

Planning committees and coordinators of NAI regional, sectional and national workshops should be aware that the American Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) provides for legal requirements in assistance of persons with disabilities in having access to training and educational services. Neil Garrison of Region 6 prepared this summary of pertinent information and we are grateful for his careful research in this area. This may be used to familiarize you with responsibilities. If you have specific questions, call the NAI National Office at 1-888-900-8283.

The following items have been taken as excerpts from a reprint of a publication of the American Society of Association Executives (A.S.A.E.). This May 1995 periodical ("Meetings & Expositions") included an "Ask the Legal Section" column that specifically discussed A.D.A. requirements. In summary, the following is what was included in that publication:

- The A.D.A. requires the N.A.I. Regional Workshop Planning Committee to make "reasonable accommodation" for workshop attendees with disabilities if the attendee places a request for such services.
- The cost for these A.D.A. mandated services must be borne by the N.A.I. Workshop Planning Committee.
- If the N.A.I. Workshop Planning committee makes other reasonable alternatives available to this workshop attendee, the A.D.A. does not require the N.A.I. National Workshop Planning Committee to provide sign language interpreters to a hearing-impaired individual just because that is the expressed choice of that workshop attendee. These reasonable alternatives might include choices, which are less expensive than the costs associated with providing sign language interpreters.
- If a workshop attendee with a hearing impairment voluntarily asks if h/she could bring (and pay for) a sign language interpreter but requests a waiver of the sign language interpreter's workshop registration fee, the N.A.I. Workshop Planning Committee could elect to approve this request. That would be considered a "reasonable accommodation" under A.D.A. requirements. However, if the workshop registration fee includes the cost of meals, the N.A.I. Workshop Planning Committee may decline to waive that portion of the fee.
- Yet another example of an alternative "reasonable accommodation" would be to provide the hearing-impaired individual with written transcripts of the lectures/presentations that take place at the N.A.I. Workshop (preferably for use during the program... yet it would be acceptable to provide this written transcript after the completion of the workshop if the transcript is generated from an audiotape of the session). Again, the N.A.I. Workshop committee must bear the cost of the regional accommodation...not the workshop attendee.
- The A.D.A. requires that disabled person make their needs known in advance in order to allow service in an efficient manner. The N.A.I. Workshop registration

form should be used as a tool to gather information from disabled attendees prior to the workshop. This registration form should ask the workshop registrant the following questions: “Will you require any of the following aids for the N.A.I. Workshop? (a) American Sign Language; (b) Total Communication Interpreter an interpreter using sign language and the spoken word); (c) Oral Interpreter (Note: oral interpreters simply “mouth” words... many persons with hearing impairments can read lips but that becomes difficult for those seated in the rear or if multiple speakers are involved); (d) Tactile interpreter (for deaf or blind people interpreting directly on the hand or in the person’s face); (e) An assisted hearing device; (f) Will you be bringing a service animal? (e.g., seeing eye dog... Note: service animals will require a space and a designated rest area); (g) Alternative forms of all printed materials for the blind, including Braille, raised letter, signed guides or readers.”

As a meeting planner, the N.A.I. Workshop Planning committee may be subject to civil penalties of up to \$50,000.00 for a first violation under Title III of the A.D.A.