>> Lauren Appelbaum: Welcome everyone! Before we get into the meat of our webinar today, which is on accessible events, both in-person and online, we're going to do quick introductions of ourselves. My name is Lauren Appelbaum and I am the Vice President of Communications and Entertainment and News Media at RespectAbility and I have long brown hair. I'm wearing glasses, a pink shirt with white flowers, and behind me you'll see a background that says RespectAbility in white and yellow on a black background, and my pronouns are She and Her. I've been with RespectAbility for about six and a half years now, and I think it's always important to share, because we're talking about accessibility, and I'm going to share a little bit about my personal disability with you so you can understand how that plays into what we're going to be sharing in a moment. I have something called reflex sympathetic dystrophy in my right arm and right leg, and I'm someone who acquired a disability later in life, and so as you are listening to this presentation today you can think about, you know, what, why you can think about the fact that you may not need accessibility or people might not need accessibility in this exact moment, but you might not realize that someone may have acquired a disability due to aging, accident, or illness, and so I'm gonna pass it off to my colleague Eric, who's going to introduce himself and then he'll start the presentation for us today.

>> Eric Ascher: Thank you Lauren. It's great to be with all of you. So my name is Eric Ascher, my pronouns are He/Him/His, I am wearing glasses, I have short black hair, I'm wearing a RespectAbility polo shirt that. all the staff got, and I'm sitting in front of a white wall. And so I'm autistic, and I'm also openly gay and Jewish, and I'm very excited to have been here on the back end for all of these webinars and to finally be done with this series -- it's been great, I've enjoyed it, but it's good to have it behind us, so. I'm going to open up the PowerPoint now. Okay, three quick logistical points before we begin. We have live captioning and an ASL interpreter for this webinar and you can make sure that you can either turn on the captions in Zoom or you can use the link that I'm going to put in the chat box in a moment to see the transcript in a separate window. We are taking questions throughout this webinar and at the end as well, and so if you have questions you'd like to ask myself or Lauren, please do not hesitate to put them in the Q&A box. And this webinar is being recorded, and after I edit the captions on it and make sure they're clean and perfect, it will be posted to RespectAbility's website, probably by the end of this week. So that's the logistics out of the way. Let's get into the heart of the thing. Before we do that though, actually, we should thank our partners and co-promoters. They helped us promote the series by sharing with their audiences and we really appreciate all of them. I recommend, you can download this PowerPoint and visit all of their websites, and highly recommend you do that. We also want to thank our generous funders for this series. The Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles, and The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies. One of the people from Schusterman spoke at one of the previous webinars in the series that's available now on the website. Without their support, this series would not be possible. Additionally, we want to thank The David Berg Foundation, The Beverly Foundation, and Diane and Guilford Glaser Foundation -- I'm going to pause for a second to let our interpreter spell those out -- for their support of our general Jewish inclusion work. So, why are we doing this series? Including people with disabilities is something that more than 90 percent of Jewish organizations say that they want to do, and yet a survey we conducted of the Jewish world showed that fewer than 15 percent of Jews can identify a single leader with a disability in Jewish communal life. And so this series has been a compliment to our previous series which trained organizations. Both series will be fully available to watch online. And this one is designed to introduce Jewish lay leaders with disabilities to the topics and skills that will help them to lead as volunteers and professionals and non-profit organizations. And with those slides out of the way, we've already introduced ourselves, we can move past this slide and we can dive right into the meat of the matter. So, accessibility matters for everyone, and because -- it particularly matters for people in the U.S. -- people with disabilities because, but it helps everybody as well. And you want to make sure that you're planning things ahead of time so that you can make sure that -- it's much easier to make an event accessible when you start planning it from the beginning, rather than retrofitting it at the end. And it's important because 20 percent of the people in the U.S. are deaf or hard of hearing, 48 million Americans. More than 1 million people are blind, more than 12 million people have low vision. 5 million plus are English language learners. And while not everyone knows that they have a disability, it is likely that more than 40 million Americans have a learning disability. And these are just some of the people who might want captions or ASL interpreters, or other accessibility features in your events, so it's important to keep them in mind. And the disability market's huge. It's important because we're not just -- including people's disabilities is not just the right thing to do, it's also a smart -- good for business, good for nonprofits, good for any organization, because we're such a large population and we have such big spending power, and more than one trillion dollars. It makes a huge difference to include people with disabilities. So I'm going to pass it off to Lauren for the next slide.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: So let's think about this for a moment. When we think about access, what do we think about? On the screen right now are a bunch of different symbols that you may be familiar with. There is a symbol of a wheelchair, a symbol of a guide dog, a symbol for braille, for parking, for sign language. So sometimes when we're thinking about accessibility, we might be thinking just about specific tactics of ensuring we have an ASL interpreter, ensuring we have live captions. But on the next slide we'll see an image where we're seeing a lot of people, kind of images of interconnectedness. So when we're thinking about access, we want to think about, not that, okay, everyone can kind of just be in the room -- and be able to watch, but how can everyone truly participate with everyone, and not just speak to -- not just listen to the speaker, but also be able to participate in a conversation with others in the room as well. On the next slide there's a really nice quote that we wanted to share and it says "If I get to be me, I belong. If I have to be like you, I fit in." So to think about belonging, to allow people to feel like they belong at your event. And then now we're gonna step into a moment of a few things about words to use, because that is one way to really make someone feel like they belong. We often get the question of, oh, can I use the word disability? I got news for you, disability is not a bad word. You know, those of us with disabilities, we use it and we prefer you use it. And you know, I'm going to share a few other tips on different words to use and so. Things like to avoid: euphemisms like "differently abled" or "special needs." Oftentimes people prefer you not use those words. When talking about someone without a disability, suggest using non-disabled instead of able-bodied or normal, because think about it, if you say that someone is normal, that is implying that someone with a disability is not normal. Other things to avoid are passive victim words, like "he suffers from cerebral palsy." Instead say "he has." Instead of saying "confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair bound" you can just say "wheelchair user." Another thing that I come across often in my work in the entertainment industry, is common ableist language that is used. For example, words like "crazy" or "lame." Trying to take those words out of our vocabulary. And then avoid referring to "the disabled" in the same way that you would avoid referring to "the Jews." Instead considering -- instead consider using terms such as "the disability community" or "the disability activists." And important to note that disabled individuals should not be described as inspirational or courageous just because we have a disability. Next I want to get to a topic that we get lots of questions about. People first language versus identity first language. People first language is "woman with a disability." Puts the emphasis on the person first, followed by a description of the disability. Identity first language, "disabled woman," puts the emphasis on the disability. Now, several U.S. disability groups have always used identity-first terms, specifically the culturally Deaf community and the autistic rights community. It's important to note that there isn't necessarily a right answer when you're talking about people first versus identity first language. Some people feel very, very strongly that you use one or the other to describe themselves. I myself use both interchangeably, and I’ve noticed that sometimes it is a generational thing. When I'm talking to people in their 50s, for example, they're much more likely to use people first language. When I'm talking to people in their 20s, much more likely to use identity first language. But when we're talking about accessible events, you know, it starts with the language we use and if you don't know what language to use when you're working with a specific individual, simple thing. Ask. Just the same way you might ask someone what their pronouns are, ask them how they want their disability to be defined. You know, everyone might have a different way that they would like to be described. Now I'm gonna pass it back off to Eric.

