



How hearing-friendly is your arts program?

About 48 million Americans experience hearing loss—from children to veterans to seniors and everyone in between. These folks and many others need hearing-friendly venues in order to fully engage in and enjoy Puget Sound’s rich arts scene.

You might not know if your patrons have a hearing loss—it’s an invisible disability, and many who don’t hear well won’t ask for help. But they’ll be looking for signage and information.

How inclusive and welcoming are YOU to people with hearing loss? Here’s a checklist.

- Do you have signage that advertises the assistive listening system? Is it likely to be seen and read? (Is it clearly visible by doorways, kiosks, and information desks?)
- Do you market your hearing access via your website, invitations, social media, newsletters, playbills, and flyers?
- Do you have a working PA system? Are staff trained how to use it?
- Do staff, presenters, and performers use the microphone *every time*? Do they repeat audience questions so all may understand?
- Do you have a working assistive listening system? A hearing loop, FM, infrared, caption readers?
- Are all staff trained to understand the assistive listening system and why it’s needed? Can they troubleshoot problems? Do staff know how to check out and maintain headsets and neck loops—and show patrons how to use them?
- Do you test your assistive listening system regularly? Do staff know whom to call for repairs?
- Is there a protocol for managing equipment that’s checked out (charging, replacing batteries, testing, repairing, sanitizing?)
- Are caption readers placed where people can see them? Are they correct and well-timed so patrons can follow them?
- For museums: Are your videos captioned? Is your theatre looped (and films captioned?) If you have audio interactive displays, are they looped and captioned?
- Are you familiar with CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation), which shows visual text of speech as it happens? This technology helps people who are deaf, people with mild hearing loss, people who wear hearing aids, and English language learners.



This is the universal symbol for hearing access. It's easy to insert this symbol into your website, email, and marketing materials, along with a sentence about the hearing access you offer.

Remember that hearing access comes in two essential forms: aural and visual. Sometimes both aural and visual (with priority seating) are needed to ensure clear communication. American Sign Language is an example of a visual hearing access tool, but **just 5% of people with hearing loss can understand ASL.**

Contact the Hearing Association of America-Washington for more help: info@hearingloss-wa.org.

Resources

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

Wash-CAP

<http://wash-cap.com/>

Find a CART provider

[http://www.stenosearch.com/connect/cart_reporters.htm#Washington CART Providers](http://www.stenosearch.com/connect/cart_reporters.htm#Washington_CART_Providers)

Hearing Loops and Other Assistive Technology

http://www.hearingloss.org/sites/default/files/docs/Comparison_of_LargeAreaALS.pdf

www.loopseattle.org

www.hearingloop.org

<http://hearingloopnw.com/>

<http://ccacaptioning.org/>

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters

<http://www.aslnetwork.com/>

Hearing Loss Resources

www.hearingloss.org

www.hearingloss-wa.org

<http://www.hsdcc.org/>