

Hedva's Disability Access Rider

As I've received invitations to speak and/or perform at arts, culture, and literary institutions and universities (often internationally), I've learned a lot about my own capacity and how working with institutions tends to go. So that we can work together better, now, when I am invited somewhere, the first thing I do in response is send my Disability Access Rider.

Accessibility is still taking root in how institutions understand and work with disabled artists and communities. They've often never heard of "access intimacy" before, or if they have, they don't know what it means in actual practice. I've found that my access rider is often the first of its kind that they've seen.

In 2019, I made my Access Rider public because many people have asked to see it, and I've heard from a range of folks—from other crip artists to abled curators and organizers and hosts who want to work with us—that this document has been a useful model for them.

I welcome anyone who wants to use this as a template for your own rider, or to share with institutions who invite you to do stuff. And I invite anyone working within the institution to use it too.



Thank you for inviting me to contribute to your event. I am disabled, so for me to participate, I need support from my hosts. I also require the events I'm part of to be accessible to the disabled community. What's cool about this is that more people can come, and we'll all feel better when we're there.

This means that we're going to have to embark on access intimacy together (if you don't know what that is, please read the online article by Mia Mingus called "Access Intimacy: The Missing Link"). Before I can commit to that process with you—and honey, it is a *process!*—please take a moment to read the below, and let me know how you can support each item. If you need more specifics about any component, ask me. I'm happy to clarify and assist where I can. If you can't provide something on this list, let's have a conversation about it. I am more interested in accessibility as something for which we work together rather than a punitive standard I measure you against.

0.

Money—

Access should not be funded solely by me, the disabled individual (e.g., taken out of my fee or production/materials/travel budget), but shared with the institution, and/or city, state, and/or federal funding. The fact that it is often funded by me, in more ways than just

financial, signals how inaccessible the world is. Please join me in carrying this weight.

1.

Time—

Accessibility takes a really long time, and it's messy af! I will not be able—literally *will not be able*—to work with you if we let the demands of capitalist time run our lives. I require the timeline of our work, including expected response times and deadlines for the project/event itself, as well as the accessibility elements, to be as un-stressful (for everyone involved) as possible.

I've found that it works best to have all the below confirmed and agreed upon by contract at least three weeks before the event takes place. Trust me, the more time there is to work out all the logistics, the better.

I cannot travel the day of the event.

2.

For the entirety of the trip—

I require a care person to assist me. I cannot travel alone. I prefer to bring a care person with me, because we will already have a relationship and they will know what is needed. Their travel, lodging, food, and transportation must be paid for by the host, as mine are. If this cannot be supported, please make available someone within the institution who can lend a hand while I'm there.

3.

For air travel—

The flight cannot depart before 14:00. The airport cannot be more than one hour away from my house or where I'm staying. Nonstop is preferred. If a layover must happen, it cannot be longer than two hours. I need to be picked up from, and taken to, the airport. I must have an aisle seat on the flight because I use a cane. This has to be booked in advance. On flights longer than six hours, I require a business-class seat. Depending on my health, sometimes I require wheelchair assistance at the airport. Please check with me about this before booking flights.

4.

For lodging—

I require my own room, bed, and private bathroom in a nonsmoking room that has a window. There needs to be access to food *at* the place I'm staying; hotels must have room service. The lodging has to be a reasonable distance from where the event will take place. I require an elevator if there are more than two flights of stairs. I require all meals for the duration of my stay to be paid for by my host. My food allergies/intolerances are: no nuts, seeds, shellfish, cephalopods.

5.

For the event itself—

I cannot participate in anything before 16:00. I, and my audience, cannot sit for longer than ninety minutes without a fifteen-minute

break. I require a dressing room/backstage area, and would not be bothered if fresh flowers appeared there. On the stage, I require a cushioned chair with a back for the event; I cannot stand.

6.

For the accessibility of the event—

I require that the event take place in a wheelchair-accessible space—no exceptions. I require every effort be made to provide both CART and sign language interpretation for the event; at least one of these has to happen. I require all-gender restrooms at the space. I require spaces to be as scent-free as possible. I require masks. If someone makes an access request, I require that the hosts make every effort to provide it.

If you can't provide what's been requested, tell me with enough time before the event so we can find a solution.

7.

For the publicity of the event—

I require that the accessibility information of the event be posted with all materials that include my name. This includes information about parking, elevators, wheelchair- and all-gender-accessible restrooms, CART, and ASL interpretation during the event. Best practice is to be transparent and as detailed as possible about how the event is, and is not, accessible.

For example, if there is one step, anywhere in the space, say so and where it is and if there are any additional routes. For example, if only CART is being provided and not ASL, say so. For example, if the parking is a five-minute walk, or a fifteen-minute walk, from the

space, say so. For example, if the space must be kept at a noticeably cold temperature, as it is in most archives, say so (in this case, I've seen an institution provide blankets—a good idea!).

A contact email and/or phone number must be posted with all materials that include my name, in order for people to request specific access items.

A sentence I've found works well: "If you have an access requirement, please contact us at [X] by [date], and we will make every effort to provide it."

8.

For the documentation of the event—

I require open/closed captioning of all video documentation. I require textual image descriptions (alt text) for all photos posted online. I reserve the right to approve all final language published that includes my name. NOTE: I use they/them/their pronouns.

9.

In case—

Because I have chronic illnesses, I may have to cancel the trip at the last moment if I have a flare. This doesn't happen often, but it has happened. If there's a way that I am able to participate remotely, I will.

10.

For the future—

It would be so cool, and you'd make me and my friends and many others very happy, and you'd increase the attendance of your events by a lot, and you'd become a working part of building the kind of world that needs to be built, if you would follow this document not just for me, but for all your work in the future.