>> Eric Ascher: Thank you very much. So I forgot to skip that slide because, ask is the key word, and we have "ask" written here five times. So, accessibility starts before the event, as I was alluding to earlier, kind of clumsily. It's important to think about everything from the beginning, because when you when you're, you think about accessibility from a start, it's a lot easier than trying to shoehorn it in last minute. So here's a question that -- I'm gonna pose this to everyone watching and we're gonna ask you to respond in the chat box actually, what are some of the most common accessibility challenges you've experienced when planning virtual events, and what are some of the solutions you found to be most effective? And I'm gonna give it a second and see if anyone has anything they want to put in the chat box.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: And as Eric continues along with this section, if anyone shares in the chat, I'll be monitoring as well.

>> Eric Ascher: Okay, so invitation format. Now we get into the technical stuff. So, ensure that all of your images and logos have alternative text or image descriptions for people who are blind or use screen readers. And so what that means is that if someone's using a screen reader, if they can't see what's on the screen, if you -- screen readers aren't magic so they can't figure out what's in an image without you telling the computer what the image is. For example, I'm going to go back and actually just give you an example of this actually. So for this -- this slide right here, this picture we would describe this as, we could say a black woman wearing a mask, sitting at a computer, looking at the camera. That would be an image description for this situation. And so you want to describe the purpose of the image. Why is it there? What is, what would someone miss out on if they didn't -- couldn't see it? Make sure that they know. Have a plain text version of the invitation, so some people, some people use screen readers or need plain text and will be messed up with a lot of formatting, won't be able to process a lot of formatting, so make sure you have a plain text, just the text without any images or formatting. Some systems are not accessible to people who use screen readers and others are, and it changes all the time. So the best approach is always to have someone using a screen reader user test it for you. And google forms works right now. Things can change, so again, just having people with disabilities test your invitations and make sure that they can use it, that's the best approach always. And accommodations language -- this is something we've been doing for a while now. On the sign up form, ask registrants if they need any accommodations to fully participate in the event. And this slide on, which you'll be able to download right now actually, has information, has sample text you can use. It's important to include a real person's name with an email address and a phone number so that if someone has any issues, or any concerns, or any questions, they know who to contact and who can help them. You can set a deadline of 48 hours before the event to request accommodations. And asking people if you want to -- if they need any accommodations does not require you to provide them if they are unreasonable. That's important to know. But it also means that you can save money if no one requests sign language, or captions, you could save money and not offer them if people don't request it. But -- yeah, it's important to ask. So information to provide in your invitation: how long will the event last, what's the format of it, will participants be on video or audio or will it be more like this, like a webinar where spectators are just watching a presentation. Will there be an icebreaker or questions for everyone to answer? Let people know that ahead of time. I mean, I know someone, people like me who are on the autism spectrum, sometimes we don't like being surprised with sudden discussion topics that we weren't aware of. Encourage attendees to send questions and comments in advance, which is helpful for those who might want more time to prepare. And if there will be time for live Q&A, share that in the invitation. And this is one of the parts that I've been doing a lot for RespectAbility, which is creating accessible documents. And the great thing about this is that PowerPoint and Word documents in particular, they literally have a system -- there's a tool in the application that literally walks you through how to make your document or PowerPoint accessible. It gives you all the things that are wrong and how to fix them. And it's in the -- it's in both programs and there's a link here that shows you where to -- find that, and so distribute your documents or presentations in advance and always have a text only version of the word document. But again, it's super easy to make your documents accessible, because it literally walks you through it. And I think this was my last slide so I'm going to pass over Lauren.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: So now that you have set everything up for ensuring that your event is accessible, thinking about all these different elements before, now we're going to talk about things that you should be doing during the event. So one thing that's important to think about is access for all, whether it is virtual or in person. Next slide please. To think about accommodations for folks like this for example, if people don't have video conferencing -- people might live somewhere where they have where they don't have easy access to wi-fi, so to offer an option for attendees to dial in by phone. And now that a lot of people are thinking about hybrid events, to think about how you're going to ensure that your event is both -- is accessible to all if you're going to have it in terms of virtual and in-person and ensure that things are accessible. Now we're going to pose another question, and I see that Erika has already kind of popped something up in there. What are some of the most common accessibility challenges when planning in-person events and what are some of the solutions you found to be most effective? So we already have a comment from Erika saying, "why are there not enough podiums for those of us who cannot hold books or papers in our hands while looking at the audience?" So you know, this is important to think about for speakers, if someone is speaking and they might want to put their materials down in front of them, and then also for audience members to have a place for people to be able to put things down as well. We have another one in the chat right now from