Baseline Accommodations for Accessibility and Inclusion

Programs and Events

Sea Grant
ILLINOIS-INDIANA

The people of Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant value diversity, equity, and inclusion in both our organization and the communities we serve. Therefore, we strive to make access to research, outreach, education, and employment opportunities available to everyone, regardless of race, color, religion, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, disability, or veteran status.

The ways in which people interact with natural resources are a function of their beliefs, values, and life experiences. By explicitly incorporating diverse perspectives and inclusively collaborating across stakeholder groups, we can foster more equitable and sustainable natural resource management.

We work to:

- Help communities address critical natural resources issues, ranging from climate change adaptation to pollution prevention to safe recreation.

- Provide accessible, free, or reduced-cost programming to diverse audiences, including via ADA-compliant and multi-lingual publications.

- Expand access to our research grants, fellowships, and internships to include underrepresented and non-traditional groups and individuals.

- Be a leader in equal employment opportunity practices and offering employee training on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.

- This commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has shaped our beliefs and practices as we interact with others. Specifically, we:

    ◊ Strive to create a welcoming environment, so that each person feels accepted, valued, and safe.

    ◊ Insist on respectful behavior because words and actions, or the lack thereof, have powerful meaning.

    ◊ Encourage the open expression of ideas.

We recognize that natural resources issues affect everyone, though they do not affect everyone equally. At Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, we celebrate the diversity of both people and nature as well as the complex interactions between them.

This Publication

This resource covers in-person and online programs and events such as workshops, conferences, and meetings. This resource does not cover communications accessibility and inclusion for web materials, videos, or extension/outreach publications. It is intended as a starting point, not an exhaustive resource.

For the purposes of this document, we are encouraging supporting inclusive practices for a diversity of backgrounds, abilities, and identities, including physical accessibility, sensory accessibility, and cognitive accessibility. Careful planning of events helps ensure equitable experiences for all participants.

NO PARKING

Accommodation and Inclusion Statements for Program Marketing and Registration

STAGE: PRE-EVENT   **COST: $0**

Organizers can use the following **inclusion statement**. It is crafted from IISG's DEI Statement, specifically tailored for programs and events.

> The people of Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant value diversity, equity, and inclusion in both our organization and the communities we serve. Therefore, we strive to make our programs and materials accessible to everyone, regardless of race, color, religion, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, disability, or veteran status. We will make every effort to accommodate the needs of any participants.

Organizers can use the following **accommodation statement** in the registration materials. It can be revised into a question format (i.e., do you require accommodations) and be included in the event registration form.

> Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Accommodations for persons with disabilities can be requested by contacting the event organizer up to two weeks prior to the start of the event. Requests received after this date will be honored where possible.

Note: If you are providing a certain accommodation, regardless of whether participants request it (e.g., closed captioning or wheelchair access), note that in the marketing materials so those with disabilities know they do not have to request it. Disability-access symbols can be used in marketing to demonstrate the available accommodations, which in turn will reduce the need for text and create more usable space in these materials.

RESOURCES:

Disability Access Symbols, Graphic Artists Guild
https://graphicartistsguild.org/downloadable-disability-access-symbols/

Accessibility: Resources to Help Ensure Accessibility of Your Virtual Events for People with Disabilities, National Endowment for the Arts
https://www.arts.gov/impact/accessibility/resources-to-help-ensure-accessibility-of-your-virtual-events

Site Selection for Accessibility, Mobility, and Inclusive Participation

One commonly overlooked aspect of accessibility is physical accessibility of the location. To ensure that the location you've selected is accessible, look for sites:

- Near public transportation—no more than 5 minutes walking distance from the nearest stop.

- Offer free parking or list a cost (which should be minimal).

- With accessible parking spaces and drop off areas.

- That have buildings with ADA compliant entrances, automatic doors, ramps, restrooms, moveable seating, presentation areas, adequate lighting, and sound.

- Avoid spaces with new carpeting, freshly painted walls, or recently used chemicals for participants with smell sensitivities.

