

**JFK Center-How to Prepare for Hosting an Intern with a Disability.**  
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(Your CART writer is standing by. The webinar will begin shortly.)

>> The broadcast is now starting. All attendees are in listen-only mode.

>> Hello everyone. And welcome. My name is Rachael Nease. I'm the coordinator for the EEI Internship Program here at the Kennedy Center. This is part of a monthly webinar series facilitated by the office of accessibility at the Kennedy Center, that focuses on topics of arts and disability and education.

I'll run you through a few administrative things related to the Go To Webinar service.

If you would like to view a live-stream captioning service, please follow the link and follow along.

Speaking of the attendee control panel, everyone should see this box on the right-hand side of your screen. If at any time you need to leave the webinar, you can click on the X in the upper right-hand corner. Please make sure you've selected telephone or mic and speakers, depending on how you are connected to today's webinar. This will allow you to hear us clearly, and allow us to hear you clearly if you choose to participate with a question at the end of today's session.

If so, please click on the raise hand button on the left hand side of the control panel. Please type your questions into the question box at the bottom of the control panel. Your questions will come directly to me and when we come to a break in Laura and Bethany's presentation, I can relay the questions to them.

If you're on the social media scene, please tag us with # VSAWebinar.

We don't mind later grams. I would also like to let you know after the webinar, we will send out a copy of the PowerPoint to all attendees, and a recording of the presentation will also be available.

Lastly, while I have your attention, I would like to introduce you to next month's webinar. Glenn McClure and Anne Rhodes will be speaking at the same time 3-4 p.m. eastern daylight time.

Today we have two presenters will be speaking about how to prepare for hosting an intern with a disability. The first is Bethany, a colleague here at the Kennedy Center. And we also are lucky to have Laura Savia. Ladies, I'll turn it over to you.

>> Thank you very much. We're excited to be here and to be talking about a subject near and dear to our hearts, hosting interns with disabilities.

We hope that this webinar will demystify the process of hosting an intern with a disability, and we're going to cover four key stages. Recruitment, interview and selection, preparation, and implementation.

Implementing students with disabilities into an art organization can have a profoundly positive impact. And we've seen this happen firsthand and we'll explain why this happens.

I work at Williamstown Theater Festival. That's where I am right now. And I run the Young Artist Program at Williams Town. We have 110 young artists in residence with us every summer. Actors and directors.

And within our apprenticeship program, where 70 young actors live with us for the entire summer, and work with us on crew as well as an acting opportunity. I've traditionally hosted 2-3 apprentices with disabilities in that program. And before my time at Williams Town, I ran the one at the Atlanta Theater Company. I'm experienced, but definitely not an expert on special education, but someone committed to inclusion in the arts.

I should note that I've only worked with apprentices with physical disabilities or impairments, which differs a little bit from Bethany. Bethany, do you want to give a little bit of background on your work.

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: Absolutely. As Laura mentioned, her experience was with individuals with physical disabilities. My experience can with non-residential, primarily administrative for those with intellectual disabilities. By combining the two experiences, you'll hear a variety of different ways of hosting an intern with a disability.

>> LAURA SAVIA: What we're going to tell you today is certainly not gospel. This is more of a case study of what two people have found over the years have worked really well. We're not experts. We're just examples of how anyone can create a vibrant, inclusive program within the educational structure of their institution.

So you'll have to find what's useful and use other points of our discussion as jumping off points for yourself and what can work within your organization. But we're excited to share with you today the philosophies and tips and tricks that have worked within our own work.

We wanted to start off by touching on why. Why are we all here. And why is it so important to host interns with disabilities?

And you probably have thought about this if you signed up for this webinar. But we believe when we look around in the culture of America, minorities of all kinds are underrepresented. Starting in the internship program where you can get artists involved in a young age can help reset that balance.

Also, hosting interns with disabilities in my work I have found keeps us nimble and open minded as arts administrators and leaders, period.

Having an intern with a different point of view can help you solve problems and keep an open atmosphere.

It also fosters a more inclusive and generous company. I've seen this every year. Having one or two apprentices out of 70 at our program renders a more generous and warm and inclusive company throughout the company. It makes them a better company.