Rebecca saying, creating a sensory friendly environment, yes, to ensure that things, you know, especially when you're working with autistic individuals to ensure that it is sensory friendly and for others, you know, for everyone. So now we're going to go over a few specific examples of things. Arrival and food, think about locations of things. How high are your tables? So you want to think about, are your tables -- the table height good for check-in, good for the buffet for food? Next slide. Think about speakers and seating. Where do you have the ASL interpreters? Can someone view the speakers and the ASL interpreters at the same time? Do you have enough seating space for people who use wheelchairs and different types of wheelchairs where they might be lower than people seated in chairs or much higher than people seated in chairs? And then thinking about A/V considerations. So what we have here is CART, live captioning, and so if you are going to have it in a virtual way, it's very easy. You can turn it on here. Eric also put a link in the chat where you can watch it in a separate window. In-person, you would want to have those live -- captions somewhere where people could easily see that while also looking at the speaker. And for if you're doing a smaller event, an alternative -- and you don't have it set up for everyone to see the live captions, an alternate option is to set it up on someone's individual laptop. And this is also a really great thing if someone comes to you last minute and requests that accommodation and you might not have time to set it up for in the big room but you could set it up on an individual laptop and give it to that individual as well. So audio description. What is audio description? The idea is that speakers describe what is on screen. We talk about audio description a lot in my work in the entertainment industry in terms of TVs and film, but in events. So when we're talking -- when there are various images that have been on the PowerPoint, we've been describing what those images look like in case if someone cannot see it for themselves, whether it's because they are low vision or blind, or because of other access issues and they're joining us via phone today. That's also why we made the PowerPoint available for people to download themselves. And then that PowerPoint is fully screen reader accessible so people can access it. However even though this PowerPoint is fully accessible, people cannot use screen readers on this PowerPoint that's being shown on screen right now during this webinar because it's a video coming to them. So that's why it's important that we make the PowerPoint available for all to download onto your own computers. If you're showing video clips and they don't include audio description, we suggest that the speaker explain the visuals prior to showing the video. And there's a link for more on audio description for anyone who is interested. Talking about live captioning for a moment, benefits: it helps people who are deaf or hard of hearing, people who have learning disabilities, people whose first language is not English, as well as generally everyone. It really greatly eases the cognitive load of a video meeting or event. We are all experiencing Zoom fatigue, which is why I think a lot of people are looking to get back into live events, but adding captions is a really great way to help relieve some of that. A little bit -- I mentioned CART before, so what is that? So that's an actual live transcriber, and that's what we have today. This is not automatic, so it's a live individual, and ahead of time, it's best practice is to provide names, proper nouns, and any technical vocabulary for more accurate captioning. And this can be used for platforms like Zoom or in-person on a separate screen or individual tablet. And a note on automatic speech recognition. While it is improving, it will still have more errors than a live person. Two resources: we're currently using something through 1CapApp now, but StreamText is another one. What's great about it, is it allows you to view things in a separate browser window that viewers can completely customize. If they're colorblind, for example, they can change the colors. And this is something that can be used during virtual events like this, or live events where it might be on the screen somewhere, but then people can have access to have a link where they can open it up in any web browser and then be able to customize it completely for themselves. A little bit about ASL interpreters, you know, captioning can be great where people can kind of follow along, but if you want Deaf or hard of hearing individuals to fully participate, you're going to want to ensure that you have ASL interpreters. And similarly with live captions, for events that involve complex subject matter, technical terms, or industry specific terminology, viewers will find that it's hard to keep up. By having an actual ASL interpreter, it'll be a lot easier for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to fully participate. A tip, when you're talking about virtual events, to avoid spotlighting an individual during webinars. That leads to all attendees only seeing the video of the active speaker and means that attendees are unable to view the ASL interpreter's video. Instead, ensure gallery view and then as the host, you can give participants the ability to multi-pin individuals so they can pin the speakers and the interpreters and such. Also, in terms of hiring a sign language interpreter, best practice is to book at least two weeks prior to the event. Ensure that your interpreter is certified, and there is a link to kind of learn more and figure that out as well. Best practices for a virtual meeting -- this is considered a webinar, a meeting would mean that everyone would have their video and audio capability to be on. Each person should say their name every time they begin speaking. Any individual not speaking should be on mute, and depending on the number of people in that meeting, have your video on or off. Moderator should manage turn taking in a meeting that has a bunch of people. And for people who are non-verbal, to give folks an option to share thoughts if others are doing so verbally. For example, allowing them to put their thoughts in the chat box and the moderator can read it out loud. ASL interpreter video should stay on all the time. And if it's a long meeting we suggest having a 10 minute break every hour or so. And so I was just double checking in the chat to see if there's anything that -- any questions. Nope, okay. So now I'm going to pass it off to Eric, who's going to talk about after the event.