Provide transportation information to registrants including:

- Exact street addresses.

- Distances and obstacles.

- Directions for walking, driving, or public transportation.

- Information on accessible parking and entrances.

- Images of the building.

- Contact information for organizers.

RESOURCES:

Accessible and Inclusive Events Resource Guide, University of Michigan
https://diversity.umich.edu/resources/accessible-inclusive-events-resource-guide/

Public Lands Engagement: Focus on Accessibility, National Environmental Education Foundation
https://www.neefusa.org/conservation/public-lands-engagement/activity-guides/focus-on-accessibility-guide

Other tips and suggestions for inclusive locations include:

- Ensure there is at least one paved and flat route to and from the main entrance (no gravel, uneven surfaces, curbs, or stairs).

- If you provide transportation to/from an event, ensure that it is wheelchair accessible (has a lift), unless it is an RSVP-only event and no one has requested accessible transportation.

- If not already present, include signs with Braille that have the names of bulidings, room numbers, and where accesible entrances and elevators are.

- Have lactation/reflection/prayer room(s) available for participants. Make locations known in advance and state the location(s) of these facilities at the beginning of the meeting.

- Arrange the space so all participants can use common routes. Routes should be wide, flat, clear of debris, and preferably paved.

- Distribute accessible seating options, so that individuals requiring accesible seating are able to mix with the rest of the participants and attendees.

- Before the event, send multiple remiders witht the descriptions of room layout, parking instructions, and available bathrooms. Attach agenda and other materials in advance, as well as accommodation processes.

- If not already posted, print and hang signage for accessible entrances/exits, restrooms, and stair/elevator locations.

Accessible
Entry

CHICAGO PARK DISTRI

Photo Courtesy of:
Joel Zavala

Accessibility and Inclusive Participation

During events, accessibility and inclusion can be facilitated by:

- Requiring that all presenters use a microphone, even if they insisit their "voice can carry."

- Having audience members speak into a microphone during questions and answers, or having presenters repeat what is said before responding.

- Trying to eliminate as much background noise from the event space as possible.

- Ensuring there is room for ASL interpreters or CART (communication access real-time translation) captioners if they are in attendance.

- If the event will have interpreters or captioners, providing them with meeting materials at least two business days in advance so that they have the opportunity to prepare.

- Ensuring there is enough space to accommodate service animals.

- When planning outdoor stewardship or engagement events, including at least one activity that is in an accessible location and requires minimal movement and/or heavy lifting.

  ◊ During an event to remove invasive plants, while some participants are going out and doing physical removal, others can catalog finds on a map.

  ◊ During an event to sample water quality, some could be out gathering samples while others could be labelling samples for further analysis.

  ◊ During an event to plant pollinator species, some are out physically planting while others build pollinator housing.

- Advertising that there will ADA accessible actvities both before and during the event.

Pronoun Use

One significant, but simple way, to be more inclusive is to incorporate the use of preferred pronouns. To do so:

- Consider adding preferred pronouns use to registration materials.

- Add preferred pronouns to printed nametags.

- Add written descriptions to bios, web pages, and email signatures.

- When hosting a meeting with visitors or groups who do not regularly work together, include preferred pronouns as a part of introductions.

- Make dividers between pronouns consistent. These can be commas, semi-colons, pipes, or slashes.

When using Zoom, pronouns can be added to participant names:

1. Select participants.

2. Hover over your name.

3. Select "More."

4. Select "Rename."

5. Click on fields in "Enter a new screenname" to add pronouns.

RESOURCES:

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Gender-Neutral Pronouns, Time Magazine
https://time.com/4327915/gender-neutral-pronouns

Gender Pronouns, University of Wisconsin
https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns

Hello
my name is

Presentations

PowerPoints and handouts are a useful tools, but some steps will help you to reach your audience even more successfully.

- Make sure that body text is at least 24-point size.

- Take advantage of sans-serif fonts (e.g., Arial, Verdana, Helvetica). These fonts are often easier to read at a distance.

