COMMUNICATION AND DISABILITY ETIQUETTE TIPS

- Use common sense and extend common courtesies to everyone.
- Speak directly to the individual you are addressing, not to a companion or sign language interpreter. Never shout at a person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.
- When you meet someone with a vision disability, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. If conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- Service animals are working animals. Do not pet, feed or distract them.
- Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking, and wait for them to finish. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head.
- Never pretend to understand; instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
- If needed, describe people with disabilities using “person-first language” (e.g., a person with epilepsy, not an epileptic). Avoid words/phrases like handicapped, victim, and confined to a wheelchair.
- Relax! Don’t be afraid to use common, accepted phrases like, “See you later,” or “Did you hear about that?”