

Vermont's Communication Tourism Tips

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This is aimed toward visitors who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, DeafPlus,
DeafDisabled, and late deafened.

Lodgings

Visual Communication: Use visual aids such as written notes, gestures, and facial expressions to communicate information. Keep a pen and paper handy for written communication if needed.

Communication: Be flexible with how to communicate with your guests. Don't just rely on phone calls. Be willing to offer text messaging, email, or even use the relay service. A guest can only access their telecommunication devices if they have access to good quality high speed internet.

Accessible Room Features: Equip your hotel rooms with visual alerts for doorbells, fire alarms, and phones. You can have some rooms with either permanent or portable fixtures.

Courtesy: Give them time to read lips or communicate in their preferred way.

Accessibility: Share what accessibility measures you already have and/or are willing to do to ensure that their visit is exceptional.

Eateries

Learn Basic Sign Language: Familiarize yourself with common restaurant-related terms like "menu," "water," and "check." Even learning simple gestures can go a long way in facilitating communication.

Maintain Eye Contact: When communicating, maintain eye contact and ensure your face is well-lit. This allows them to lipread more easily and feel more engaged in the conversation.

Use Visual Aids: Offer menus in Braille or Large Fonts. The best practice is to keep format the same as it is now but with a font size of 18pt. Offer to have the specials in a written format.

Communication Access: Have a notepad and pen available. Be willing to text back and forth.

Museums

Provide written information: Offer written materials such as brochures, guides, or captions to accompany exhibits or presentations. This allows visitors with hearing challenges to follow along and understand the content.

Use visual aids: Utilize visual aids such as maps, diagrams, and images to convey information. Visual cues can enhance understanding for Deaf individuals.

Use gestures and facial expressions: Incorporate gestures and facial expressions to supplement communication. Non-verbal cues can convey tone and emotion, enhancing interaction.

Maintain eye contact: Maintain eye contact when communicating with Deaf individuals to demonstrate attentiveness and engagement. This fosters a sense of connection and understanding.

Use technology: Utilize assistive listening devices, texting, or video relay services to facilitate communication if available. These technologies can bridge communication gaps and enhance accessibility.

Accommodation: If a person needs interpretive services, the best practice is to reserve them as soon as possible. It is recommended to reserve two weeks in advance or earlier.

Communication Marketing

Provide closed captions (CC) and subtitles: Make sure the captions are synchronized with the audio and include relevant non-verbal information.

Transcribe Audio Content: This makes the content accessible for those who may not be able to hear the audio.

Use Accessible Social Media features: Many social media platforms offer accessibility features such as closed captions for videos, image descriptions for photos, and alternative text for graphics. Make sure to use these features when posting content.

Choose Accessible Website Design: Ensure your website is designed with accessibility in mind. This includes using clear and simple language, providing alternative text for images, using descriptive link text, and ensuring keyboard navigation is possible.

Provide Text Alternatives: For any content that is not text-based, such as infographics or charts, provide text alternatives. Alt Text is read aloud by screen readers and is invisible to others. Alt text is added to images on webpages and social media, and it briefly describes the photo or video. It can have character limits.

Provide Image Description: This can be read by anyone, and they also describe photos but they're usually longer than alt text. They usually contain more information about nuances like mood or emotion. Image descriptions are added to social media captions, comments, or as a caption to a photo on a webpage.