It also brings about nuts and bolts accessibility improve that will benefit future patrons and future employees. Getting yourself up to speed will make sure that structural improvements are in place in the future. It's a big benefit to your entire organization.

And finally diverse perspectives yield better problem solving and more fertile creativity. Every time I'm met with a challenge, whether it's structural or cultural within my organization, because I've been prompted by someone with a special need, I found that cracking that problem in a non-traditional way actually opens me up to probably a better solution, and it breaks up the status quo.

I could go on and on. But these are the key reasons that have really brought us here today and have made us passionate about this topic.

One thing to point out is that even something as basic as the ADA definition of disability was something that I had just sort of learned on the go. So I thought we would just review it.

An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A person who perceives

having such impairment or is perceived by others as having an impairment.

It's important to remember that not all disabilities are physical. Just to admit to you as a fellow foreigner was something that I was never taught in my arts administration education, and it's something that I've had to teach myself.

No question is too small or too basic. No question is ever too small or basic. The nuts and bolts of working with people with disabilities is a lifelong process of learning. And we wanted to start at the basic place and show you something that we've learned along the way.

I think we have a poll question at this point. We're going to switch gears and invite you to answer this question. I'll read it aloud. You should see it displayed on your screen.

The question is what are you most hesitant about in hosting interns with disabilities?

And you can select all that apply. So one, ADA compliance.

Two, adjusting an existing program.

Three, creating a new program, which I know some of you are doing.

Four, a time and energy commitment.

Or five, finding appropriate for the intern's skill. So we invite you all to respond to the poll right now.

Okay, we have our result. It seems like the overwhelming majority of finding appropriate work for their skills. 84% replied that. 33% checked time and energy commitment.

20% checked adjusting an existing program.

And 7% checked ADA compliance as well as 7% for creating a new program.

So finding appropriate work for their skills is something I have also worried about and thought a great deal about. And we'll get into some of our experiences with that and some tips we have for that. And we'll keep that in mind as we go forward in this presentation.

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: As Laura mentioned earlier, we have divided up the core content into four stages. Recruitment, selection, presentation and implementation.

To give you a reference point, I'll first give you an overview of the experiential performance initiative.

The EEI program is designed to offer meaningful instructional and experiences to individuals with intellectual disabilities to six individuals each year.

The goals are to provide exposure to the performing arts, improve social skills, and provide opportunities --

The interns often have lunch almost every day together.

For our applicants, they must have a documented intellectual disability. They must be between the ages of 19 and 30. They must demonstrate an interest in the performing arts and be referred through a social service agency.

The interests vary depending on their placement.

And there's three different placements. Two with a document center and the gift shop. Is and the third placement is a split between two or three departments in the Kennedy Center. My office participates in the split placement.

Our EEI interns are also implemented into a larger internship program throughout the building. They develop individual goals and objectives, and complete midterm and final reviews and attend performances.

Pictured here is our most recent group intern Adrienne. She's working in the inventory section doing book inventory.

And we have a photo of two of our document center interns who were working on folding programs for millennium Stage performance.

Our program has been in existence for 10 years now, which definitely makes it easier to recruit new applicants.

Additionally they must be referred through a social service agency. At this point, there are many relationships with many agencies in this area that already specialize in that.

Additionally we belong to the greater Washington internship coalition, which has a list of internships for people with disabilities in the D.C. area. And our access office has made connections with some local secondary transition conferences.

And now Laura will tell us a little bit about how Williams Town does recruitment.

>> LAURA SAVIA: Yes. So at Williams Town, we have to be a little bit more scrappy, because our program is specifically focusing on apprentices with disabilities are relatively new. We've had to build a recruitment structure from the ground up, and I imagine a lot of you are in a similar situation.

Our apprentice program overall has been in place for over 40 years, so we've had a good applicant pool for that. But making it known that we are specifically offering a few spots to apprentices with disabilities, that has been more of a challenge.

In order to meet that challenge, we've done a few things. We've created an E-blast that we send to every educator and arts organization that we can find all across the country. We send an E-blast at the very beginning of our recruitment process back in December or January.

