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DIVERSITY
THROUGH INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

*An Evolving Toolkit for Creating
Inclusive Processes, Spaces & Events*

Created by
FemNorthNet & DAWN Canada

• www.criaw-icref.ca/femnorthnet • www.dawncanada.net •

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Individuals who have been part of a process or attended an event that is inclusive of all participants will tell you what an enriching experience it can be. To be in space where everyone feels welcome, has personal needs met, and is comfortable participating is rewarding for both the participants and for society as a whole because everyone has a chance to be heard, regardless of who they are or where they come from.

As many organizations will tell you, planning and hosting an inclusive event or process can be an overwhelming task given the diversity in our society. Do not let this scare you! Rest assured that with the right tools and guidance you can learn how to develop more inclusive practices—ultimately sharing in the wonderful experience of full inclusion.

The Inclusive Practices Toolkit was created to assist organizations and individuals in planning and carrying out events that facilitate the participation and inclusion of all attendees, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, heritage, or culture. This Toolkit includes practical information about budgeting, choosing a location, creating accessible event materials, booking support services, and more. These considerations are essential in ensuring events unfold as smoothly and successfully as possible. In addition, the Toolkit provides a number of helpful resources including a sample budget for inclusion measures, a sample section for registration forms to gather information on accommodation needs, a sample care provider contract, an accessible seating guide, a checklist to help track what components of inclusive event planning have been completed, and more!

The Toolkit is a joint initiative between FemNorthNet (Feminist Northern Network), a project housed at the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women - Institut canadien de recherches sur les femmes (CRIAW-ICREF) and the Disabled Women's Network of Canada – Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées du Canada (DAWN-RAFH). Emerging from our shared work and need to develop and model inclusive practices, this toolkit shares what we learned about best practices. It combines our common principles of participation, inclusion, and equality for all with the collective wisdom gathered by women from both organizations over a period of years. This toolkit is indeed the "walk of our talk and the roll of the roll" and we are inviting you to walk and roll with us.

THE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES TOOLKIT

Why an Inclusive Practices Toolkit?

Everyone belongs. When you make an event, space or process "inclusive," you make it possible for everyone to participate with ease in any part of your work.

Canada has made numerous commitments to creating an inclusive society for all. Through support for the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015 and other international and domestic conventions, Canada has asserted its values of equal participation and accommodation of diversity. These values must extend into every aspect of society, including our organizations and meeting places.

After all, community services and facilities for the general population should always be available on an equal basis to all and we should all be responsive to making meetings, conferences, and events inclusive. Inclusive practice takes away barriers that might stop participants from attending or, if they do attend, prevents them from enduring unnecessary discomfort or being put in the uncomfortable position of having to make requests that may or may not be able to be accommodated at such late notice.

We know from experience that thinking inclusively can be a challenging exercise. We also realize that to create a sense of belonging for all, individuals and organizations will require a set of robust tools that provide practical solutions to designing inclusive meetings, workshops, projects, or other events. Rising to the occasion, FemNorthNet and DAWN-RAFH have combined our collective knowledge and best practices for inclusion in this toolkit.

This toolkit is organized in steps from beginning to end of organizing an event. In each case we provide resources in the appendices to help with your work. We hope the information, guidelines, resource lists, and sample documents included in this toolkit will help you or your organization facilitate events and projects that are inclusive, respectful of diversity, and truly successful!

Inclusion means that you are welcomed and accepted no matter what your circumstance – this means people of different cultures, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, genders, socioeconomic classes, and abilities. The supports some people need are already a part of everyday life. For people who use sight, most rooms and buildings have built-in lights. They don't need to ask for light in order to participate and can assume the lights will be on. For others, the supports may not be included in everyday life. They cannot assume the supports they need to participate will be available and often have to ask or do without. Inclusive practice encourages us to think through and provide the supports everyone needs to enable their participation. Supports may include a scent-free environment, childcare, or any of the other examples provided in this toolkit. Successful inclusion is seamless and allows for participation of diverse groups of people.

The Partnership

Working with diverse women from across Canada, **FemNorthNet** is a collaborative project between university researchers, community organizations, and northern women. The primary goal of FemNorthNet is to understand how economic restructuring in Canada's north is affecting women from diverse walks of life. In order to ensure all women can participate and be heard, FemNorthNet has worked towards developing an inclusive research process with practices that can be adapted to suit the participants and communities of FemNorthNet partners. This is a reflection of FemNorthNet's commitment to intersectional gendered analysis and participatory action research. FemNorthNet contributors wish to share their learning about inclusive practice with the Canadian public through this toolkit.

DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN-RAFH) Canada is a national, feminist, cross-disability organization whose mission is to end the poverty, isolation, discrimination and violence experienced by Canadian women with disabilities and Deaf women. DAWN-RAFH is an organization that works towards the advancement and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities and Deaf women in Canada. Our overarching strategic theme is one of leadership, partnership and networking to engage all levels of government and the wider disability and women's sectors and other stakeholders in addressing our key issues.

Reality Check

This tool is designed to help organizers of any event, no matter what size or type, accommodate the needs of the participants, volunteers, and presenters needed to make it a success. However, we acknowledge there are often barriers to realizing the ideal event to which we aspire, whether these be financial barriers, limitations on the built environment we have access to, or other people that put limits on our ability to be inclusive.

Just remember to always strive to be as inclusive as possible. Refer to the Diversity through Inclusive Practice Checklist and implement as many best practices as you are able. Many inclusion measures, such as providing more space for mobility devices to circulate within a room, can be put in place for no extra cost. Think about inclusion simply as a matter of ensuring courtesy, safety, and comfort to participants in your event. Participants who require accommodations are often familiar with common barriers to realizing full inclusion in events. If you are struggling to find a solution due to a lack of resources do not hesitate to speak with them. They can

often provide reasonable and creative solutions to meet their needs.

It is also impossible to plan for every scenario and sometimes, in spite of your best efforts, a participant may arrive to your event with unexpected needs. The participant may not have disclosed their needs when they responded to your event invitation or submitted their registration form. Sometimes an individual's circumstances can change as a result of health changes, the stress of travel or differing functional requirements in different environments. The best way to plan for the unexpected is to have contingencies built into your plans and budget.

Being inclusive is about developing respectful relationships. As a result there is also a role for participants – to share their needs with organizers and recognize the limited resources that may be available. Providing creative alternatives may help organizers better address individual needs.

An Evolving Toolkit

Finally, we intend this toolkit to be an evolving document. That means that as we continue to learn about best practices for inclusion the Toolkit will be updated with new suggestions, guidelines, and sample tools that can assist all event planners as they strive to create inclusive spaces. We also encourage you to build upon this toolkit as you become experienced with inclusive practices so that others in your organization may benefit from your learning in the future.

We hope this toolkit becomes part of a living dialogue about inclusion and would like to welcome you to the growing network of people seeking to create a truly inclusive society for all.

For more information...

For more information or to request a webinar to support your use of this Toolkit please contact:

DisAbled Women's Network Canada (DAWN - RAFH Canada)

Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées du Canada

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Phone: 514-396-0009 (QC); Fax: 514-396-6585 (QC)

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www.dawncanada.net

SECTION 1: PLANNING FOR DIVERSITY

Canada is a country filled with diverse people. In this section, we invite you to consider a variety of groups of people and outline suggestions to assist you in including and showing respect for them. Don't forget that many people belong to more than one group, for example a woman may identify as lesbian and disabled. Another may be a senior woman of colour who is Buddhist. A young man may identify as Aboriginal. Our inclusion practices need to recognize and reflect those intersecting groups as well.

A Range of Abilities

Many people live with disabilities. Some of these disabilities are visible, while others are not. Some people directly identify with their disability (e.g. "I am a Deafblind person"), while others do not (e.g. "I am an individual living with Deafblindness"). Some people use the term "disability", while others prefer "disAbility" or "differently abled" or otherwise. It is important to remember not to make assumptions about anyone. Respect the identity labels people choose for themselves. Accept individuals' requests when they say they have a disability and/or accommodation need.

Participants at your event who have disabilities have a right to feel safe, respected and included in all aspects. Include disability as a topic area in diversity training for staff and volunteers. Ensure that event sponsors, service providers, presenters, and exhibitors are prepared to demonstrate respect and inclusive attitudes towards participants with disabilities. Offer as many supports and services to accommodate participants with disability-related needs as your budget will allow. Include in your advertising any accommodations that budget will not allow. This allows participants to be prepared to attend without these accommodations or to arrange for their own accommodations.

Some general tips to remember when interacting with individuals living with disability are as follows:

- Treat everyone as you would like to be treated. Remember that people with disabilities are not victims. Avoid demonstrating pity or acting patronizing toward them.

- Never be afraid to approach an individual with a disability to engage in conversation. Remember to talk directly to the individual, even if they have a companion, attendant, aide or interpreter with them. If unsure about how the person prefers to communicate, ask them. Allow individuals time to respond and avoid completing their sentences for them.

- Always ask the person if they would like assistance first before actually giving any assistance. The person may not want or need help. Listen to what the person is saying and do your best to provide what is requested, not what you think.

- Use "People First" language. See the Inclusion Project's guide to "People First" language here: http://inclusionproject.org/nip_userfiles/file/People%20First%20Chart.pdf

- Do not distract or assume you can pet an individual's service animal. These animals are on-the-job and need to be focused to assist their owner.

LGBTQ+ - A Very Inclusive Acronym

People identify with a wide variety of sexual orientations. The LGBTQ+ acronym reflects a range of identities, including: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-Spirit, plus others. However, we acknowledge that while this acronym and the terms included within it are meant to be inclusive, not everyone within the LGBTQ+ community approves of or identifies with these terms. Use of this acronym does not intend to ignore other gender and sexual identities that exist, or to disregard the politics of labeling. We use this acronym as a starting point for discussion within groups and organizations, and to emphasize the fact that regardless of how an individual identifies, they have a right to feel safe, respected, and included in any event or process they participate in.

To ensure you create a space that is inclusive of all sexual orientations there are a number of steps you can take. First and foremost, educate yourself. Reach out to organizations that represent and serve the LGBTQ+ community for resources and information. Use this knowledge to educate and foster inclusive attitudes amongst the staff and volunteers that will be helping run your event. Ensure that event sponsors, service providers, presenters, and exhibitors are aware that

your organization supports human diversity, including diverse genders and sexual orientations. Confirm these partners will be respectful of this diversity and commit to serving all participants equitably during your event. Consider putting together a resource list that you can share with event partners and participants.

Following education, there are several concrete steps you can take to create an inclusive space during your event:

- Ensure your organization has a policy regarding discrimination and harassment and place. Share this policy with everyone who will be present at your event and make sure it is enforced at all times.

- Know each individual's chosen gender identity and preferred names and pronouns (i.e. he/she, his/hers, they/their). Be respectful and use these chosen names and pronouns. Apologize if you use the wrong pronoun or name. To continue using pronouns or names that the person does not identify with (even if using a legal name or prior name) is to be deliberately disrespectful. Transgender people can understand and sympathize with some confusion, so long

as there is continuous, good faith progress in using the proper name and pronouns.

- Make sure that the dress code for your event (if any) respects LGBTQ+ rights to dress in conformance with their gender identity.

- If possible, designate gender-neutral restrooms (toilet facilities that anyone may use, irrespective of gender identity or sexual expression). This amenity is also deeply appreciated by straight people with disabilities whose helper is of a different gender or for parents caring for children of a different gender who are still too young to use the washroom themselves.

- Never, under any circumstances, should a participant or contributor to your event be forced to reveal information about their gender identity or sexual orientation. All individuals representing your organization, outside contractors, and participants should understand and respect this policy.

Inclusion Across the Years

Unless you are hosting an event geared towards a particular age group, it is always beneficial to have participants representing a range of ages to ensure a diversity of perspectives are present. Youth and seniors are two age groups whose experience may be improved by particular inclusion measures. For both groups try to avoid "token" representation. If you do not anticipate having a large number of youth or senior participants, do your best to register at least two people from each age group so they may support each other during the event.

The term "youth" usually refers to individuals who are aged 15-29 years old in Canada. **To make your event friendlier to youth, we encourage you to think about the following factors:**

• Involve youth in your planning process and ensure staff and volunteers are prepared to respond to the needs of youth during the event. Youth are often available as volunteers and may be able to offer creative talent to your event for writing, editing, or designing conference materials and displays. It is also a good idea to involve youth in media opportunities and in post-event activities such as evaluation.

• Promote your event in places youth frequent (e.g. in youth magazines, at popular local hang-out spots, in youth shelters, at schools, on campuses). If you have an event-related website consider adding a section specifically targeted at youth.

• Few youth have access to personal vehicles for transportation. Try to ensure your event venue is accessible by public transit or think about arranging a bus or carpooling to allow youth to reach the event more easily.

• Youth often attend school during the day but University or College students may also have evening or weekend classes. Try to plan your event well in advance and to schedule events where youth are anticipated to be present during evenings or weekends. This will allow for youth who have classes or other commitments during these times to make alternative arrangements to be able to attend.

• Youth are just getting independently financially established. Make sure your event dress code does not require highly formal clothing as this may be beyond the financial means of youth.

• Use plain language and try to avoid jargon so that youth understand event content. Make sure youth have the proper resources and adult support to accomplish tasks assigned either during the planning stages or during the actual event itself.

• If youth are participating in your event, try to highlight resources and organizations that may be of interest to them.

The term "senior" is generally used to refer to individuals 65 years of age or older in Canada.

To create an event that is appealing to seniors consider the following:

• Involve seniors in your planning process and/or as presenters. They often have time to volunteer as well as experience and wisdom to impart on any number of issues.

• Seniors may not have access to a private vehicle for transportation. Make sure your venue is accessible by public transit or think about arranging a bus or carpooling to allow seniors to reach the event more easily. Further, try to end events before dark if seniors will be in attendance and driving, as they often experience reduced visibility at night.

• Many seniors experience sensitivity to lighting and as we age our eyes take longer to adjust. Best practice is to have a space that offers bright, natural light throughout. Try to avoid use of incandescent lighting (which can be dim), lighting without covers (covers help to reduce glare), and older fluorescent lighting (the new fluorescent bulbs are generally okay).

• Aging also impacts our hearing and makes it more difficult to focus on individual sounds. Try to reduce background noise at your event as much as possible and use microphones, speakers, or headsets to improve people's ability to hear and focus on presenters.

