

Art Shanty Projects Access Plan

2025-2026

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INTRODUCTION Art Shanty Projects intentionally creates an impermanent art village on Minnesota lake ice amid a changing climate and environment. With a spirit of embracing challenges through creativity, we support an ecosystem that inspires everyone to create and participate in art, thrive in winter, and build community.

Art Shanty Projects embraces the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in our commitment to ensuring that all members of our community can participate as fully as possible in our arts events, programs, meetings, facilities and communications. Accessibility is built into the fabric of how we do art and what we expect from artists, board members, and contracted staff.

The Operations Director will serve as an Accessibility Coordinator, conduct an Accessibility Audit, and oversee updates to the Accessibility Plan. This plan will be vetted during the August Board Meeting and voted into effect on that date. We will evaluate and address gaps internally and host an accessibility training for board members and staff prior to each on-ice program.

POLICIES:

- This Access Plan will be reviewed annually by the Art Shanty Projects Board of Directors and Staff after completion of each On-Ice Program season. Iterations of this living document will be used as an evolving tool and process to guide the organization towards continued improvements for greater access. Our organization will seek consultation from key resources, such as the Minnesota Council on Disability, and local access consultants for information regarding specific accessibility resources, publications and/or access guides and surveys.
- New board and staff members will be provided a copy of the Access Plan as part of the Board Manual used for orientation, training, and reference.
- Understanding that accessibility is an integral part of what we do, Art Shanty Projects will integrate funding for Accessibility resources into its annual budget. Funding will be earmarked for items such as: professional sign language interpreters, audio description, website formatting for accessibility features, signage, restrooms, and ramps for the On-Ice Event.

ON-ICE EVENT ACCESSIBILITY

The On-Ice Program occurs on the frozen surface of a Minnesota lake which is not an inherently accessible space. The lake provides both barriers and unique opportunities to find creative, site-specific

accessibility solutions. Given our interdisciplinary approach, we have more flexibility and opportunity to adjust and welcome different ways of presenting and accessing art.

Current Status

- In 2022 the artist manual was updated to include clear design expectations and instruction regarding accessible design. A checklist tool was developed to assist ASP staff in ensuring artists are building shanties that are accessible. The Artistic Director and Production Team utilize this tool when conducting site visits with artists to ensure design expectations and accessible design elements are incorporated. The efficacy of these resources has only been partially evaluated due to the pandemic and the exterior-only shanties.
- ASP budgets funds to rent two ramps annually to take visitors from the shore to the surface of the lake. (Ensure the incline ratio is 12:1.) Art Shanty Projects provides accessible bathrooms, accessible parking, and a path to the entrance and around the village that is clear, accessible, and navigable. Path from accessible parking spaces to the ramp entrance needs improvement. Since 2023, wayfinding steps were put in place to make wayfinding from parking to ramp easier (though our move to Plan Beach no longer required it). Village attendees and the general public have used these ramps to access the lake from shore.
- In FY2022 we improved on our information gathering process from artists about the sensory experience of shanties and performances. This information was integrated into maps, mailbox didactics, web, and handouts for visitors.
- Art Shanty Projects is committed to ensuring that Deaf and/or Blind participants can enjoy our event with ease. We schedule daily interpretation by professional Sign Language interpreters and Audio Describers. In 2022, 2023, and 2024a production team member provided training and an orientation to these consultants and then collected post-program surveys from them. Likely due to the pandemic, we had fewer visitors request these services.
- Most of our village signage follows ADA recommendations for 18+ point sans serif fonts, high contrast. We updated the format of our village map (from lasercut to printed on vinyl) for legibility. We have also updated the survey board questions to be printed on waterproof paper instead of lasercut for better legibility.
- During the 2020 On-Ice season an accessibility consultant provided on-site evaluation and feedback about overall village design, specific shanty design, and printed materials. Following the 2022 season, we interviewed an artist/participant for feedback on their experience. Due to Plan Beach, we did not conduct an on-site audit in 2023.
- We built 4 kicksleds in 2021 to add to our fleet with grant funding to be used in our 2022 program. Our current fleet includes 3 kicksleds with arms, 2 kicksleds without arms, and 1 wheelchair accessible kicksled. Kicksleds were well used during the 2022 season, and required better assembly to hold up to the frequent use. (Kicksleds were not used in 2023 due to the uneven park terrain making them ineffective and in some cases unsafe to use.) 3 kicksleds were donated by Brave the Snow to be made into art kicksleds.
- We collected dietary information from all artists, volunteers, board and staff members to accommodate accessible snacks and lunches. Staff contracted with food trucks who served a variety of food that supported different dietary considerations.
- An accessibility question is included in the open call application that prospective artists must consider and respond to.
- Surveys from participants, artists, performers, and volunteers indicated a significant number of

people identify as neurodivergent (ie 22% of surveyed visitors, 24% of volunteers), though our current plan does not include considerations or accommodations specific to those who identify as neurodivergent.