Letting them know, announcing, that we have apprenticeships or internships if they want to think of them that way, specifically earmarked for people with disabilities. And then we've asked for nominations or recommendations. We found that using nominations was a good way to get people, um, from just filing that E-blast in a folder, but get them to interact with it.

We found that a lot of these leaders know people, even if it's just one student with a disability in their community. And by creating a nomination program, that, we kept it very simple. They didn't have to write a letter on letter head. They were just able to simply nominate someone. That's how we started finding people from my program.

My computer is telling me I'm experiencing connection difficulties. Am I still okay Rachael.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: I can hear you.

>> LAURA SAVIA: Okay, great. I'm going to continue. We took all of our existing materials, our website, our E-brochure, our posting that we send to colleges to post for internship opportunities on their bulletin board. And we incorporated language about our VSA program. Our internship for apprentices with disabilities into that material.

You don't necessarily have to reinvent the wheel. You just need to brand your new aspect of your program into the existing material.

We also made it really easy for applicant to self-identify. If you were a young actor interested in applying and you clicked through to our application page, you would see in bold an announcement that we had scholarships specifically dedicated to people with disabilities.

And in programs where there aren't scholarships, you could just really stress that you're looking for a diverse group of people. And we made it easy for them to self-identify as having a disability in the application itself.

And finally, Bethany touched on this, it's really important to utilize local organizations.

In our case, the Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts is a New York state organization that catalogs actors with disabilities and other aspects in terms of diversity.

Because our office is in New York, in the recruitment phase, we made a relationship with them. So reaching out to your organizations who have relationships with young artists or young people with disabilities, is crucial.

>> Great. Moving on this is our interview and selection program. You'll move into the interview selection phase of the process. At the Kennedy Center, we use a group interview rather than

one on one for our applicants. Prior to that, they receive a packet of resumes for all the applicant to review in advance. And it's a great time to identify which applicants have skill sets for our specific work.

The group includes all applicants who are qualified and the supervisors for that placement.

The applicant that was referred was also accompanied by the interns, but they are not to speak during the interview.

What happens, the accessibility office asks them to introduce themselves and then asks a few questions. The supervisors then have the opportunity to ask questions that apply specifically to their position.

After general questions have been asked, the group breaks up so the individual applicants have the chance to speak with the supervisors directly.

One of the things we really make sure we do during that time when we're asking questions is to ask open-ended questions.

Things like "Do you prefer working alone on a project or with other people?" Or "Do you have any experience in an office setting, and if so what"?

It gives a chance for all applicants who wanted to ask a question to do so.

After the interview, the supervisors submit their top three picks to the accessibility staff. And they review them and then see which three interns are offered the position.

The accessibility office then takes care of all the paperwork involved. Contacts, W9 forms, contact information, badge access forms, everything.

If you haven't caught on yet, the VSA and the accessibility center at the center is fabulous.

You shouldn't try to arrange everything for the internship by yourself. Use the people around you. Your HR management, your business office or a company lawyer. Consult them for their expertise and then share the responsibility.

One of the most important things that I have learned in my time as a supervisor for the EEI internship program is to be flexible.

We find that, you know, the interviews give you a great general idea of whether the applicants will be a good fit as an intern. But it's really important to know how they will perform with general tasks before they begin the internship. We tend to have a general plan in mind. We set goals with our interns each semester, which help us and them have an idea of what they would like to learn, what skills they would like to improve, and also it gives us a way to measure their accomplishment at the end of the internship.

So we have some standard work that most of our interns, simply like filing with mailers. We try our best to give them that experience.

We had one intern who expressed interest in learning our phone system. We taught her our standard greeting and how to transfer calls and how to answer basic questions.

Another past intern, Jessica, loved dance performances and wanted to tackle a research project. She developed a list and helped send out a targeted mailer to the contacts that she specifically researched.

And Andrian wanted to improve his typing and Excel skills, so we developed ways for him to improve that.

Also, know that each intern's skills will vary. Some will need to work alongside someone with consistent guidance, while others can work independently.

Instead of giving verbal directions, write them down if that's easier for them to use instead.

