

ADDRESSING SOCIAL BARRIERS

Honoring history and moving forward. Because so many places have historically been unwelcome or inaccessible to people with disabilities, the social barriers to access are often just as powerful deterrents as the physical barriers. But by directly addressing these barriers through authentic, equitable community engagement, you can help disability communities overcome the social barriers and feel truly welcome on public lands.

- 4. Invite people with disabilities into your space.** A welcoming invite can make all the difference for some people. It can be hard to feel welcome or supported in lots of public spaces when experiencing a physical disability, as much of society still treats disability as a burden. By extending an invite and offering reassurance, you can build a bridge to these people and make them feel included before they even arrive. Consider discounts to help with financial barriers.
- 5. Make photos and detailed information easy to access on a variety of platforms.** Lots of sites and features labeled as "ADA Accessible" simply aren't accessible for everyone, so offering people a chance to learn about a space in several ways can help reassure them that they're able to access the places they want to visit. One of the most-used tools by people in wheelchairs is Google Streetview, which shows on-the-ground images of places so they can see what a place looks like for themselves before visiting. If your site doesn't have Street View images, consider taking lots of photos and posting them online in an easy-to-find spot with detailed descriptions.
- 6. Identify and communicate accessible transportation options.** Thinking experientially means thinking about how people get to your space. Check into your local public transportation options and see if they're accessible. Once you've identified what options are available, advertise them to the community.
- 7. Include accessibility in regular features instead of creating exclusively accessible options.** People with disabilities want to hike the same trails, see the same sights, and ski the same slopes as non-disabled people. Avoid creating spaces or experiences that are just for people with disabilities; instead, focus on making existing recreation opportunities inclusive.
- 8. Use signage to educate the non-disabled.** Some hiking and biking trails specifically prohibit motor vehicles or restrict use on the types of mobility devices that can be used. There have been instances of non-disabled people telling wheelchair users and hand-cyclists that their devices are prohibited on those trails. To avoid this, include information about handcycles, wheelchairs, and other adaptive equipment that's permitted on trails to let non-disabled recreators know that trails are usable with a mobility device.