- As an organization, we strive to be as inclusive as possible and this includes creating an environment where masks are strongly encouraged and technology/access tools are utilized for accessibility.
- For the 2024 program, we reduced ASL interpreter and AD hours to one day per weekend due to budgeting tightening and reduced service use after the pandemic
- In 2024 it was noted by the Producer coordinating accessibility services that the audio describer and ASL interpreters were not utilized by any attendees.
- In 2025, the one page access handout map included places to sit down in the village. Since we occupy a lake surface, there is inherently no seating infrastructure.
- In 2025, we reserved one kiksled all day for medic use.

Goal:

- All shanties will provide opportunities for engagement by people with varying access needs.
- We will provide participants with information about accessibility considerations for each project through the website and project signage.
- Art Shanty Projects will provide artists with explicit guidance, best practices and resources based on ADA guidelines.
- Provide accessible pathways between parking spaces and the ramp to the village.
- Increase the variety of supports available to navigate through the village.
 - **Continuing Steps:**
 - *2023-2024:* continue to test out the artist implementation of best practices; do research to learn how to intentionally better serve those who identify as neurodivergent. Some possible ways research could be used: to better prepare artists (in terms of engagement) or for communications (accessibility notes on didactic materials).
 - *During build visits (November 2023 -January 2024):* Continue checking in with artists about shanty accessibility and provide additional feedback and support as needed.
 - *January 2024:* Project didactics include short descriptions of each shanty and accessibility notes as needed (e.g. door width, full dark immersion, sensory elements). Update shanty descriptions on the website with accessibility information. (Collect information in advance, clarify during installation weekend)
 - *January 2024:* Explore and test solutions for improving the route between accessible parking spaces and the ramp, including wayfinding.
 - *February-March 2024:* Use post program surveys to gather information about how we can improve support in 2025. Budget for new initiatives or shortfalls for next program year.
 - Test out a variety of implements, including walkers, hiking sticks, traction cleats, etc, and assess their usefulness.
 - **Longer term (beyond 2023) goal:** Continue learning and explore new ideas based on feedback.
 - For the 2025 Season we will consider reducing the number of contracted hours for Audio Description and ASL Interpreting services due to low numbers of

people using these services. Alternatively, put more hours towards reaching out to these populations.

- For the 2026 season, ASP was awarded an Access Arts grant from MSAB. With this grant, we are enlisting a team of consultants (including a former staff member, our ASL interpreter and AD, and a former performer) to conduct an evaluation of our current accessibility plan and advise on the creation of an outreach plan for both artists and visitors with disabilities.

Goal: All village signage is high contrast, large enough to read, and at a height that can be read by people of all heights.

- **Next Steps:**

- *November 2023:* Continue displaying access signage to indicate where to meet/find ASL interpreters and Audio Describers; incorporate access symbols in other places.
- *December 2023:* Continue to print signage for village utilizing sans serif font at least 24-point, with high contrast.

What the event looks like when this work is done well:

- There are two ramps (12:1 incline) from shore to the surface of the lake, accessible bathrooms, accessible parking, accessible paths from parking to ramp, and a path to the entrance and around the village that is clear, accessible, and navigable. Our budget includes provisions to build these into the infrastructure of the On-Ice Event.
- ASL interpretation and audio describers are available every day we are open to the public and participants can find where to meet them. As a potential cost-cutting measure we will look at reducing the number of hours/days that these services are provided on-ice.
- The open call provides explicit expectations, and the artist manual provides best practice guidance about ramps, door widths, and other barriers to accessibility and ADA guidelines. Artists get support and feedback throughout the build process so they have the tools they need to build accessible shanties. Artists respect the spirit of these guidelines and make their best effort to create accessible projects.
- Artists get feedback and guidance from staff, with ample time to make adjustments to their projects.
- People with varying access needs actively participate in the program.
- People who want more information both in advance and at the program can find it!

