

Event Audit

Event Planning

In order to ensure an event will be accessible to the greatest number of people, it is necessary to embed an accessibility lens from the planning stage.

Event Planning	Yes / No	Condition
Have individuals with disabilities been invited to be part of the event planning team?		
Have the accessibility requirements of presenters and attendees been asked about and planned for? Considerations include the need for accessible room accommodation, presentation equipment, and dietary needs.		
Has event information been prepared to include messaging about equity and inclusion? E.g. "We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage fully. To be respectful of those with allergies and environmental sensitivities, we ask that you please refrain from wearing strong fragrances. For inquiries about accessibility or request specialized equipment, please contact XXX."		

Event Planning	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Have staff / volunteers been trained on the presence of event accessibility features?</p> <p>Staff / volunteers should be able to answer questions and speak knowledgeably of any accessible components of the event. For example, staff should be able to direct attendees to accessible spaces (e.g., quiet room, different seating types, washrooms etc.) and ask attendees how they can provide any additional assistance.</p>		
<p>Have staff / volunteers been trained on how to speak to individuals with accessibility needs?</p> <p>It is important to ask if individuals require aid rather than make assumptions, and also important to direct questions to the individual rather than to any companion who may be present. Person-first language should also be used to emphasize the person rather than the difference (e.g., a person with visual impairments rather than a blind person).</p>		
<p>Has an accessible website been designed to support participants in booking event tickets / accessing event information?</p> <p>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines create an international standard for website accessibility. Important considerations include high colour contrast, large text options, and speech-to-text compatibility.</p>		

Promotional Materials

Designing promotional materials to consider accessible best practices makes marketing materials more inclusive, and increases the likelihood that members of different disability demographics will be able to participate in the event.

Promotional Materials	Yes / No	Condition
Has the event been promoted using a variety of mediums? Examples include printed advertisements, newspaper, social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok), and radio.		
Do the promotional materials embed principles of accessible design? Materials should use high-contrast colours, colour palettes that consider forms of colour blindness, large sans-serif font, sentence-case text, and be written in plain language. Images should have descriptive captions, and essential information should not be placed in graphics (which cannot be read by assistive technology).		

Promotional Materials	Yes / No	Condition
Do videos include audio descriptions and captions?		
Do the materials include information about accessible features? Important considerations include the presence of accessible washrooms, accommodations for service animals, and any assistive communications (e.g., interpreter, tech options).		
Do the materials provide a contact for accessibility-related questions? A designated staff member or volunteer should be made responsible for responding to requests for information.		

Location & Entrance

The location of an event and how people are able to access it often determines if people are able to participate. This section should be completed in addition to the Approach and Entrance section of the Buildings checklist.

Location & Entrance	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If transport links are provided (e.g., shuttle bus, taxi, ride share options) are they accessible?</p> <p>Vehicle options should provide for a wheelchair. Transportation options that are equipped with wheelchair lifts / seating should be available prior-to, during, and after the event. Event times should be aligned with SMART bus operating hours to ensure attendees can get to and from the event reliably.</p>		
<p>Is the location of free parking evident, or have parking costs been advertised in advance of the event?</p> <p>People with accessibility needs often also have lower incomes and need to be aware of any additional budget expenses.</p>		
<p>Have event planners checked the accessibility of available parking and egress routes?</p> <p>Refer to the Approach & Entrance section of the Buildings Checklist.</p>		

Location & Entrance	Yes / No	Condition
If entrance doors are not automatic, are they propped open?		
Are any gates, turnstiles and openings wheelchair accessible?		
Are registration tables offered at a height to accommodate people with wheelchairs? Tables should also have appropriate knee clearance.		
If a line is expected at the check-in area, are there seats available? Seats with armrests should be made available in areas where people are expected to wait.		

Communication

Events involve sharing large amounts of information with participants, from event schedules and dining options, to conference presentations and event navigation. Ensuring information is transmitted comprehensively requires different approaches for different materials and abilities.

Communication	Yes / No	Condition
Is wayfinding signage present throughout the venue? Event planners should conduct a walk-through to ensure there is signage to support navigation from parking / drop off to the venue, throughout the venue, and to major event spaces (rooms, dining hall, washrooms, registration, etc.).		
Does signage combine multiple accessibility features? Because signage may be temporary it can be difficult to include Braille or raised tactile lettering, but other changes can be made such as using sans serif font in sentence case (using upper and lower case letters), using large text, having high colour contrast between the sign and letters, and including symbols and pictograms on the sign.		
If print materials are provided, is there a large print version? Large print (greater than 14 point text) and sans-serif font are legible to most people.		