>> Eric Ascher: So this is why -- I get to talk about why all these webinars haven't been available immediately after now, which is fun. So after the event, ensuring accessible videos for websites and social media. The importance of captions, as we said, a lot of people use captions and 41 percent of videos are incomprehensible without the sound. Eighty percent of viewers react negatively to videos playing automatically with sound, and so many social media outlets will auto play videos on silent now. And so basically captions will allow people to enjoy your event, and it makes a big difference for social media. Subtitles versus captions. So there is a distinction. Subtitles only reflect what is being spoken. Captions, which is what we try to do, go a step further by also including non-spoken information, like laughter, applause, music. Hopefully you can't hear the construction going outside my apartment, but if we could, I would include that as well, as well as environmental sounds. Open captions are always visible. Eighty-five percent of the Facebook videos are watched without sound and ninety-two percent of mobile users watch video with sound off, so we recommend including open captions on most videos. And we've been doing that all of our webinars for past year plus. And closed captions are different because they can be turned on or off via software. So you can choose to see them or choose not to see them, but we do open captions because they're the most accessible. And so how do you add captions to your videos? As I'll say later, you can pay someone to do it, but you can also do it yourself pretty easily. YouTube has a caption editor and it's free, so you upload your video to YouTube -- give it a couple hours and it will create a rough transcript automatically. And granted, the speakers will not be identified, certain words won't be accurate, no punctuation, there won't be any capitalization, lots of things will be wrong. Some people call these "craptions" instead of captions. And so, but the good news is you don't have to keep them as "craptions," you can edit them and make them captions. And so you can fix all the problems and then download the file. You don't even have to make the video public on YouTube, if you don't want your video on YouTube as the final destination, you can edit it on YouTube and then download the SRT file, and then upload it to Vimeo, Facebook, anywhere else. So all of this is -- YouTube has a great support document that we link to in this PowerPoint, it has all the information you need on how to do all this, but it's pretty easy, and it -- if you've ever used a text editor, it's pretty self-explanatory, so. And a lot of this information, plus a lot more is in our "ensuring virtual events are accessible for all" toolkit, which is linked to at the bottom of the slide. And we put that together in the middle of the pandemic and it was really helpful I think. So, question to consider. If we can make one change today in order to ensure greater accessibility for everyone, what would you recommend that we do with in-person events, and online and virtual events? And I'm gonna let you all put that in the chat box, the link for toolkit is not in the chat. One second, let me just put that in, and that's good, so a note on hybrid events, let me turn it back to Lauren.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: So before we get to hybrid events, someone did bring up sensory friendly events, and I realized I didn't talk about that, and I apologize. And we also had a question of what does sensory friendly mean? So I just wanted to share that oftentimes, sensory friendly is used when talking about performances. Like, different theaters will have a sensory friendly performance where it will be lower audio, for example, it will be, you won't have any loud crashes or bangs, you might not have the the fog going, or the smoke and such. And it is, you often will hear it in relation to performances for people who are autistic to attend, but people with other disabilities often are looking for sensory friendly performances as well. And then how does that relate to doing events? If you're doing a virtual event and you're going to be sharing anything where there might be some sort of loud noise, maybe a video or something, making sure to give people a heads up so they're aware that that might be happening. Talking about a live event, one very simple solution that you can do is have something called a quiet room. And so if the event is a larger event and there might be a lot of networking, that could become a sensory overload for individuals. So I suggest having a, you know, side room where people can go to that room just to take a little bit of a break and kind of give themselves an internal reset. And so a quiet room is helpful for all and such, and so wanted to make sure that we addressed that since I saw it and then I skipped over it during the last section. So hybrid events, this is where a lot of people are kind of moving toward. I'm speaking at a journalism conference this fall, and the way that they're doing it is they are having a short two-day in-person conference, followed by a week-long virtual conference, and they're kind of gearing their in-person part to the leaders and then the virtual one to kind of everyone in the community. And so, and some of the in-person events will be recorded and then shared later during the virtual event, others, they're going to ask folks to kind of redo -- basically do their presentation once live, and then do it their presentation again for the camera and so that way there can be -- that way people who are attending the virtual conference can have access to all the material that was given during the live conference. But then there will be even more content at the virtual conference, because it'll be over a week versus just kind of the two days in person. So that is one model when thinking about how to do a hybrid event where you actually have, kind of, two back-to-back events, and then things that are done live can be shared virtually with everyone afterwards. If you're going to do it all at once, all together, a true hybrid event, so if you're live streaming an in-person event, think about what's in that video frame. For example, where is the ASL interpreter? Are they in the frame or are they just outside the frame? Are you going to be doing different cuts? Are you going to have three or four cameras at your event, and so maybe the one straightforward has the ASL interpreter in frame, but the other is from the side, for example, may not. So you maybe want to think about a picture in picture, where you're going to have the ASL interpreter always kind of up on the screen in some fashion. And then, but that all goes back to kind of planning at the very beginning. of how you're going to ensure full accessibility. We talked about captions before. You know, CART can be live at the event on a screen, and also running across a Zoom screen for people watching virtually, and/or available via a link that people can open up in a web browser for them to be able to see a running live transcript. So you have lots and lots of options, and oftentimes it's just the one person doing one thing that can then become available on all these different platforms. And so, and as I already mentioned an in-person conference followed by a virtual conference with accessible recordings, and that's what's kind of nice there, where Eric was talking about ensuring accessibility of content, this webinar included, after the fact is that if you did some in-person events and then share the video afterwards for a virtual conference, you would have the time to really ensure that everything is fully accessible for everyone that's watching it.

