



# Our commitment to accessibility and inclusion

## Introduction

Laugh Factory Inc., both as an organization and as individual team members, is grateful to have the opportunity to work with and beside people who possess a variety of cognitive, physical and emotional abilities and are truly humbled by the diverse cross section of challenges and strengths that every one of our artists, team members and guests brings to our lives and our work.

At Laugh Factory Inc., we are committed to creating accessible environments throughout our physical work, communications and in all of our practices in order to provide everyone with physical, emotional and intellectual access to, comfort within and the ability to thrive through our shows, promotions, publications, community, relationships, events and day-to-day business. We believe these commitments strengthen our organization, our experience and our impact for everyone.

We embrace our role as learners, allies and champions in a greater effort to see equal access for all and consider it our duty to celebrate all levels of abilities as the beauty that makes up our colorful, complex and diverse world.

We understand that this field of understanding and action is ever-growing and expanding. Therefore, we acknowledge that, amongst our best efforts, we will make unintentional omissions or errors occasionally and amongst asking for forgiveness we commit to listening, learning and amending practices with empathy and gratitude to our constant teachers.

## Accessibility Policy–Overview

Laugh Factory Inc. believes in making entertainment experiences accessible to all people and is committed to providing access to persons regardless of abilities and life challenges, so that they may enjoy and participate in all that Laugh Factory Inc has to offer. It is our goal to remove all barriers and provide a safe, welcoming and empowering space for laughter, expression, and inspiration.

We embrace all levels and varieties of physical, emotional, psychological, environmental and learning abilities and work with our comedians, content creators, staff and visitors to embrace differences; to uplift someone not in spite of their



challenges but because of and in celebration of their unique experience and inherent strengths.

We shy away from the use of labels or the practice of limiting a person's abilities with a clinical diagnosis. Instead we use these diagnoses to create environmental considerations and integrate potential support and accommodations into our content and shows.

We recognize that for those who have mixed abilities their experience of life has most likely not been equal to those who identify as typical. We therefore seek to create an equitable environment within which they can feel equal and strive to make whatever extra accommodations and considerations are needed to create an equal experience.

We see it as our role as entertainment industry leaders to champion a fully inclusive world. Art has a unique ability to initiate thought, foster dialogue and create change and, for this reason, it is our moral imperative to be a leader in the effort to see equal access for all and to lead the celebration of the unique value of all members of our communities.

Access is a civil rights issue, with a moral imperative. Access to cultural programs is a legal requirement of the Arts and Humanities Endowments' Section 504 Regulations and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The access laws extend civil rights similar to those now available on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin and religion to people of all abilities. Access is a diversity issue. Section 504 and ADA promote diversity and inclusion by ensuring broader access to the arts and humanities for all people, regardless of ability.

## Definitions

### Access

- Every member of a community having opportunities and access to encounter, appreciate, participate in, learn and be informed about the arts and entertainment.
- Everyone experiencing equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.



- Fair and just pathways to appreciate and be exposed to the arts and entertainment as well as attain information and opportunities to fulfill cultural and artistic expression and development.

## Abilities

*Factors that can impact a person's abilities:*

- Physical challenges including but not limited to:
  - Impairment in physical function or structure
  - Injured body part either chronic or temporary
  - Illness either chronic or temporary
- Mental health\* challenges including but not limited to:
  - Trauma—both current and lifetime memory based
  - Post traumatic Disorder
  - Depression, anxiety or panic disorders
  - Bipolar disorder, schizophrenia etc.
  - Eating disorders
  - Addiction disorders
- Learning challenges including but not limited to:
  - Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
  - Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia
  - ADD, ADHD
- Age and age related conditions
- Geography—a person's location and travel accessibility

\* **PLEASE NOTE:** We believe that mental health is a physical challenge that should not be separated from or stigmatized uniquely to other physical challenges; but for the sake of equity, we do currently mention such challenges specifically with the hope that in time the two will be treated with a similar level of compassion, transparency and medical rigor.

## Convictions/Beliefs

Laugh Factory Inc. believes that:

- Our challenges are our greatest strengths and are the key to our greatest successes, both individually and collectively.
- Furthermore, it is our challenges that will define the greatest impact that we each can have in the world.



- Together we are stronger and together, embracing our differences, we are even stronger.
- There is no “normal.”
- Currently, life is not designed equal for all and therefore we must make considerations and efforts to include and engage all equitably. We must also speak up against such inequities and raise awareness of these unjust situations until they are permanently changed.
- Labels and diagnoses should not define or limit a person or group but instead create access and awareness. We refuse to keep anyone confined by their diagnosis and encourage all to explore beyond the realms of “possible.”
- Some pain and traumas are invisible and we honor the challenges that people are experiencing that cannot be seen at first, second and sometimes, the 100th glance.
- Those defined as “disabled” are profoundly able and often gifted in ways that those defined as typical are not.

Access is a dynamic work in progress, as new initiatives are developed, the entertainment industry changes and expands, and new technologies are introduced. We will make mistakes and omissions. We seek feedback and requests from all who see opportunities for us to create a more accessible environment, community and cultural experience.

## Actions

Physical accommodations:

- All of our showrooms are ADA compliant locations with comfortable access for all including wheelchair and mobility aid users.
- We strive to consider other mobility issues (e.g., steepness of slopes, height of buzzers, access to seating, distance of parking from destination, heavy doors).
- Special/Adapted equipment and changes in the physical environment may be necessary to support all audience members. We are ready to accommodate this need.
- When possible, we use principles of universal design so environments can be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible.
- Certain types of light can be triggers (such as for seizure disorders), so it is important to either avoid fluorescent lighting, strobe lights, and flash photos, or warn people significantly ahead of time.



- There should be restrooms that are both physically accessible and designated as gender neutral, which is both inclusive for members of the LGBTQI+ community and for people who may have caregivers accompany them.
- We provide a quiet space for those with sensory needs as well as a rest space with chairs, water etc.
- Where possible, there should be both visual and non-visual items available for use.
- Where possible, for shows and events, there should be American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and CART captioning available, which often involves booking these services significantly in advance.
- Additionally, there should be agreements with ASL and interpretation agencies to have interpreters available when needed.
- Where possible, transport for those in challenging geographic locations should be explored and provided.
- Paratransit or other services may need to be arranged/offered. If transportation cannot be provided, then we should explore video options.
- Live streaming or video conferencing availability can help include those that may not be able to make the event for reasons related to location or physical abilities, or for any other potential reason.
- All written materials should be provided in an accessible format.

## Language

- We respect the inherent worth, dignity, and multiple talents of all people, including speaking and writing respectfully and appropriately about an individual. We encourage all to use person- or people-first language, emphasizing the person first, not their abilities.
- We ask that all avoid language that operates on ability assumptions, such as "I need everyone to stand now." Instead, "If you are able, please stand with me."