

# Making Accessible Events

## The Basics

- ❑ If collecting RSVPs, be sure to ask about accommodations.
  - ❑ Our standard registration forms include requests for large-print, Braille, materials in a language other than English, someone to assist in getting around, wheelchair accessible seating, elevator or ramp access, hearing assistance, transportation needs to and from the event, and a section to add any other needs.
- ❑ Identify a member of your planning team that is focused on accessibility. Walk through every part of the day to ensure it is accessible to all attendees. Throughout the event, keep an eye out for things you can adjust and remedy.
- ❑ Make sure that other event volunteers receive orientation about accessibility.
- ❑ Include accommodation and inclusion statements clearly in your event materials. Include contact information where people can reach out with questions.
- ❑ Check your facility ahead of time for ramps, accessible gender-neutral restrooms, enough seating, doorways and halls wide enough for wheelchairs, bright and even lighting
- ❑ Assume someone in the room has a disability, even if it isn't evident. Be mindful of your language and assure that it is not insulting to those with disabilities.

## General Accessibility Measures

- ❑ Designate seating for people with disabilities near the exits or at the front of the room
- ❑ Describe the room at the beginning of the day and/or throughout the day, especially when giving participants instructions on where to go. (E.g. "Lunch is set up on two tables at the back left of the room. The food is laid out like this: ...")
  - ❑ Ensure that the layout of the room isn't significantly changed without announcing it to attendees
- ❑ Offer a service animal relief area
- ❑ If planning a conference or an all day event, incorporate various facilitation methods (visual, auditory, verbal and kinesthetic; small group and large group)
- ❑ Make sure that materials are not left in aisles and walkways and that chairs are pushed in so no one trips; remind participants to be mindful of this throughout the day.
- ❑ Provide ways for people with disabilities to provide feedback on the accessibility measures in your event. This is a learning process, so take lessons learned and implement them next time.

- ❑ Include people with disabilities as speakers and on panels
- ❑ Make sure that we have enough time between sections so that people with disabilities can switch venues in a safe and unhurried manner.
- ❑ Avoid “find a partner in the room” activities that may be difficult for those with visual or mobility challenges. Instead, assign groups and clearly explain where people should go.
- ❑ Consider taking further accessibility measures: establish a scent-free policy to accommodate those with allergies, designate a quiet space or room for those who may need a break from large groups. Proactively make sure that people with allergies or special food requirements are provided for.

### Visual Accessibility

- ❑ Use high contrast colors (dark-on-light and light-on-dark)
- ❑ Don't use images to present text information
- ❑ Presenters need to describe information as fully as possible if presenting pictures or charts.
- ❑ Caption and/or transcribe video and audio content
- ❑ Use descriptive link text for the ease of screen-readers (“[register for the event here](#)” rather than “[here](#)”)
- ❑ Offer large print materials (18 pt font)
- ❑ Send information electronically as text-based documents before the event so those with e-readers can access the materials.
  - ❑ Keep in mind that PDFs, Google Forms and Google Docs are not compatible with some e-readers.
  - ❑ Microsoft Word for documents, Eventbrite for event registrations and Survey Monkey for surveys are generally the most compatible.

### Auditory Accessibility

- ❑ Provide sign language interpretation for all large events
- ❑ Use microphones, even in a smaller room, and assure even audience comments are repeated through the mic. Use a PA system for large events.
- ❑ Include written copies of the important information that is being covered
- ❑ If audio assistance is needed, see if hearing loops are available
- ❑ Ensure that facilitators are trained to only have one conversation going in a group at a time.