

ADVANCING ACCESS FOR EVERYONE

Creating Accessible & Inclusive Meetings or Events

Planning ahead for inclusion can help to create an event that is welcoming to everybody. Here are some guidelines to consider when organizing meetings and events.

EARLY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- When possible, include people with disabilities in all stages of event planning.
- Consider the date and time of your event to minimize barriers related to length of day, number & duration of breaks throughout the event, availability of transportation, and religious observances.
- Designate an **Access Coordinator** on your team for the event or meeting.

Event Access Coordinators

- Receive, confirm and track all access requests from participants.
- Manage and implement accommodations.
- Communicate accommodations arrangements with participants and staff.
- Identify assistants who will be available to help with access-related tasks.
- Coordinate all materials for accessible distribution several days in advance.
- Request interpreters & captioners at least **two weeks in advance** (z.umn.edu/icu).

VENUE

Conduct an early site visit to clarify accessibility and what may require additional planning related to:

- Entrances & elevators
- Restrooms (accessible, all-gender & transfer table availability)
- A refrigerator & microwave for those bringing food
- Sufficient accessible parking & transportation
- Audio technology (microphones, listening devices)
- Temperature control & lighting considerations
- Quiet spaces

Please also:

- Ensure space is large enough.
- Plan for wheelchair accessible seating and paths throughout the space.
- Provide a variety of seating and table options (e.g. table heights, styles, sizes).
- Confirm emergency protocols and request changes needed for disabled people (e.g. elevator use during a fire).
- Identify other events at the same venue that day and plan to reduce access barriers (e.g. managing noise level).
- Avoid decorations in pathways, flash/strobe effects, latex balloons, and fog machines.

MARKETING, WEB DESIGN & FORMS

- Create accessible materials — learn how at accessibility.umn.edu or z.umn.edu/doccon.
- Provide accessible online registration and request preferred names.
- Indicate access being provided (e.g. interpreting, captioning, listening devices, audio description).
- Ask and remind participants to use scent-free products.
- Use this language to invite accommodation requests: "To make disability-related accommodations or dietary requests contact [**Event Access Coordinator**]."

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Other Considerations

For all-day or multi-day events and conferences:

Verify and provide, in advance, a list of:

- Accessible lodging
- Accessible restaurants nearby and hours of operation

Contact information for:

- Pharmacy – nearest & 24 hour
- Urgent Care, E.R. & crisis hotline
- Grocery stores
- Accessible transportation
- Veterinary office, emergency vet & pet stores

MATERIALS

- ❑ Contact Document Conversion at dsdoccon@umn.edu to request alternate formats at least **two weeks in advance**.
- ❑ Distribute all materials digitally in advance to all attendees—include an agenda indicating the amount of walking/physical activity.
- ❑ Provide copies in Braille (as requested), large print and digitally on event day.
- ❑ Check and update all **presenters'** materials for accessibility.
- ❑ Print preferred names on name tags in a large, dark font.
- ❑ Consider the color choices and contrast of all materials.
- ❑ Gather an **Event Kit**.

Presenter Considerations

Instruct presenters to create accessible presentations by:

- Checking the order each slide element will be read by a screen reader.
- Including alt text on all images. (accessibility.umn.edu)
- Considering color/contrast choices and avoiding use of flash or strobe effects.

Remind presenters to:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Always use a microphone.
- Describe images and explain slide content.

FOOD

- ❑ Plan ahead to provide gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, vegan, kosher and halal options.
- ❑ Clearly label all food and keep specialized options separate.
- ❑ If meals are provided, offer full course options for specialized requests.

Event Kit

- First aid kit with latex-free supplies & ear plugs
- Paper, pens, unscented markers, scissors, tape, duct tape, blank name tags & clipboards
- Unscented bathroom & cleaning products
- Bike tire pump & patch kit for wheelchair tires
- Juice or regular soda & straws
- Clean rug or mat
- Umbrellas & ponchos
- Water bowl & dog waste bags for service dogs
- Garbage bags

Announcements

- Introduce the Event Access Coordinator.
- Give clear directions to accessible & all-gender bathrooms—indicate transfer table availability.
- Ask all participants to say their name before speaking.
- Invite participants to take breaks for self-care.
- Share emergency protocols.
- Explain Event Kit and identify quiet spaces.
- Invite people with dietary requests to get their food first.

EVENT DAY

- ❑ Post directional signs and station greeters at all entry points, elevators, stairs.
- ❑ Use an inclusive check-in process (consider table height, amount of noise, number of staff, flow of check-in process).
- ❑ Avoid background music.
- ❑ Brief all staff about accessibility plans.
- ❑ Set up clear and spacious paths outside and inside.
- ❑ Ask photographers to not use flash and to seek permission before photographing people.

EVENT FOLLOW-UP

- ❑ Distribute promised materials and/or post online in an accessible format.
- ❑ Send accessible thank you notes and evaluations and ask for feedback regarding accessibility and inclusion.

Please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 612-626-1333 or drc@umn.edu if you have questions.

Disability Resource Center
Office for **Equity and Diversity**

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