

This document has been designed to serve as a guideline for planning events that are inclusive and accessible. Every event is unique and may require different steps to accommodate everyone. While this document will serve as a useful tool, it is not a completely comprehensive resource. Should you have further questions, please contact the Centre for Human Rights (CHR).

1) Budget:

Plan ahead:

- Arranging for services such as interpreting, intervening, note-taking and preparation of materials in alternative formats may require additional time and usually have an associated cost

2) Date and Time:

Plan ahead:

- Don't plan an event on a day of religious observance or statutory holiday.
- Consult York's list of religious observance and statutory holidays found online at religious observance dates.
- If the event is at night, consider having York's goSAFE service standing by at the end of the event to escort participants who want their service.
(goSAFE is a free service. For information regarding booking and contact see, goSAFE.)

3) Room(s) and other space:

Ensure the space being used has:

- Aisles that are large enough for people who use wheelchairs/scooters
(Scooters are larger than wheelchairs)
- Accessible areas that are interspersed throughout the room *(front, middle, and back)*
- Plenty of space around tables, *at least 36"*
- Adjustable lighting *(When booking the space, ask if the lighting can be adjusted and how to do so in order to avoid complications later.)*
- A stage that is easily visible, ramped and/or easily accessible
- A screen that is easily visible
- Good acoustics *(recommend use of microphone)*
- Reserved seating in the front row for people who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, using wheelchairs, scooters or walkers
- Accessible/Gender neutral washrooms within a reasonable distance
- Cables/Cords that cross aisles/pathways covered so that all participants can easily traverse them
- Assistive listening devices, if requested
(Assistive listening devices refer to hard-wired or wireless transmitting/receiving devices that transmit sound from the microphone directly to the listener, minimizing the negative effects of distance, noise, and reverberation on clarity.)

Ensure that:

- Event organizers/volunteers know the location of public telephones that are accessible (*with volume control, with a TTY, and a coin slot that is 1.22m above floor level*)
- Well lit, easy to read signs, that are also available in Braille, have been posted that mark the locations of accessible/gender neutral washrooms, payphones, elevators, etc.
- Well lit, easy to read signs, that are also available in Braille, have been posted that mark the locations of gender specific washrooms that some participants may require
- Background noise has been reduced as much as possible
- All parts of the event are smoke free and free of scents (floor varnish etc.)
- If ceremonial medicines etc. will be used notify facilities in advance to have the space set up to do so in the safest method possible
- All event organizers/volunteers are aware of emergency evacuation procedures
- Personal/Attendant care service providers who can provide assistance in the washroom, finding it etc. (*These should be professionals **not** volunteers*)
- Personal/Attendant care service providers can be found through a local care community access centre
- Let attendees know, if possible ahead of the event, about the location of accessible entrances, bathrooms, elevators, and lifts

4) Advertising and registration:

Ensure that:

- Ample notice is given about the event to allow people to arrange transportation and other needs
- The advertising states the duration of the event and is accessible in different formats
- Include the accessibility symbols on the advertisements
(*For a list of these symbols see, disability access symbols*)

If food is served:

- Provide a nut-free menu.
- Provide an ingredients list for food provided.
- Give participants an opportunity to request dietary preferences.

For registration forms:

- Try to provide as much accommodation as possible without request.
- Ask participants to give two weeks notice for accommodation
- Ask Participants to check off if they require the following:

- ASL Interpreter	- Braille
- Intervener	- Large print
- Note taking (<i>Real time captionist or speech to text services</i>)	- Electronic file
- Assistive Listening Device	- Accessible media (<i>captioning or description</i>)
	- Other - please specify (<i>e.g. accessible parking</i>)
- Follow up with requests to inform the participant if the service(s) will be available or not

5) Staffing the event:

For volunteers:

- Ensure they are trained in providing accessible customer service, anti-oppression, positive space etc.
- Ensure they are visible and clearly identifiable.

For service Providers:

- Book them as soon as possible.
- Provide them with agendas and presentation outlines in advance.
- Ensure that they are clearly identifiable.

Other services:

- Ensure that note-taking services are visible for all participants on a separate screen.
- Ensure there is an activity room for children and child minders.
- Ensure food orders include interpreters, note-takers, attendants and child minders.

6) Some suggestions for booking services:

Sign Language interpreters:

- The Canadian Hearing Society, Ontario Interpreting Services: (416) 964-9595
\$110.00 per interpreter for 2 hours, then \$55.00 per subsequent hour.

Captionists:

- Neeson & Associates: (416) 413-7755 www.neesoncourtreporting.com
or ACS: 1(800) 335 0911 www.acscaptions.com

Braille materials:

- York University – Printing Services
For ordering and associated cost email: printing@yorku.ca
- CNIB: (416) 486 2500 www.cnib.ca
- Microcomputer Science Centre Inc.: (905) 629-1654 www.microscience.on.ca

7) Effective Events:

- Remind presenters to end presentations on time.
- Ask presenters to use the CNIB Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines when preparing their presentation materials.
- This is found online at the CNIB page
- Have print copies of the presentation available at the beginning of the event.
- Ask presenters to send an electronic copy of their presentation well in advance.
- Have lectern heights and AV controls adjustable to accommodate the presenters.
- Ask presenters to orally describe the content of their presentation (slides, notes, etc.)
- Ask that videos and other forms of media include accessibility features.
- Have the presenters ask at the beginning of the presentation about the need for breaks.
- If showing video(s) screen the video first. If there is something that may be triggering (upsetting) warn people first.
- Leave room at the end of the session for debrief or provide resources for people.

8) Arriving at the space:

Transportation:

- Ensure transportation options are realistic for participants with different abilities.
- Check for wheelchair accessible parking near the front entrance.
- Ensure wheelchair access routes are at the front entrance or a safe accessible alternate path is clearly marked.

Accessibility with Public Transit:

- Brampton Transit
- GO Transit
- TTC
- York Region Transit
- York University – Van Go Service (York’s accessible mobility service)

Make arrangements by contacting vango@yorku.ca or (416)736 2100 ext. 22546.

Van Go is available from 8:00AM –10:00PM Monday – Friday

Event space:

- Ensure all participants can reach all areas of the event independently.
- Check that elevators have low buttons, Braille or raised number marking or audible floor announcements.

8) Evaluation:

- Ensure there is an accessible online version of any distributed evaluation forms.
- Include a space in the evaluation for comment on the accessibility of the event.
- Consider using online surveys that have been developed with accessibility features such as SurveyGizmo.

Information provided by:
George Brown College’s
Guide to Planning an Accessible Event

York University Registrar’s Office,
Religious Observance Dates 2012

York University’s Physical, Sensory and Medical Disability Services
U50 Tips for Planning an Accessible Event