And finally, one of the most important is to include your interns in the regular office culture. Whether it's your usual meetings with senior staff about work-related things, or social conversations with coworkers. Get to know them. They are part of your team, even if only for a very short while.

Pictured here again is our most recent intern Adrian. He is showing off his paychecks.

This is in my office.

>> LAURA SAVIA: We have another poll question we would like to hear from you now.

If you were to host an intern with a disability, what would the position most likely be? You have five choices.

Actor/creative.

Two, administrative.

Three, technical.

Four, combination of the above.

Five, other.

So we invite you to answer what position this would most likely be right now.

Okay, so we have our results. So it looks like in response to if you were to host an intern with a disability what would the position most likely be.

60% of you responded administrative. 27% responded combination of the above. 7% responded actor/creative. 7% responded other. And nobody responded technical.

So we will try to keep this in mind knowing that there's a big administrative focus. And of course if you have questions that pertain to your specific response, you're working specifically with actors or specifically with another department, you can absolutely ask those questions later on.

So right now we're going to move into page three. Preparation.

This is a really big step for me. This is where a lot of my work, with all interns, but specifically interns with a disability comes into play.

And I'm guessing a lot of you in education and running internship programs know what I'm talking about.

There are a few core concepts in the preparation stage that has made a big difference with me since I've gotten a hold of them.

I treat the intern or the parent, if it's a young person or a minor, I treat that young person as the expert. I learned that no amount of preparation or research will prepare for the nuance of every single intern with special needs for the situation.

I really turn to the intern or to their parent early on once I made the hire. And I ask them, you educate me, you're the expert. You spent a lifetime articulating what your needs are. Tell me what you need.

In the cases where I made assumptions, oh, this person is probably going to need a special vehicle. Or this person is going to need such and such kind of facility, I've usually been wrong. It's a mistake to liken their needs to an incoming person. Every person is different.

Deputizing that intern or the parents and say work with me on this. Educate me. And tell me what your needs are. Not being afraid to ask big questions, ask little questions, and to ask dumb questions.

That's the best way to do it. They'll probably end up teaching you things you never knew.

And another thing that was sort of scary for me when I first started doing this was finding the right language. I think that in the age of overpolitical correctness, it can be really daunting to discuss disabilities for the first time.

And you just have to acknowledge that there's no way you'll be an expert over night. You just

have to listen, ask questions, use common sense and problem solving.

Ask the person their preferred language when referring to a specific disability. And overall just make sure you find language that feels comfortable for you to describe both the limitations and the strengths of your program. And to communicate with other department heads and other educators and the interns themselves.

You can't hold back just because you don't know exactly how to describe something.

No one expect you to be an expert, you just have to jump in.

A third tenant that has become really important to me is budgeting time and money when I'm preparing to host interns with a disability.

So budgeting money is a little bit more obvious perhaps. But sometimes when I'm hosting an apprentice with a physical disability, there can be actual infrastructure changes or preparations I need to make in terms of logistics.

And that can cost money.

For example, this year I have a rental vehicle dedicated to the transportation. The day-to-day transportation of two of our apprentices. One who uses a wheelchair and one who uses a walker.

I also had to install hand rails in the stalls in a specific bathroom one year.

If I can secure \$1,000 in my department's budget ahead of time, even before I made my hires, just for this structural implementation, it's much easier to have that money in place than deal with the stress of "Oh my gosh, they're coming, and I just realized I have to get a car." It's better if you already have the money in place.

I have the luxury of a boss that's very supportive. And if you do, too, I recommend setting aside a little bit. So you won't have the additional stress.

I also budget extra time. And I think that's even more important than the money.

Every timetable I make for my general recruitment at Williams Town, I add about a month to it. Back up a month to start the same task when I'm thinking about recruiting interns with a disability.

The E-blast that goes out and asks specifically for people to nominate a person with a disability. That E-blast goes out a month, maybe even two months, before our general recruitment e-blast. I try to contact the interns that are coming up to Williams Town about a month before their peers just in case a vehicle is necessary or if we need to make accommodations if an aide needs to be there. So we're working way ahead of time.

And the third concept is liability. Not something I learned at theater school.