Communication	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If print materials are provided, have they been made available in an online PDF?</p> <p>Screen readers and other assistive devices are used by people with visual impairments to access documents.</p>		
<p>Is a hearing enhancement system present to amplify sound to users?</p> <p>Depending on the event, selecting a space that provides induction loops can support hearing for people with hearing aids. Headphones and induction loop receivers can be provided to assist people without hearing aids. Other assistive listening devices can be made available upon request.</p>		
<p>Has a sign language interpreter been hired?</p> <p>If the event expects to cater to people with hearing loss or members of the Deaf community, it will be necessary to engage an interpreter. The interpreter should be provided a visible place on the stage that is well-lit and easy for people to see.</p>		
<p>If videos are being played, or the event has an online component, are captions provided?</p> <p>Many platforms offer auto captions, and although faulty, these can be better than having no-captions.</p>		
<p>Are name tags easy to use with a place for pronouns?</p> <p>Name tags should be easy to apply for people with dexterity issues.</p>		

Communication	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Are microphones provided to speakers and audience members (during question period)?</p> <p>Even if people are confident about their ability to speak loudly enough without one, microphones should be used at all times so everyone can hear what is being said - by both the speaker, and audience members.</p>		
<p>Has seating been reserved near the presenter for people with auditory needs?</p> <p>A position close to the presenter can help people who are hard of hearing, and also support lip reading by people who are deaf.</p>		
<p>Are auditory portions of the event available in written format?</p> <p>Participants could receive written material at the registration / check-in desk.</p>		
<p>If there is background music, is it low enough that people can clearly have conversations?</p> <p>People should not have to raise their voices or strain to hear over the music.</p>		

Catering & Food

Having access to appropriate food that meets dietary requirements not only influences people's perception of the success of an event, but also is a significant factor in making people feel included and comfortable.

Catering & Food	Yes / No	Condition
Are food stations, condiments, and cutlery all within easy reach? Consider reaching from a seated position. The food service counter should also be at an accessible height for people in a wheelchair.		
Are drinking straws and cups with handles available? Some people with dexterity needs may have these requirements for beverages.		
If food is self service, have staff / volunteers asked if people are in need of assistance? Rather than single out people with disabilities, all people should be asked, and an attendant can be notified if help is needed.		
Has food been labeled with the key ingredients? Whether on the menu or at the food service station, common allergens should be identified.		

Catering & Food	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Have participants been given the opportunity to indicate a dietary restriction and / or allergen?</p> <p>It is important to ensure everyone can be assured that they will be able to eat.</p>		
<p>Are sugar-free and caffeine-free drink options available?</p> <p>A range of alternative sweeteners can also be provided for people who drink tea / coffee. Bendy straws and lightweight cups should be placed at wheelchair accessible height.</p>		
<p>Do food service and beverage stations have easy to read signage?</p> <p>Signage that combines pictograms and text is preferred. Font should use a mixture of upper and lower cases to help readers better distinguish between letters. Service attendees can be prepared to describe food to people with visual impairments.</p>		
<p>Does the food selection address a range of lifestyle choices, dietary restrictions, and religious observances?</p> <p>Vegetarian and gluten-free options should be provided. Depending on the demographic of the event, vegan, halal or Kosher food should also be provided. Food catering to these different needs should not cross-contaminate with other food options.</p>		

Event Space

As event spaces are often temporary and involve many moving pieces, event planners do not have the same margin for error as with more permanent structures where accessibility improvements can be made over time. An accessibility-focused walk through as well as completion of the washroom portion of the Building Checklist before the event can help catch potential oversights.

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Are high traffic areas free from tripping hazards like wires and cables?</p> <p>Areas with these types of tripping hazards should be off-limits to event attendees, or, if not possible, the wires should be fixed to the ground and highlighted through the use of colour contrast.</p>		
<p>Has a quiet space been identified and is clearly marked on event wayfinding?</p> <p>Low stimuli environments are useful for a range of people, from people looking to nurse babies, to people with neurodiversities, and people of different faith backgrounds.</p>		
<p>If there is a raised stage, is it accessible?</p> <p>Ramps should be well-lit, and any stage edges should be well-defined or highlighted with colour contrast.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
If a podium is expected to be used, is it height-adjustable? The microphone or podium should be usable by shorter individuals and people in wheelchairs.		
Is the event space evenly-lit? The venue should be well-lit to facilitate navigation, but should not be too harsh that it creates glare.		
Is the stage well-lit and disorienting lighting effects minimized? Strobe lighting should be avoided.		
Is the stage / projection screen visible from all seating? The presenter should be visible from the furthest seating area and the sides.		
Are the washrooms accessible? Refer to the washroom portion of the Buildings Checklist.		
Is there an assortment of furniture types? A variety of chair types (with and without armrests) should be provided.		
Is the event surface firm, level, and slip resistant? If the event is outdoors, pathways through the event space should be identified that avoid slopes, slippery areas, and loose surface materials (e.g., gravel, sand, tree roots). Any temporary surfaces that are installed should have good traction and minimize gaps. Gaps that can't be avoided should run perpendicular to the path of travel.		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If the event is outdoors, are there sheltered areas from the elements?</p> <p>Depending on the time of year, it may be necessary to provide structures to protect people from the sun / wind / rain, as well as cooling or heating stations (e.g., a misting station or outdoor heater).</p>		
<p>Is seating available where people are expected to wait or need rest breaks?</p> <p>Lobbies, entryways, service lines, and long hallways are areas where people could benefit from having seating.</p>		
<p>Are seating areas designed to accommodate someone with a wheelchair?</p> <p>Tables should have enough knee clearance to enable a person in a wheelchair to sit at them, while chairs and tables should be movable to provide more flexibility to meet different user needs.</p>		
<p>Do service animals have a designated toilet space?</p> <p>An outdoor space with clear access should be identified. If different service animal species are expected, provide multiple designated spaces (e.g., service ponies are prey animals and should not go in the same area as a service dog).</p>		
<p>Is there a drinking dish identified for service animals?</p> <p>Staff / volunteers should be prepared to provide water to service animals.</p>		