

Sample/template letters

(Sample letter to school or university facility manager)

Dear XXXXXXXXX:

I would like you to know how much I've enjoyed participating in the XXXXXXXX programs over the past several years. I have found great fulfillment in conducting the course that I teach, and I believe the "teachers" and students feel the same way.

There is one problem however that I want to bring to your attention as it can be rectified quite easily. The problem is that the hearing experience in the classroom for people with hearing loss is not good, making it challenging to get the full benefit of the classroom experience. This is my experience as well as the experience of any of our students that have a hearing handicap. And of course, if we don't hear properly, our cognition is impeded and that's the whole point of learning.

You may ask why not get hearing aids or better hearing aids. The fact is that as wonderful as hearing aids and cochlear implants are, they do not handle the two biggest hearing challenges, which are distance and ambient noise. And of course, that is exactly the experience in any classroom.

There are several solutions to this problem called assistive listening devices. The best one by far is a "hearing loop". You can get more information on it at <http://www.hearingloop.org/>. this is the solution that I recommend that XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX gets.

I would be happy to sit with you some time in the near future, hopefully in the

next two weeks, to discuss this situation and provide you with more information. I look forward to hearing back from you and fixing this one area that truly hinders my and anyone with hearing loss, learning experience.

Best regards,

XXXComplainant's name

(Sample letter to community auditorium manager)

Dear XXXXXXXXX:

I enjoyed chatting with you briefly about hearing accessibility and my personal problems with the way this is being addressed.

As I mentioned then, it's my view that XXXXXXXXXXXX as a community does not recognize the needs of hearing impaired residents in XXXXXXXXXXXX and our facilities violate ADA regulations, with respect to hearing challenged residents. I've also mentioned that I have previously been the victim of personal human rights violations, but have thus far not filed complaints.

Our auditorium, for example, does not have a sound system that is compatible with the current technology in hearing assistive devices and technologies, or with today's generation of hearing aids. This could be easily and inexpensively corrected with the simple installation of a hearing loop. Alternately, the use of FM or infrared technologies would make it possible for hearing impaired residents to understand business meeting proceedings, programs, music or any sound-dependent event held in the auditorium with the use of headsets owned either by individuals with hearing loss or offered by XXXXXXXXXXXX Association.

Failure to do either leaves us or the XXXXXXXXXXXX Association open to litigation resulting from anyone's individual complaint to the US Department of Justice which would consider the situation at XXXXXXXXXXXX a Code C violation of Federal ADA regulations.

I had previously provided copies of the Kennedy Center Report on best practices and describing such solutions to the previous Administrator and as far as I can tell, these guidelines were completely ignored.

I serve as an elected officer of the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey, a unit of the Hearing Loss Association of America. If we, as an organization, can be of assistance in correcting the lack of concern by the XXXXXXXXXXXX Association, we'd be pleased to offer our counsel or refer you to State or local sources that are freely available for XXXXXXXXXXXX's use and compliance.

Many thanks, and all best regards,

XXXXXXXXX Complainant's name

(Sample letter to a public museum manager)

Dear Mr. XXXXXXXXX,

As a New Jersey resident, I'm very proud of our XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX museum/facility. It's an amazing museum and I want to share my enthusiasm with you.

There is however one problem that takes away from my ability to enjoy the museum.... That is it is not fully accessible to me as a person with hearing loss and so to anyone of the 48 million Americans with hearing loss. I want to bring it directly to your attention so that you are aware of this issue and so that you can resolve the issue.

Background:

Fall of 2014

In the fall of 2014, XXXXXXXX and I met with museum employees to discuss accommodations for people with hearing loss. The personnel we met with were: XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX.

We explained that museums, as public venues, are required under Title III of the Americans With Disabilities Act to provide reasonable accommodation to people with hearing loss. We explained that, in particular, the museum should:

- Install accessibility at the information and ticket counters.
We suggested that hearing induction loops were best option. (See info on induction loops <http://www.hearingloop.org/>).
- Provide open captioning of video presentations in its exhibitions.
- Utilize self-guided audio tour devices that display text of the recorded information and/or transmit the recorded information to receivers with both headsets and neckloop.
- Install hearing induction loops and/or provide closed-captioning devices to make its two movie theaters accessible to people with hearing loss.