• To assist with readability of materials, make sure handouts and signage are done in large print and that the font and background of these materials are high contrast.

Spirituality & Religion

In an inclusive event it is important to address and accommodate all participants' spiritual needs — to many, this is a sign of respect. To meet the spiritual and/or religious needs of each participant there are a number of steps that can be taken. As always an important first step is to ensure everyone involved in running your event as well as all participants attending your event are aware of the need to respect the diversity of all individuals present.

Beyond this, you can do the following:

• Ensure the date and timing of your event do not interfere with any major spiritual holidays or periods of observance. Refer to these calendars for guidance: www.interfaithcalendar.org and www.timeanddate.com/holidays/canada.

• Refer to the "Individual Accommodations and Supports" sections of the event registration forms (see

Appendix B). Make a list of requested spiritual supports. If the requested supports are unclear, or you are unsure you can accommodate them, have an event organizer contact the participant who made the request to obtain more information and figure out how to best fulfill the request.

- Make sure your dress code is respectful of religious and spiritual clothing and accessories.

- Allocate a space in your event venue for spiritual observance, commonly known as an "interfaith space". This is a quiet room where participants can go to pray, meditate, or reflect quietly. Just be sure that participants who use the space understand the space is to be shared and therefore everyone should behave accordingly.

- Ensure meals reflect the dietary restrictions observed by the religious or spiritual practice.

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples live in many places in the world and practice their own cultures, languages, and traditions. They maintain close ties to the land in their cultural and economic practices. Indigenous peoples have worked tirelessly to have their collective cultural and political rights recognized.

In Canadian law and politics the term Aboriginal refers to Status Indians and non-Status Indians (also called First Nations people), Métis, and Inuit. There is significant diversity amongst First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Canada reflecting hundreds of indigenous nations. There are linguistic, spiritual, and customary differences within and between these communities. Not all indigenous people choose to identify with their heritage, speak their original languages, or practice traditional customs.

Other indigenous people have a strong sense of their ancestry and are deeply involved in maintaining the traditional practices and teachings of their ancestors.

The International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs reminds us that "self-identification as an indigenous individual and acceptance as such by the group is an essential component of indigenous peoples' sense of identity. Their continued existence as peoples is closely connected to their possibility to influence their own fate and to live in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems." This emphasizes the importance of never making assumptions about anyone's heritage based on appearance alone and trusting individuals when they say they are indigenous.

Some general best practices include:

- Consulting with the

community band office, government headquarters, local Métis association, Elders' councils, Friendship Centres, or one of the national organizations listed below to learn how to respectfully accommodate members of indigenous communities.

• Involving indigenous participants in decisions about the event, including which ceremonial activities should be built into the schedule, if any (e.g. sunrise ceremonies, drumming, dancing, singing, prayers).

• Acknowledging traditional territory at the event opening (e.g. "I acknowledge the _____ people, whose traditional lands we share for this event"). If unsure about the traditional territory or nation your event venue is located in, contact one of the aforementioned organizations for more information.

• Having a representative from the local indigenous community/nation (usually a Chief, Elder, or other community leader) attend to offer an opening prayer and set good intentions for your event.

• Providing access to an Elder for counseling and guidance, especially for longer events or those that address intense topics.

Some best practices reflect specific communities:

• An indigenous representative may wish to perform a smudge, as in the First Nation tradition. These events should always be optional, as some individuals may not feel comfortable participating in the ceremonies of another culture. In addition, smudging should always take place outside to avoid setting off fire alarms and to avoid triggering allergies to the substances being burned.

• If an indigenous representative or Elder participates, be sure to thank them with an appropriate token of thanks. The National Aboriginal Health Organization recommends tobacco (a sacred plant) for First Nation and Métis Elders and small gifts for Inuit Elders (see these guidelines for more information: http://www.naho.ca/media-centre/interviewing-elders-guidelines/).

Indigenous peoples may not always want these accommodations. Please respect their wishes.

Canadian Indigenous Organizations

• **The Assembly of First Nations** [1-866-869-6789 or www.afn.ca]

• **Native Women's Association of Canada** [1-800-461-4043 or www.nwac.ca]

• **Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami** [1-866-262-8181 or www.itk.ca]

• **Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada** [1-800-667-0749 or www.pauktuutit.ca]

• **Métis National Council** [1-800-928-6330 or www.metisnation.ca]

• **Congress of Aboriginal Peoples** [1-613-747-6022 or www.abo-peoples.org]

Ethno-Cultural Racial Communities

The term "ethno-cultural racial community" is an umbrella term that refers to ethno-culturally diverse racialized groups of people, varying from newcomer immigrants, refugees and non-status people, to people who have lived in Canada for many generations. As stated previously, Canada is incredibly diverse and home to many different ethno-cultural racial communities. It is very likely you will have members of various communities present at your event and there are a few steps you can take to ensure everyone feels included and able to fully participate.

Again, the first step is always education. Build a component on the impacts of racism and racial privilege into your diversity training for staff and volunteers. Be sure any sponsors or partner organizations for your event promote racial diversity and equity to avoid discouraging potential participants from attending.

Once you are more aware about racial privilege, discrimination, and inclusion, you can take the following steps:

- Include representatives of various ethno-cultural racial groups in the planning process and ensure racial diversity amongst your presenters.

- Promote your event through community groups and organizations that work with, and support the various communities you seek to engage, such as local community centres, settlement agencies, and other such community service organizations that support newcomers and immigrants.

- Make sure the diversity of your audience is reflected in the images and language of promotional materials.

- Be conscious of the religious or spiritual dietary observances of the communities you seek to invite.

- Avoid "token" representation if possible. Seek to actively reflect the diversity of racial, cultural, national and Aboriginal communities in your region.

- Make sure your dress code respects cultural modes of dress.

- Encourage participants from diverse ethno-cultural racial communities to communicate their needs to you throughout the event, as well as to discuss any situations that make them feel uncomfortable. Be prepared to respond to situations of racism. The Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice provides some good resources on this topic (visit http://www.icpj.net/2010/racist-comment/ for more information).

As with disability, do not overstate or assume accommodation needs for participants of ethno-cultural racial communities. Recognize that you may make mistakes in attempting to accommodate them, but this is part of the learning process and a simple apology or request for clarification of the appropriate response options goes a long way.

Facing North

FemNorthNet's work brings together women from Canada's south with women from Canada's near and far North. Through our collaboration, southern participants have learned more about northern cultures, practices, and realities that are quite different from those in the south, yet just as diverse. Northern perspectives and knowledge are shaped by both culture and by the communities people are a part of.

In order to include both southerners and northerners in processes and events it is important to ensure people from both regions contribute to planning and organization. However, recognize that many northerners have competing demands on their time already, so it is important to acknowledge their prior commitments and assign tasks accordingly.

When organizing an activity in a northern location, or an activity in the South that will include northerners, note the following:

*   Do your best to host events and activities in northern communities. Northerners are often expected to go south to participate in cross-regional events, which only contributes to the lack of understanding amongst southerners about northern cultures. Take your

Jane Stinson © 2012

participants to experience life in a northern community and foster true cross-cultural understanding where able.

*   Northerners are highly resourceful. There may not be access to as many services and goods as those in the south, but northerners are skilled at doing things differently than in the south, often with a lot with less. If struggling to find a solution to a planning problem (such as finding a suitable meeting space in a small community), ask someone from that northern community about it—chances are they will have some creative alternatives to suggest!

*   Northern cultures and northern landscapes are distinct from southern ones, therefore the practices, language(s) and images used in the activity should reflect practices, methods and images that are normally used in northern gatherings.

*   Like in many other cultures, northerners love to gather around food and great value is placed on hospitality. Include opportunities to share and enjoy food with one another at meetings and events to truly bring people together.
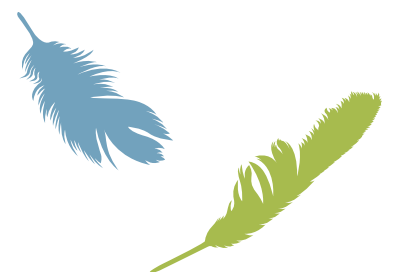
SECTION 2: PLANNING FOR AN INCLUSIVE EVENT

Deciding who will Participate

At the very beginning you need to identify who you would like to participate and begin to understand what their particular needs may be. People are diverse, often identifying themselves in multiple ways. Inclusion means ensuring that people are able to participate, with organizers recognizing and supporting diverse ways of being. When we fail to think about ways to include different groups of people, we may make it difficult for them to participate. And we need to understand that diverse groups overlap and include other groups.

For example, if we want to bring in young people, we will want to remember that young women and men can be recent immigrants, Aboriginal, people with disabilities, and/or LGBTQ.

Budgeting for Inclusion

When planning an event it is best practice to include an amount in your budget specifically for inclusion services and supports. When calculating this amount consider who will be attending your event and what their needs might be. A best practice is to distribute a registration form well in advance where participants can indicate services and supports they may need access to for full participation (see the "Event Registration" section and Appendix B for more information). This step will help you budget accordingly.

Below is a list of services and supports that may be required. A *Sample Budget for Inclusion* can be found in **Appendix A**. The sample budget includes cost estimates for a variety of services and rentals, however it is recommended that you check costing with local service providers in the community where the event will be hosted as costs can vary between locations.

Pre-Event Inclusion Services

- **Event materials** – Depending on your desired audience, event materials such as handouts, forms, and signage may require translation into French, English and/or other languages, including Braille. Translation is one budget item for inclusion. Printing Braille documents should be included separately since only special print companies are able to produce Braille documents. In addition, it is good practice to have your event materials available in multiple formats including in print and on a website in Word, PDF and rich text formats. Check out the "Preparing Event Materials" section for more information.

- **Financial assistance** – Some people will require financial inclusion measures in order to attend your event. This often means they require a cash advance for themselves as well as for a family member or attendant who will support them throughout the event. Advances may cover things such as travel expenses

to the event location and transportation costs to event venues. Arrangements may also need to be made for waiver of the requirement to produce a credit card during hotel check-in.

- **Accommodations for participants with disabilities** — Wherever budget allows, it is best practice to allow participants with disabilities who need to travel to attend your event to arrive in town a day before the event begins and to depart a day after the event ends. This recognizes that there may be additional and often unexpected demands for those with disabilities when they travel.

- **Travel considerations** — When budgeting for travel costs for facilitators, speakers, participants, etc. include a sufficient amount to ensure flexibility for the traveler to accommodate their particular needs. In addition remember safety concerns that may arise as a result of the time or location of travel.

- **Care Services** — Parents with young children, and individuals who care for an elderly relative or family member with a disability, may require care services for their dependents while they attend your event. In addition, some participants may require boarding for their animals. Not all participants will have the resources to cover the expense of these services. If your budget allows, issue funds for care services to these individuals in advance, or arrange for reimbursement of costs following your event. Refer to the Sample Budget for Inclusion in **Appendix A** to set appropriate care service reimbursement rates and the sample care provider contract and invoice in **Appendix C** for appropriate payment documentation.

On-Site Services

- On-site service requirements may include sign language and oral interpretation, personal attendants, Braille translation, Computer Assisted Real-time Translation (CART), language translation, spiritual support, child care, animal care, etc. We recommend that you are generous in your cost estimates at the start (allocate more money for services than you anticipate them actually costing). After you have received more information about needed services via registration forms or invitation responses the budget can be revised and any excess funds can be used as contingency funds (to cover last minute service costs) or put towards other event costs.

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Putting Together an Event Team

The best way to ensure your event is inclusive of diversity is to plan and organize the event with a diverse team. If possible, try to put together a team that reflects the diverse group of people you have identified as your audience. If this is not possible, consider setting up meetings or phone calls early on in your planning with individuals or organizations that either represent or are familiar with these diverse groups. They can provide pointers to ensure your event is truly inclusive of diversity!

Timing Your Event

So you have an event idea, you have identified your desired audience, an inclusive budget developed, and an event team in place—amazing! The next step is deciding when to host your event. When making this decision you have to consider not only the schedule of your organization, but also the schedules of your desired participants. Event timing can affect who is able to attend, and if poorly planned it may also affect your ability to provide a high-quality, inclusive event.

We recommend you choose a date that leaves you plenty of time to make necessary bookings and leaves your participants enough time to make the preparations they will need to attend.

Some factors to consider when choosing the dates and timing for your event:

- **Cultural Considerations** – We live in a culturally diverse country. Try to time your event so that it does not overlap with major religious or cultural holidays. Significant cultural and national dates you should keep in mind can be found at the following websites: www.interfaithcalendar.org and www.timeanddate.com/holidays/canada.

- **Ability Considerations** – People with disabilities may need extra time to arrange transportation and to perform the routines necessary to prepare for your event. If you schedule your event on short notice, people with disabilities may not be able to attend.

- **Disability Supports** – Disability support and services agencies often require between several days and several weeks notice to accommodate requests. For example, sign

language interpreters, oral translators, and real-time caption professionals are in great demand and short supply and can require from two to four weeks notice for services. (These should be the first services you book to ensure full inclusion of your event.) If you are showing a video, allow yourself sufficient time to get it captioned and have descriptive video added.

- **Transportation** — If your event runs over the scheduled time people with disabilities may be unable to stay, as pick-ups by accessible transit often must be scheduled in advance. Do everything you can to ensure your event runs on time. If you anticipate spontaneous social events before or after the formal event consider formalizing these so participants can schedule accordingly (e.g. include an optional off-site group dinner on the event schedule).

Finding a Location

Safety, access and universal design are key considerations in choosing a location for your event or places for your guests to stay. Be sure to make an on-site visit before booking any location. You can never be certain of a location's universal design features or accessibility with only a phone call.

When you visit possible sites, take a tape measure and the *Diversity through Inclusive Practice Checklist* that accompanies this toolkit with you. If you have never checked out a location with inclusion in mind before, you may want to invite someone with more experience in organizing for inclusion to accompany you.

In addition, it is a good idea to walk the floors of the accommodations and event venue the day before check-in to ensure everything is properly arranged and any required maintenance work has been completed.