OFF ICE EVENTS ACCESSIBILITY:

Current Status:

- We host a limited number of off-site special events for artists, members, and the public at business locations already required to comply with ADA. We also encourage the use of masks during events to minimize risk of pathogen exposure for members of the community.
- Board meetings can take place remotely (over Zoom or similar).
- Maintaining in-person programming when possible, we will continue providing remote meetings to increase accessibility for many in our community.
- The current website is mostly compliant with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) version 2.1 Level A. Accessibility testing is being performed for the new website in November 2023.

- We invested in a portable conference speaker/microphone to enhance audio in meetings. The clearer audio has increased understanding and comprehension of speakers.

Goal: Accommodate access needs at virtual meetings.

- **Next Steps:**
 - *November 2023:* Find out what access needs are not being accommodated at virtual meetings, and what access needs will need to be supported at in person meetings.
 - *August 2023 to November 2023:* As of the time of this report we are in early stages of redesigning the website and are emphasizing accessibility in all stages of the process.
 - *Ongoing:* Research through staff, artist, and board survey how to support any disability accommodation needs, and fulfill needs that we are able to fulfill without undue financial burden.

COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY:

Current Status:

- Most internal and external communications currently involve in-person meetings, hybrid meetings, telephone, e-mail, website, and social media. We provide notification of external meetings, programs and other opportunities at least two weeks prior to the announced activity through email, website, social media, or other relevant channels.
- All images posted to social media, website, or used in newsletters include alt text following guidance from the [alt text styleguide](#). This style guide has been developed, is followed by staff (who wrote it) and is being reviewed by board members. During development of the new website, the web designer and tech manager of the board reviewed alt text and ensured quality.
- Website (artshantyprojects.org) was replaced with a new design that had accessibility features in mind. It has been partially reviewed for accessibility.

Goal:

Utilizing Zoom as our video conferencing software ensures that our meetings are accessible. Zoom is built with accessibility in mind and is industry-standard software for this reason. Zoom and Google Meet provide built-in live captions during virtual meetings. While we must acknowledge that the live captions are not perfectly accurate, they do have a high degree of accuracy when speakers are enunciating and speaking at a reasonable pace.

- By reviewing current hourly rates for our ASL interpreting , we have information about the cost of providing in-person ASL interpreters so that prior to in-person meetings we can notify artists that an ASL interpreter can be provided upon request (with at least one week notice before the event). We must also balance this with our current financial ability to provide such services. Our organization strives to provide a radically inclusive environment, and we must balance that with our financial ability to provide such services.
- A procedure for communicating on-ice written information (ex. Project didactics) with blind and low-vision visitors is provided via the audio describer or via online sources.
- Accessibility info is easy to find on the web site and includes Accessibility Coordinator name and phone number.
- Update the ASP Web Accessibility Guide for the new website and brand style guide.

- **Next Steps:**

- *August 2023 / ongoing:* We will be moving away from virtual meetings and transitioning back to in-person or hybrid meetings.
- *April 2024:* Determine what of these resources and costs to include in the 2025 budget, including, but not limited to ASL interpreters for in-person meetings.
- *Summer 2024:* Perform accessibility testing and remediation on an ongoing basis.

When this work is done well, the organization looks like: Staff is confident, knowledgeable and prepared to support PWD in virtual meetings, understands best practices for communicating on-ice written information, and ready to provide services upon request at any time.

ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

Current Status:

- Individuals with disabilities comprise a small percentage of our artists (~3% of 2022 artists identified as people with disabilities in a voluntary, anonymous survey), audience (14%), and other stakeholders. During our limited 2024 season, out of 14 artist respondents 0 reported having a disability. 2 responded that they are neurodivergent.
- Outreach with artist organizations has been made. The Institute for Community Integration's Art for All program and ASP leadership met to discuss potential partnerships.
- Outreach efforts to audiences in disability communities in advance of the On Ice Event include posting our events to Minnesota's Accessible Activities Calendar and sending notices to organizations that serve people with disabilities.
- We provide detailed accessibility information on our website.
- Soliciting feedback about accessibility from artists, volunteers, and audience members with disabilities is collected as part of our anonymous post-ice audience survey. We conducted an interview with a 2022 Shanty artist who is Deaf to collect feedback and insights.
- The On-Ice Program is free admission for everyone in order to encourage attendance. We publicize this plan in our publications, news releases, website, social media, and other correspondence.

Goal: Present projects by artists with disabilities in the on-ice program.