Further, literature explaining these types of access was given to the staff, along with information about the Museum Access Consortium (<http://museumaccessconsortium.org>) in nearby Manhattan, which describes itself as “an association that regularly hosts professional development workshops and offers a network of mutual support to help practitioners engage with disability advocates and people who have disabilities to learn about, implement, and strengthen best practices for access and inclusion in cultural facilities of all types throughout the New York metro area and beyond.”

Following our meeting I contacted the staff several times but received no return calls.

Follow up visit XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, 2016

We returned to the museum on XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, 2016 to see what, if any, improvements had been made in hearing accessibility. We visited exhibitions and observed facilities on all four floors of the Center. Our findings are as follows:

On the ground floor:

- No assistive listening at the security checkpoint.
- No assistive listening at the information counter.
- No assistive listening at the membership counter.
- No assistive listening at the main counter where tickets are sold.

On second floor:

We were offered tickets and audio wands, at added cost, to the museum’s special exhibit on XXXXXXXXXXXX. When asked if the wands for this exhibit included captions or an assistive listening option, staff said they did not know.

On the third and fourth floors:

- On-screen captions were provided for most, but not all, videos shown on monitors in the various exhibition areas. The captions we saw were well done.
- Staff advised us that IR or FM assistive listening systems were available in the movie Theater and the 3D Science Theater, but that the sound could be accessed only via ear pieces, and that no hearing aid-compatible devices, such as neck loops, were available.

In conclusion

The Intrepid Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC, and Museum of Modern Art in NYC already have such accessibility. I'm looking for a museum, especially the caliber of the XXXXXXXXXXXXX, to have that same accessibility if not more.

Let's schedule a meeting in the next few weeks, as I would be happy to discuss how you can make the museum accessible to people with hearing loss. I will try to contact you so that we can schedule a convenient time to meet. I look forward to meeting you.

Respectfully,

Name of complainant

(Sample letter to local community leader)

Dear XXXXXXXX:

I was happy to see that the Clubhouse audio visual system is on your published list of items finally being addressed for replacement or improvement.

You should be aware that, as a hearing impaired resident, when I sit in the front row of the auditorium during a live Board of Trustees meeting, I do not and cannot understand a word of what you or anyone else is saying. To me, it comes through like a foreign language.

At present, the only way I can understand Board meeting proceedings is to stay home and watch the meeting on TV, to which I have attached a Bluetooth system, which allows me to understand. But, that also prevents me from asking questions, or participating in any discussions pertaining to any of the issues at hand. That's a violation of my civil rights.

I am also unable to understand entertainment events during which the spoken words of a comedian, vocalist or other performer speaks from the stage.

You should be aware that this is a violation of the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA), and is also a violation of applicable NJ state law which requires you to make reasonable accommodation for persons with hearing disabilities.

The obvious solution would be to install a looping system. A looping system is simply a single piece of wire attached to the speaker system. When used by anyone with a hearing aid, the speaker sound is received directly in one's hearing aid, when their telecoil switch is turned on.

Almost four years ago, I wrote to the Administrator – but to date my letter has been ignored. My letter, sent in November of 2012, at a time when the Clubhouse auditorium was being renovated and the minor alteration of adding looping to the process could have been done as the lowest cost expense item of your total renovation. (If you'd like to see a copy of my earlier request, I'd be happy to provide a copy.) I've also attached some outside public information about looping.

If XXXXXXXXXXXX continues to ignore applicable laws for the handicapped, XXXXXXXXXXXX continues to invite litigation by anyone in the community who is similarly handicapped. (As you may know, 50% of all people over 70 have some degree of hearing loss, per Johns Hopkins study statistics.)

I am asking for your early attention and consideration as you make plans to modernize XXXXXXXXXXXX's internal audio system, as noted in the January 2016 issue of the XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Most cordially,

XXXXXXXXXXXXComplainant's name and contact information

Sample letter to film producer

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXX:

Congratulations on having produced and distributed "XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX." My wife and I recently saw the film in a theater. She very much enjoyed it, while I struggled to hear the dialogue owing to my severe-profound hearing loss and your company's failure to provide a closed-caption track.

After years of advocacy by our organization and groups representing the deaf, the requirement that all cinemas make closed-caption devices available to movie patrons is about to become law. And with the conversion to digital projection, closed-captioning systems have been installed by all major cinema organizations and caption-viewing devices are available at cinemas throughout the country.

