



## Resources and Ideas for RAD Assets Embarking on Accessibility and Inclusion Projects

From closed captioning for online videos to curb cuts in sidewalks, people of all abilities benefit from accessibility improvements. In 2023, RAD more than doubled its budget for Accessibility & Inclusion grants and is prioritizing projects that go “beyond the ramp.” Current RAD assets are encouraged to propose projects that reduce barriers of access and promote inclusion of people with physical and cognitive disabilities.

### Not Sure Where to Start?

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These organizations are leaders in the field for best practices in Accessibility and ADA Compliance.

- **archive.ADA.gov** (<https://archive.ada.gov/index.html>) provides information, standards, and regulations on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The **ADA National Network** (<https://adata.org/>) is specifically focused on training, education, and resources on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **RespectAbility** (<https://www.respectability.org/>) champions the inclusion of people with disabilities by fighting stigmas and advancing opportunities. They offer training, speaking engagements, and resources for individuals, employers, and more.
- The **National Organization on Disability** prioritizes inclusion of people with disabilities across society. The NOD Employment Tracker helps organizations assess their own inclusion practices (<https://www.nod.org/tracker/>).
- The **Kennedy Center’s Office of Accessibility and VSA** (<https://www.kennedy-center.org/vsa>) focuses primarily on accessibility in the arts and arts education by providing resources and opportunities for administrators, artists, and the disability community.
- Although created for the **National Park Service**, Harpers Ferry Center offers guidance and best practices on accessibility of spaces and programming (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/accessibility.htm>).
- **KultureCity** (<https://www.kulturecity.org/>) is all about sensory accessibility and inclusion.
- **Web Accessibility in Mind** offers guidance and tools (<https://wave.webaim.org/>) for evaluating a website for accessibility features, such as form labels, alternative text, keyboard navigation, and color contrast.
- The **ADA Symposium** (<http://www.adasymposium.org/>) is a comprehensive conference for training on the ADA and other disability-related laws.
- The **Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council** (<https://www.paddc.org/>) advocates, empowers, and provides grant funding for people with disabilities.
- **Disability Inclusion PGH** (<https://disabilityinclusionpgh.org/>) is a Pittsburgh-region initiative to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities.

This list is not exhaustive as there is a wealth of resources, including blog posts, web developers, consulting firms, and more available online and through the organizations above.

## A Couple of Tips

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- To learn about different types of accessibility improvements, visit <https://disabilityinclusionpgh.org/accessibility-how-to-videos/>.
- To learn all about website accessibility, you can review the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>.
- To check the color contrast on your organization's website, visit <https://colorshark.io/> or <https://colororacle.org>.
- To learn more about use of font size, check out <https://www.acb.org/large-print-guidelines>.

## Successful Project Ideas

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### Sensory-Friendly Kits and Accommodations – Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

- The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh utilizes Universal Design standards for all of its exhibits. The museum also offers sensory friendly afternoons once a month. They adjust lighting and provide noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, fidgets, and other items for children and families with autism spectrum disorders and sensory sensitivities.

### Tactile Universal Signs – Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium

- In 2014 and 2016, RAD granted the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium two grants of \$25,000 for way finding signage and Braille/tactile signs in a new exhibit area and interactive components and tactile signs for the new exhibit, Jungle Odyssey. Accessible signage includes interactive components, such as a life-size model of a crocodile skull, a relief of a clouded leopard's paw, and push-button audio describing animal behaviors and anatomy.

### Sensory-Friendly Program Adaptations – Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and Cultural District Partners

- The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and Cultural District Partners, including Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh CLO, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and Pittsburgh Opera, offer programming throughout the year for people with autism spectrum disorders. The Symphony, for example, adjusts music to minimize sudden, loud sounds, provides low-level lighting, offers fidgets, earplugs, and noise-canceling headphones, among other accommodations.

### SoundShirts – City of Asylum

- In 2020, RAD granted City of Asylum \$20,000 for a SoundShirt system and SoundShirts for audience members with hearing impairments to feel and see the sensations of sound through vibrations and lighting when wearing a SoundShirt.

### ADA-Compliant Website Enhancements – Prime Stage Theatre

- In 2022, RAD granted Prime Stage \$7,000 for website accessibility and other improvements to program materials. The website upgrade includes restructuring page content, assigning alternative tags for images, using descriptive titles for hyperlinks, designing accessible forms, ensuring keyboard accessibility, and adjusting design for accessible color contrast.