

*[Catalyst Project](#) compiled this accessible event planning document with support from many people, primarily [Sins Invalid](#), a disability justice organization. Please contact [info@collectiveliberation](mailto:info@collectiveliberation) with any feedback or questions.*

## **Accessibility Planning for Events and Meetings**

### **Invitation:**

- Send out a save-the-date a month ahead of time (or as soon as possible) including accessibility information (like coming [scent-free](#)), but also specifically asking people to RSVP for anything that you are able to provide but won't necessarily without RSVPS (for example, childcare, Spanish or ASL translation)
- Make accessibility information very visible on each version of an invitation (email, paper, facebook, website) that goes out. This should include suggested donation sliding scale, childcare information, wheelchair accessibility, transportation information if it's not close to public transportation, info about a scent-reduced space, ASL or Spanish translation, live transcription, headsets, and livestreaming.
- Translate into any languages other than English that make sense for your outreach (if that makes sense)

### **Money:**

- If the event has a door fee, make it a sliding scale that goes down to very low or zero
- If possible provide transportation stipends for people who need it. This can come in the form of bus passes if your space is easily accessible by public transit (ie. if all your event organizers are planning on driving, it's probably not easily accessible).
- Provide food and childcare
- If someone is asked to play a leadership role that they wouldn't be able to do because of work, consider paying a stipend for that work.
- If possible, don't ask anyone to front money for anything for the event. If any money needs to be fronted (ie. making copies, buying food for the meeting, etc.), make sure that the people who are asked to do that can front the money and wait to be reimbursed.

### **Venue (before reservation):**

- Check to make sure:
  - space and bathrooms are fully wheelchair accessible (actually ask about the bathrooms, even if the space claims to be accessible)
  - space is close to public transit
  - there is separate space we can use for childcare
  - we can hang gender neutral signs on the bathrooms for the course of our event

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- they either use fragrance-free, non-toxic cleaning products, or that we can provide them with those products ahead of time to use the last time they clean the space and the bathrooms before the event. (Dr. Bronner's unscented soap is a good standby here). NOTE: we recommend physically going to the space a week or so ahead of time to remove these products if necessary and give the bathrooms time to unstink.
- we can serve food
- preferably, that the space has a lot of natural light. this is often not an option, but at least try to avoid spaces that are only neon lighting with no natural light.
- there's a sound system, and projection capabilities (if we are offering live transcription). If you don't have the technical skills yourself, ask for the venue to provide someone during the event to help with tech problems that arise.

#### **Venue (after reservation & day of):**

- Arrange to get them the scent-free cleaning products if they have professional cleaning staff. If not, make plans to clean the space yourself.
- Check the sound system ahead of time, and be willing to take the time to make any necessary adjustments as you go. Remember that many people will be unable to follow if there is even a minor amount of feedback, echo, etc.

#### **Bathrooms:**

- make sure they are ADA accessible and cleaned beforehand with scent free cleaning products (see: Venue)
- if a venue doesn't have a wheelchair accessible bathroom, an ADA-accessible porta potty can be rented and delivered. Double check that it is ADA accessible. This is really not the ideal option because porta potties are cleaned with toxic chemicals and no one likes a porta potty.
- create signs that point to the bathrooms and say whether they are wheelchair accessible or not
- Stock all bathrooms with scent-free hand soap. Remove other hand soap options if possible. If not possible, label the soap you want people to use and the soap you don't want people to use.
- label at least one bathroom as "all gender" and make sure people know where the different bathroom options are

#### **Creating a Scent-Free/Scent-Reduced Space:**

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- In addition to making sure your invitation asks people to come scent-free and that the venue has cleaned with scent-free products, set up a scent-free seating section at the venue the day of. This should:
  - be physically separated from the scented section by at least an aisle
  - be well-ventilated (check proximity to doors, windows, vents, etc. and make sure those are not bringing in things like cigarette smoke, chemical cleaners, etc.)
  - include seating for wheelchair users (preferred language is “wheelchair users” not “people in wheelchairs” or anything else)