Some common inclusion bumps or pitfalls to look out for when choosing a location:

- **Entrances & Exits** — Choose a building where women, seniors and disabled people will be able to enter/exit through safe, well-lit entrances. Inclusion cannot happen when some people have to use a freight elevator or enter/exit an event venue through a staff-only door, while others get to use the main doors. These differences can set some people apart from the group and create additional barriers such as arriving late, using different routes from the main group, or the perception that some people require "special handling". Inclusion happens when all participants enter/exit through the same entrance and have access to the same routes.

- **Key Accessibility Features** — Disabled parking should be available close to the main entrance of any event venue. Elevators should have low buttons with Braille markings and be equipped with audio floor indicators. An accessible washroom or washroom with an adapted stall should be available in each venue for participant use. Check to see if the venue has a hearing-aid compatible telephone available for hearing-impaired participants or a public telephone that has volume control and is accessible to wheelchair-users. In addition, if you are providing on-site care services for children, seniors, or family members with disabilities make sure these spaces are also accessible for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers, crutches or other mobility aids.

- **Rest Areas** – Many participants appreciate a quiet space to rest, or to practice their religious or cultural traditions. Providing a quiet room with chairs and some water helps to ensure inclusion.

- **Maintenance** – It is important to ensure venues for hosting participants have been properly maintained. Check if any repairs or remodeling are scheduled during your event and, if so, ensure the venue makes proper accommodations to keep the site accessible and safe to guests. Floor surfaces throughout should be even, firm, and slip-resistant. Hotel rooms designated for people with disabilities, which may not be used frequently, often lack regular maintenance and may have a loose toilet seat or a broken support bar. Waiting for maintenance staff to arrive can create a dangerous situation for the participant and repairs may interfere with a participant's ability to use their room.

- **Power Supply** – Access to electrical outlets for accessibility services such as CART or simultaneous interpretation adds another draw on venue electricity (in addition to the laptops, microphones, speakers, etc. that you may be using). Check with the manager to ensure there are sufficient electrical outlets in each room and that the venue's electrical system (breakers) will be able to handle providing the amount of power you need to run all required technology. Make sure power cords are secured to the ground to allow safe travel over them. Make sure all equipment is plugged into power-surge protected power bars, either provided by the venue or brought in by yourself or a contracted audiovisual technician. In addition, it is always a good idea to check whether or not the venue has a power generator available in the case of an electricity outage. For participants who use battery-powered medical equipment that requires charging, prolonged power outages may be hazardous.

- **Check-In Assistance** – Negotiate with the venue manager to have maintenance and housekeeping staff available to assist with participant check-in. These staff can ensure needs such as extra linen, lowering the beds, necessary repairs to fixtures, etc. can be accommodated. If this is not possible ensure management accompanies you on a tour around the venue(s) the day before the event to ensure all issues are addressed in advance of participant arrival.

Box 1. Creating Inclusive Conditions in Your Venue

While you may not always be able to control the selection of venues you have to choose from, there are simple things you can do within any venue to create a more comfortable and inclusive space for all participants.

- **Reduce or eliminate background noise** – During meetings, background noise such as fans, fountains, and piped-in music can be a distracting for participants and can limit participation for some.

- **Create a smoke and scent-free environment** – Smoking and strong scents can prevent some people who are sensitive to them from participating in your event.

- **Remove harsh lighting** – Fluorescent lighting, flashing lights, and overly bright lights can be barriers and triggers for some people. If possible choose a venue where these lighting issues can be avoided and ask participants not to use flash photography during the event (unless instructed it is okay to do so).

- **Regulate temperature and air quality** – Ensure the venue has a good ventilation system and heating/cooling system so that participants are able to breathe easy and remain comfortable during the course of your event.

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Box 2. Facilitating Medication Storage, Use & Disposal

Many people require medication in the course of their daily activities. It is important to ensure that there are sufficient health breaks provided to allow participants to discretely slip away and administer their medication. Some participants will require a refrigerator in their rooms and on-site in order to properly store their medication. For participants that use needles to administer medication a proper biohazard container will be required for safe disposal. Ensure there is a proper container at the event venue and arrange for pick-up of this container by the appropriate disposal service if needed.

Box 3. Safety & Evacuation Procedures

Once you have selected your venue it is important to sit down with the building manager to discuss what to do in the event of an emergency. You will need this information to prepare any staff and volunteers assisting with the event as well as to inform event participants about what should be done should an emergency or evacuation situation arise. Even if you are hosting your event at a venue that is very familiar to yourself and all participants, it is always good to review procedures and refresh people's memories of proper

emergency response procedures. Also ensure with the building manager that you have the proper insurance (e.g. for damages) and licenses (e.g. gaming or liquor permits) in place and that your event will meet building regulations (i.e. fire codes).

In addition to building procedures, such as evacuation in the event of a flood or fire, event organizers should also take time to think about any other possible emergencies that could occur, such as a health emergency with a participant. A good place to start is by reviewing participant registration forms to note what type of health conditions you may have to respond to. For each possible emergency a strategy to reduce risk along with a response procedure should be developed. You will need these procedures in place to properly train staff and volunteers at your event.

A key part of emergency response procedures is the chain of communication. One staff or volunteer person should be assigned as a lead in the event of an emergency. This person will be responsible for communicating with the venue manager and staff as well as emergency response personnel (fire, police, or ambulance). Event organizers should develop a list of key contacts and each contact's role in the event of an emergency. The lead emergency response staff or volunteer person should have a copy of this list with them at all times during the event.

Another staff or volunteer person should be assigned to managing individualized evacuation plans for participants. Participants should identify specialized evacuation needs on their registration form or when they confirm attendance at your event. The staff person assigned should keep a copy of these individualized procedures as should the venue manager. A copy of all emergency procedures and contacts should also be stored with an off-site contact.

Preparing Event Materials

To ensure inclusion, event materials should be finalized and ready for any necessary adaptations well in advance of the event. This means that presenters should be asked to submit their presentation materials (i.e. slide shows, handouts, videos, audio files) well in advance of the event so that they can be adapted into various formats for participants. Many agencies require at least a few weeks' notice to be able to provide transcriptions, translations, or captioning of materials in time for events.

Written Materials

Having written materials available in a variety of print and on-line formats makes them accessible to wider audiences and removes barriers to participation. The official language or languages of the event should be clearly indicated on promotional materials so participants know whether or not they will require translation of materials to be able to participate.

Using clear or plain language summaries of complex documents means that people with literacy challenges or those whose first language is not the language of the document, can participate in discussions (see **Appendix F** for the Canadian Labour Congress's guide on using clear language and design). Another possibility is to provide audio recordings of documents.

Offering copies of materials on a memory stick or a website allows people to use their own technology, with whatever adaptations they use, to review the materials. If you choose to put them on a website, make sure your website is accessible using Website accessibility guidelines (visit http://www.w3.org/WAI/users/Overview.html for more information).

Including access symbols on publicity materials lets people know which accessibility and support services will be available at your event (see **Appendix H** for different disability access sign symbols). These may also be useful to print on signage for event activities so participants know at a glance which accessibility features are offered in each one.

For more information on adapting written materials see the "Creating Accessible Handouts" section in **Appendix G**. To find a service provider to have written materials transcribed into Braille, translated into another language, or audio recorded please refer to the list of organizations provided with the *Sample Budget for Inclusion* in **Appendix A**.

Audio-Visual Materials

Ensuring inclusion also means that audio-visual materials such as videos, audio files, music, etc. include adaptations so that all can enjoy them. For example, closed captioning of videos allows hard-of-hearing participants and those who first language is not the language of the video to understand what is said. Sign language captioning allows Deaf participants to see the audio in their own language. Described video allows participants who are blind or visually impaired to appreciate the images portrayed.

When presenting charts, tables, or diagrams, presenters will want to describe what is on the screen so that all participants receive the necessary information. Transcribing audio files, such as radio broadcast or interview clips, allows those do not use hearing as their primary source of information or who do not understand the language used, to understand what is

contained in the audio files. Finally, slideshows can be made more accessible through simple design, clear transitions, and plain language use.

More information on how to appropriately adapt audio-visual materials can be found in **Appendix G**: *Resources for Creating Accessible Presentations & Presentation Materials*. These inclusion measures will ensure everyone in your audience is given the opportunity to follow along with event presentations and benefit from the information included in handouts, slideshows, and other audio or visual supports.

Event Registration

The information you collect on event registration forms will help you to effectively prepare for the inclusion accommodations required by participants. If all those attending your event complete a form, including guest presenters, exhibitors, and contractors from service agencies hired to provide on-site supports, you will be better able to host an inclusive event.

We suggest registration forms include all categories of access requirements so as to avoid any surprises on the day of your event. These may include accessibility service needs, dietary needs, childcare or animal care requirements, etc. In addition, your registration form can request all attendees avoid wearing perfume or using heavily scented products during the event. It is also helpful to have people provide emergency contact information for someone the organizers can contact in case of emergency.

A sample of a section that can be added to registration forms to gather information for inclusion measures is provided in **Appendix B**. For smaller events that do not require registration, **Appendix B** also provides some sample text you can include in event invites to gather the same information in a different format.

Box 4. Allergies

Knowledge and awareness of allergies are on the increase and as such, accommodation to them is necessary. An allergic reaction occurs when the body reacts to a substance as it if were harmful. Reactions can be highly uncomfortable and sometimes life threatening, therefore it is important to take steps to accommodate those who live with allergies.

The first line of defense is prevention. The most common food allergens are peanuts, eggs, tree nuts and shellfish. Other common allergies are soy, wheat and sulfites (a common preservative in foods). People may also be affected by environmental allergens including pollen, insect bites, animal dander, smoke, dust, perfumes, colorants, etc. If your registration form includes a section where participants can identify all allergies and whether they require an Epi-pen or other medical assistance if a reaction occurs, you will be better able to address these needs.

Event organizers should be aware of which participants are at risk for life-threatening reactions (such as anaphylaxis), be briefed on common symptoms of an allergic reaction (e.g. difficulty breathing, sneezing, cramps, rashes, itching, watery eyes, swelling, redness, etc.), and know what actions to take if someone requires assistance. A list of participants' allergies should be kept on hand in case emergency medical attention is required. Best practice is to have one person assigned to holding this list and administering Epi-pens or other basic first aid if needed.

Booking Services & Renting Equipment

Some key services are essential to hosting an inclusive event. In addition, the *Sample Budget for Inclusion* in **Appendix A** provides more information on when you should book certain services and other site-specific conditions that may need to be factored in when booking.

Catering – Participants should indicate on their registration forms if there are any dietary restrictions, food allergies, or food sensitivities that need to be accommodated. Make sure the caterer you book is able to manage special meal requests before ordering and provide a comprehensive list of what foods/ingredients specific individuals cannot eat to your caterer. Caterers may be able to provide a menu that suits all participants' needs or may prepare separate meals for those who require them.

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Spoken Language Translation/Interpretation* – It is important to you choose an "official" language for the conference and clearly state this language in all advertising materials and on registration forms. To be inclusive you will want to provide linguistic accommodation as much as you can, which means hiring translators for written materials as well as simultaneous interpretation during your event. Simultaneous interpretation can either occur on-site (the interpreter is present at the event venue) or off-site (the interpreter listens and relays information through an internet or phone connection). Both types of interpretation have different technical requirements and associated fees, so be sure to discuss your particular event needs with the service provider to ensure you book the type best suited to your event. Translators are also in high demand, so book well in advance for both written translation and simultaneous interpretation services.

It is important to realize that Canada has linguistic communities that do not speak either official language. In addition, languages have multiple dialects, therefore it is important to ensure materials and live content are translated into the dialect used by your audience members or the dialect used in the region where your event is being held. A limited budget or a lack of qualified and available translators can make it difficult to accommodate multiple language groups, but when possible it is highly important to accommodate as many languages as necessary.

Medical Services & Security – Depending on the size, location, and type of event you are hosting, you may legally be required to have emergency medical responders, First Aid providers, or security or police personnel on-site. Discuss these requirements with the venue manager(s), contact the local or regional police force about security requirements, and contact the local or regional paramedic branch about emergency medical service requirements.

Care Services* – Participants may have to bring dependents (including children, family members with disabilities, or seniors), a service animal (such as a seeing-eye dog), or personal care attendant with them in order to participate. Providers will need to be booked in advance and may require a space at the event venue (or nearby) to accommodate those using their

services. Service providers and those in their care will need to be fed and may also require overnight accommodation. The need for various service providers should be indicated on the registration form. A sample contract for hiring care providers, along with a sample invoice outline to share with providers, is included in **Appendix C**.

Participants who require a Personal Care Attendant should be referred to **Appendix D**. The *3-Step Process and Personal Assistance Checklist* will help these participants effectively define the types of assistance they will need during the event, negotiate a contract with a service provider, and provide all necessary information about care needs to both the service provider and the event host. These participants may also benefit from the contract and invoice guidelines in **Appendix C**. It is best practice to allow event participants to choose their own Personal Care Attendant rather than choosing one for them. Participants may have a family member that usually provides care or a preferred service provider that they know and trust. Only in instances where the participant requests assistance with finding a Personal Care Attendant for the event should the host of the event intervene.

Either arrange to pay the service provider directly or to reimburse the participant after the event. This decision should be made based on participant's preference rather than on a financial needs assessment. It is not inclusive practice if some participants are required to disclose information about their financial situation in order to get the supports they need. If choosing to reimburse, be sure to clearly stipulate the terms for reimbursement in advance (e.g. Will the host cover travel, accommodations, and meal costs for the care provider? Is there a limit on the number of service hours eligible for reimbursement? Are family members eligible for payment for service?). Always require a copy of the signed contract from the participant in advance of the event and a copy of the service provider's invoice prior to issuing reimbursement.

While a *Personal Assistance Checklist* (**Appendix D**) may be attached to the contract given to the service provider, the participant may not wish to share this list with the event host as the information it contains is highly personal. However, it is important the event host request a list of emergency contacts (including contact information for a back-up Personal Care Attendant) from the participant as well as an outline of any emergency protocols that should be followed should the participant experience a personal, medical, or event-related crisis.

If you know some of your event participants will require supports for persons with disabilities, you may also need to look into some of the following services:

Assistive Equipment – Some participants may require assistive equipment at the event site and/or wherever they are staying if the event is longer than one day. You may offer to assist participants who need equipment by providing them with a list of suppliers (see **Appendix A** for a list of possible suppliers) and providing them with the contact information of the manager of the hotel where they will be staying. If equipment is being delivered to and picked up from your event site, make sure a staff person or volunteer is aware of delivery and pick-up times.