But depending on the type of organization or host organization, you may to look at your company's liability. For example, at Williams Town Theater Festival, our landlord is Williams College. Now everything I do has to be run up the flagpole of not just our liability, but also of the college.

That was something I never expected, but when I've been drafting letters of agreement for students with disabilities, they've requested to show those to their lawyers, just to make sure we were totally covered.

So taking a moment to find out from your HR person or find out from your company's lawyer or the landlord, their lawyer, what needs they have, it will serve you very, very well. You don't have to become a lawyer yourself. You do have to ask a lot of questions and make sure you check off the box of liability.

So that's it for stage three. Stage four is the fun part. The implementation. So stage four is really broken down into four categories. Transportation, accommodation, communication, and then the sort of daily supporting and maintaining of that program or that intern.

In terms of transportation, this is a big one for me since I work with apprentices with physical disabilities and often mobility issues. And also because I'm in a residential internship program. Meaning all of the apprentices live on this college campus with me and my staff the whole summer.

I'm in charge of a meal plan, getting them to and from of the campus. And Bethany is in more of an office setting where they're showing up 9-5.

It's important to go the extra mile literally with your students with disabilities. Find out what they're going to have to do in terms of transportation.

And give them a warm welcome.

We have someone coming to the festival on Thursday. And she uses a wheelchair. And she asked if there would be a ride from the Albany Airport. Normally we don't provide rides. But I changed this policy, because it's important to me that her first impression be one of warmth and support. So I'm having an intern go pick her up.

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: Since we do have our interns communicating to the Kennedy Center Monday-Friday for several hours, we've found that sometimes they need assistance with scheduling their rides through metro access. Something as simple as offering your assistance if they need help with metro rides, just that little thing so they know their transportation is lined up has made a big difference.

>> LAURA SAVIA: Having a sense of the train schedule or the bus schedule, that can really put

someone at ease.

And once they're on your campus, the transportation becomes all about the details. The includes on the walkways, the road conditions, the ramps. I'm speaking of course of someone with a mobility issue or using a wheelchair or walker. Are there push buttons on the doors? What are the stair situations? Does someone have to go upstairs to get somewhere? Knowing the measurements of the doorways and the width of the hallways. Any kind of information that you can get at your fingertips will help you answer questions that will inevitably come up.

I think it's a really good idea to walk the campus or walk your facility with an eye for this. Just literally walk every path that the intern will be using. And do this again when the intern arrives. Go with them. Because you're in the going to be able to anticipate the problems that they'll encounter when they're walking that path.

So just combing the campus or the facility in that way has helped me avoid a lot of surprises down the line.

I want to move onto accommodations. This is a big one for me, again, since people are sleeping here, living here, eating here. If that is the case for you, you want to ask the intern really early on once you've hired them what their needs are in terms of housing and restrooms. And if they have questions, get them answered.

I've worked closely with Williams College to get ground plans and measurements. And answer questions about their old buildings and which ones are going to be the most accessible.

If I can't get a ground plan, I'll go with my iPhone and e-mail a picture. This is the distance from your bathroom to your dorm room. Is this accessible? If it's not, we'll figure out a way to make it accessible.

Or sometimes I'll send them a ground plan and say which one is best for you.

If separate housing is required because the main housing situation is not accessible, it's important not to send that intern alone into a different dorm. But to put six or seven apprentices or interns with them. And I'm speaking about housing, which may not apply to you. But that's a good rule in general.

You want to give them as much of an equal experience as possible.

If an intern needs to travel by car, when everyone else is walking, don't send them alone in that car. Send them with other interns. Same thing with housing and any activity that has to be modified.

You also want to pay attention to evacuation plans, as I know we all do.

The specific thing to pay attention to is the evacuation plan for someone who uses a wheelchair or a walker or whatever the case might be.

The next in stage four is communication. Another big one.

So communicating with the intern or their parents is something we've talked about. You want to keep that open line of communication all semester long.

It's also important to communicate with your fellow staffers and other department heads.

You want to be talking to every single administrator or educator who will be responsible for this intern. They want to be told in advance that they'll be overseeing an intern with a disability.

The earlier the better. I have a couple of examples of this. We had a movement teacher here at Williams Town. And I forgot to tell her that you were going to be working with someone in a walker.

