



INCLUSIVE

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

EVENT CASE STUDY



AT A GLANCE

Event Name

Times Square New Years Eve Ball Drop

Location

Times Square, New York City & YouTube Live

Dates

December 31/January 1, 2023 - 2026



Live Services Onsite



Online Livestream Services

EVENT GOAL

The New York City Ball Drop is a global, iconic tradition held in Times Square on New Year's Eve, attracting large crowds from across the U.S. and around the world. Our shared mission is to make this bucket-list event accessible to the Deaf and hard of hearing community worldwide, welcoming everyone to ring in the new year together in person and online.

SERVICES PROVIDED

ASL interpreting services provided meaningful access to spoken and musical performances.

2023 | 2 ASL Interpreters Onsite for 6 hours of live interpreting provided

2024 - 2026 | 4 ASL Interpreters (2 Onsite, 2 Virtual) for 6 hours of live interpreting across onsite and livestream platforms

IMPACT

Onsite Attendance has varied over the years. In 2023, the first year of services, we welcomed approximately 10-15 attendees. In 2024, when ICS provided pro bono coordination, attendance increased to **40-45 attendees**. In 2025 and 2026, when the Times Square Alliance coordinated services internally, turnout stabilized at approximately 20-30 attendees each year.

Virtual Attendance has grown steadily. In 2024, peak viewership reached nearly 35,000 viewers. In 2025, peak attendance increased to approximately 40,000 viewers. In 2026, viewership rose again to nearly **50,000 viewers**. Attendance is consistently highest during the final hour before the ball drop, from 11:00 PM to 12:00 AM.



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CHALLENGES

Low to No Deaf Attendance

Previous New Year’s Eve events relied on a single interpreter with no outreach or promotion of accessibility services, resulting in little to no Deaf attendance onsite.

Weather & Environmental Conditions

Freezing temperatures, wind, and rain created physically demanding conditions for interpreters and impacted onsite attendance.

Multiple Nationalities & Language Access

As a global event, New Year’s Eve in Times Square attracts Deaf attendees from many countries, and ASL is not a universal sign language.

Interpreter Selection for High-Profile Coverage

Onsite interpreters needed to work in unpredictable conditions, use International Sign, and interpret live music. Virtual interpreters needed to be adaptable and confident interpreting live interviews with little preparation.

Crowd Management & Sightlines

Crowding in the accessible viewing area led to blocked sightlines for Deaf attendees relying on ASL interpreters.

SOLUTIONS

Team-Based Interpreting & Access Promotion

ICS implemented an industry-standard, team-based interpreting model and collaborated with the Times Square Alliance to plan and promote accessibility. As a result, Deaf attendance grew from virtually none to 30+ attendees, demonstrating the impact of intentional, inclusive design.

Prepared Teams & Access Promotion

Interpreter teams prepared in advance with weather “survival kits” to maintain service quality in all conditions. ICS also promoted accessibility directly to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, helping drive onsite attendance despite weather challenges.

International Sign & Audience Engagement

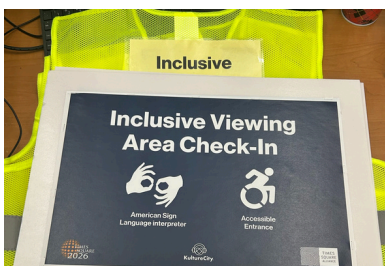
ICS ensured onsite interpreters had knowledge of International Sign and actively engaged with attendees to adapt communication access to the needs of a diverse, international audience.

Intentional Interpreter Matching

ICS carefully selected interpreters based on technical skill, adaptability, and event fit. This resulted in a consistent interpreter team, providing trusted, familiar faces for virtual viewers and experienced support for onsite attendees.

Improved Viewing Design

Through collaboration with the Times Square Alliance, ICS supported the addition of a raised interpreter platform and expanded the accessible viewing area, improving sightlines and ensuring meaningful access.





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BENEFITS

Strengthened Inclusive Brand Presence

- This partnership reinforces the event's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, positioning Times Square and the NYC Ball Drop as leaders in creating welcoming, accessible large-scale public events.

Celebrating NYC as a Global Center of Diversity

- By providing sign language interpreting services for a worldwide audience, the event reflects and celebrates New York City's role as a cultural crossroads and a symbol of diversity, equity, and belonging.

Collaborative Marketing and Community Reach

- ICS marketing efforts helped promote the accessible experience directly to Deaf and hard of hearing communities, increasing awareness, attendance, and trust while ensuring the right audiences knew access was available.



AIN'T WE ALL AMERICAN?
(OH RIGHT, WOO)



EVOLVING TOGETHER

Co-creating inclusive and welcoming spaces and improving access throughout this partnership is something we're proud to do at ICS. Step by step, here's how ringing in the inclusive New Year has evolved over the years.

2023

- First year of providing **onsite accessibility services** with an ASL interpreter team
- Welcomed and proactively encouraged **Deaf attendance**
- **Established a partnership** with regular planning and debrief meetings, creating space for open discussion

2024

- **Designated accessible viewing area** was created for persons with disabilities onsite
- **Virtual services** added to support an accessible livestream on Youtube
- **Deaf attendance increased** and accessibility services were featured on the Times Square Alliance's website

2025

- **A dedicated point of contact** was added from the Times Square Alliance team to answer accessibility questions from the public

2026

- **Improved setup** with interpreter placement on an elevated platform, significantly improving visibility
- Production team provided excellent **preparation materials** including song lyrics





TESTIMONIALS



THANK YOU

Times Square Alliance’s continued commitment to accessibility elevates the New Year’s Eve Ball Drop experience and reinforces its reputation as an inclusive and forward-thinking leader in live event production. We are especially grateful for the collaborative partnership, through thoughtful planning meetings, post-event debriefs, open discussions, and the meaningful involvement of Deaf community members in decision-making. This level of care and proactiveness is deeply appreciated in making inclusion possible.

“ICS has been an amazing partner for the past several years. Most recently, they provided onsite ASL services for the New Year’s Eve Ball Drop in Times Square as well as on our livestream. They also provide ASL services for our June yoga event in Times Square. They are professional and dependable!”

- Regina F

“Going from 0 to 30+ Deaf and Hard of Hearing attendees is a testament to the difference between simply checking the box for accessibility (by providing a single interpreter and telling no one) and creating truly inclusive accommodations in a genuinely welcoming space. The Times Square Alliance cares about improving access every year, and that level of commitment is rare and deserves to be highlighted.” - Shelby Edwards

“Seeing American Sign Language interpreters on screen fills me with joy; it creates a sense of connection to the event as they are using my language!”

- Princess Prince



INCLUSION STARTS HERE

Email ICS at info@inclusiveasl.com to explore how we can help make your next conference or event fully accessible. Prefer a quick conversation? Scan the QR code to schedule a meet & greet with our team so we can learn more about your goals, timeline, and the support you need.



Scan to connect