Interpretation & Intervener Services* – Interpretation services allow individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing to fully participate in the event. These services are in high demand and require advance booking. Interpretation services may include American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) interpretation, oral interpretation (for individuals who lip-read rather than using sign language), Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or FM or infrared systems. FM and infra-red systems are amplifying units for people who are hard of hearing. The FM system is popular for events due to its strong amplification capacity and portability. Note that some assistive listening systems may work only for some hard of hearing people with a T-switch on their hearing aids, while others may need to wear a headset. It is best to have both options available.

For any event that is longer than one hour, you need to book a minimum of two interpreters. If the event is long you will need at least three interpreters: one to interpret, one to rotate and one who is on break at a table away from the interpreters' table. Depending on how long the meeting will be, you should ask the service providers how many interpreters will be needed. Interpreters need a break every 15 to 20 minutes, so if your meeting is longer than 20 minutes, you should plan on hiring two sign language interpreters. If your event runs overtime, you need to ensure the interpreters can be paid and are available for the extra time.

Deafblind individuals will not benefit from the above interpretation services. They require an intervener, which is a specialized attendant trained to communicate with deafblind people via methods such as signing into their hands. Once you know your participants' needs, book right away.

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Captioning – Deaf and hard of hearing people also benefit immensely from captioning services. Captioning services may be provided remotely (off-site) through an internet connection or on-site through Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART). The advantage of off-site captioning is that captioning can be provided for events taking place online (e.g. web conferences, webinars) or, when events are physical gatherings, the interpreters can caption from their office and save you travel and accommodation expenses. The advantage of on-site CART services is that if your internet connection fails, or the microphone does not pick up all audio (such as questions from the audience), the interpreter can continue fully captioning everything that is said. Both on-site and off-site captioning services have different technology requirements. Discuss your resources and needs with a local service provider to determine which type is best for your event.

 *Interpreters and care providers should be told in advance of the event if they will be needed for support outside of the formal event schedule, such as during event breaks or for social activities following the event. It is important to provide these types of support to participants in all aspects of the event if the event budget will allow for it.

Preparing Presenters & Exhibitors

Just like the event host, presenters and exhibitors at your event should be prepared to foster an inclusive atmosphere. When booking presenters and exhibitors provide them with information about the audience you anticipate hosting. Once registration has closed, follow-up with presenters and exhibitors to confirm who will be in the audience. Notify them if some participants do not speak the official event language fluently, will be using interpreters or assistive listening devices, will be referring to adapted materials, etc. Presenters should always be aware that their audience will have different levels of literacy, different attention spans, and come from different backgrounds. Presenters should be told to speak clearly, using plain language as much as possible, to make their presentations dynamic to maintain audience interest, and to be sensitive to the variety of identities and histories of participants. In this respect, presenters and exhibitors may benefit from reading the "Planning for Diversity" section of this toolkit.

In terms of logistics, presenters should be referred to **Appendix G** for information on preparing accessible slideshows, handouts, and audiovisual supports. Speakers should be notified if their presentation will be consecutively interpreted, as this will automatically double the length of their presentation. In consecutive interpretation the speaker presents 1-5 minutes of material at a time and then an interpreter repeats the material in a second language. Therefore, a one-hour presentation would only contain 30 minutes of actual material. For longer presentations, speakers may wish to plan for a short break or invite people to get up and move around as needed.

For larger event spaces or instances where simultaneous interpretation services are being provided, speakers and participants should always use microphones. If the presentation involves audience participation and language translation is being used, the presenter should also be equipped with a headset or be ready to refer to an in-room interpreter to translate

participant feedback. If there are not enough headsets to provide to all participants, the presenter may be responsible for relaying the translation provided back to the audience in the official event language.

You should confirm the types of technology your presenters will require access to (e.g. projector and screen, laptop, TV, speakers) and also the format their presentation will be in. If presenters plan to walk around and engage with the audience you will have to give consideration to room layout and time allocated for presentation. Always remind presenters to end sessions on time.

Remember that presenters and exhibitors are also diverse and may require different supports to participate. Have them fill out a registration form that includes a section on inclusion measures (refer to **Appendix B**) and confirm the accessibility features of presentation spaces with them in advance (e.g. accessible stage, adjustable podium, on-site services).

Recruiting Volunteers & Training Staff

Individuals who will be staffing or volunteering at your event should also be prepared to be respectful of participant diversity and ready to respond to participant needs. As a first step you should try to have staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of your participants. We also suggest you provide staff and volunteers with diversity and inclusion training, covering topics such as disability, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and spirituality. This will increase their confidence when they are working with people from different walks of life.

You may wish to access such training through an existing organization. Many colleges, universities, municipal governments, and local organizations offer diversity training workshops. Examples of organizations that you may wish to contact about diversity training include New Canadians Centres, LGBTQ Associations, or Aboriginal Friendship Centres. If you want to do your own training, we still encourage you to reach out to local community groups and service organizations for advice and information. In addition, you can draw on the information provided in the "Planning for Diversity" section of this toolkit.

We recommend that you screen all volunteers prior to your event to reduce risks and liability. Volunteer Canada has useful information on screening here: http://volunteer.ca/content/screening/. Further, volunteers should also fill out a form that includes a section on inclusion measures (refer to **Appendix B**) so that you are aware of any health issues or accommodations they may require.

Each volunteer and staff person should be assigned a specific role at all times (see list of key roles below). It is best practice to have a volunteer and staff coordinator who manages role assignment. Confirm in advance that volunteers and staff are comfortable carrying out their assigned roles and make adjustments as needed. All staff and volunteers should be trained in emergency and evacuation protocols (contact the venue manager for detailed information) and at least one staff person or volunteer should be First Aid and CPR certified.

It is a best practice to allocate time at the end of each event (or each day of the event, depending on event length) for volunteers and staff to debrief. This allows volunteers and staff to ask questions about any difficulties they ran into and to discuss these issues and how to resolve them. It is also a good opportunity to gather volunteer feedback about their experience via a brief discussion or anonymous survey. This feedback will allow you to improve the volunteer experience for your next event and hopefully provide you with a group of satisfied and dedicated volunteers to draw upon in future.
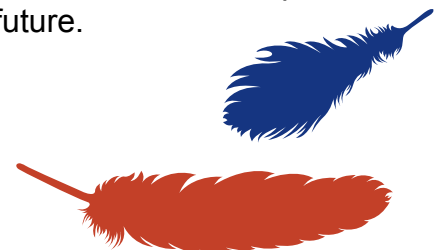
Key assignments for Staff or Lead Volunteers to support inclusion:

- **Volunteer Coordinator** — Assigns roles to volunteers, assists with training volunteers in these roles, and is available on event day to manage the work of volunteers and respond to volunteer needs and questions. All volunteers will check in with the Volunteer Coordinator as they arrive at the event venue. The Coordinator will be responsible for making sure all volunteers are visibly identifiable (from a name tag, shirt, or armband), and establishing a central place (e.g. information table) where volunteers can report to or go to for help during the event. The Volunteer Coordinator should take the lead on responding to complaints or concerns that participants bring to the attention of any volunteer, even if this simply means directing the concern to the appropriate staff person.

- **Staff Coordinator** — The Staff Coordinator should have been involved in planning the event and have an understanding of all the roles that need to be performed to allow the event to run smoothly. The Coordinator will assign tasks to staff and be available during the event to answer staff questions, reassign staff if needed, and deal with any logistical issues that arise (e.g. staff run out of office supplies, laptop for presentation stops working, staff person assigned to catering assistance becomes ill, etc.).

- **Attendant Assistant** — Assists family members or Personal Care Attendants who are accompanying participants with disabilities. This person should familiarize themselves with the supports required by each participant requiring accompaniment and organize a time to collect feedback from care providers about their experiences (either in a short survey or debrief session).

- **Service Provider Assistant** — Greets service providers as they arrive on-site and assist with any set up that is required. The Service Provider Assistant will be available for the duration of the event to answer questions from service providers and streamline communication with venue management and staff.

- **Exhibitor Assistant** — Manages setting up tables, chairs, and taping off exhibitor area, greets exhibitors as they arrive, directs exhibitors to their assigned space, and responds to any exhibitor questions or needs. Gathers exhibitors for a briefing on venue layout, schedule, and emergency and evacuation procedures.

- **Presenter Assistant** — Greets presenters as they arrive, takes presenters to see their presentation space, and introduces presenters to the audiovisual support technician to do sound check, slideshow set up, etc. The Presenter Assistant will answer any questions from presenters and attend to last-minute needs. They will also be responsible for briefing presenters on venue layout, event schedule, and emergency and evacuation procedures either as a group or individually.

- **Catering & Refreshments Organizer** — Manages purchasing and preparing food and refreshments for the event or is assigned as the main contact person for a hired catering company and staff on the day of the event. The Catering & Refreshments Organizer needs to carry a list of participants' food allergies and special dietary needs to ensure safe options are prepared, set aside, clearly labeled, and available to those who need them. They should introduce themselves to any participants with special dietary needs and be responsible for responding to any food-related questions or concerns.

- **Emergency Response Lead** — Carries a complete list of emergency contacts for all participants along with information about allergies, health conditions, and individualized emergency protocols with them at all times. Responsible for communicating with venue management and staff as well as emergency responders and security providers (paramedics, fire fighters, police) in the event of an emergency.

Creating an Inclusive Event Schedule

The pacing and structure of your event are also important to creating an inclusive experience. **When creating a schedule for your event, consider the following:**

- Allow enough time during presentations for questions and discussions, noting that everyone should be granted the right to respond at their own pace.

- Some individuals use medication throughout the day, require periods of rest for a fatigue disorder, must eat every couple hours due to a health condition, or take time out to engage in prayer or meditation and will need scheduled breaks to attend to these needs or they will miss out on parts of the event. We recommend scheduling short breaks between each event activity (5 to 10 minutes) to allow participants to get up, stretch, use the restroom, etc. In addition, longer breaks (20 to 30 minutes) with refreshments provided should be scheduled in between each major meal break.

- Individuals who do not have their own vehicle may need to use public transit to get to and from the event venue(s). Start and end your event while public transit is still running regularly or arrange a cab, bus, or carpool for participants without personal vehicles.

- Try to hold your event during daylight hours when it is safest for people to travel to and from the venue(s). Note that this may not always be possible if hosting an event in a region where daylight hours are dramatically reduced during a particular season (e.g. in Canada's North during the winter).

- If you anticipate having youth participants, plan to hold the event outside of regular school hours on an evening or weekend.

- If you expect people will want to stay to socialize following official event activities build a time for socializing into the schedule so that participants can plan accordingly.

- Clearly identify which activities on the schedule are optional. This allows individuals who have family responsibilities, work tasks, or become tired easily to identify when they can be absent from the event without missing anything too important.

- Issue the event schedule to participants at least a week in advance of the event so they can plan for transportation to the venue(s). This is especially important for individuals with disabilities who may need to book special vehicles.

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SECTION 3: HOSTING AN INCLUSIVE EVENT

Setting up the Venue

Seating, Booths, Tables & Displays

The organization of seating and tables in an event space is important for visibility, mobility, and interaction. A selection of different seating arrangements and the advantages of each are outlined in **Appendix I**. Regardless of which seating arrangement you choose to use be mindful of the following:

• Presenters and/or other participants (if the event is interactive) should be as visible as possible from any seat in the room. Being able to read facial expressions, body posture, and physical gestures is an important part of interpreting what people mean or how they feel when they speak.

• There should be enough seating to accommodate event participants as well as any staff, volunteers, service providers, presenters or exhibitors that may be present and allowed to participate in event activities. Staff and volunteers should have seating reserved near venue exits in case they need to get up and leave during the event. Personal Care Attendants should have seating reserved in a location where they can be clearly signaled by the participant they are assisting if needed but are otherwise unobtrusive during event activities.

• Tables should be spaced at least 4 feet apart with aisles in between to allow participants with mobility devices to circulate freely. Ensure there is space at each table to accommodate a wheelchair or scooter user if need be (if a table usually seats 8, only place 6 chairs around it). This allows participants using mobility devices to freely choose where they would like to sit rather than being pre-assigned to a seat.

• If there is a need to pre-assign seating try to avoid clumping participants with disabilities in one area or creating a "wheelchair ghetto" at the back of the room. If a participant has requested to be seated in close proximity to an exit, rest room, or refreshment table this should be respected. In cases where the venue space has areas of sloped floor, ensure scooter and wheelchair users are located in spaces where the floor is flat. In larger venues, participants who have visual impairments or are Deaf or hard of hearing should be seated as close to the front of the room as possible to improve their ability to hear the presenter, read the presenters lips and gestures, and see any visual presentation aids.

• Ensure all aisles in event rooms are kept free of tripping hazards, such as extension cords and technical equipment cables. Cables should be run around the outside perimeter of a room and not cross door thresholds (unless absolutely necessary). There should also be waste bins located close by to deter participants from leaving event materials or refreshment containers on the floor.

It is also important to ensure pathways to refreshment tables, information tables, and exhibitor booths and displays are wide enough and kept clear of tripping hazards. If a venue is set up for participants to be standing or mingling (such as for a cocktail hour), remember to provide some seating options along the outside edge of the room for participants who may require periods of rest.

Signage
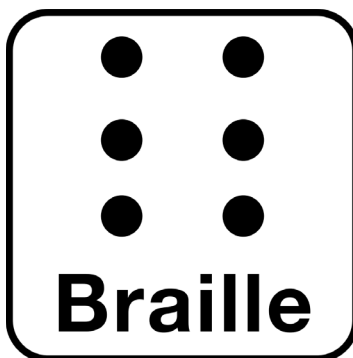
Signage is an important element of an event if any of the participants are unfamiliar with the venue. Signs can be posted outside the venue to clearly identify the event or inside the venue to identify directions to rest rooms and information tables or to indicate which activities are taking place in which room. Having a schedule poster (approximately 24 inches by 36 inches) available in a central location is also a good idea.

Signs should be clear and easy to read for everyone. The text on the sign should be high contrast with the background (e.g. black on white or white on dark blue) and in large print. We suggest using both upper and lower case letters, in a serif font (such as Times New Roman). For indoor signs beside event rooms, we recommend upper case letters be at least 20mm tall and lower case letters be at least 15mm tall. Outdoor signs will require much larger font, depending on the distance from which the sign must be able to be read.

