

# Office of Disability Resources

## Accessible Meeting & Event Checklist

It is our expectation that all meetings/events are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Taking care to create an accessible event benefits not only individuals with visible or known disabilities, but also helps to ensure that all participants/attendees, including individuals with non-obvious disabilities and/or chronic health conditions, and people of all ages and body types, **are able to fully engage in the program.**

### 1. Ask!

When you send out the invitation or notice, include a welcome message to let invitees know they can contact the planner regarding accommodations. Your message might include text such as: **“We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to engage fully.** To be respectful of those with allergies and environmental sensitivities, we ask that you please refrain from wearing strong fragrances. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, **please contact Cindy MacDonald, Director of Disabilities at 413662-5334.**

#### **You could also include in your invitation the following:**

I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:

- o Assistive listening device
- o Captioning
- o Reserved front row seat
- o Large print
- o Advance copy of slides to be projected
- o Wheelchair access /access to a ramp/alternate route
- o Diet Restrictions. List: \_\_\_\_\_
- o Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If it appears you will be **unable to meet a specific request**, follow up with the individual who made the request to determine whether an alternative arrangement can be made

### 2. Check Venue in Advance

Look for these features when inspecting your meeting/event space:

- o **VISIBILITY: CONSIDER THOSE WITH IMPAIRED SIGHT** Clear signage (identifying location and directions); well-lit meeting space and adjacent areas; projection screen visible from all seating (if using projection).
- o **ACOUSTICS: CONSIDER THOSE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT** Public address (PA) system; roving microphone; limit unnecessary background music; seating available near presenter for lip

reading; **availability of assistive listening devices.** Is there well-lit space for an interpreter if needed?

o **MOBILITY: CONSIDER THOSE WHO MAY BE IN A WHEELCHAIR OR HAVE OTHER MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS** Accessible parking near venue; proximity to bus stop; ramp and/or elevator access; accessible bathrooms; barrier-free pathways; wide doorways and aisles to accommodate wheelchairs/scooters; no loose cables across walking areas.

o **TECHNOLOGY: CONSIDER THOSE WHO MAY NEED TO USE ADAPTIVE DEVICES** Electrical outlets in accessible seating areas to accommodate devices, laptops, etc.; extra space or work surface.

o **SERVICE ANIMALS: CONSIDER ACCESS AND SPACE FOR SERVICE DOGS** Comfortable space for service animals to rest during event; accessible toileting and watering facilities nearby.

3. At Event

o **PRESENTATIONS** Provide presenters with a checklist requesting that they: submit materials in advance so that they can be forwarded to individuals who may not be able to view screens or flip charts; verbally describe visual materials (e.g., slides, charts, etc.); have printed copies available (in larger font); avoid using small print on presentations that can't be seen from a distance; ensure speakers (including those asking questions) always use a microphone; activate **captions** on any video used in the presentation; **encourage hourly breaks**; and organize breakout group activities to maximize distance between groups (e.g. each group going to a corner of the room or side rooms).

o **Q&A** Make sure to repeat questions posted by audience before responding, especially if there is not a roving microphone available. Presenters or audience members may express confidence that they are loud enough and do not need a microphone. Regardless, ask them to speak into one.

o **FOOD:** Clearly indicate allergens and gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, or other options.

4. **Questions? Have questions about accommodations or accessibility for your event? Contact Disability Resources at 662-5334.**