>> Eric Ascher: And now, I'm going to do my best impression of Matan, and give the speech that he gives at every one of these webinars, which is you have a chance right now, there are some people watching us right now on Facebook and on Zoom, we are here to answer your questions. So if you have any questions for us, please put them in the Q&A box or in the chat box, and we're here to help, so we want to help you, we want to teach you how to make these events accessible.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: So we have a question, Eric, that's from an anonymous. How could a person with sensory sensitivity prepare themselves to be part of an event if they know there will be loud sounds?

>> Eric Ascher: Um, I'm not the best person to answer this because I'm still working on this myself honestly, but I'm one of those people who does not like loud noises at events and things. So I don't really have the answer to this question. But I do know that it is always better to know ahead of time than to be surprised last second, for certain people. And so if I know when the noise is happening, I can leave and go to the bathroom and come back. I can do -- there are lots of things I could do, and so basically, knowledge makes a big difference, that's what I'll say about that.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: As event organizers, sharing it up front so you can be aware, because honestly, you may choose that you're not going to go to that event because you don't want to put yourself in that situation. But as Eric noted, having, knowing, when it is is vitally important, because you could go and then leave and then come back. And having that quiet room then becomes super important for you as event organizers, because then people can leave that room -- leave and go into that quiet room for a period of time, and then come back afterwards, and you can even have someone designated, you know of a high school volunteer to be able to be like, all right, you know, that part of the performance is over, come on back, it's good now. And so you can make it very easy for people to be able to go in and out and that is a very simple thing that you could that you could offer.