### **Live Transcription:**

- Hiring a professional [Communications Access Realtime Translation](#) provider is preferred exponentially over having volunteers do it for accuracy and speed. Rates run from \$75-\$200 an hour, and some people have a minimum # of hours they'll work (usually 3). Ask for references when possible. Someone with experience doing this for social justice events will have an easier time.
- Make sure that there is a projector and a screen (and the right connector cables) at the venue (preferably without extra charge). If there aren't, ask if the CART provider is able to bring those.
- Using the projection, rather than just having someone sit by the computer or watch on their own laptop. It reduces stigma, allows for people to move between looking at the panelists and the transcription better, and also will assist a much larger group of people who have hearing impairments or difficulty with auditory processing but would never ask for services around it.
- CART providers will want to read whatever language we are putting out about the event so they can familiarize themselves with it ahead of time. Plan to send them a program and/or the email invitation.
- Make sure to tell the person ahead of time that we are going to want a copy of the transcription and double check with them right before the event to remind them of that. They may need a week or so to edit the document, and you may want to do your own editing on it as well before sharing publicly.

### **Set up & Facilitation:**

- Make sure the seating for wheelchair users has spots in and out of the scent-free area, and that there are seats for wheelchair users' non-wheelchair using friends/attendants nearby. Think through the flow from the wheelchair-accessible entrance to the sign-in / ticket / food areas and make sure it works smoothly.
- When planning the agenda, think through any small groups / ice breakers / facilitated activities with regard to the scent-free space, wheelchair users, and

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people with limited mobility / hearing impairment. Is there a place people can go that's more quiet? Will there be live transcription for a small group? Is there a scent-free small group? etc

### **Check in with guest speakers:**

- Do they need childcare?
- Do they have any additional access needs (i.e. a ride with ParaTransit, or for us to pay for their attendant)?
- Ask them to come scent-free and let them know about any other access needs we know the group has already (ie "exercises need to accommodate for limited mobility", "people have mild hearing impairments and we'll be reminding them to speak up")

### **Announcements:**

- at the beginning of the event be sure to announce all relevant accessibility info, including who the access ushers are and what they're there for.
- part of this is practical, and part of it is about supporting culture-shift around disability in our movements

### **Childcare:**

- recruit experienced volunteers or paid providers as soon as possible & make sure to contact them again a few days before the event and let them know how many kids we're expecting, what time to show up, etc.
- Consider whether you need to have multilingual childcare providers.
- should try to have a childcare provider for each 2 kids
- bring sign-in forms for parents to sign that includes:
  - parent/caretaker's name
  - parent/caretaker's phone number
  - kid(s)' name(s) and ages and gender pronouns
  - any known allergies or disabilities, etc.
  - sign in and out times
- if leaving the event space, have parent/caretakers sign consent form that childcare provider is responsible for their kids from 'X time to X time'
- make sure there are toys/games/things to color with, etc.

### **Food:**

- plan to provide substantive snacks that include protein, with options that are vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and sugar-free

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- Don't ask everyone to eat vegan or vegetarian as meat is important for some people for their cultural or nutritional needs.
- ask people who are bringing food to bring or fill out a card labeling ingredients.
- having juice on hand is helpful for people who have blood sugar issues

### **Video & Live-streaming:**

- Live-streaming makes events accessible across geography and a wide range of ability. Need: someone who knows what they're doing, a video camera that can connect into the sound system or has a high-quality mic & a fast internet connection.
- Recruiting volunteers for video and live-streaming (can be difficult, may need to pay someone)

### **Accessibility Ushers:**

- the role of accessibility ushers is to be on hand to problem solve if issues come up or people need access support. they should be familiar with whatever accessibility plans are in place for the day and very visible. ideally people will have some experience being an attendant, but many people can play this role well.