Braille House

Making Tourism Accessible for Visitors who are Blind or have Low Vision

Communication and Marketing – *Why the Necessity?*

Having accessible facilities and practices are important in making tourism inclusive for visitors who are blind or have low vision. *Equally important is letting people know about these!* Information on accessibility is just as vital as the features that make a place accessible: prospective patrons and their travel party will not visit if they cannot find out if a service or facility is accessible or not, to them personally.

Many travellers with accessibility requirements begin their trip online. A journey can require planning and research across several platforms, so having accessible websites and digital resources available is essential. Provision of and access to accurate, up-to-date information is important, for potential and actual visitors, as well as staff. Blind and low vision visitors typically like to know what it will be like when they visit a destination.

Creation of a venue access guide serves as an informative tool that will answer many visitor inquiries and makes it possible for employees to deliver information consistently and accurately. "An access guide is the best marketing tool to promote services to the inclusive tourism market." Checklists, such as the Sell-Assessment Audit Checklists provided by Braille House in the context of this initiative, can be well used … "to gather data to create an accessibility guide that should be given the same attention as any other marketing collateral – they should not simply be put up on a website as if they were an access audit checklist, but should instead be incorporated into an accessibility guide that will be used as a marketing tool, with the information integrated seamlessly into a website and easily found through a prominent accessibility menu… No matter what the level of accessibility, it's vital that as much detail as possible – using the above access checklist resources – is prominently displayed on websites and in product brochures. Ideally, websites should have a dedicated and easily identifiable Accessibility or Access & Inclusion menu where all relevant information can be easily located." (Ref: Tourism Access and Inclusion: Best Practice Guidelines for Tourism MSMEs in APEC)

> *"It's equally important that staff are fully aware of and trained in all accessibility features and accommodations so that they are equipped to answer questions when asked by potential customers. Due to what's known as the 'digital divide' – which refers to people with disability and seniors not being as digitally connected as the general population for several reasons – it's important to provide alternative means of accessing information related to accessibility. Primarily, this would involve staff members answering queries by phone, email or text message. In addition to including information in product brochures or catalogues, it's a good idea to produce a stand-alone PDF (with accessibility features enabled; see here for full instructions - https://helpx.adobe.com/au/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html) that lists all accessibility features and accommodations, with pictures, that can be mailed or emailed to potential customers and/or inserted into a product brochure or catalogue."* (Ref: Tourism Access and Inclusion: Best Practice Guidelines for Tourism MSMEs in APEC)

Tap into the other materials provided in the Communications and Marketing element of this project to further promote your accessible destination through accessible communication.