

Measuring Up: Accessible Public Event Guidelines



.... How does your Public Event Measure Up?

For many communities hosting an accessible public event, such as a community forum or workshop, is a central part of their Measuring Up community assessment. Part of making your event successful is considering how you can make it as accessible and inclusive as possible, so that a range of citizens in your community, including persons with disabilities, feel both comfortable and welcome. Here are some key points to consider:

Advertising and Outreach

- Provide lots of notice - this gives people a chance to organize transportation options, aides or other supports they may require.
- Provide space on any registration forms for people to identify accommodations they may need. Make sure to follow up with these individuals in a timely manner to let them know if these accommodations will be available.
- Include accessibility information about the building on any advertising material.
- If you are serving food, provide a range of options to meet a variety of dietary needs (i.e. vegetarian, wheat-free, low-fat, etc.).
- Choose a time for the event that is outside of regular working hours so as many people as possible can attend.

Transportation

- If possible, make sure your venue is on an accessible bus route.
- Locate your event near accessible parking.
- If possible, make sure the main entrance to the venue is the accessible entrance for that building or location.
- Post clear, legible signs directing participants to the event room or area.
- Arrange for greeters to meet participants who may require extra assistance entering the venue.

Setting up the Room

- Allow for easy movement of wheelchairs, scooters or other mobility equipment by arranging furniture appropriately.
- Leave plenty of space around tables and other gathering points.
- Provide bright lighting, without glare, that can be adjusted if necessary.
- Choose a room with good acoustics.
- Try to eliminate or reduce background noise.
- Make sure an accessible washroom is available within a reasonable distance.
- Post clear, legible signs showing the location of accessible washrooms, elevators, phones and other amenities.
- Set up any projector screens in a spot easily viewable from the whole venue.
- Cover electrical cables or cords when they run along the ground so wheelchairs, canes or other devices do not get caught, and to avoid tripping.
- Ensure organizers, facilitators and participants are aware of accessible emergency evacuation routes.

Volunteers and Facilitators

- Train any volunteers or event facilitators in how to respectfully assist persons with disabilities and how to respond to, or seek help for, for any issues that may arise.
- Ensure volunteers are easily identified with nametags, t-shirts, etc.
- If needed, book Sign-Language Interpreters or any other aides well ahead of time to ensure these services are provided.
- Provide translators or aides with an agenda or presentation outlines in advance of the event. At the event introduce the people providing these services and make sure their role is clear.
- If needed, think about providing child-care at your event to enable as many people as possible to attend.

Accessible Presentations

- Remind presenters to remain on schedule. Many people with specialized transportation arrangements have little flexibility in extending their time.
- Produce handouts, transparencies, Power Point presentations, or any other related materials in large print font (14 point or larger).
- For presenters, make sure lectern heights, computers or other controls can be easily reached and adjusted.
- Presenters should verbally describe the contents of any Power Point slides, written materials or other resources that may be shared.

These are only some of the many suggestions and techniques you can use to make your public event accessible and inclusive. For more ideas to make your event the best it can be, consult with community members and with disability organizations in your area.

We are also here to help. Feel free to contact 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring Up team to get advice on how to plan your accessible public event. We look forward to hearing from you.

Measuring Up Team

Phone: 778-327-5123

Email: measuringup@2010LegaciesNow.com

Website: www.2010legaciesnow.com/measuring_up/

These guidelines were developed based on:

Disabled Women's Network Ontario
Planning for Accessible Meetings, 2002.