If it is reasonable (and if resources allow) we recommend signage be translated into necessary languages (e.g. French, English, Braille). It is also a good idea to include access symbols (refer to **Appendix H**) on signage for event activities so participants will know if supports such as assistive listening devices will be available in that session. So get those signs up—but also remember to have someone assigned to taking signs down at the end of your event!

Managing Staff & Volunteers

On the day of your event any staff or volunteers helping out should already know their assigned role and how to complete it. Volunteers may be supporting participants, guiding them to events, working at a central information table, assisting with refreshments, distributing event materials, or other related tasks. Staff will likely be working in more technical roles such as assisting presenters and exhibitors, directing contractors (interpreters, technical support people, caterers), and running activities.

It is always recommended that you have at least one staff

person assigned to managing the roles of other staff and volunteers. There should also

be one staff person assigned to responding to emergencies. This staff person should have

a complete list of emergency contacts for all participants along with information about allergies, health conditions, and individualized emergency protocols.

For larger events we recommend having a designated table for volunteers and staff where participants can go for information or assistance. Volunteers and staff should be easily identifiable by wearing something bright such as an armband, nametag, or vest. The volunteers or staff who are certified in First Aid and CPR should also be distinguishable—we recommend putting a red cross on their shirt, armband, nametag, or other identifying item.

Remind staff and volunteers to check in with each other throughout the event to make sure each of them is hydrated, has been eating regularly, and taking breaks as needed.

Check-ins could occur through face-to-face conversation or simply by visually checking in to see if anyone is showing signs of fatigue, discomfort, or distress. Like participants, volunteers and staff may find certain situations overwhelming and/or forget to look after self-care without the proper supports in place.

Managing Service Providers

All service providers working at your event should be instructed to check-in with a designated staff person or at the main information table when they arrive at the event venue. Some service providers, such as those providing technical support, may require access to your venue in advance of the event (often the night before) so someone should be available to meet them, give them access to the venue, and assist with any set up issues. Each service provider should be assigned to a particular staff person or volunteer should they have questions or concerns during the event.

Those providing services should be briefed on important aspects of the event such as the schedule, venue layout, and emergency procedures. It is best practice to ensure service providers are given a package that includes this information either in advance of the event or when they arrive at the venue. Packages for moderators, note-takers, interpreters, and technical support persons (lighting, audio-visual, assistive devices, etc.) should include copies of all presentation materials and presenter notes. Packages for care providers should include emergency contacts, health information, and individualized emergency protocols for those in their care.

Managing Presenters & Exhibitors

It is best to have exhibitors set up their tables and/or displays either first thing in the morning before participants arrive or while participants are engaged in an event activity in another space. This prevents participants from getting in the way of exhibitor set up or vice versa. Exhibitor spaces should be clearly labeled and outlined (using masking tape, rope, etc.) to ensure displays do not take up aisle space needed for participant movement.

Exhibitors should be instructed to check-in with a designated staff person or at the main information table when they arrive at the event venue. One staff person or volunteer (or more, depending on number of exhibitors) should be assigned to assisting exhibitors. Exhibitors should be briefed on important aspects of the event such as the schedule, venue layout, and emergency procedures.

Presenters may be invited to participate in your entire event or may only be present for a single activity or session. Either way, you should instruct presenters to check-in at a designated location or with an assigned staff person or volunteer 15-30 minutes prior to their presentation. Presenters should be given an opportunity to get familiar with the space they will be presenting in and to test out any audio-visual aids they will be using during their presentation with the technical support people. This is also a good time to remind presenters to speak clearly, to be sensitive to the needs and identities of audience members, and to keep their presentation running on time. Presenters should be briefed on what to do should an emergency arise during their presentation.

Welcoming Participants

Everyone knows first impressions count, so it is important to set the tone for your event at the very start. Have participants check-in at a main registration table or with a designated staff person as they arrive. This is an opportunity to inquire about any last minute inclusion requests or accommodations and to distribute event materials, including those in adapted formats. It is a good idea to include a copy of the venue layout, event schedule, and emergency procedures in each participant's materials package. At check-in participants should also be directed to needed services such as on-site care services, the booth for obtaining headsets, on-site medicine storage, personal interpreters, etc.

Once participants have gathered in one location for the opening of the event there are a number of items to review. It is important to remind everyone to be respectful of each other during the event and to contribute towards making all participants feel included and safe in every aspect. Let participants know that it is okay to leave any activity if they are feeling distressed, overwhelmed, or require a break and identify where they can find quiet spaces to rest. Explain to participants how to identify the staff and volunteers, taking time to introduce those who are playing key roles such as services coordinator, emergency response coordinator, or meal and refreshments coordinator. Reassure participants that event interpreters will translate everything that is said and will not censor anything. Point out key venue features such as accessible washrooms, exits, information desk, interfaith/meditation room, charging stations for cell phones or laptops, etc. If time allows, go over the schedule for the event and remind everyone that it is important to arrive at event activities on time so the schedule is not delayed.

Emergency evacuation procedures should also be

reviewed. Let participants know what the alarm will sound like, that staff or volunteers will lead them out of the venue, and where the outdoor safe meeting place is. Reassure participants who require assistance that someone will be there to help them out of the venue should an emergency arise.

Most importantly, make sure participants feel comfortable approaching your staff or volunteers with any questions or concerns they may have. Remind participants that if they have a concern they are likely not the only one at the event to feel this way so it is important to voice these concerns and have them addressed. If a concern is brought forward that may be impacting multiple participants, consider addressing the issue and then notifying all participants about the resolution. For example, if a participant finds presenters are speaking too quickly to understand what they are saying, remind speakers to slow down and have speakers ask participants at the beginning of activities to provide a signal if they are going through material too quickly.

Meals & Refreshments

Aside from the discussion, learning, and socializing that goes on at events, participants also look forward to delicious food and drinks! However, it is important to make sure that the meals and refreshments served are safe for everyone.

If your event is small and you or your organization is purchasing and preparing food and drinks directly, make sure one staff person or volunteer is assigned to managing refreshment and meal services. This person should be aware of participants' food allergies and sensitivities or particular eating/drinking requirements to ensure safe options are prepared, set aside, clearly labeled, and available to those with special dietary needs. Participants with special dietary needs should know who this person is so they can direct any questions or concerns to them.

If you have hired a catering service to prepare and deliver food and drinks to your venue you should assign a staff person or volunteer to receive the delivery and manage the meal and refreshment services. The catering service should have received a list of dietary needs in advance (based on information provided on your registration forms or as feedback to invitations) and should have clearly labeled items for you (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, diabetic-friendly, halal, kosher, etc.). These labels should be referred to when serving participants or set out on the refreshment table if items are being served buffet-style.

If the catering service is both preparing and serving the meals and refreshments they should already have a system in place for managing special dietary needs. However, one staff person or volunteer should still be assigned to managing catering staff and answering participant questions about food and drink. This person should have a list of participants' food allergies, sensitivities, and special dietary needs on them at all times for quick reference.

If your event is larger in size and you are doing buffet-style meals and refreshments it is recommended the staff or volunteers assigned to managing catering only allow a few tables to serve themselves at a time or that multiple refreshment areas be set up. This will prevent congestion and allow participants who have anxiety over crowding or have mobility issues to move about more freely.

There should also be some form of refreshment available at all times for participants that have diabetes, low iron, blood sugar issues, or other dietary needs. Not sure what kind of refreshments to have on hand? Do a quick online search to find an abundance of recipes and snack ideas for accommodating every dietary need.

APPENDIX A - SAMPLE BUDGET FOR INCLUSION

The cost estimates listed below were gathered from information collected from the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Independent Living Canada, The Canadian Hearing Society, The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada, The Ontario Interpreters Society, Vital Mobility, Pharmasave, Wheelchair In Motion, Lifestyle Accessible Vans, Self-Care Home Health Products, The Red Cross of Canada, Accessible Printing Inc., and Braille IT as of Summer 2013.

Organization: _____

Lead Accommodation Coordinator: _____

Name of Event: _____

Date(s) of Event: _____

Service/Item	Service/Rental Notes	Budgeted Cost*	Actual Cost
Captioning	Include any conference calls, meetings, or events where the deaf or hard-of-hearing will be present.	$125 / hour	$____ / hour @ ___ hours = $ ____
Sign Language Interpretation	Sign language services should be booked at least 3 days in advance and can either be provided on-site or through video remote interpreting (VRI) services, if appropriate.	$125 / hour	$____ / hour @ ___ hours = $ ____
Braille Translation	Braille costs are difficult to estimate as different formats may be required for different users and most companies assess documents on an individual basis before issuing quotes. Each document will have different complexities and therefor require different parameters. Generally each electronic page of text will require 3 pages of braille translation. Shipping and handling of documents is extra. Please contact the Canadian National Institute for the Blind for referral to a braille translation company that can provide pricing quotes.	$6.50 / brailled page (first copy of document) $1.75 / brailled page (each additional copy)	$6.50 x ___ pages + $1.75 x ___ pages (x ___ # of additional copies) + shipping & handling fees = $ ____

Service/Item	Service/Rental Notes	Budgeted Cost*	Actual Cost
Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)	CART refers to word-for-word transcription of speech to text in real-time. On-site CART services have a 3 hour minimum booking time, along with an additional 1 hour preparation fee ($140). Services should be booked 2-3 weeks in advance. Travel for the writer (and accommodation, if applicable) must be covered ($90/hour for travel time + 0.54�/km for mileage). Off-site (remote) CART services have a 2 hour minimum booking time, along with an additional 1 hour preparation fee ($140). Services should be booked at least one week in advance and it is advisable to have an IT specialist on-site to assist with technical setup (testing of remote connection, audio and captioning devices). All event materials should be provided to writer in advance (PPT slides, agenda, meeting minutes, lists of acronyms, list of speaker names, speaker notes, etc.). **Tech Requirements:** hard-wired internet connection & audio (phone or polycom w/ extended speakers); dedicated phone line; laptop; projector w/screen; IT support person	**On-site** $140 / hour ($130/hour for each additional hour above 3-hour minimum) + $140 prep fee + $68 setup cost + $35 admin. fee + travel costs **Off-site** $250 / 2 hours ($130/hour for each additional hour) + $140 prep fee + $35 admin. fee	$ ___ / hour @ ___ hours + $ ___ in additional fees = $ ____
Language Translation	Translation may be required for event documents as well as during the event itself. The cost for translating documents will vary by length of document, complexity, and service provider rates. The cost for on-site translation services will depend on the length of the event, type of translation (simultaneous translation requires extra technical equipment), and number of translators required, plus any travel fees. Translation can also be provided off-site for teleconferences and video conferences to reduce costs. Call an area service provider for a quote on services to meet your event needs.	Pricing structure for documents will vary - Contact local service provider for estimates	**On-Site Services:** $____/ hour x ____ (# of translators) @ ____ hours (+ $____ travel fees) (+ $____ technical equipment rental) = $____

Service/Item	Service/Rental Notes	Budgeted Cost*	Actual Cost
Rental of Wheelchair	Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required. Some companies may have a minimum rental period of a week or a month. Other companies are more flexible and offer day-to-day rental.	$35-$40/week + $15 delivery charge (Vital Mobility) $3-4/day + delivery cost (Pharmasave)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge = $____
Rental of Electric Scooter	Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required. Some companies may have a minimum rental period of a week or a month. Other companies are more flexible and offer day-to-day rental.	$40-$55/day +$50-$60 delivery charge (Vital Mobility)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge = $____
Rental of Walker	Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required. Some companies may have a minimum rental period of a week or a month. Other companies are more flexible and offer day-to-day rental.	$39/month + delivery cost (Vital Mobility) $3.00/day + delivery cost (Pharmasave)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge = $____
Rental of Hoyer Lift	Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required. Some companies may have a minimum rental period of a week or a month. Other companies are more flexible and offer day-to-day rental.	$95/week + $60 delivery charge (Vital Mobility)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge = $____
Rental of Bath Transfer Bench or Shower Chair	Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required. Some companies may have a minimum rental period of a week or a month. Other companies are more flexible and offer day-to-day rental.	$25-$60/month + delivery cost (Self-Care Home Health Products)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge = $____
Rental of Commode	Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required. Some companies may have a minimum rental period of a week or a month. Other companies are more flexible and offer day-to-day rental.	$20-24/month + delivery cost (Red Cross of Canada & Pharmasave)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge = $____
Rental of Wheelchair-Accessible Van	Cost of vehicle delivery and additional mileage will vary by company. Note that a deposit or credit card number may be required through certain rental companies. Some companies may also have a minimum rental period.	$130/day + delivery cost + additional mileage (Wheelchair in Motion & Lifestyle Accessible Vans)	$____ / day @ ___ days + $___ delivery charge + $___ additional mileage fee = $____

Service/Item	Service/Rental Notes	Budgeted Cost*	Actual Cost
Attendant Care	Costs for attendant care are usually a flat rate. However if you're using a private agency, the rate is hourly and you will have to visit the agency's website for pricing. If the attendant is travelling with the participant, the organization will also be required to cover attendant travel and accommodation costs. It is also advisable to hire an attendant that floats, assisting multiple participants during the event.	$100 - $150/day per attendant	$____ / day @ ___ days (+ $___ travel accommodation costs) x ____ (# of attendants) = $____
Child, Elder, and Dependent Care Services & Accommodation	Care services for children, elderly or disabled dependents will vary by location, service provider, number of individuals requiring care, and type of care required. For instance, staffing requirements for child care vary by province, number of children, age of children, and needs of children. Cost may also increase if you must rent a space for the service provider to use during your event. In addition to providing care services for dependents, you may also have to provide travel, lodging, and meals (depending on length of event).	Contact local service provider for estimates	**Service fees:** $____ / hour @ ____ hours x ____ (# of dependents) (+ $___ travel fees) (+ $____ rental space) = $ _____ **Accommodation Costs:** $ _____ (travel costs) $ ____ / day x ___ days (hotel rates) $ ____ (meal costs) x ___ (number of dependents) = $ _____
Animal Care Services	Care services for animals will vary in cost based on the size, needs, and type of animal as well as the location and types of services offered by the provider. On-site service providers for service animals of participants will need to receive reimbursement for any travel costs and meals during the event.	Contact local service provider for estimates	Actual costs will vary

*Please be sure to contact local service providers to get quotes and costing for services and rentals. Prices will vary based on event location, specific requirements of your event and event participants, and additional service provider fees. Note that prices are generally higher for service provision in remote and rural areas and that travel or mileage fees may apply for bringing in on-site service providers.

