



LIBRARIES
TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES

ACCESSIBLE SMALL AND
RURAL COMMUNITIES

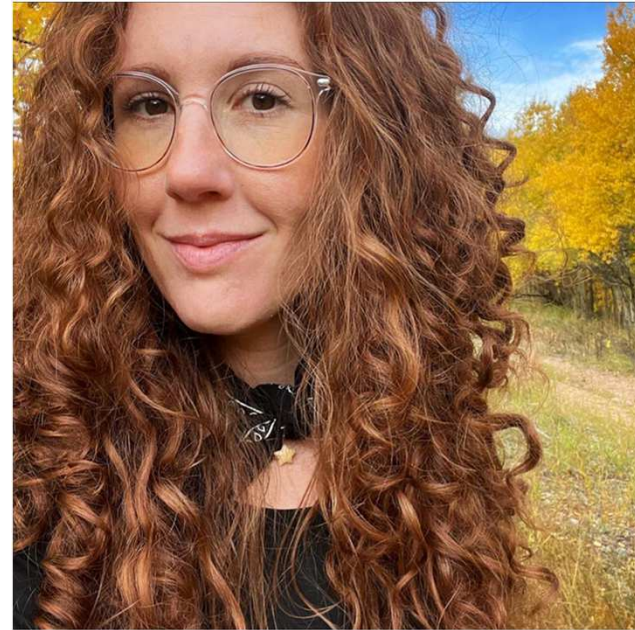
[ALA](#)AmericanLibraryAssociation

Hosting Accessible Community Conversations

Presenters



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WHAT does it mean to host accessible conversations?

- Planning: deciding the topic and structure
- Inviting: making invitations to the community
- Leading: also known as facilitating.
Welcoming people, sharing agreements, and guiding the conversation



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WHAT does it look like to host conversations?

Conversations can be small, with a couple people, or large events with lots of people.

In this project, for many, it will likely take the form of small group conversations.



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WHY addressing accessibility in the library requires community conversation

- You don't know until you ask!
- Without communicating with the community, you are making assumptions about what they need or could make the most use of.
- This could lead to wasted resources or funds spent on a lesser priority.



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HOW to talk with the community about accessibility

- Ask what they need or would make the most use of.
- Discuss the realities - cost, feasibility of purchasing/implementing, etc .
- Allow them to respond to one another, and for you to take that information in and respond, too.



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WHO to connect with, co-creating with the community

- Consult with the community you are looking to reach. Find out what they would like to discuss.
- Partners - who in the community is working with, supporting the community members you are hoping to reach. They can help with invitations, framing the conversation, and even provide insights as to what is already offered by other community institutions.



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WHAT to ask the community

- Overarching question to ask in engaging the community (examples):
 - How can we make the library more accessible for our community?
 - How can we best address accessibility in the library's physical spaces?
 - How can we improve library programming for our disabled patrons? Neurodivergent patrons?



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WHERE: Location, logistics, oh my!

- Traditional conversations: in-person, synchronous, spoken
- Alternatives: Online, synchronous and/or asynchronous, written, spoken, or using other means.



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Formulate your plan

- What format, method, or tools will help your community participate with dignity?
- Follow-up: How will people discover what you learned, and what you plan to do? How will you continue to communicate with the community?



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Q&A



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Next Steps

- Complete the facilitation e-course - general practices for planning and facilitating conversation
- Review the Accessible Conversations Guide - more specific guidance, planning tool for conversations about accessibility



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