

## **Holding an accessible conference call**

There are a couple of considerations to make when it comes to holding an accessible conference call, namely, ensuring that people who may be Deaf, deaf, or hard of hearing can read auditory information, and that folks who are blind or have a vision impairment are able to view written or visual information.

### **Auditory information**

People may need a variety of accommodations when it comes to having equal access to auditory information, including, but not limited to: ASL interpreters or Computer Aided Realtime Transcription.

[Capitol Pacific Reporting](#) is a great local resource for Computer Aided Realtime Transcription, or CART. A transcriptionist listens to what is being said and uses a special computer system to input the text, which is then projected onto a screen or device. During this time, they are offering remote captioning services, wherein a group or individual can download an app or go to a website to view the live transcript, as opposed to being physically in the room with the transcriptionist and other meeting attendees. In person, the service costs \$125 per hour, plus an additional \$1.75 per page of the transcript (by request). There is a 3-hour minimum. Remotely, the \$125 per hour charge still applies, along with a \$2.25 per page cost of the transcript from the real-time streaming service.

[The Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) has additional resources for CART that are contracted with the state. Prices vary from \$75-\$115 per hour, with a potential cost for obtaining the transcript, and remote services may or may not be available.

Certified Sign Language Interpreters may also be needed for those individuals who are deaf and use American Sign Language (or ASL). [For more information on how to request an interpreter, view this how-to sheet we created.](#)

[Sorenson Community Interpreting Services](#) offers interpreting through a Video Relay Service (or VRS), wherein the individual needing the ASL services can connect with a certified interpreter via a video-capable device, and view the interpretation in real time (as opposed to being physically in the room with the interpreter and meeting attendees). The per hour cost of interpretation varies dependent on location.

[The Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) also has additional resources for ASL interpreters that are contracted with the state. Prices vary dependent upon location, and remote services may or may not be available.

Some video conferencing programs, such as [Skype](#), may have captioning services built in.

### **Visual information**

When it comes to visual information, people who are blind or have a vision impairment may also need a variety of accommodations to ensure equal access, including but not limited to: stating one's name before speaking, accessible versions of documents, and verbal explanation of the documents being reviewed.

There are a number of great online resources on creating accessible documents in [PDF](#) and [Word](#). Essentially, you need to ensure that the content is useable to a screen reading software or magnification program. It is important to send electronic copies of these documents, such as an agenda, to participants who may require them in advance so that they have time to review them to ensure they are compatible with their assistive technology and can follow along using their software during the call.

It is also important for a person who cannot see the potential video feed or caller information to be able to understand who is speaking, and what is being reviewed onscreen. This is where stating your name prior to speaking, and explaining verbally what is being reviewed come in.

For example, rather than simply stating "this is Emily, and we are reviewing the Contract now," it would be important to say something like "this is Emily, and we are reviewing Subsection 3a of the contract now," so that the person is able to follow along more easily.