



## ADA POLICY AND ACCESS PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The American Composers Forum is an arts service organization based in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Its mission is to “*nurture the creative spirit of composers and communities*”, and its primary activities “*provide new opportunities for composers and their music to flourish, and engage communities in the creation, performance and enjoyment of new music.*” We do not present concerts our events ourselves on a regular basis, but collaborate with a variety of partners to carry out our work. We both encourage and monitor the accessibility of our work in all settings to assure that all persons with disabilities are welcome. ACF is committed to continually moving toward more complete accessibility.

The ADA policy of the Forum (originally adopted in 1999) states:

*“The American Composers Forum is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, marital status, national origin, disability, age, public assistance, veteran status, or sexual orientation.*

*Upon request and with adequate notice, any of the American Composers Forum’s printed information may be made available in alternative formats (including digital, Braille and large print). Please contact the American Composers Forum at [mail@composersforum.org](mailto:mail@composersforum.org) or (651) 228-1407 for further information.”*

The statement appears on our website (link from our homepage), and a truncated version of the full statement may be used on position descriptions, mailings for job openings, and print materials describing ACF programs, if appropriate. This reads, “**Upon request, ACF materials can be made available in an alternate format.**”

Additionally, the following employment policy is stated in the organization’s Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual:

#### 1. Policy

It is the Forum’s policy to employ the best-suited person available for each job. This policy recognizes individual differences and the specific demands of each position. Our employment procedures attempt to identify strengths and skills of potential employees that match the specific requirements of each position.

#### 2. Non-Discrimination

The Forum will provide employment and enforce employment policies and procedures without regard to race, age, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, status in regard to public assistance, or any other classification protected by federal, state, local law. Physical or mental disabilities will be considered only as they may relate to bona fide job requirements.

### BACKGROUND

This ADA Access plan was developed originally in 2007 using the Arts Accessibility Checklist provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. This guide

was supplemented with assistance from key individuals with expertise in ADA compliance, state government and personnel issues.

ACF's ADA Access Plan was originally approved by the Board in 1999 and is reviewed annually. Two governance units have responsibility for development and evaluation of the ADA plan: ACF's Executive Committee and the full Board of Directors. The Executive Committee has responsibility for oversight of all personnel and policy recommendations, and reports to the full board as required. It is the board that formally approves all organizational policies.

#### Accessibility of Forum Programs

ACF has been an extraordinary resource for composers in Minnesota for 40 years. Similar to its hiring policy, it offers responsive, one-to-one assistance to all composers without regard to race, age, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation or disability. Program descriptions and application guidelines are posted on the ACF website, which is accessible for those with visual impairments (see below).

Programs of the American Composers Forum support the careers of composers and develop markets for their music. ACF awards commissions and fellowships to composers through the *Jerome Fund for New Music*, *McKnight Fellowships*, *McKnight Visiting Composer Program*, and others. We offer numerous workshops and salons for composers to meet fellow artists, engage with visiting composers and perform their work. We also have a record label that markets and distributes recordings in CD format as well as digital platforms throughout the world. We consider access on several levels at ACF:

#### Economic

One often-overlooked example of broad access is cost, and most of the programs and services offered by ACF are free. There is a nominal cost to join ACF (\$70 regular/\$50 for seniors and students), but we rarely charge for any ACF sponsored event.

#### Office Space

ACF's office is located in Landmark Center Suite 522, at 75 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota. The building has an accessible entrance and restrooms on each level for staff, members and guests. Additionally, the Landmark Center has its own ADA Plan and the Landmark staff has trained ACF staff on ADA compliance and emergency plan.

#### Event Space

ACF partners with numerous performing organizations to offer career workshops, networking events, readings and salons. Examples of ongoing partnerships include the *Composers Institute and Reading Sessions* with the Minnesota Orchestra (Orchestra Hall) and *Music in the Making* with St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Classical MPR and Walker Art Center (venues include: UBS Forum at MPR, Amsterdam Bar and Hall, Guthrie Theater and Walker Art Center). Facilities at all locations are accessible and ADA compliant.

ACF also runs a variety of residency, educational and media programs designed to broaden the reach of composers and their music. These programs put composers directly in contact with communities by collaborating with arts organizations, community groups, hospitals, faith congregations and schools. Resources of these partner organizations vary greatly, but we provide an overview of how they can improve their own accessibility to ensure equal access to persons with disabilities. This resource is called ***ADA Policy and Guidelines for Partner Organizations*** (attached to this plan) and is posted on the homepage of our website. In this way, ACF will serve as a resource to organizations that may not have a history of incorporating accessibility plans into their programming.

### Web site

Like most organizations, our websites ([www.composersfourm.org](http://www.composersfourm.org) and [www.innova.mu](http://www.innova.mu)) are the primary method of communicating with our various constituencies. It was completely overhauled in 2011 using the open source Drupal platform, and accessibility was a primary benchmark in developing its structure and content.

### ACCESSIBILITY PLAN TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	TARGET DATE
Present ADA Plan to ACF board annually for review and approval.	January 2016
Invite guest speaker at least once a year to ACF staff meeting for education and increased awareness of disability issues.	January – December 2016
Conduct a ACF staff visit at Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts	January – May 2016
Contact appropriate organizations to learn of any changes in ADA compliance regulations or new technologies for persons with disabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSA Arts of Minnesota</li> <li>• Vision Loss of Resources</li> <li>• Dancing Dots music software</li> <li>• Arc of Greater Twin Cities</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Monitor addition of ACF policy on all printed materials	Ongoing
Create and update a list of ADA reference materials for ACF staff and partnering organizations.	Ongoing

*Approved by ACF Board of Directors 1999.*

*Reviewed and updated January 2007, March 2012, January 2013, May 2014, January 2015, January 2016.*

**ADA POLICY**  
**and Guidelines for Partner Organizations**  
*(posted on the homepage of the ACF website)*

The American Composers Forum is committed to increased accessibility for persons with disabilities, both in its own programs and those carried out in partnership with other organizations. We ask that all partners ensure full accessibility for ACF participants in accordance with guidelines established by the American Disabilities Act. This document is offered as a resource for any organization that needs to review its own venue or program for compliance with these guidelines.

ADA Policy

The American Composers Forum is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, marital status, national origin, disability, age, public assistance, veteran status, or sexual orientation. It is important that all participant organizations understand and agree to this policy to assure the broadest access possible to our programs.

We urge you to avail yourself of the following resources and suggestions. If you have any questions, please contact the Forum at (651) 228-1407 or *mail@composersforum.org*.

**Steps for Improving Accessibility**

- Consult with people who have disabilities. Ask them for advice on what could be improved about your programs or facilities?
- Review facilities. Is this space accessible? Can it be made more accessible?
- Make sure print materials can be made available in alternative formats upon request (digital, Braille, large print, etc.). Advertise this availability in your program materials.
- Review Web sites for usability for those with visual impairments.

**Resources**

The National Endowment for the Arts has an Office of Accessibility that offers a comprehensive list of resources, tools and publications for ADA planning (including website testing).

<http://www.nea.gov/resources/accessibility/office.html>