

Accessibility Checklist for COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Sites

3/16/2021

The Minnesota Department of Health is providing this guidance to remind vaccination providers of their obligations to persons with disabilities of all ages and abilities. Discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Minnesota Human Rights Act, and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.¹ During this COVID-19 public health emergency, providers are expected to continue to make reasonable accommodations to their policies and practices in order to comply with both the letter and intent of these laws.

People with disabilities are diverse, and many disabilities are invisible and not immediately clear. Testing and vaccination locations must ensure their site is accessible physically, sensory, cognitively, and technologically. This checklist may help health care workers navigate accessibility issues and make process improvements.

It is important that everyone is able to get tested when needed and vaccinated when available. This means making sure nothing gets in the way of access. Participation will improve for everyone by paying attention to these details:

- **Physical ease of access:** Make sure the space is easy to get to and to move around inside for people with limited mobility and those who use wheelchairs, walkers, and other aids to get around. People who have low vision or are blind need a clear path of travel that is smooth and free of all barriers.
- **Sensory ease of access:** Some people with disabilities, such as autism, or people who suffer after a trauma, may be sensitive to lights, sounds, smells, or the physical touch that testing and vaccination requires. Limiting the time they must wait is critical. A separate, more private space may be needed. Be patient and sensitive, taking into account each person's individual needs.
- **Cognitive ease of access:** Give clear information about what will be done and how it will be done. Provide clear information and signage. Explain all the steps. This information should be available in different formats and in plain language; a visual storyboard can help to improve understanding. Give people the time they need to understand the information. Know that you may need to wait a little longer for a response.
- **Technological ease of access:** Make sure the registration program is readable with a screen reader by someone who has low vision or is blind. Ensure there is a phone or in person registration option for assistance.

Improving physical access

- Wayfinding is critical. Ensure readable signs with large font and high contrast colors are up and correct.
- Accessible routes and sidewalks must have a curb cut or curb ramp that is at least 36 inches wide with a stable, smooth, and slip-resistant surface and a slope no greater than 1:20 (5%). A portable ramp is acceptable.
- Clean and clear paths. In the winter, make sure paths are shoveled and salted. Registration tables or reception counters should be no more than 36 inches high, with a clear floor and leg space for a wheelchair and moveable chair to allow someone to sit if needed.
- Make sure least one of every 25 parking spaces is accessible parking. These spaces should be clearly marked if people are to park and leave their vehicles to get tested or vaccinated. Spaces may be marked temporarily, if needed.
- Accessible parking spaces must be 8 feet wide, with an access aisle that is also 8 feet wide. Access aisles must be marked “no parking.” Accessible parking spots must have a sign posted with the universal symbol of access. It must say “vehicle ID required” and say how much the fine is for parking illegally.
- Transportation to and from testing and vaccination locations may be needed for people with disabilities and unique health needs. Provide a designated drop off/pick up area for paratransit services should be provided. This area should include chairs to allow for individuals to be seated when they arrive or before they leave their appointments. These areas should be staffed in case anyone needs assistance.

Communication practices to improve access

- Be prepared to communicate in different ways. Be aware that masks can make communication harder. Always ask someone how they want to communicate.
- Print standard questions, instructions, and descriptions of procedures. Have standard questions in large print and, if possible, in Braille.
- Consider having clear masks available for staff to communicate with people who would benefit from reading lips or seeing a face more clearly.
- Give clear instructions, both verbal and written, with step-by-step procedures.
- Have a small, dry erase board for interactive conversations.
- A phone or tablet can be used to access communication apps.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR COVID-19 TESTING AND VACCINATION SITES

- Have pictures available or demonstrate testing and/or vaccine procedures using visual cues.
- Provide written materials or electronic information in high-contrast large print (16-point font or larger).
- Read instructions aloud, if needed.



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Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.