

EQUITABLE ACCESS PROJECTS IN CAMP FACILITY MAINTENANCE

A guide to considering disability equity when working on maintenance and development projects at camp facilities.

WHAT IS DISABILITY EQUITY IN MAINTENANCE?

Equity in maintenance starts with critically looking at our spaces and knowledge and from that developing a lens to not only consider mainstream disabilities in your planning but to use empathy as a tool to broaden your definition of disability and needs vs barriers.

Needs: are the physical, mental, emotional conditions for someone to feel safe and included in a physical space or activity.

Barriers: are the physical structures or systems in place that prevent someone from being or feeling included in space or activity. Barriers are a condition of the environment, not the body. Ex: Stairs, Curbs, gravel, small restrooms, lack of privacy, narrow trails, poor lighting, etc...

DISABILITIES - Common Disabilities to consider:

Wheelchair users, manual and powered
Blind, Deaf-blind
Deaf, varied hearing ability and communication, ASL
Neuro-Divergent, Autism, ADHD, learning differences
Cognitive, Down syndrome, developmental delays
Traumatic brain injury
Amputee, limb variation
Invisible disabilities, trauma, mental conditions
Illness, degenerative disease, terminal illness

Remember, they all have a physical relation to space, try considering how that might be for each, what barriers might look like for different experiences.

- What are some disabilities that you encounter at camp?
- What are some you would like to be more inclusive of?
- What would that look like for your maintenance and development projects?



SELF ASSESSMENT

Take this self assessment and explore some questions you might ask when using a disability equity lens in general or for a specific project. Consider how creative maintenance might solve some of these barriers and create more inclusive spaces.

RESOURCE: [The Accessibility Toolkit for Land Managers](#) from [Willamette Partnership](#)

Facilities to consider when thinking through the following questions:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dining Hall | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Games/Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amphitheater | <input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Water access | <input type="checkbox"/> Gathering space |

■ How many sets of stairs do you have on your site? What would it take for no steps to exist at camp? What spaces would be a priority to remove steps?

■ How do people with low vision or blindness navigate your site? What would it look like to have a hard edge on all trails and walkways so someone with vision needs could navigate easier?

■ How do your acoustics feel for those who are deaf or neurodivergent? What spaces are loud or have a low hum? Can you hear fluorescent lighting?

■ How often do groups gather for conversation, where does that happen, what does it look like? How can we arrange a space so that as many faces are visible as possible for lip reading?

■ How could signage be used to increase access for a variety of disabilities? What would that look like?

■ How can ground surface and leveling of spaces and trails improve someone's experience at camp? What are simple ways of achieving this?

■ How could the privacy and safety of an accessible bathroom/changing space make people feel included and welcomed physically and emotionally?

■ What would it take for everyone to be able to participate in the activities at your camp? Games, trails, lodging, etc.



MAINTENANCE PROJECT GRANT PROPOSALS - How much is too much?

The thing with equity work is that it is endless, it often requires large commitments and a lot of planning, but the good news is that there are also endless small maintenance projects that can also have a huge impact on access. Maintenance can be done in a way that also enhances the equitable access to spaces in your facility. Maintenance can be improved by using different materials, replacing broken or worn down materials or appliances with an option that better serves camp participants, consider what opportunities you have to maintain AND improve your facility at the same time. Don't be shy, many funders are eager to help you in your journey and understand this is largely uncharted territory for most. So, the best advice is to take the time to develop an equity lens, do your research, show that you have larger goals, and then ask for what you need.

Other things to consider for equitable access at camp outside of maintenance: Website content and accessibility, communication material, dialogue between teacher, parent and instructor, program development, communication at camp, strategic planning, Disability consultants.

RESOURCES - Guides and Consultants to continue the work.

Guides:

- [The Accessibility Toolkit for Land Managers](#) from [Willamette Partnership](#)
- [Access Recreation - Trail Guidelines](#) - PDF
- [The Ultimate Guide to Inclusive Playgrounds](#) - MRC
- [Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation and Trails](#) -USDA
- [Barrier-Free Trails](#) - Washington Trails Association
- [Universal Design Principles for Trails](#) - Oregon Trails Coalition

CONSULTANTS:

- [Empowering Access](#) - Disability Equity and Inclusion Consulting

