



Virtual IDEA Data Meetings

MORE ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

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This brief provides additional guidance for accessible virtual meetings. Refer to our main guide, *Holding Accessible IDEA Data Meetings*, for general guidance.

Setting up the Virtual Meeting

Virtual meetings offer flexibility and can increase opportunities for participation; however, they also present unique accessibility challenges. Without careful planning, barriers such as inaccurate captions, inaccessible shared content, poor audio quality, or platform limitations can prevent some participants from fully engaging in discussions and decision-making activities.

The Platform

Choose a virtual meeting platform with accessibility features. Consider features such as:

- Real-time and/or automated captioning.
- Ability to spotlight or pin interpreters.
- Keyboard navigation support.
- Screen reader support.
- Accessible chat and polling features.

No matter which platform is chosen, ensure facilitators are familiar with its accessibility setting and features. Make sure to test screen sharing, audio and other accessibility features in advance.

Multiple Ways to Join

Participants should have more than one way to access the meeting. Options may include:

- Joining by phone.
- Joining by computer with audio and video.
- Joining by computer with audio only/video only.

Providing multiple options helps accommodate different technologies, internet connections, and accessibility needs.



During the Virtual Meeting

At the start of the meeting, orient attendees to key platform features, including how to access captions. Explain when and how participants can ask questions, provide comments, and report accessibility concerns.

Provide multiple ways for participants to engage, such as speaking, chat, polls or reactions. Read chat content aloud to support participants who cannot access it.

Supporting Keyboard-Only Access

Participants may navigate the meeting in different ways, so provide enough time and clear instructions for everyone to follow and participate. Keyboard-only and screen reader users may need additional time to respond to polls or chat prompts. When directing participants to buttons, links, or shared content, provide clear instructions that do not rely on visual cues or mouse actions alone.

Troubleshooting

Have plans in place for when things go wrong. Technology and accessibility issues can occur during any virtual meeting. Prepare backup options and address problems as quickly as possible.

Common issues and solutions include:

- **Live captions fail:** Switch to automated captions.
- **ALS interruption:** Use captions until service is restored.
- **Screen sharing disrupted:** Providing verbal descriptions.
- **Participant cannot access materials:** Share materials through an alternative method.
- **Audio difficulties:** Use alternative communication methods.