Planning an Inclusive and Accessible Event

Ensuring that people feel welcome and able to fully participate in any in-person event you're planning may take time, but it's essential to your success. The following checklist of best practices can get you started; for further advice see the list of resources at the end. Please share this information with your colleagues and partners, and let us know if you have suggestions or additions for future updates.

Before the Event

Inclusivity should never be an afterthought. For a successful event, begin incorporating inclusivity and accessibility into the early stages of your planning.

DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

- Co-create promotional materials with partners to confirm their preferred language and terminology.
- If the event will be held outside your community, defer to local partners for speaker recommendations.
- Who is the audience you are trying to attract, and is your messaging appropriate for that audience?
- Invite speakers who are affected by the issue and who your audience will relate to.
- Ask for speakers' pronouns so you can properly introduce them on promotional materials and in person.
- Who will give opening remarks?
- Which colleagues or volunteers will join you and talk with attendees?

EVENT MESSAGING AND INVITATIONS

- Avoid ableist language both in person and in your messaging.
- Promote the event on a variety of platforms and to a diverse audience.
- In the invitation, ask attendees about pronouns and food allergies, and whether they will need translation services, childcare, or transportation.
- Use simple language when describing the event.

LOGISTICS

- Be sure to consider venues and catering companies owned by women and people of color.

- Choose a wheelchair-accessible venue.
- Every speaker should have a microphone, and should have the option to stand or sit as they prefer.
- Make sure to visit the venue at least a day before the event so you can provide directions and accessibility tips for attendees.
- Is there adequate public transportation to the event? Is there validation for parking?
- When possible, events should be free, and you should reimburse travel and parking.
- Offer childcare at the venue.
- Be sure the day you choose to hold the event does not conflict with a religious holiday.

> *Ensuring that people feel welcome is critical for hosting a successful event.*

LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY

- Identify people who have experience creating multilingual spaces.
- Do you need to hire an interpreter?
- Consider whether you need translation(s) of your invitation, promotional materials, and handouts.

FOOD AND DRINK

- If you're hosting a happy hour, use messaging that welcomes people who don't drink alcohol.
- Provide food suitable for many diets and restrictions.
- Does the caterer use ingredients that are locally sourced, organic, pesticide-free, non-GMO, or antibiotic-free?
- Adjust food orders as you receive RSVPs to reduce food waste, and find a nearby food pantry that will accept any excess food.

During the Event

- Invite people to share their pronouns and provide name tags that allow people to fill in their names and pronouns.

- Hold yourself accountable for respecting pronouns and correcting people who use the wrong pronouns.
- Have a plan for how you would defuse potentially tense situations involving racist, sexist, anti-gay, anti-trans, or classist language or behavior.
- Give each speaker in a panel discussion equal time. If you're facilitating a group discussion, give special attention to voices that need to be amplified.
- During Q&A sessions, allow a diverse group of attendees to ask questions.

After the Event

- Follow up on action items that arise during the event (sending resources, connecting people, etc.).
- Thank your speakers, caterers, community partners, etc.
- Ask speakers and participants for feedback and have a plan for remaining connected.
- Reflect on the event:
  o Who attended—did you have a diverse audience?
  o Who were your speakers—did they represent different experiences?
  o What would you do differently? Was there anything you were unprepared for, and should be included in this document?

Additional Resources

For more information on how to incorporate inclusivity and accessibility into your communications, event planning, and event facilitation, we encourage you to visit the following academic and nonprofit resources:

- Ableism/Language (*www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html*)
- Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process (*http://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/anti-oppressive-facilitation*)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: An OpenCon Report on Conference Planning (*https://sparcopen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-Report-July-10-V1-Release.pdf*)
- Fakequity (*https://fakequity.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/fakiequit5.pdf*)
- How to Build Language Justice (*http://antenaantena.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/langjust_eng.pdf*)
- Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing (*www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf*)
- A Progressive's Style Guide (*https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/SUMOFUS_PROGRESSIVE-STYLE-GUIDE.pdf*)
- Pronouns (*www.colorado.edu/cisc/resources/trans-queer/pronouns*)

The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future.