She said if you told me a couple days in advance, I could have created something that would work for everyone. But I didn't have that information, so I had to go on the flight.

My apprentices are working in the seam shop, a lot of manual labor, painting, building sets. I went to the department heads a week before the apprentices' arrival. We're going to have somebody in the wheelchair and somebody in the walker. I want you to be thinking now about what jobs in lighting and paint where they can work.

Because when they get busy, they're going to say isn't there a desk job? But giving them that same experience. Maybe they can't go up on a ladder, but there's something around the lighting drafting. Or there's some kind of activity in the prep area that they can participate in, so when they go to watch that show come together in our theater festival, they can say "I worked on the lighting, just like my peers." Or I worked on paint, or costumes, just like my peers.

So inspire your colleague to think creatively in advance.

In terms of supporting and maintaining a good relationship, a productive one with the interns while they're there. It's important to have a point person for that intern and to create a schedule of checking in.

Do you want to do mid-term evaluations where they tell you how things are going for them and vice versa. You do you want to have a daily or weekly check-in where they know they're going to have a private, 15-minute conversation with that point person where they can let it all out and say what's working and what's not.

You have to make that decision based on you and based on the other members of your staff and based on the intern.

But letting them know that there's a point person and that timely check-ins are available has become really the foundation of how we maintain a good experience here at Williams Town for apprentices with disabilities.

So that's all I have for stage four. And if you have questions about that, we can come to that later.

This is just a fun little example of something I went through a month ago.

I'm about to have a wonderful apprentice named Brianna and she uses a wheelchair.

When I was deputizing her as an expert, I said to her over the phone, I said give me a top ten list of things moving through college or other arts camps you wish people would have known in advance.

I said just write it out for me. She only said it six.

One, restroom accessibility.

Two, make sure the entrances and doorways are accessible. Basic, but clearly hasn't always done well in other places for her.

Three, make sure the classroom space. An accessible table and enough room to move around the space.

Basic, but not something I would have thought about.

Four, since it's a theater internship, make sure the stage, dressing rooms and backstage is all accessible. It's easy to forget one of these.

Five, you've got to check out of the elevators or the lifts.

And if there aren't elevators or lifts because it's an old building, what's the creative solution?

Can the class meet outside or in an alternate space? Can it be done in a different way?

Different excluding the person, but always finding a creative solution.

Number six, something I never would have thought about, the dining hall. She said make sure there's room between the tables and the aisles for a wheelchair to get through. The dining halls are generally tight.

By knowing what her top ten list was in advance, not only did I make things better, but I also learned I can intern what has not gone well in the past. And make sure that I'm not pushing a button or repeating something that caused her stress in the past. And you see how simple it is. It wasn't awkward at all. She e-mailed me immediately back and I've been able to address all six points for her.

She knows when she arrives on Thursday at least these six things have been addressed.

That's just one little example of the open line of communication.

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: Laura and I came up with a few of our golden rules where if you're going to sum it up into a few main points, these are the most important things.

The intern or the parent is the expert. They will know best. Use open communication and defer to them.

Give the intern the same experience that their peers are having. Include the intern in activity. Don't isolate.

Third, flexibility is key. Plans are good to have, but be willing and ready to alter your plans when your intern begins and you get to know their skills and interests and accommodation needs.

Finally, don't work alone. Use your colleagues or other departments or legal team. It's important to not try to do everything yourself.

We've used a few additional resources. Some organizations that I've found that are great sources of information here. And that will be again in the PowerPoint that they e-mail out later on.

And secondly, the U.S. Equal Employment Commission, I used this specifically when I was educating myself about the EEI internship program here at the Kennedy Center. They have some great situational examples in here of how you should interact in different circumstances and I found that extremely, extremely helpful.

>> These are a couple pictures of two of the acting apprentices. She won a plum role, beating out a lot of other people.

And there's another picture of another person. Also got cast in Dracula. This is very rare for apprentices to be cast in a big production. But their performances were fantastic, and they were seen by over 5,000 people in this production. To me, it symbolizes the pinnacle, the reason we do the work we do. Trying to make our program as inclusive as possible. This director had a real vision for casting in the most inclusive way possible. And taking a disability and making it into, um, the most exciting part in some cases, of the performance.