Reliable research from Johns-Hopkins indicates that 48 million Americans suffer from measurable hearing loss. 55% of them are under age 65, and many, like me, cannot use assistive listening devices because of the severity of our hearing loss. By not providing closed-captioning, you deny

our ability to enjoy your productions such as “XXXXXXXXXXXXX.” (I assume that your release also did not have a descriptive audio track for people with blindness and vision loss.)

I gather that the financial challenges facing independent movie companies such as yours are daunting and that there is a cost to providing caption and descriptive audio tracks. However, I urge you to recognize the right of those with disabilities to equal enjoyment of the cinema experience and not to shut us out when the rest of your industry has come so far in affording us access.

I would appreciate your response to this request and would be glad to provide any additional information or assistance. My email address is: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXXX and my mailing address is XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Cordially,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

(Sample letter to investment counselor organization)

Dear XXXXXXXX,

Thank you for a wonderful day of conference talks and entertainment at Lincoln Center

One problem: I was unable to understand what was said by the speakers and entertainers – because I’m one of 48 million adults over 65 with hearing loss. One of every three seniors over 65, and one of every two over 75, has difficulty hearing. I suspect that means hundreds of your investors had difficulty hearing. Or perhaps they had previously been unable to hear and simply decided to stay home.

The recent conference was my second. And for the second time, I attempted to use the outmoded and poorly maintained assistive listening equipment made available by the Met. Most of us with severe-profound hearing loss (who wear hearing aids and/or cochlear implants) just cannot understand speech with such equipment. I tried to listen in the am. By afternoon, I gave up and left the auditorium until the wonderful concert by Sir Paul.

There is a relatively easy solution to this lack of hearing accessibility. Please consider it for next year: Add a large CART screen to display a live transcription of the remarks for us to read. This would also enable any people who are deaf to enjoy the proceedings as well. We can provide more information and recommend a CART operator, if desired.

My email address is XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXX and my phone number is XXXXXXXX.

Cordially,

Complainant’s name and address

Sample followup letter to investment counselors manager

Dear Mr. XXXXXXXX,

You may recall my letter of last November, copy attached, suggesting that you enable your investors with significant hearing loss or deafness to enjoy your Annual Investment Conference along with all others. In response, someone from your office indicated that this would be considered.

Having just received your email “save the date” notice for the 2015 event, I again suggest that XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX arrange for a large screen on the Met stage on which all spoken words throughout the morning and afternoon can be projected via live CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) for all to see and for those who are deaf or have hearing loss to read (a universe including one of every three people over age 65).

Several CART interpreters could work in shifts in the same way that court stenographers capture live courtroom dialogue. An added benefit is that you would also have a written transcript for subsequent reference use, as desired. And including a note about CART access in your invitation materials and announcing it at the start of the event would signal your organization’s strong sense of social responsibility, forward thinking and sensitivity to people with special needs.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance in this regard. My email address is XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXXXX and my phone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Cordially,

Complainant’s name

Sample letter to Graduate School Auditorium manager

Dear XXXXXX:

I am writing on behalf of the Hearing Loss Association of America to inquire about accessibility for people with hearing loss to GC Keynote Events open to the public, as required under the Americans With Disabilities Act. A member of our Chapter recently attended a GC Keynote lecture and brought the lack of hearing accommodation in XXXXXXXXXXXX Auditorium to our attention. Her email is attached.

From what XXXXXXXXXXXX was told and because there is no mention of hearing accessibility in XXXXXXXXXXXX Auditorium on the Graduate Center website or in printed materials, we believe you need to make your facility hearing accessible and provide appropriate signage and notices of such accommodation.

Please consider installing an induction loop in the auditorium to transmit sound wirelessly to telecoils in our hearing aids. Those without telecoils or hearing aids can listen to the induction loop signal with a receiver and headset. The many benefits of induction loops are described in the accompanying fact sheet.

Please have someone contact me if I can advise CUNY personnel about assistive listening technology and options. I am a graduate of HLAA and Gallaudet University's Hearing Assistive Technology Training Program and have consulted with a number of institutions and organizations on hearing accessibility. I can be reached by email, at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXX, or phone, at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Cordially,

Complainant's name