)

This enables participants to download the material ahead of time and follow along during the webinar. *Note:* all session materials must be accessible. Use these [CLP resources](#) to learn more about making documents accessible.

4. **Schedule closed captioning with one of DOI's closed captioning services:** Caption Colorado or Caption IT. For detailed instructions on how to schedule closed captioning, please see the [Scheduling Closed Captioning job aid](#). You should schedule closed captioning at least 12 hours in advance of the webinar.
5. **Provide the captioner with the webinar session details.** This will provide them with context for the session and improve their captioning performance.

Hosting a Webinar

1. **Avoid sharing videos via webinar.** There are two reasons for doing so. First, visually impaired participants will be unable to see what other participants can. Second, oftentimes the network struggles to stream the content and creates a poor viewing experience for all. Instead, share the video links prior to the webinar. *Note:* make sure the videos you share are closed captioned and audio described.
2. **Avoid using Google Slides as a presentation format.** Google Slide presentations when shared via a webinar platform are often prone to formatting issues and become distorted.
3. **Ensure all presentation documents (PowerPoint slide decks, PDFs, Word documents, etc.) are accessible.** This includes content created by a non-government source. Use these [CLP resources](#) to learn more about making documents accessible.
4. **Build Audio Description into your presentation technique.** For example, let participants know what page of the document you are on or describe where you are on a site you are sharing. If your presentation is rich in images, graphs, or charts, describe the slides for participants. This will prevent you from having to pay exorbitant amounts of money later to get the webinar recording professionally audio described.
5. **Include multiple ways for participants to engage with the content and other participants.** For example, a visually impaired person might be unable to use the chat feature in the webinar platform. Provide them with an email that will be monitored during the session so they can still ask questions and participate in the discussion.

Sharing a Recorded Webinar

Webinars are frequently recorded and shared with those who can't attend the live session. For detailed instructions on how to record a webinar, please see the Recording Webinar job aids for [WebEx](#) and Adobe Connect (in production). Review this [job aid](#) for instructions on how to schedule closed captioning in WebEx.

If you decide to record your session, use the following guidelines to ensure it is accessible:

1. **Download the captioning transcript, MP3 file, and MP4 file of the recording.** Upload the MP4 file to a video hosting platform (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, and sync the transcript with the video. This will create closed captions for your recording, which is an accessibility requirement.
2. **Review the transcript and make any necessary edits.** Sometimes the captioner is unable to capture *everything* that is said during a session, so it's always good to review the transcript and fill in any places that might have been missed.
3. **Provide participants with accessible session handouts, an MP3 file (audio), an MP4 file (video), and the edited transcript.**

Note: Audio description for recorded webinars is unnecessary if the presenter provides their presentation materials prior to the webinar and gives a *detailed, descriptive presentation*. If the presentation is highly interactive or contains complex visuals or lacks adequate built-in description, the webinar will need to be audio described.