>> Eric Ascher: I'm very happy to see we're getting more questions. That's good! Tips for how a venue can become more accessible. What equipment and signs should a venue have for guest at these events? Obviously -- I'm gonna answer some of this and then I'm gonna let Lauren fill in the gaps. So make sure that there's a -- obviously an event is not accessible if the venue is not accessible, if there's stairs, and no ramps, no elevators, that's obviously, that's the obvious stuff. We've tried to have events, like, I can tell a personal story. We've had an event --we've tried to have another New York City a while ago, and we called the restaurant and we asked, "is this going -- is this venue accessible?" And they said yes. And then we asked, "is the bathroom accessible?" And they said no. And they said there's just one stair. I'm like, that doesn't -- that's not accessible then, is it? And so basically, just double check is the big thing. Make sure that -- and then make sure that you're hosting it, your event in an accessible venue that's built for the ADA, and I'll let Lauren fill that in because that was not a great answer.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: Sure, and so we -- also, because you were talking about signs, one thing to really avoid is putting up a sign when something isn't actually accessible. Because we have seen people be like, "oh I'll just solve it, I'll put up a sign saying it is," but it doesn't fix the actual issue. You may have one accessible bathroom in your synagogue, for example. You may have just one pathway that does not have stairs. And so it would be important to have signs and say accessible bathroom, and an arrow, and so people know that maybe that the closest bathroom to where the event space is being held may not be accessible, but there is another one around the corner. And so to put up those signs to tell people how to get to it. My synagogue right now, most of the building is accessible, but to get into the school building, there are stairs. And so the only way to kind of get from the main synagogue building to the school building is to go outside and then come back in again. So if you were having an event where people would be going from one area to the other, it would be important ahead of time, or maybe have like a few pieces of paper with a map printed out. And so if you see someone that -- you know, you could, A, give it to people that visibly, you know, use a wheelchair and then, B, have several on the sign-in table and so people could see it there, because you may not know. Someone may have a nonvisible disability where they are unable to do stairs. And so there are a lot of different ways that you can kind of figure things out that aren't infrastructure things. So let's see, we're getting a bunch more questions in, we love it. I'll read the next one. How can people encourage organizations to continue offering online services and events as in-person things start to happen again? I think a lot of people think, since COVID is getting better, they don't need to offer online events anymore, even though it's been so much more inclusive. This is a huge thing here at RespectAbility. And so even prior to the pandemic we were doing a lot of events like this, because we understand that disabled individuals cannot necessarily just get up and go anywhere they want. And so having virtual events is so much more accessible. People can do it from home and they don't have to worry about traveling somewhere. And I think it's vitally important to remember that, how many more folks have been able to participate in your events this past year even though they might not have been the exact type of events you wanted? Like, we used to have an event on Capitol Hill every year, and every summer. It was our annual big event, and last summer we did not do it. We ended up doing it online. And the in-person event -- in Washington, DC, we could have maybe 100 or 200 people attend because there are space constraints, and then also people -- to travel is not easy. When we did it virtually, we had more than 10,000 people participate, either live or watching the recording within one week. So think about it, of how many more people that you can reach. So if you're going to return to an in-person event, think about recording it, think about having people being able to watch it afterwards, and think about ways that if people --because COVID's not over, you know, we would love for it to be over, but -- and especially for folks who are immunocompromised, it may not be safe for them to attend your in-person events yet. And so think about ways where, if you're gonna have a speaker and then networking opportunities, where people can live stream the speaker and then have a small networking room where you have someone facilitate that in a Zoom room for the folks that are watching it virtually, so they don't miss out on those networking opportunities as well. Eric anything you want to add to that one?

