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Accessible Event Planning Checklist

When planning an event, please consider the following to ensure it is accessible to all attending.

Advertising, Outreach and Registration Forms

☐ Give ample notice for your upcoming event – this allows people to arrange for transportation, assistants or other supports they may require. Indicate both start and finish times.

☐ Provide space on your registration form or on the event notice for people to identify their accommodations or accessibility needs. If you are serving food, give participants a chance to indicate dietary restrictions.

☐ Include contact information (e.g., phone number and email address) so that attendees can contact you with their requirements.

☐ Follow up with people who request accommodations in a timely fashion to inform them whether or not these will be available.

☐ Indicate whether there are any fees for admission or materials, note that fees should not apply to any accompanying support persons.

☐ On posters or information sheets, include international accessibility symbols indicating accessibility (e.g. wheelchair access, captioning, sign language interpretation).

☐ Promote a scent-free practice for all events.

Planning Ahead

☐ Train event personnel on how to respectfully assist people with disabilities and to respond to any accessibility issues that may arise.

☐ Make sure that event personnel are easily identified (use name tags and/or other identifiers).

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☐ Book any access supports being provided in plenty of time to ensure availability. (e.g. Sign Language interpreters, real-time captioning, note-takers, attendants).

☐ Provide interpreters, captioners and note takers with agendas and presentation outlines in advance of the event.

☐ At the event, be sure the interpreters and/or captioners are introduced and explain what they will be doing during the event.

☐ Remind participants as well as volunteers and service providers of the scent-free practice.

Selecting and Setting up the Room(s) for Your Event

☐ Allow for easy movement for wheelchair and scooter users (you may need to rearrange furniture). For example, choose a room with wide aisles and plenty of space around tables.

☐ Include accessible seating areas interspersed throughout the room where possible – front, middle and back.

☐ Good lighting (bright, without glare and allows for adjustment).

☐ If a stage is being used, ensure it and any projection screens are easily visible.

☐ Good acoustics. If possible, arrange for provision of Assistive Listening Devices (e.g., an FM system).

☐ Provide for seat reservations for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

☐ Make sure accessible washrooms are available within a reasonable distance.

☐ Cover electrical cables or cords that cross over aisles or pathways so wheelchair users as well as people who use canes and walkers can traverse easily and safely across them.

☐ Wherever possible, try to eliminate or reduce background noise during proceedings.

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☐   Ensure that all parts of the event are smoke-free.

☐   Make sure organizers, presenters and volunteers are aware of emergency evacuation procedures.

Helping Participants get to the Meeting or Event Space

☐   Make sure transportation options for getting to the venue are accessible to people with disabilities.

☐   Determine the location and approximate distance for nearest accessible parking.

☐   Make sure that wheelchair access is via the main entrance. Alternatively, post clear, legible signs at the main entrance showing alternative, safe and accessible entrances.

☐   Make sure people with disabilities can reach all areas used at your event independently or with assistance from your volunteers, e.g., the registration desk, auditorium, breakaway rooms, stage, etc.

☐   Preferably, elevators should have low buttons for wheelchair users, Braille/raised number markings or audible floor announcements for people who are blind or with low vision, and visual floor indicators for people who are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

☐   Post clear and easy-to-read signs showing locations of accessible washrooms, elevators, phones, etc.

Suggestions for Effective Presenters

☐   Remind presenters to end meetings or presentations on schedule (important for people making advance transit arrangements and for pre-booked support people).

☐   Produce materials in large print (16-point type or larger) and have available electronically in case of a request for such a format.

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- ☐ It is always good to have a few print copies on hand. Encourage and support presenters to offer copies of their material in different formats and distribute them before their presentation starts.

- ☐ Ideally lectern heights and audio visual controls should be adjustable to meet the needs of different speakers.

- ☐ During the session, presenters should verbally describe contents of videos, or any written materials, including overheads or chalkboard notes for audience members with vision loss.

- ☐ Encourage presenters to use captioned videos.

- ☐ Organizers or presenters should check with the audience about the need for breaks.

Budgeting for Your Event

- ☐ Set aside funds early in the planning stage for accessibility and in the event of requests for communication supports and accessible formats.

Evaluating Your Event

- ☐ Be sure evaluation forms are accessible and include a section about accessibility of the event. This can provide valuable information for use in planning future event plans.