

Accessible Theatre Funding Resources

*VSA arts of Minnesota
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1. VSA arts of Minnesota offers matching funds (up to \$100 for each of two shows by a company during a year) for interpreter or audio describer costs. If a theatre offers reduced price tickets to users of this service, VSA will reimburse the theatre up to \$7 per ticket – to all interpreted or described performances during the year, not just the two for which we can assist in the interpreter/describer costs. Theatre organizations must apply for these reimbursement programs at least five weeks before the event in order for publicity to assist in attracting audiences. Forms are available from VSA arts of Minnesota, 612-332-3888, statewide 800-801-3883, or Fax 612-305-0132; jon@vsaartsmn.org.
2. The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council has an Access Guide to help nonprofit arts groups plan for activities like interpreted performances. It does not provide specific funding, but offers guidelines. MRAC's regular project assistance grants include a budget line item for Access. This encourages groups to plan in advance for accessibility costs. 651-645-0402. Other regional arts councils may offer similar programs and guides.
3. Lions Clubs often fund local accessible performances because of their vision-related service mission. For instance, the Anoka Lions Clubs fund occasional ASL-interpreted performances of the Lyric Arts Pocket Theatre. The Nine Mile Creek Theatre in Bloomington received \$2500 from their local Lions.
4. If you receive funding for special purposes like accessible performances, be sure to give credit in your publicity, playbills and announcements (e.g., ASL interpreting funded by the Anoka Lions Club).
5. Foundations or agencies that fund outreach to new audiences may consider partial funding of costs to provide audio description or American Sign Language interpreting if there is also a significant effort to find the people and service agencies in your area that could benefit from those services.
6. Group rates can be offered to special education students, deaf or blind clubs, residents of group homes, participants at developmental achievement centers, customers of ophthalmologists, ASL students, senior citizen centers, etc. to attend special performances that are ASL-interpreted or audio described. In such cases, a pre-show tactile tour for blind audience members or study guides can be helpful in preparing them for the show.
7. Medical clinics, hearing aid companies, doctors of optometry and other health-related businesses may be willing to distribute information or subsidize advertising, outreach and interpreter/describer costs.