- **Next Steps:**

- *Ongoing:* Identify barriers in artist call, artist events, and on ice events.
- *Summer 2022-On Ice 2023:* Begin building relationships with arts groups that already center people with disabilities. Learn about their artistic practice, invite them to visit the 2023 on-ice event.
 - *Summer 2022 and onward:* Identify those groups that we might want to partner with. (arts groups that center people with disabilities, possibly also schools, faith-based organizations, other community groups). Possibly look into MSS, Avivo, or Interact—art and art-making orgs that serve people with disabilities. Reach out to groups to evaluate interest.
 - *November 2022- January 2023:* Set up times for interested groups to visit the event. ASP staff and/or board will greet and welcome visitors.
 - *February-April 2023:* Follow up with primary contact(s) about how the visit to the

on ice event went and:

- Evaluate interest in future engagement
- Collectively identify barriers to successful and enjoyable participation. (And figure out how ASP can support future participation).
- *2024 and beyond*: Deepen engagement with organizations/ groups/ artists that visited in 2023. Reach out to additional organizations/groups/artists.
- *April 2023*: Based on feedback and interest, evaluate our capacity and resources to allocate funds for outreach to artists with disabilities and funds to address barriers as identified by participating artists for future programs.
- *June 2023*: Met with Art for All, part of the Stephanie Evelo Program for Art Inclusion, part of the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. Their goals for community art inclusion, and our goal of facilitating inclusion of all members of the community align very well. Due to limited timing and staff availability for the Art For All program, 2024 season visits were postponed to 2025.
- *December 2025*: ASP received an Access Arts grant to review our access plan and improve our outreach plan for both artists and visitors with disabilities

Goal: To attract and serve people with disabilities in leadership roles (staff, board, volunteers, jury)

- **Next Steps:**

- *February - March 2024*: Get meaningful feedback from people with disabilities who are already actively engaged in ASP.
- *2023 and beyond*: Plan ways to support neurodivergent artists, performers, attendees.
- Consider providing a sensory-friendly day/activation, provide sensory information on shanties and/or performances, provide “distract kits” to support attendees and caregivers. Or determine times when the program is more subdued from a sensory aspect.
- *2023 and beyond*: Internally assess our capacity to work alongside and provide services and accommodations for people with disabilities in these various roles.
- *2023 and beyond*: Using the artist plan as a model, adapt strategies for each of these individual groups.
- The board will develop a strategic plan for outreach, feedback, and long-term engagement with people with disabilities as audience, board, staff, and volunteers. This responsibility will fall to the Board Spirit and Operations group.

When this work is done well, our organization looks like: people are engaging as part of project teams, and as leads of project teams. People with disabilities are creating art as part of ASP that is meaningful and exciting to them. People with disabilities are supported as decision makers and artists, and impact the direction of ASP.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING:

Current Status:

- There is regular significant annual board and staff turnover, necessitating ongoing annual training.
- Our mission/vision/guiding principles were updated in Spring 2021. Accessibility was integrated

into our vision and values at this time.

- We have an updated grievance procedure that includes accessibility.
- The Grievance procedure is difficult to find on our website.

Goal: Our community knows about the grievance procedure and how to easily access it. As an organization, we are prepared to respond to accessibility-related grievances.

- **Next Steps:**

- *August 2024:* Board and staff review grievance procedure and avenues of feedback (email, social media, surveys, in person complaints/comments, incident report forms, etc)
- *September 2024:* Post updated grievance procedure clearly and prominently on our website in both the feedback and accessibility sections, and anywhere else as appropriate.
- *Fall 2024:* Elaborate on the actionable steps to take for an accessibility-related grievance.

Goal: Provide ongoing accessibility training and onboarding for board and staff. Everyone integrates accessibility in the work that they do.

- **Next Steps:**

- *Summer 2024:* when hiring seasonal production staff, ensure that there are candidates interested in and/or knowledgeable about accessibility and the arts.
- *Fall 2024:* Redesign accessibility training for all staff and board. Training should reinforce that accessibility is a priority and also help the board and staff understand their roles in activating the plan.
 - Determine the outcomes of a well-executed accessibility training. Design the training to achieve those outcomes. Practical skills around etiquette, mobility assistance, sensory limitations, etc. should be addressed.

When this work is done successfully: Art Shanty Projects board and staff have a common understanding of what accessibility looks like for our organization, and members are prepared to activate the plan. Our organization is welcoming of criticism and grateful for the invitation to better meet the needs of our community. We are prepared to handle any grievances.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

See [Art Shanty Projects Grievance Procedure](#) for steps for resolving grievances.