So these actors are working actors in New York. They're both doing very well. We couldn't have been more proud of them last summer. I hope we have some more experience this year.  
>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: I'll leave you here with our contact information. Feel free to e-mail us with any questions you may have. And if we don't have the answers, we'll try to find the place that will have answers to you.

Thank you for joining us today. And we'll turn it over to Rachael so she can field any questions

you may have.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: Thank you ladies. That was some good practical advice on hosting an intern with a disability and really employing flexibility in doing so.

Let me pull up my screen as well.

We do have a few minutes before the end of our webinar. And we would invite you to ask any questions. We do have a few that have been typed in throughout our webinar performance. (Laughing) Here.

But I think I would like to ask you a question. Because I'm looking at the attendees here. And I know that quite a few people who are participating today are from large organizations that have pre-existing kind of all-purpose internships, large cohorts of people.

And they're trying to incorporate their own internship for interns with disabilities.

Can you speak to how well or give any tips about how you folded your interns with disabilities into kind of pre-existing larger programs? Either with practical advice or maybe in ways that you folded them in socially?

I know that's sometimes an issue when I'm working with my interns.

>> LAURA SAVIA: I can jump in. At Williamstown we work on creating a socially inclusive culture, as well as working productively. That's important here because everyone is living together.

And we make absolutely no distinction, as little distinction as possible, between an apprentice with a disability and those without.

And I do always pay special attention. I do keep an eye on some of the social patterns emerging as the summer goes on because hosting apprentices with a disability can sometimes put people in a certain category, no matter how hard you try.

For example, if two people have to take a vehicle every day instead of walking to a destination with their friends, they're probably going to form a bond.

And I've worked really hard when I've created the daily apprentice schedule to create a fresh schedule for all 70 apprentices every single day, I've worked hard to break up cliques to make sure that if I feel like the intern with a disability is being excluded socially, I'll keep an eye on that. I'll make sure to maybe put them on a smaller assignment with maybe only four other people where there's a stronger chance for conversation and bonding. Where they have to drive to a neighboring town and pick up some costumes.

I make sure I break up cliques actively. But basically if all goes well, we don't need to give that a ton of thought, because our program is so fast and furious that usually everybody is sort of

thrown into the mix all at once.

And you know, last year our two apprentices with disabilities thrived. They were not only tasked, as you saw, in those pictures. But they were also very popular and had great, strong bonds. And lasting bonds with other interns.

I don't know if that was a practical response, but that's sort of my experience with it.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: Great. I like that idea. Breaking up cliques actively.

I have a curve ball of a question for you. That was just typed in. And you can say uncle if you want if it's entirely out of your realm of experience.

The question is our internship program, which is actually an advisory council of young leaders with and without disabilities, will be conducted almost entirely online. What are the considerations I should be making in this situation?

>> LAURA SAVIA: Um. I don't know if I have any experience with a program that exists entirely online. Um. Just to make sure I'm understanding it, the group is, can you read it one more time?

>> RACHAEL NEASE: Sure. The question is our internship, which is actually an advisory council of young leaders with and without disabilities, will be conducted almost entirely online. What are the considerations I should be making in this situation?

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: One thing that comes to my mind, just thinking with training our interns and administrative tasks in the office is not to assume that they know exactly how to use whatever program or something else that may be second nature to you.

So maybe just following up earlier to make sure that they have all the tools that they need in order to be participating fully.

>> LAURA SAVIA: I think that sounds like an incredible program, but I don't feel like I'm qualified to speak.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: That's great. I think that was a good response from Bethany. And I know in working in this department, there are all kinds of concerns for accessibility that come up just with websites or online programs.

Sometimes it's as simple as thinking of the kind of text or the color of the font that you're using. Sometimes it's making sure that maybe someone with a visual impairment can use their screen reader as you're working.

But we may need to know more about that program. But we probably would. So send us some information.

I also have a question from Cecelia in Kentucky. I think you both touched on this.

She writes my organization is very keen on making sure our unpaid internship is an educational experience and does not involve just busy work.