>> Eric Ascher: I just want to say the hybrid events are the answer here. I feel like the idea of, I think we've, the future has to be the ability to have in-person events with a virtual component so that we don't leave anyone out, because I feel like there are so many benefits of virtual events and there are also things we don't want to lose from in-person events, and so the hybrid events are the future, I think, so that's all. I'll just stress that point and I'll let you pick the next question you want to answer.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: Sure, we'll just go in order. This is from another person who's anonymous. I would like to arrange ASL interpretation for all major programs my team develops, regardless of whether someone has reached out to request the accommodation. However I am concerned that my boss won't be receptive to the cost this adds to our budget. What is your advice? Should I hold firm, am I trying to do too much by arranging ASL when it's not required by an attendee? So, two things there. If you're recording this event or if it's a virtual event, you might not know if someone needs it, because you're then going to put the video up, and then by having the ASL interpreter in that video, it means that more people can watch and participate, and be brought in to learn about your organization and the programs that you do. So if you are a membership organization, you can use that as leverage of say, you're going to pull more members in, and then in terms of more brand recognition. If you're going to have ASL interpreters and no-one requested it, it is really, really important to advertise that you have ASL interpreters at your event, because I have to -- I've talked to so many individuals who are Deaf who have told me that when there's no way to request an accommodation, and it doesn't say that there's going to be an ASL interpreter, the assumption is that the organization would not be receptive to hiring one. And so, when one is not advertised, people assume, not only does one not exist but that the organization wouldn't get one if requested. And so if you're going to spend the money, you want to advertise it, you want to share it with groups in your community of folks who may be interested in taking advantage of that. And then I would take a look, depending on your budget, I would honestly take a look at all of your different programming and look at the size of your programming. And so, major, you know, annual events and things like that, 100 percent I think you should always have ASL interpreters. If you're having, you know, smaller events, book clubs, you know, various meetings, what you could do, if you don't have the budget for every single event, is push it out there that it is open and available by request. And then do your best to try to get people who are interested in the event to request it. Because most people are gonna say, all right it's requested, of course we're gonna get it. And so you could go that route of offering it and making it very clear that you are offering ASL interpreters, and that applies to kind of smaller organizations that don't have the budget to hire interpreters for every single event. And now, I must admit, RespectAbility, we're still a fairly small nonprofit. And so, but. it's something that we have prioritized in our line item budgets to ensure that we have ASL interpreters and captioners for every single event like this. So when you have your annual budgeting meeting, that's the best time to bring it up, and say all right, I'm adding a line item for ASL interpreters for my event, in the same way that I have to pay for room rental costs and food, and all these other things that your boss probably wouldn't balk at. So try and get it in at the beginning. So, Eric, I can pose the next question to you if you want.

>> Eric Ascher: Go ahead.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: This is another anonymous one: What can I do to make sure event spaces create these accessible features if they don't have them?

>> Eric Ascher: So that's a fun one, because I don't fully know the answer to that. I feel like definitely if you...

>> Lauren Appelbaum: You want me to take it?

>> Eric Ascher: Yeah, I'd like you to take it actually.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: So the idea, so I mean, there's always a legal space, but I'm not going to get into any legal things here, but you know, there are people who would go after event spaces if they're not accessible. You know, in terms of non-legal ways, is you know, the amount of money that people may spend in an event. That's very powerful. And so if you were planning some major events and said, hey I want to do this event but I can only do it if you're accessible, and, oh, by the way, I'm going to bring my friend who uses a wheelchair to your event space and we're going to do a walk through together before we sign that paperwork. And so then they'll know that they need to make sure that those, that everything is truly accessible. And they can't say oh yeah, it is, and there's actually one little step. So my colleague Matan, who is a lawyer, is gonna -- come on and address this question as well.

>> Matan Koch: Hello everyone, and I'm trying to get my camera on, there we go. Hello everyone. I don't really want to address the legal points specifically, because the legal process just takes too long. By the time you go through a legal process the event will be said and done. But what I do want to remind is that this webinar is appearing inside of our preparation series for lay leaders for organizations, and so the very notion of the series is that you're going to try to put yourself into positions of leadership, positions of planning. And when you're in a position of leadership or planning, you make it a part of the discussion from the moment you join your position of leadership, so that by the time there's a moment in time where you want to push for something big or something unusual that the organization hasn't done before, you've positioned yourself, right? It's not that you show up right as they're planning an event and say, why don't you have these five accessibility features, but if you've joined their committee or their board or you show up every week and say we should think about accessibility features, that's when those changes happen and that, frankly, is why we're running this whole series, is so that you, our audience, will put yourself in position to be able to have those types of discussions. And for those who haven't watched our Effective Advocacy From The Inside webinar that we did last week, they talk a lot about the strategies of gentle suasion that one uses from the inside of an organization to affect that, so now I'm gonna disappear again, but I just wanted to share that with you all. Thank you for letting me Zoom bomb, Lauren.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: [Laughs] Of course. So we have a related question to one before about how expensive are accommodations like an ASL interpreter, and are there any resources we can share. So I'm also putting this in response to the Q&A, but ASL interpreters often cost between 80 to 100 dollars per hour. If the event lasts more than one hour you will need to hire two ASL interpreters who will work as a team, alternating every 15 to 20 minutes. Live captioners cost around the same, about 80 to 100 per hour and such. And that may seem like a lot but when it means that you are able to pull in so many community members that want to participate in the events that you are helping to plan, it can make a huge difference. And you asked about resources -- yes, so I am putting my -- so Eric has put some resources in the chat that we have shared specifically for the entertainment industry. I'm also going to throw my email in the chat so if you want -- we work with a wonderful sign language company as well as a wonderful live captioning company, and I'd be more than glad to make an introduction to those companies for you to follow up with them directly. One other note on that, especially with ASL interpreters. If your event is topic specific, you're going to want to mention that when you're talking to a company. For example, we do a lot of events that are entertainment industry related and we always make sure that the people we're working with know that. It has come up before, you know, of people who may know various Jewish terms or Hebrew words, or things like that that you may want to talk to. But all of those things go into planning early and asking those questions. Okay, Are there any organizations that help with funding for interpreters and captioners? Unfortunately not. It's something that we've looked into and try to kind of help make happen, and so it is -- it's definitely something that would be great for that to exist. However, I do want to share that a lot of people who fund, who are just grant makers, are starting to care about accessibility in a really, really great way. And so if you are applying for a grant for a program or an event on behalf of your organization and you put in there that x percent of the budget is for things like ASL interpreters and captioners and explain why, and talk about how many people in your community can benefit from that, that could actually help your overall application which is really great, so to be thinking about in that way as well.

