



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 present concerts and events on a regular basis, and collaborate with a variety of partners to carry out our mission. 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 increased 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 or (651) 251-2807 for further information.”

The statement appears on our website, 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. ACF has adopted an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Plan, which states our commitment to review annually and evaluate all activities and programs as they may relate to people with disabilities.

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 ACF Programs

ACF has been an extraordinary resource for composers/music creators in the United States for over 40 years. Similar to its hiring policy, it offers responsive, one-to-one assistance to all composers without regard to race, age, color, religion, national origin, marital status, gender, 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).

Through grant and mentorship support, publications, hosted gatherings, and leadership, ACF partners with creative artists and organizations who reflect the diversity of our world and fosters generations of music creators, performers, and advocates. By highlighting the individuals creating music through their unique stories and the impact of their art, ACF strives to demonstrate the relevance, vitality, and beauty of the musical experiences being designed and experienced across the country. Furthermore, we seek to shine light on those artists working on the fringe and the artists whose stories reimagine the word "composer." ACF is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive place for creative artists across racial and gender identities, musical languages, and communities.

We consider access on several levels at ACF:

Economic

One often-overlooked example of broad access is cost, and all program events and application processes offered by ACF are free.

Office Space

ACF's office is located in Landmark Center Suite 522, at 75 West 5th 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 workshops, networking events, readings and salons. Facilities at all event 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. In this way, ACF will serve as a resource to organizations that may not have a history of incorporating accessibility plans into their programming.

Website

Like most organizations, our websites (www.composersfourm.org, www.innova.mu, and www.newmusicmn.org) are the primary method of communicating with our various constituencies. Our 2016 website redo was sensitive to accessibility needs.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN TIMELINE

ACTIVITY/GOAL	TARGET DATE/TIMELINE
Present ADA Plan to ACF board annually for review and approval.	January 2020
ACCESS PLANNING AND RESOURCES: Engage three accessibility advisors of different life experience to speak with full staff (and compensate them for their time).	3-18 months
PHYSICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ACCESS: Develop an accessibility audit/checklist for all potential program and event venues.	3-18 months
PHYSICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ACCESS: Talk to Landmark Center staff to learn more about barriers to emergency/evacuation procedures.	3-18 months
ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH: Audit website specifically for accessibility (and prioritize maintenance during “admin/data days.”	3-18 months
ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH: Have full staff participate in online training for alt-text and accessibility in website best practices.	3-18 months
ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Designate “slush fund” specifically for access activity and accommodations (Ex: hiring interpreters, trainings, etc).	3-18 months
ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Create directory (or access existing) for all potential resources needed, outlining contact names, costs, and timeframe for services.	3-18 months
ACCESS PLANNING AND RESOURCES: Evaluate staff and funding capacity to more actively pursue this work.	18-36+ months
ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH: Create accessibility page on website specific to a staff contact person including known barriers and accommodations. Draft language for all programs to use in materials.	18-36+ months
ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Identify strategic partnerships with organizations doing this work.	18-36+ months
Staff-led revamp entire ADA policies and guidelines for partner organizations to reflect best practices and learnings.	18-36+ months

Approved by ACF Board of Directors 1999.

Reviewed and updated January 2007, March 2012, January 2013, May 2014, January 2015, January 2016, January 2017, February 2018, January 2019.