How can I implement an internship program for individuals with disabilities that isn't just filing?

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: Sure I'm a former intern from the Kennedy Center myself. So I was part of the internship program along with EEI interns when I was going through it.

We do seminars with the different leaders and basically different leadership points within the building. So we had a seminar that was specifically about development. And you have the head of development teaching you about how they do development for the building. And the different percentages of income, where they come from. We also met with someone from the NSO who talks a little bit about symphony and how that side functions.

That seminar gave us a great viewpoint of not just the daily office work that you see a lot with internships. But it spoke to how the actual organization is run and gave great insight to how we could possibly be involved in that kind of organization in the future.

>> LAURA SAVIA: And something I'll just add, I like to, if it's a small enough group, I like to ask everybody for three goals or hopes from the internship. And to be as specific as possible. Sometimes it will be just be a conversation and it will be one-on-one or I'll ask them to write it down.

I had someone say I'm really interested in casting. So I made sure whenever there was a casting director on the premises, I connected them and made that instruction.

It could be things you wouldn't expect. Like Bethany said, someone wanted to improve their typing skills.

So knowing what the individual goals are will allow you to find educational moments or teaching moments that might have otherwise seemed like busywork.

While they're filing, say I know you had an interest in budgets, but the section that you're filing here is related to the budgets in such and such a way.

Making them the expert and then going from there has allowed me to have a lot of teaching moments when I didn't really expect them.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: Great. I have another question for you.

For smaller museums with limited staff and limited resources, would you suggest using museum volunteers. What are some things to be mindful of for volunteers supporting and managing

interns with disabilities?

>> LAURA SAVIA: That's a great question. Volunteers are any other new group of personnel who are going to be interacting with an apprentice with a disability. That's a time where you really need to double down on communication.

I think that it's hard to answer the question generally. But I do think that being aware of if there's a difference in status. If the volunteer is overseeing the intern. Just giving a heads up to someone who is going to be partnering with or overseeing an intern with a disability. Answering any questions. Or saying I don't know about that. Let me ask you if there's a preference.

Just advising them. There can be so many questions that arise in the moment.

So it's a little bit vague, but I think that's a great question because, um, any time you're bringing two groups together, I think you have to strike the right balance of giving a bunch of details, but also kind of letting that intern speak for him or herself and letting problems come up as they will.

I don't know. That's a little tricky, but nothing to worry about.

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: It is. And I'll just add onto that. We have three volunteers every semester. And we really like when the volunteers help out because they have really fun projects. So that's a way to kind of break up working with Excel every day. Having volunteers is a great way to make their experience more well-rounded.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: And I have one last question for you ladies from our friend at VSA Florida, Wendy.

She writes I'm getting ready to host an intern who is visually impaired at the VSA office in Tampa. Our work is primarily administrative. Any ideas for keeping this experience enriching?

>> BETHANY SPILHAUS: That is a great question. Again, I haven't had personal experience with hosting an intern with visual impairment. I don't know Laura if you had any experience on your side of things?

>> LAURA SAVIA: I actually don't oddly. I'm sorry to strike out on you Wendy. I don't have any experience with an intern with a visual impairment. I worked with someone with a hearing impairment. But, yeah, I'm not sure. I think I would want to point you toward some of those additional resources.

But again asking them and finding out really clearly in advance how that person likes to work best. I think that's a great question for that incoming intern. Just asking point-blank. Hey, I want to make sure this is a robust experience for you. Encouraging them to speak up if they are hitting a wall and to tell you in advance what works best and what would be the most exciting.

>> RACHAEL NEASE: Good practical advice of Laura's. Just ask. That's the way to have the

most enriching internship experience.

Ladies, I think we are out of time for today. So I will conclude our webinar there. I will let our participants know that there will be a survey that will pop up after you exit out of the attendee panel. And we greatly appreciate your thoughtful responses

With that, I will thank you for joining us. Laura and Bethany, I think you've given us some great advice and maybe led us to some great resources to consider fully.

If you have any questions or comments about this webinar or any in the past or future, please contact our webinar queen Lisa Damico.

Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Thanks so much.

(The webinar ended at 3:59 p.m. ET)