**Making Meetings & Events Accessible**

**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 (name, email, phone).”

One or two days before your event or meeting, send out a reminder about refraining from wearing strong fragrances.

Another approach is to include a checklist in your meeting RSVP. For example:

I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:
\_\_\_ Assistive listening device
\_\_\_ Captioning
\_\_\_ Reserved front row seat
\_\_\_ Large print
\_\_\_ Advance copy of slides to be projected
\_\_\_ Wheelchair access
\_\_\_ Wheelchair access to working tables throughout room
\_\_\_ Scent-free room
\_\_\_ Lactation room
\_\_\_ Gender neutral bathroom
\_\_\_ Diet Restrictions. List: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Make sure you follow up on all requests received. 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:

**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).

**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?

**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.

**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

**Zoom**

Zoom provides accessibility options. Please visit the [Zoom website](https://zoom.us/accessibility) for assistance in making this option more accessible.

**Service Animals** – Consider access and space for service dogs. A comfortable space for service animals to rest during event; accessible toileting and watering facilities nearby.

**3. At Event**

**Assign a person to be responsible for all Accessibility Needs**

Ensure that presenters are aware of HR’s commitment to disability – inclusive meetings, and ask them to prepare and deliver their presentations with accessibility in mind. Slide desks should be made available in advance.

**Designate**

At larger events or events with scheduled accommodations, designate someone to be responsible for accommodations as well as help
with seating, ensuring captioning and other technology is working, maintaining clear pathways, or other needs.

**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; make sure they can be seen. Captions at the bottom of a screen may not be visible to people at the back of the room.
* 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).

Have someone onsite who helps to ensure follow-through on all of the above.

**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.

**Food**

Clearly indicate allergens and gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, or other options.