>> Eric Ascher: I'll just quickly add on that one that if you don't have a budget, which obviously the first goal is to get the budget. For virtual events, I mean in Zoom for example, you can and should always turn on the live captioning -- the automatic live captioning, if you can't afford to pay a captioner. It's better than nothing and it makes things a little bit more accessible. So a lot of it's about being in the right mindset and just knowing that there are things you can do to make things more accessible, a lot of them don't cost money, so I'll just add that.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: Excellent. All right, so we have: can someone with a disability request an event have a virtual component as a reasonable accommodation? I don't see why not, and so,

>> Eric Ascher: Definitely worth a shot.

>> Lauren Appelbaum: Yeah, and here's the thing when requesting accommodations, sometimes you might be talking to another lay leader, and they might not know about this topic at all. So if you are looking for help and you come with a solution, they're going to be very, very thankful. So if you say, hey, is there any way that someone at the event could bring their computer and like hop on Zoom, or bring their phone and hop on FaceTime with me, or something like that, and that's very tangible things that you can ask for, and so you can kind of do something like that, where you give them a potential solution for them to ask. What a reasonable accommodation is -- so a reasonable accommodation -- is something that someone would -- you know, if you came and said hey, I want this event that you've been planning, I want you to like change the date and the location and the caterer and all this, that wouldn't be considered reasonable. But asking someone to figure out how to potentially share it live, and if they can't share it live, maybe someone can record it and then they can send you the recording, so there are often ways. And the best thing to do is whether you are the one asking for the accommodation, or the one who is helping run an event and someone else asks you for an accommodation, this is -- just have a conversation, especially if someone's asking you the question. They probably know a lot about how to accommodate their own disability, so you can be very honest with them and share what your limitations are and say, do you have a solution? And they often will have a solution and be able to figure something out. So we didn't get a chance to answer every single question, but as I said, I put my email in the chat so you can feel free to follow up with Eric or myself if you have any other questions on this topic. We'd be very very glad to help you and/or connect you to folks that are local to you that could help you with your events and such. So I'm going to pass it back off to Eric, who's going to take us home.

>> Eric Ascher: Okay. We have three slides left in this series, so I'm very excited about these. If you've seen any of the previous webinars, you know what these slides are. First up, we have our National Disability Speakers Bureau: Jewish Division. If you're an organization and you want to have someone speak at your event, and you want training on accessibility or any disability related issue, we have plenty of speakers available and they'll be happy to help you. For more information on the Speaker's Bureau, Contact JakeS@RespectAbility.org, or visit RespectAbility.org/Speakers-Bureau. We also have a Jewish Inclusion Fellowship, for -- if you're one of the -- if you're out of college and/or you're a young leader with a disability who wants more experience working on these issues, we have a virtual fellowship program. I started out as a Fellow. Ideal for people who want to gain skills and contacts while making a positive difference for people with disabilities. And so do you know someone who fits this bill? Are you someone who fits the bill? Go to respectability.org/about-us/fellowship and learn more about how you can apply. And thank you for joining us. We have a link on this slide. As we've said several times throughout this series, every single one of the webinars in this series has been posted to that link there, or will be post that link there by the end of this week. And we want this to be like an evergreen resource for you, so please go back, please re-watch the webinars, please share them with your friends, share them with everyone and we want people to get eyes on these because this can be a really big resource for a lot of people.