Contact Information for Service Providers**:

Accessible Printing Inc.	(Ontario)		www.accessibleprinting.com
The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada	(National)	1 (604) 617 8502	www.avlic.ca
Braille IT	(Calgary, AB)	1 (877) 402 5463	www.brailleit.ca
The Canadian Hearing Society	(National)	1 (877) 347 3427	www.chs.ca
Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council	(National)	1 (613) 562 0379	www.cttic.org
Conference Interpreters Canada	(National)	1 (888) 294 3032	www.conference-interpreters.ca
Council of Canadians with Disabilities	(National)	1 (204) 947 0303	www.ccdonline.ca
Independent Living Canada	(National)	1 (613) 563 2581	www.ilcanada.ca
Lifestyle Accessible Vans	(Toronto, ON)	1 (877) 779 1677	www.lifestyleaccessible.com
The Ontario Interpreters Society	(Ontario)	1 (855) 656 3748	www.chs.ca
Pharmasave	(National)	1 (800) 661 6106	www.pharmasave.com
Red Cross of Canada	(National)		www.redcross.ca (Go to "In Your Community")
Self-Care Home Health Products	(Vancouver, BC)	1 (604) 872 5800	www.selfcarehome.com
Vital Mobility	(Toronto, ON)	1 (866) 508 4825	www.vitalmobility.ca
Wheelchair In Motion	(Selkirk, ON)	1 (888) 776 1102	www.wheelchairinmotion.com

**Please note the list provided does not indicate endorsement of any of the listed service providers by CRIAW or DAWN Canada. These providers were simply chosen based on the availability of pricing information and breadth of service provision. The list is intended to provide event planners with a starting point for researching service costs in their area.

APPENDIX B - GATHERING INFORMATION FOR INCLUSION

Invitations & Registration Forms

To ensure all participants are able to fully participate, it is a good idea to include a section on your registration form or a note in your invite instructing participants to outline what accommodations, services, and supports they require access to.

Sample Invitation

For a smaller event or meeting, registration forms may be unnecessary. As an alternative to the form, event planners can ask participants for accommodation information by sending them a brief invitation that includes the following text:

> In order to ensure your participation in our event we are happy to provide you necessary services and supports. These may include things such as provision of documents in alternative formats (Large Print, Braille, etc.), individualized accommodations, dietary requirements, etc. Please let us know what supports you will require so we can make arrangements in advance. We would also appreciate being notified of any specific assistance you may require in the event of an emergency evacuation. For more detailed information, questions or concerns please contact (*name of contact*) at (*email address or phone number*).

Sample Registration Form Section

Individual Accommodations and Supports

Please fill out the section below to indicate any health issues we should be aware of and to indicate what accommodations and supports you will need access to during the event. Check off the boxes beside all services, supports, or health issues that apply.

Allergies & Intolerances

☐   Food/Drink (specify): _____

☐   Environmental (specify): _____

☐   Medication (specify): _____

Mobility Requirements

☐   Personal Mobility Device (specify): _____

☐   Accessible Transit to and from event site(s)

Personal Assistance Requirements

☐ Personal Care Attendant / Caregiver / Family Member

☐ Advisors / Coach

☐ Psycho-Social Health Support

☐ Note Taker / Scribe

I require the above support / service to assist me with: _____

_____

_____

Name of Attendant / Caregiver / Coach accompanying me to event: _____

Service Animal & Animal Care

☐ I will be bringing a service animal with me to the event and require on-site pet care services.

Type of Service Animal (i.e. guide dog, hearing dog, seizure dog, mental health service dog, mobility service dog): _____

☐ I have a companion animal at home that requires off-site accommodations (boarding) while I am attending the event.

Language Requirements

☐ Simultaneous translation (Please specify language):_____

☐ American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation

☐ Langue des signes du Québec (LSQ) interpretation

Service Requirements

☐ Oral interpreter

☐ Assistive listening system

☐ Intervener

☐ Advisor

☐ Real-time captioning (CART)

Please explain your service requirements below.

_____

_____

Alternative Media / Materials Format Requirements

☐ Large print materials

☐ Braille materials

☐ Audio-cassette

☐ DAISY

☐　　　Descriptive video

☐　　　Captioned video

☐　　　Audio transcripts

☐　　　Copies of materials on CD, USB flash drive, or other device (specify): _____

Please provide more detail on the alternative media or alternative materials formats you require:

_____
_____

Individualized Accommodation Requirements

☐　　　Special dietary needs or restrictions (specify):

_____
_____

☐　　　Emergency evacuation needs (specify):

_____
_____

☐　　　Overnight accommodations (e.g. accessible hotel room) (specify):

_____
_____

Spiritual Support Requirements

Do you anticipate that you will have any needs for spiritual support during the conference? (Please specify):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you have any other accommodation requests for us? (Please specify below)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX C - SAMPLE CARE PROVIDER CONTRACT & INVOICE

Use the sample contract below to create a contract between your organization and event participants' caregivers or personal attendants. This contract may also be used for individuals providing on-site care services for children or other dependents of participants. This contract could be adapted for service animal care providers as well. For participants with extraordinary care needs or disabilities, this contract should be used along with the *Personal Assistance Checklist* in **Appendix D**.

Care providers should also complete a registration form or other form indicating personal health issues or accommodations they may require. Care providers must submit an invoice following the event (see example below) and may request reimbursement for lodging, meals (if not provided), and travel expenses (note that mileage rates should be negotiated in advance).

Using the contract below, replace the words in italics with your event information and have care providers fill in the rest of the information. Note that times for care provision will have to be flexible around event activities as well as the needs of the participant or their dependent.

Sample Care Provider Contract

During the (name of event) taking place at (location of event) on (date[s] of event) I, _____
_____ (name of care provider), agree to serve as a care provider to
_____ (name of participant, child, elder, or other dependent adult).

The hours for work are as follows:

Date(s): _____   Hours: _____

_____   _____

My duties will consist of:

☐ Providing assistance to the participant based on their individual requirements

☐ Providing assistance to a child, elder, pet, or other dependent of a participant based on their individual care requirements

☐ Other (please specify): _____

I understand that I am responsible for performing my duties diligently and for providing a caring and respectful attitude towards the person I am assisting during the event. I am aware that my role is to provide a positive experience for the person I am assisting, to help them fully participate in the event, and to avoid interjecting during the event unless explicitly requested to do so by the individual I am assisting.

I further acknowledge it is my responsibility to inform event organizers of any specific personal needs I have or anticipate could arise in the discharge of my duties (i.e. allergies, illness, etc.). (Name of host/ host organization) has no responsibility in this regard. If there are any conflicts or concerns that

cannot be resolved I am to notify (name of host/ host organization) as soon as possible.

_____   _____

(Care Provider's Signature)   (Host Organization Signature)

_____   _____

(Date)   (Date)

Sample Care Provider Invoice

Care Provider Name: _____

Care Provider Address: _____

Name of Event: _____

Event Date(s): _____

Name of Participant who received services: _____

Rates & Reimbursement

Item	Rate	Unit	Total
Care Provision Service	$ ___ (per hour / day)	(# hours / days)	
Accommodations (if applicable)	$ ___ (per day)	(# days)	
Travel Expenses (if applicable)	$ ___ (mileage / flight cost)	(# kilometres)	
Per diem (if applicable)	$ ___ (per day)	(# days)	
		Applicable Taxes:	
		Overall Total:	

Charge to:

_____ (Name of Organization)

_____

_____ (Address of Host Organization)

APPENDIX D - BOOKING PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

3-Step Process & Personal Attendant Checklist

The tools in this appendix can be shared with participants who require a Personal Care Attendant to assist them during your event. The 3-Step Process will help them to clearly identify their assistance needs and complete a contract with a qualified service provider. We recommend that the *Personal Assistance Checklist* (along with any additional assistance instructions) be attached to the Personal Care Attendant's contract (refer to sample contract in **Appendix C**).

3-Step Process to Booking Personal Care Attendants

Step 1: Establishing the Timeframe for Services & Availability of Your Attendant

Before filling out the checklist below, be sure to do the following:

1. Confirm your schedule during the event and identify the times at which you will require an attendant (i.e. all day, overnight, only during certain hours).

2. Confirm that an attendant will be available at the necessary times.

3. Determine whether or not attendants will be permitted to stay in event rooms with you at all times. If not, confirm with the event host that a separate room located near the event space will be provided for attendants to wait in while event activities are taking place.

Step 2: Establishing Assistance Requirements

Using the Personal Assistance Checklist below, identify all types of assistance you will require over the course of the event. If you have a particular illness, medical condition, mental health concern, allergy, or disability and will be receiving services from an attendant that does not regularly assist you, be sure to provide more information about it in a separate note to the service provider. Assistance needs not included in the checklist below should also be added to this note.

Step 3: Confirming the Contract

Ensure your personal care needs can be accommodated by the service provider or Personal Care Attendant. Negotiate the cost of services and payment method in advance and request these in writing prior to receiving services. Provide a copy to event host if being reimbursed for service costs. Complete any additional paperwork required by the service provider. In addition, put together a list of emergency contacts and protocols to share with BOTH the service provider and organization or individual hosting the event.

Personal Care Attendant Checklist

Category	Task	Activities	✔
Arrival	Accompaniment on Arrival	Meet at airport, bus depot, or train station to assist with luggage retrieval and transport to hotel	
	Check-in to Hotel	Assist with check-in, unpack luggage, organize toiletries and medications, set up disability-related equipment, and set up laptop or other devices	
Event Activity Assistance	Registration	Assist with registration	
	Pre and Post Event Activity Assistance	Attendant is unable to stay in room during event proceedings. Will assist with finding a place to sit, organization of event materials, set up for presentation (if needed), trips to washroom during health breaks, and meals during breaks. The attendant will not interfere with or participate in event proceedings unless invited to do so. Must enter and exit venue as discreetly as possible.	
	Event Proceeding Assistance	Attendant will stay for event proceedings, provide assistance with finding a place to sit, organization of event materials, set up for presentation (if needed), and note-taking. Will assist with trips to washroom, ensure fluids are readily available, and help with meals / snacks during health breaks. The attendant will not interfere with or participate in event proceedings unless invited to do so.	
Departure	Check-out from Hotel	Assist with packing personal belongings, disability-related equipment, electronic devices, etc. Help organize carry-on luggage if required. Assist with checking out of hotel and bringing luggage to lobby.	
	Accompaniment on Departure	Meet at hotel and accompany to bus depot, train station, or airport. Assist with travel check-in, luggage check-in, carry-on bags, and getting to point of departure. If flying, assist with finding someone to help the person through security and to their gate as well as a flight attendant on board to assist them. Ensure someone is at destination to receive them. If travelling with the person, provide in-transit assistance.	
Personal Care Requirements	Dressing & Undressing	Hang up, fold, or set out clothing for the day. Place worn or soiled clothing in a laundry bag or bin.	
		Assist with lower body - underwear/disposable briefs, skirt/pants, socks, pantyhose, slippers, shoes, boots	
		Assist with upper body - underwear, shirts, sweaters, ties, scarfs, jackets, coats, gloves, jewelry	
	Oral Care	Flossing / brushing teeth as needed	
		Cleansing / Providing mouth care as needed	
		Cleaning dentures	

Category	Task	Activities	✔
Personal Care Requirements	Facial Hygiene	Washing, rinsing, and drying face in morning, evening, and following meals (or as needed)	
	Hands Hygiene	Washing hands following meals and after elimination (or as needed)	
	Grooming	Using an electric or safety razor to remove unwanted facial / body hair (as needed)	
		Application of make up (as desired)	
		Brush / Comb hair in morning (or as needed)	
		Wash, blow or towel dry, and style hair (as needed)	
		Clean and manicure fingernails and toenails (as needed)	
	Genitourinary & Bowel Care	Perform care to the perianal area. Rinse and pat dry or use disposable wipes. Remember to CLEANSE FROM FRONT TO BACK (away from urinary tract) to prevent infection.	
		Perform catheterizations or ileostomy care (as needed)	
		Position, empty and clean drainage systems, including ileal conduits	
		Clean up individual and equipment after procedures or incontinence	
		Use disposal briefs (as required)	
		Attend to menstrual cycle (as required)	
		Monitor residuals (if required)	
		Administer enemas and suppositories performing stimulation or disimpaction (as needed)	
		Perform colostomy care	
	Bathing (Sponge Bath)	Assist individual with sponge washing and drying face, hands, underarm and genital areas before dressing, before bed, or as needed	
	Bathing (Bed Bath)	Prepare the items needed for bed bathing. Bathe and dry off the individual. Apply any creams, lotions, ointments, powders, or deodorants (as required). Clean and maintain bed bath equipment.	
	Bathing (Tub or Shower)	Assist individual with transfer into shower/tub, using Hoyer lift if needed. Ensure individual correctly positioned in bath/shower chair or to use grab bars. Assist with bathing, drying, and application of lotions, powders or deodorant (as required). Clean and maintain bath equipment.	
	Laundry	Launder clothing and/or bedding in the event of incontinence, spills, or emesis	
		Launder orthotic supplies and/or garments requiring special care (e.g. antiembolic stockings, CPAP headgear) if soiled	

