

Kristen Darmody (00:06):

Hello, my name is Kristen Darmody, and I work on the Oregon Health Authority's Accessibility team. My pronouns are she/her/hers. I'm a white person wearing a dark purple turtleneck. In this video, I will explain the accessibility kit offered by the Oregon Health Authority, also called OHA, to community partners and providers to improve the accessibility of COVID-19 vaccines for individuals with disabilities.

OHA is offering these accessibility kits because making small changes to the way we work can ensure that folks with disabilities or access and functional needs have equal access to services. Sometimes, just a small change to the way we do things can make it possible for a person to maintain their independence and autonomy. This can result in a better experience for all, and it can be a concrete way for our organizations to live out our commitment to equity. Gathering a few items and resources in one place means that it's easier for us to make that happen. These kits have been put together as part of Oregon's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, but they are designed for use in many different kinds of public events. We expect recipients to hang onto them and use these kits to make all their future events accessible, helping to foster a culture of accessibility across our state.

These kits contain basic materials and information to make interactions more accessible for people with disabilities and people who speak languages other than English. The materials are packaged in a portable plastic bin with a lid for easy storage. Each kit includes PockeTalkers, which amplify sounds closest to the listener while reducing background noise. They're useful for people who are hard of hearing. Also included in the kits are batteries and disposable earphone covers for these devices. A supply of clear masks, which allow people to see an individual's full face when they speak. This could be especially helpful for folks who prefer lip reading or seeing facial expressions in communication, to name a few examples. A small dry erase board and markers for interactive conversations. This can be used to write out what you are saying or draw visuals to support your communication. Flashlights and extra batteries to help folks see written materials more clearly. Magnifying glasses to help with reading written materials.

A visual communications card. This card contains pictures that people can point to, which can aid in sharing information. It's helpful for folks who are nonverbal and can also assist those with limited English proficiency in communicating as well. On the reverse side of this card, there is a section with the phrase, "I speak," written in over two dozen languages, which facilitates a person telling you what language they speak so you can connect them to the right interpreter if needed. At this time, OHA is including instructions on accessing video and telephone interpreter services as well. OHA has a contract with Language Link and Voiance for telephone and video remote interpreters, and community partners can access interpretation free of charge if no onsite interpreter is available. The kit also contains a small supply of disposable face masks, gloves, and disinfectant wipes for you to clean your materials after each use.

Thank you for taking a moment to learn more about your accessibility kit. We look forward to hearing how it helped you have an accessible event in your community. Share your stories at ucedd@ohsu.edu. This video series is brought to you by Oregon Health Authority and the OHSU University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. If you want to learn more about accessibility and COVID-19, please visit us here, www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus.