

# How to make your residency more accessible

## Planning and preparation

- If your residency has an overall strategy or action plan, or a specific equality plan, include your values and goals to increase the diversity of the artists and to make your residency more accessible.
- Break down your goals into action points and set a schedule for your work. This way you can also work on the accessibility of your residency in moments when no disabled artist or artist who is a Sign Language user is working at your residency.
- You can access useful material to support your planning work on the websites for the Culture for All Service and for Finland's Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, for instance.

## Spaces

- Evaluate how accessible your residency premises are. You can book an assessment from a specialist (from Invalidiliitto, the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, for example, provides a list of trained individuals offering access audits). You can also make a self-assessment by taking photos of your premises and measuring pathways and possible thresholds, steepness and differences in height, and the dimensions of bathrooms. As a reference, you can find [the self-assessment on the accessibility of the Viippola residency premises, compiled by the Aine Art Museum staff \(PDF on the City of Tornio's website in Finnish\)](#).
- Evaluate how the accessibility of your spaces could be improved through adjustments, reparations, or with additional equipment. [Tip: checklist for accessible living spaces by the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities \(PDF in Finnish\)](#), also available in [Word-format: checklist for accessible living spaces \(Word in Finnish\)](#).
- Provide information about your accessibility in your communication material.

## Budgeting

Make a budget for accessibility solutions. Be prepared to cover at least the following costs, depending on the situation.



- Equipment to enhance the residency's accessibility (e.g. ramps, support rails, induction loops).
- While public transport is often accessible, be prepared to provide disabled artists working at your residency with an accessible taxi from time to time.
- Travel costs for an accompanying assistant or interpreter, if such costs are not covered as a social service of the artist's domicile.
- Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, pays for work-related interpretation for people who are Sign Language users. There are, however, availability issues with Kela's services. A residency host can also actively prepare to pay for part of the required interpretations.
- Possible additional veterinary expenses related to the travel of an assistance dog (does not apply to artists travelling within Finland).
- Developing accessibility: e.g. accessibility assessment of the website, overall access audit, fees of experience specialists.

## **Website and communications**

- Ensure that your website is accessible. The best way to check this is by requesting an accessibility assessment through a specialist.
- Make sure that the visual design of your website and all communication material is as accessible as possible. See, for instance, [the guidelines of clear communication by the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired \(in Finnish\)](#).
- Communicate in different languages. When announcing an open call, do this in as many languages as possible, e.g. Finnish, Easy Finnish, Swedish, Easy Swedish, English, Finnish Sign Language and/or Finland-Swedish Sign Language.
- Always aim at easily understandable language in your communication. [Tip: check the Finnish Centre for Easy Language's tips on using Easy language.](#)
- When announcing an open call, provide information about the accessibility of the premises of your residency as well as other accessibility. Use text and symbols to communicate this on your website. Provide information about accessibility of your residency premises and other accessibility using text and images on your website, whenever announ-



cing an open call. We encourage you to also list your residency's accessibility on the Finnish Artist Residency Network's website. Communicate also openly when lacking accessibility.

## **Applying for residencies**

- In your open call, explain the accessibility situation of your residency. Inform potential applicants what kind of support is available. You can also specifically encourage disabled artists and artists who are Sign Language users to apply.
- In case you use an application form, make sure that the form is accessible. You can find many examples on how to do this, for instance: Papunet's guidelines on how to design clear forms (in Finnish). The best way to ensure a form's accessibility is to request an accessibility assessment from a specialist.
- Consider all possible alternatives of sending an application, or its attachments. As some examples, a video or sound file option, or, indeed, an interview all widen the range of possibilities for applicants.
- Consider if you are able to offer support to people compiling an application. One option is to appoint a contact person with a certain number of hours to help applicants.
- Collaborate with different organisations in order to reach out to disabled artists and artists who are Sign Language users when announcing your call.
- Consider how the diversity of artists could be taken into account in the selection process. Please remember this also in the case of invitation-only calls. Positive action can facilitate a residency period also for those artists who have been underrepresented in residency programmes. Putting more emphasis on the appeal of the working plan at

hand over previous merits can facilitate residency periods for new talents. When selecting artists, you can also turn to specialists who understand diversity in the arts field.

## **Artist needs**

- Disabled artists and artists who are Sign Language users might need more time and energy to arrange residency stays, especially outside their hometown. Consider how a residency host could support artists in their arrangements.



- Encourage artists to express their accessibility needs. Important aspects include fostering communication on accessibility and individual needs, a solution-driven attitude, and a safe atmosphere.
- Possible support for artists may relate to issues such as mobility around the locality where the residency is situated, meals and eating, the everyday practicalities of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health support, or occasional assistance during a stay. Feel inspired to develop together the most fitting individual, even creative solutions.
- When a Sign Language interpreter is needed for meetings and other work situations, offer to share the responsibility for the booking with the artist needing the service. In the case of Kela-covered interpretations, the residency host can also make interpreter bookings using a power of attorney. This might make it easier for the artist to focus on their residency work.
- Make sure that there is accommodation for a possible assistant or interpreter.
- A possible assistance dog must be able to accompany its handler in the residency (the relevant law states that an assistance dog must be able to follow its handler everywhere).
- Collect feedback about accessibility from artists after their residency stay.

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