Category	Task	Activities	✔
Accommodations	Room Maintenance	Ensure cleanliness of bathroom and bath/toilet equipment following use	
		Ensure cleanliness of bedroom, bedding, and assistive devices as well as organization of bed side table and/or desk	
	Personal Comfort & Security	Ensure comfort, safety, and security in the accommodations (e.g. eliminate tripping or mobility hazards, turn off appliances when not in use, adjust thermostat to comfortable temperature, ensure fluids available, etc.)	
Nutrition	Mealtime Assistance	Assist with feeding as required (could include washing hands prior to meal, cutting up food, assisting with eating and drinking)	
		Assist with gastrostomy or feeding tubes	
		Assist with Total Parental Nutrition (TPN) IV	
		Assist with hyperalimentation IV feeding using proper formula prescription and procedures (i.e. aseptic technique)	
Language	Translation/ Interpretation	Provide ASL interpretation	
		Provide LSQ interpretation	
		Provide linguistic translation (e.g. modified English, Plain Language)	
		Language: _____	
Communication	Assist with Speech and Interactions	Assist with use of Picture Exchange Communication System or other Augmentative and Alternative Communication System (e.g. talking computers) throughout event	
	Deafblind Intervention	Assist Deafblind person with communication throughout event	
Physical Health	Allergy Awareness	Respond to environmental allergic reactions (e.g. administration of anti-histamine)	
		Respond to gastrointestinal allergic reactions (e.g. administration of prescribed medications)	
		Respond to anaphylactic allergic reactions (administration of EPI pen)	
	Establish Resting Places	Ensure rest areas are available at all event locations	
	Medication Administration	Provide reminders to take oral, injection, and/or puffer/inhaler medication(s) as required	
		Administer prescribed oral medication(s) as required (e.g. with fluids, thickened fluids, food, etc.)	
		Maintain and control supply of oral, injection, and/or puffer/ inhaler medication(s)	
		Ensure oral medication is properly swallowed	

Category	Task	Activities	✔
Physical Health	Medication Administration	Administer injected medications as prescribed using correct safety protocols. Monitor medication effects. Dispose of sharps safely.	
		Administer puffer/inhaler medications as prescribed. Ensure inhalation equipment stays clean.	
	CPAP Therapy	Assist with setting up, cleaning, and maintaining CPAP machine, tubes, and mask	
	Oxygen Therapy	Assist with setting up oxygen canister and tubing. Ensure tubing and/or mask are kept clean. Monitor oxygen supplies.	
	Tracheostomy Care	Provide tracheal tube maintenance, changing inner and outer cannulas, replacing tape, and performing suctioning as needed. Maintain aseptic technique.	
	Ventilator Care	Ensure volume rate, humidity, and pressure are maintained as prescribed or as client condition requires. Change and clean tubes, humidifier, and filters as needed. Reattach tubes if needed.	
	Prosthetics	Assist with putting on prosthesis and stump socks	
		Exchange terminal devices and adjust prosthesis as needed. Ensure prosthesis maintained and in working condition.	
	Orthotics	Assist with putting on prescribed orthotics (e.g. braces, shoe inserts, splints, elastic stockings, burn garments)	
	Wound Care	Using aseptic technique, clean any wound and apply recommended dressing as prescribed. Maintain supply of needed dressings, creams, and solutions.	
	Seizure Response	If seizure occurs, time the seizure, protect the individual from harm, and ensure as much privacy/discretion as possible. In case of injury or severe/prolonged seizure, contact emergency services and inform the person of their seizure, injury, and the call to emergency services (if able). Debrief witnesses/others at the event once the crisis is resolved.	
Mental Health	Mental Health Aide Assistance	Provide mental health support throughout the event. Ensure both words and behaviour show respect and concern and speak to the individual as an adult. Provide good eye contact, active listening, honour reasonable requests, and observe body space the individual considers safe. Always follow the established care plan if one is in place.	
	Monitoring and Intervention	Indicate if behaviours, language, or observance of personal space is inappropriate for the setting	

Category	Task	Activities	✔
Mental Health	Monitoring and Intervention	Observe for changes in behaviour, abilities, mood, and personality. Respond to comments about harming oneself or others with the appropriate level of response (even if said jokingly). If extremes are observed, intervene with the appropriate response (to be established beforehand with the individual's consent). Also establish beforehand what information (if any) about the individual's condition can be shared with others. Recognize that serious threats of harm to self or others will require EMS response.	
		Be aware of events, situations, or people that seem to agitate the individual or that are known triggers for trauma, phobia, or panic. Know physical symptoms associated with negative reactions and if observed confirm the symptoms are in fact a sign of distress before acting upon them. Help the person avoid such stimuli or assist with coping mechanisms/ responses.	
	Assistance with Self-Care	Be patient and supportive, encouraging the individual to do as much for themselves as possible. Cue the person (as needed) to attend to personal hygiene, dress appropriately, observe the event schedule, behave appropriately, take medication(s), and allow sufficient time for rest. Help with money management and remembering details (if needed). Reinforce stress management and therapeutic techniques used by the individual. Actively discourage use of any substances that may inflame the mental health condition or decrease medication effectiveness, such as drugs or alcohol.	
	Administration of PRNs	If removing the negative stimulation/trigger and performing established coping techniques do not work to calm the individual, administer the prescribed PRN.	
	Emergency Response	Prior to the event establish the protocol for responding to a mental health crisis (e.g. suicidal ideations, severe panic attack, disabling phobic reaction). Respond appropriately. Debrief witnesses/others at the event once the crisis has been resolved.	
Service Animal	Service Animal Care	Assist with exercising and taking the service animal outside to go to the washroom in the area assigned for that purpose	

APPENDIX E - TRAVEL TIPS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Flying to Your Destination

If you require an attendant to travel with you, ensure that you apply for programs that discount or offer free travel to your attendant. The following major airlines in Canada offer programs for attendants (click on the link provided to access the associated application form):

- West Jet - http://www.westjet.com/pdf/travel/OPOF_Form1_en.pdf

- Air Canada - http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/before/documents/fft.pdf

- Porter Airlines - https://www.flyporter.com/Content/Documents/PorterRequestForAttendantSeating-en-2010-09-19.pdf

- Air Transat - See "Passengers travelling with an escort" http://www.airtransat.ca/en/Information-for-travellers/Before-you-go/Special-services/Passengers-with-special-needs?ID=18&type=voyageur&tmpl=GEN

West Jet and Air Canada are the only airlines that are required to provide this service and only within Canada. This means if you are flying internationally or connecting to a smaller airline that services remote locations you may have to request that the event host purchase the extra seat required for your attendant or reimburse you for the expense later on.

Unless specifically stated by your healthcare provider, you are not generally eligible to sit in executive class, first class, or other seating near the front of the aircraft. However, if your mobility is severely restricted you may be placed in one of these sections by aircraft personnel. Otherwise, you will require a Washington chair, which is a special chair that wheels individuals to their aircraft seat. Other equipment that airlines may use to assist you is the Dane (a device used for moving wheelchairs) or the Eagle (a device used for lifting individuals with limited mobility into their seats). Note that the Eagle can hold a maximum weight of 450 pounds.

An image of an Eagle 2, a device used for helping wheelchair users into airplane seats.

An image of a Dane, a device used for moving wheelchairs in airports and airplanes.

An image of a Washington Chair, a special chair used to wheel individuals to their aircraft seat.

Packing Your Bags

Experienced travelers with disabilities find it is useful to keep the following items easily accessible in their carry-on luggage at all times:

- Copies of the forms permitting an attendant to fly for free (or at a discount)

- The specifications of their mobility device (easily downloaded from the internet)

- Prescription medications, insulins, diabetes supplies, eyeglass prescriptions, or CPAP machines (these can not be easily replaced and may be affected by temperature or pressure changes outside the aircraft cabin)

- A list of emergency contacts and an ID and/or passport (backup copies should be kept with an emergency contact at home

If you are traveling internationally, make sure you follow the carry-on luggage rules for the country you are visiting.

Traveling with a Mobility Device

Notify airline personnel that you will be traveling with a mobility device both when you book your flight and when you check-in at the airport. No matter what anybody tells you, it is best to check your device and transfer into an airline wheelchair for your flight. This allows the baggage personnel to process your device safely (hopefully preventing breakage). However, if breakage does occur during transit, the airlines are usually very good about compensating you for repairs.

If you are traveling with a walker or manual wheelchair, ask for the attendant at check-in to place the device in a large plastic bag and to check it into "oversize luggage". If traveling with a scooter, remove the basket and have this placed it in a separate plastic bag. Have both the scooter and basket checked into "oversize luggage" together. If you travel with a power wheelchair, remove the joystick (controller) and the arm it attaches to. Place these in your carry-on luggage. This prevents your chair from being lifted by the arms and protects the controller. Remove the footrests and place them in a plastic bag provided by the airline. You can place your cushion in the same bag or use it as a support while you are seated in the aircraft.

Many people prefer to "gate check" their mobility devices so that they have their device for use right up until the time they board the aircraft. While this is an option, it is not advised. DAWN Canada member experiences with "gate checking" mobility devices have often been negative. Once an individual was left at the top of the jetbridge (ramp connecting boarding gate to plane) without assistance and no walker to assist herself (she discovered hers was broken). In another incident, an individual's scooter was left behind on the tarmac and the individual landed in another city to find out her device had not travelled with her. Based on this feedback, we highly recommend checking mobility devices as "over-size luggage" at the same time you check your bags and using an airline-provided device while in the airport.

Hotel Accommodations

If you will be staying in a hotel during your trip it is really important to specify room requirements prior to arrival. Ensure the hotel management knows about adjustments that need to be made to the height of the bed, requirements for the width of the door, and any assistive equipment you will require for the bathroom during your stay.

Preparing for Travel Delays

Ensure that when you travel, you have enough supplies to last an extra week should the weather or your health delay your departure. It is most important to ensure you have extra prescription medication and necessary medical supplies with you, as these may not be easy to obtain while away from home. You may want to carry a copy of your prescription from your doctor. If you are stranded somewhere without sufficient medication, most major pharmacies can transfer your prescriptions although you may have to pay for these directly and be reimbursed through your insurance plan later if you are out of province. You might also discuss ways to stretch your medication by taking less each day with your doctor or pharmacist until you are able to get home.

Travel Insurance

You should explore what travel insurance you have through existing coverage. If you do not have travel insurance, or it insufficient, you may want to look into purchasing additional coverage for your trip.

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APPENDIX F -
CLEAR LANGUAGE GUIDE

Page 1

Making it clear

A Clear Language and Design screen and checklist

Clear language and design can help you create a usable and attractive document that your audience understands the first time they read it.

CLEAR LANGUAGE = Understanding our RIGHTS

We hope this tool will help unions and other social justice groups to communicate and organize more effectively as we work toward a just and inclusive society.

www.canadianlabour.ca

Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

Page 2

A Clear Language SCREEN

☐ **Using the screen:**

- Look at the document and review its overall appearance.
- Place the window of the screen over three or four samples of your text.

Clear language involves thinking, planning, writing, designing, testing and revising

1 Line Length

If your lines extend beyond the sides of the window of this screen, they are too long.
Use columns or change your margins to 1.2 inches or larger.

2 Justification

Check the right margin of your text to make sure the lines end at different points.
This "ragged right" justification helps readers follow the text. Avoid a straight line on the right or "full justification". This is harder to read because it creates hyphenation and uneven spaces between words.

3 Highlighting

Use larger letters or fonts, bolding and boxes to highlight headings or important text. Avoid using too many highlighting methods at once.

www.canadianlabour.ca

Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

Page 3

This screen is a quick way to check draft reports, letters and other documents printed on 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

4 **Font Size**
- Count the number of words in several sample lines. If there are 15 words or more, your font is too small.
- Count the number of text lines and spaces within the window of the screen. If there are more than 11 lines and spaces within the window, increase your font size.
- Use a 12 point font or larger.

with serif M

5 **Font Face**
The letters in your sample should have "serifs," the little hooks on each letter. A serif font like Bookman or Garamond face is easier to read. Use "sans serif" fonts, such as Arial, for headings and captions.

| inch | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| cm 1 | 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9 | 10 11 12 | 13 14 15 | 16 |

Come to a Meeting on Childcare

Who?
What?
Where?
When?
Why?

6 **Text Density**
White space on the page breaks up dense text and makes the content more readable. We should also have:
- space between paragraphs
- highlighted headings
- bulleted or numbered lists
- pictures.

If your sample has no white space, edit your text into shorter paragraphs.

7 **Pictures**
Illustrations make documents more attractive.
A picture or graphic can be worth a thousand words.
Make sure pictures:
- are clear and placed with the text they illustrate
- reflect your readers and are inclusive.

Page 4

A Clear Language ☑ CHECKLIST

☑ **Consider this checklist as you review your draft document.**

Audience

- ☐ Who do you want to read your materials?
- ☐ Why do you want them to read it?
- ☐ What do you want your reader to do after they read it?

Content

- ☐ Will your readers be able to see how this material relates to them?
- ☐ Does it answer who, what, when, where, and why?
- ☐ Does the document contain all the information they need?

Organization

- ☐ Is the most important information first?
- ☐ Does the introduction give a context for what follows?
- ☐ Is the information presented logically?
- ☐ Do you guide your readers through the document using headings and subheadings?
- ☐ Can readers find what they need to know quickly and easily?

Tone

- ☐ Are you talking *to* the readers, not *at* them?
- ☐ Do you sound friendly and helpful, not bossy and distant?

Words

- ☐ Do you see concrete, active, positive words?
- ☐ Do you use words your readers know?
- ☐ Do you explain unfamiliar words?
- ☐ Do you avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviations?
- ☐ Do you use bias-free, inclusive language?

Sentences

- ☐ Do you use simple sentences, with only one new item of information per sentence?
- ☐ Do you vary the sentence length, with an average length of less than 20 words?

Paragraphs

- ☐ Do you include only one topic in each paragraph?
- ☐ Do the sentences in your paragraphs relate to each other?
- ☐ Do you use point form, question-and-answer format or lists when possible?

Testing

- ☐ Did you test your draft material with people who represent your audience?
- ☐ Did you check for words and information that can be left out?
- ☐ Did you revise any complex sentences?
- ☐ Did you use the clear language and design screen?

The best test is to check your document with some of your intended readers.

Disponible en français.

APPENDIX G – RESOURCES FOR CREATING ACCESSIBLE PRESENTATIONS & MATERIALS

To ensure presentations delivered at your event are accessible, there are three aspects that must be considered:

1. The visual presentation (slideshow, videos, audio files)

2. The handouts

3. The verbal presentation

Further information on best practices for presenters are provided in the Toolkit section on "Preparing Presenters and Exhibitors".

The Visual Presentation

Creating Accessible PowerPoint and Keynote Presentations

Slideshows are a powerful communication tool but they are often inaccessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. Fortunately, there are ways you can create slideshows that are accessible to a wider audience.

Some general guidelines are as follows:

1. Keep the design simple.

    •   Use a simple, uncluttered design template.

    •   Utilize the pre-defined text boxes, title boxes, and image boxes already incorporated into templates rather than creating your own. Adding new page elements can reduce the ability of adaptive software to read the information in the right order or to read the information at all.

    •   Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana, or APHont (a font developed specifically for low-vision readers), in minimum 24-point.

    •   Be mindful of colour contrast issues. Light text on a dark background is best (e.g. yellow on black, white on dark blue, or white on black).

    •   Do not convey information with colour alone as some individuals may be colour-blind. Bolding, italicizing, or underlining words will make them stand out, but do not overuse these font effects as they may make your slides too visually distracting for anyone to read with ease.

    •   Limit the number of bullet points and total quantity of text per slide. We recommend 5 words per bullet and 5-7 bullets per slide.

2. If using Microsoft PPT, consider incorporating audible slide transitions that notify audience members that you are moving to a new slide. iWork Keynote does not offer audio transitions, so use some verbal indication, such as saying "next slide".

- With PPT set to "Normal" view, open the Slide Show menu and select Slide Transition. A Slide Transition pane will appear on the right side of the screen.

- In the Modify transition section, select Sound.

- Choose a sound from the select box. ("Click", "whoosh", "chime", or "camera" are good choices. Some of the others might become annoying to the audience.)

3. Disable automatic slide transitions and ensure slides change "on click". This allows audience members who want to review your slides at a later time to control the speed with which slides change.

4. Minimize the number of transitions or animations used in your presentation. These features can limit the functionality of adaptive technology.

5. If using Microsoft PowerPoint (version 2010 or later), once you have completed your slideshow use the "Document Accessibility Checker" to check for accessibility issues. This tool is able to scan the slideshow for elements that are missing descriptive text, elements that have no assigned order for adaptive technologies, slides that have no assigned titles, and other issues.

For step-by-step instructions on creating accessible PowerPoint Presentations see:

- "Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations" (Microsoft Office) - http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/creating-accessible-powerpoint-presentations-HA102013555.aspx

- "Using PowerPoint" (Accessible Campus - The Council of Ontario Universities) - http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/educators/teaching-tips/using-powerpoint/

- YouTube Video: "Creating Accessible Microsoft PowerPoint 2010 Presentations: Make a Presentation Accessible" (Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pb3vrEq-iU&feature=plcp

- YouTube Video: "Creating Accessible Microsoft PowerPoint 2010 Presentations: Adding Tables, Charts, Images, and Shapes" (Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzjymVE3Z6c&feature=plcp

- "Accessible Keynote and PowerPoint Presentations" (The University of Minnesota Accessibility Office) - http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/administration/accessibility/Accessible%20Presentations.pdf

For step-by-step instructions on creating accessible Keynote Presentations see:

- "Authoring Techniques for Accessible Office Documents: iWork Keynote '09" (Accessible Digital Office Documents Project) - http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/keynote

Creating Accessible Videos

Showing a video during your presentation? It is best to look for videos that have captions (for the deaf or hard-of-hearing) or video description (for the blind or visually impaired). Captions can be manually added to videos you produce in a number of programs, or you can hire an online captioning service to add captions to any video and then host it on their server.

Video description is best to have done by a professional contractor. During an event those who are blind or visually impaired will have to listen to the video description using separate headsets or listening devices. Alternatively, if a video is short and there is no time or a lack of resources for video description, the presenter can simply show the video and then provide a verbal recap of what occurred in the video and how it is connected to the presentation.

Resources for Captioning Videos:

- Video Tutorial: "How to Add Closed Captions to a YouTube Video" - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K4WJs94FfY

- "Creating Captioned Video" (Accessible Technology Coalition) - http://atcoalition.org/article/creating-captioned-video

- Use Overstream to add captions to online videos you are not the owner of - http://www.overstream.net/tutorial/demo2.html

Creating Accessible Audio Files

Planning to use an audio file as a part of your presentation? It is best to ensure that the audio is transcribed in advance for those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. This can be done manually or by hiring a professional transcription service. There are a number of free transcription programs available for personal use such as *Express Scribe*, *Transcriptions*, and *Listen N Write*.

Make sure copies of the transcript are handed out to those who require it and that you indicate when you are going to start playing the audio file so that individuals can follow along in their transcripts. Examples of audio files could include radio broadcasts, music tracks, podcasts, or interviews.

Creating Accessible Handouts

It is always helpful to have handouts to accompany a presentation. These may provide more detailed information than your slides do and they allow participants to take better notes, refer back to material, and follow along with content at their own speed. If possible, have all paper-based handouts available in a large print version as well as a Braille version if you anticipate having participants who are blind or vision impaired. It is also best to have digital copies of handouts available on USB keys or CDs for participants. Digital copies can be used with adaptive technology.

To create accessible handouts with information taken from slideshow presentations, follow these steps:

1. Make sure all the text on your slides is included in the "Outline" view. This ensures the text in your slideshow will be available in alternative formats. In both PowerPoint and Keynote selecting the "Outline" view will open a sidebar on the left-hand side of your screen. Here text can be edited or added as needed.

2. Assign "alternative text" to all graphics.   For instructions on how to do this in PowerPoint, visit http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/creating-accessible-powerpoint-presentations-HA102013555.aspx. Currently Keynote does not offer this function.

3. Export the slideshow text and alternative text descriptions for graphics (if available) to a word processing program.

In PowerPoint:

1. To add visible slideshow text to a text-only file open the "File" menu and select "Send to..." and "Microsoft Word".   Select the "Outline" option and click "OK".

2. To add alternative text to the text-only file select each graphic in your PowerPoint Presentation one at a time and do the following: Open the "Format" menu and select either "Autoshape", "Picture", or "Table" depending on the type of graphic it is. Choose the "Web" tab.   Select and copy the text from the "Alternative Text" box. Close the dialogue box and switch to your text-only document in Word. Find the text from the slide where the graphic appears and below it type "Image:" and beside it paste the text you copied from PPT. Repeat this process for all graphics.

3. Save the file.

In Keynote:

1. Copy and paste the text from the "Outline" view into a word processing program (Word, Pages, OpenOffice, etc.). Format the text (font size, colour, alignment, spacing).

2. Consider manually adding alternative text for graphics included on the slides. After blocks of texts for slides with graphics included, write "Image:" and then briefly describe the image that was included on your slide.

3. Save the file.

To create a Braille handout:

- unless you have a Braille translation program and printer, you will need to provide the file to a Braille printing agency. See the *Sample Budget for Inclusion* in **Appendix A** for more information and some agency suggestions.

To create a Large Print handout:

- change the font and point size as needed (APHont or Arial 18 pt is recommended), format as needed, and print.

To create a regular handout:

- search for "handout" in PPT Help or "Printing Your Slides" in Keynote Help.

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The Verbal Presentation

Audience members who are blind or visually impaired will miss out on elements of your presentation if not verbally described.

Some general guidelines are as follows:

1. At the beginning of your presentation, provide both a visual and verbal overview of the presentation outline.

2. Verbally describe all graphics on the slides including tables, charts, and images during your presentation.

   - No standard format for verbally or textually describing images for those with visual impairments currently exists. However, WebAIM has developed a guide for producing alternative text for many different types of images meant to serve different purposes. Visit http://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/ to view the online guide.

3. Verbally indicate when you are changing slides so that everyone can follow along and anticipate topic changes.

4. Verbally indicate when you are linking to an external website. Describe the website you are connecting to and how it is relevant to your presentation.

5. Verbally indicate when you are about to play a video or audio file. This will prevent audience members who are blind or visually impaired from being startled or confused when the multimedia file starts. It will also allow them to put on their headsets if described video is available.

6. If described video is not available, verbally recap what occurred in videos after the audience has viewed them.

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Additional Resources

To learn how to describe and increase the accessibility of complex images including charts, graphs, tables, flowcharts, etc., check out the following resources:

- IBM - "Accessible Analytics": http://www-03.ibm.com/able/news/accessibleanalyticsfull.html

- National Center for Accessible Media - "Effective Practices for Description of Science Content within Digital Talking Books": http://ncam.wgbh.org/experience_learn/educational_media/stemdx/

- UK Association for Accessible Formats - "Formats and Guidance" Series: http://www.ukaaf.org/formats-and-guidance#accessible

To save a document in accessible PDF or DAISY (Digital Accessible Information SYstem) format (for those who prefer audio versions of information), see:

- Section 4 of EuroBlind's article "Making information accessible for all": http://www.euroblind.org/resources/guidelines/nr/88

For more information on producing and presenting accessible information visit these organization's webpages:

- Accessible Digital Office Documents Project (OCAD University): http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/

- Accessible Campus (The Council of Canadian Universities): www.accessiblecampus.ca/educators/teaching-tips

APPENDIX H - DISABILITY ACCESS SYMBOLS GUIDE

Disability Access Symbols can be used to promote and inform people about the accessibility of spaces and events. We recommend using these symbols on registration forms, event schedules, and event signage to indicate which services and supports will be available to participants.

1. Information about services and access available

2. Accessible to individuals with limited mobility

3. Live Audio description provided for performances and presentations

4. Audio description provided for TV, films & video

5. Printed materials available in Large / Accessible Print

6. Accessible to individuals who are blind or have low vision

7. Printed materials available in Braille

8. Telephone Typewriter (TTY) available for deaf and hearing impaired

9. Sign language interpretation available

10. Assistive listening systems available (headsets, hearing aids, etc.)

11. Telephone with amplified volume control for users with hearing impairments

12. Videos/TV with Closed Captioning available

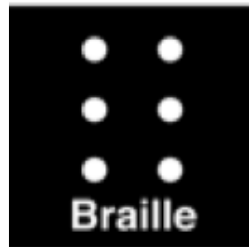# APPENDIX 1 - ACCESSIBLE SEATING ARRANGEMENT GUIDE

To be inclusive, it is always best to find event spaces that are as spacious as possible and have chairs and tables that can be moved around to suit the activity and participant needs. The traditional theatre-style seating arrangement, in which all chairs are arranged in rows facing the front of a room, is not considered inclusive or accessible.

We recommended using the U-shape, hollow circle, and parallel table seating arrangements as much as possible (more information on each of these arrangements is provided below). If using other seating arrangements make sure there is space for people using mobility devices (walkers, wheelchairs, or scooters) to pass freely behind and between seating. Remember that everyone should be able to choose where they would like to sit, rather than being assigned to a place.

U-Shape – This arrangement is good for relatively small groups where attendees are expected to participate. It is best practice to leave a minimum of 4-6 feet (6-8 feet is ideal) between the presenter's table or podium and tables where participants are seated. This allows individuals with mobility devices to freely navigate between the tables and into the center of the arrangement should they wish to speak with individuals located in hard-to-reach spots, such as the corners.
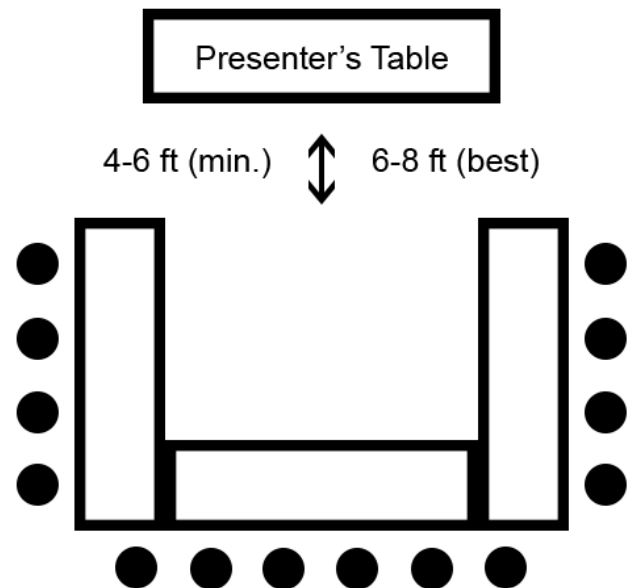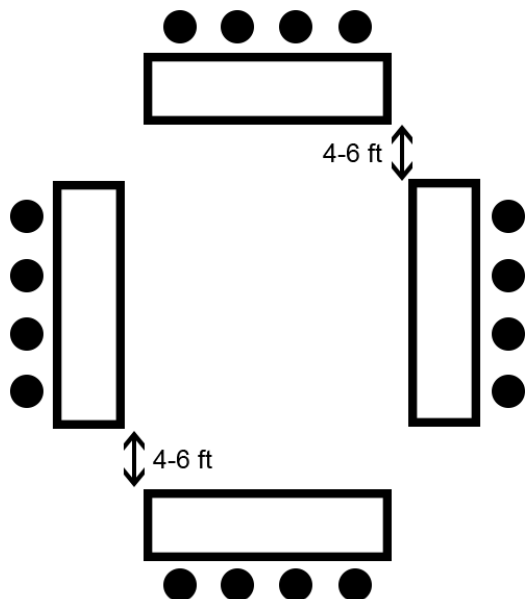
Hollow Circle or Square – These arrangements are often used when participants are expected to engage in an interactive discussion. Both require a large room, even for relatively small numbers. These arrangements can be accomplished using chairs alone or with chairs behind tables.

Parallel Tables – This arrangement can be used for small group meetings and events. It is especially useful for when a presentation is being given or a PowerPoint or video is being projected towards one end of the room. Projectors or teleconference equipment can be placed into the center of the tables preventing anyone's view from being blocked and allowing cords to be run in between the tables to save space and prevent tripping. As always, ensure that there is space around all of the tables and chairs for individuals with mobility devices to freely move around.
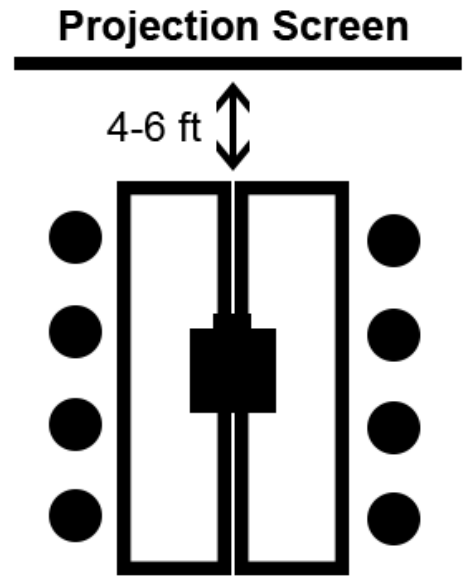
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