- Include alternate text for all images.

- Whenever possible, minimize the amount of text on slides.

- Use slide layout templates (these automatically nest content into hierarchies screen readers navigate).

- Do not add text boxes on top of slide layouts.

- Title all slides uniquely.

- Open-caption any videos you insert into your slides.

- Use built-in accessibility features of the software when creating materials.

- If there are blind individuals in your audience, be prepared to read the text on the slide.

- Incorporate a pause when you transition slides. This way, deaf and hard of hearing audience members have time to read each slide.

- Think about extracting the text and creating an outline of your presentation rather than printing the slides. It imrpoves readability and saves both paper and ink.

For slides, handouts, and other prepared materials:

- Use good color contrast and do not use color as the sole differentiator on graphs or charts.

- Write in plain language. Explain jargon or complex terms that people might not be familiar with, have summaries of texts, and be concise.

- Be sure to write out the meaning of acronyms.

- Solicit feedback from peers well-ahead of printing or presenting.

- Plan to have materials available before, during, and after an event.

- Make print items with large, easy-to-read fonts.

RESOURCES:

Accessible and Inclusive Events Resource Guide, University of Michigan
https://diversity.umich.edu/resources/accessible-inclusive-events-resource-guide/

Creating an Accessible PowerPoint, The University of Arizona
https://arizona.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=230dc360-edf0-4deb-afc7-aaab008dee11

Creating More Accessible Charts in Excel, Microsoft
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-more-accessible-charts-in-excel-19e81ce7-88af-4a3f-a4ef-a26c355527b3

Contrast Checker, WebAIM
https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

How Can You Make Your Presentation Accessible?, University of Washington
https://www.washington.edu/doit/how-can-you-make-your-presentation-accessible

Make Your Prsentations Accessible: Seven Easy Steps, User Experience Professionals Association (UXPA)
https://uxpamagazine.org/make-your-presentations-accessible/

What is a Slide Master, Microsoft
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/what-is-a-slide-master-b9abb2a0-7aef-4257-a14e-4329c904da54?ui=en-us&ad=us

Programs

To help make productive and accessible programs, broadly consider these tips to help individuals hear, see, and engage:

• Include access to event captioning and/or interpreters, particularly if participants speak a different language than presenters or organizers.

• Take advantage of available settings and services that are integrated into webinar platforms to help participants improve their experiences (e.g., live captioning services).

• Check with your own institution and any hosting institutions for transcription and caption services.

• Always use a microphone. Never assume you can be heard.

• If presenters are masking, consider asking that they use clear masks or face shields. If possible, make these materials available to presenters.

• Describe charts, graphs, graphics, and animations. Do not assume that individuals can read or see what is on a given slide.

• If using a laser pointer, or your mouse, to highlight items, describe the item you are highlighting.

• Videos with audio should have captions. If there is no audio with the video, presenters should describe what is being shown.

• If your presentation contains activities: think about accessibility of the activity. Do people with low vision, limited mobility, or hearing loss have the ability to participate? Plan ahead and plan for contingencies.
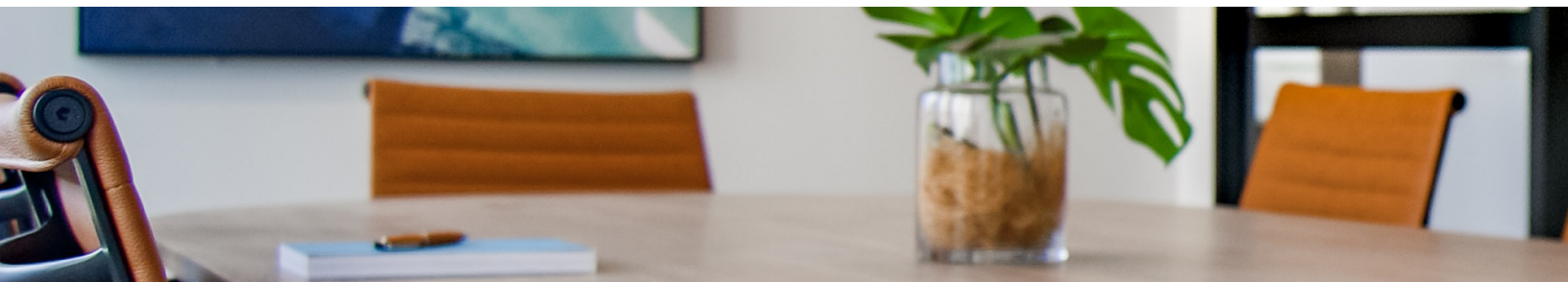
Tips for question and answer sessions:

- Provide instructions on how participants can ask questions.

- If a microphone isn't available to a participant, repeat their question before offering an answer.

- Allow flexibility in the ways participants can interact with what is being asked or shared.

- For online presentations, suggest that questions be placed into the chat for a moderator to read out loud or that audience members use the "raise hand" functions to be called on and unmuted.

- If time is running short, suggest that further questions be added to the chat to be addressed later.

Tips for creating an inclusive environment:

- Use name tags. Incorporate into name tags large fonts (particularly for preferred names), preferred pronouns, and colors that are associated with a participant's communication or physical distancing preferences. Draw attention to these features of the name tags throughout the event.

- If on a webinar or conference platform, ask attendees to set their name to include preferred pronouns. Keep in mind that meeting hosts may need to enable this setting beforehand.

- Provide handouts and/or an electronically accessible version of all program materials.

COMMON DIETARY NEEDS

- Vegetarian— restricts meat (often including meat, poultry, and fish), but products from animals such as dairy and eggs may be okay.

- Vegan— restricts any non-plant based items including: dairy, eggs, gelatin, honey, etc.

- Gluten-Free or Celiac— restricts gluten, which is naturally found in grains such as wheat, barley, and rye. Gluten is often found in processed foods as well.

- Dairy Free or Lactose Intolerant— restricts any dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, chocolate). Some also require products that contain added lactase enzymes.

- Kosher— Jewish Dietary guidelines that include restrictions such as no pork or shellfish, no mixing of meat and dairy products, and using only kosher meats (prepared in a certain way).

- Halal— Islamic dietary guidelines that include no pork or alcohol and for meats to be prepared in a specific manner.

- Food Allergies— minor or severe.

When intending to serve meals, include a question in registration materials that asks about dietary needs (see list to left). Helpful items to remember when planning are:

- Proactively try to choose caterers and providers who are able to accommodate various needs.

- Try to provide food options other than just salad to individuals with specific dietary needs.

- Include an "Other" option for individuals to describe a restriction. This will help meeting planners identify products to be wary of that may contain hidden allergens.

- Encourage participants to bring a beverage container (water bottle or coffee cup) to reduce waste generation.

Food and Dietary Needs

Snacks are a useful way to reduce meal burdens and keep participants engaged throughout the day rather than worrying about hunger. Snacks should be well thought out:

- Fruits and vegetables are typically a safe choice.

- Good fruit options include: fresh fruit (apples, bananas, grapes, oranges), fruit roll-ups or leathers, dried fruit (apples, raisins, bananas), and applesauces.

- Vegetable options that work well include: carrots, cucumbers, bell peppers and celery.

- Hummus and other dips (if free of allergens) provide a good boost to vegetables.

- For some added crunch, consider potato chips, plantain chips, veggie chips, gluten-free pretzels, rice crackers, and popcorn.

- Also consider trail mixes that do not include nuts.

- Make sure to check packaging for major food allergens including: milk, egg, peanut, tree nut, wheat, soy, sesame, fish, crustacean shellfish, and mushrooms (Note: this is not an exhaustive list).

- Choose snacks with simple ingredients to make it less likely allergens may be present.

- Keep a copy of the packaging available to consult so a participant may review ingredients.

- If serving a homemade snack, have a copy of the recipe, along with a complete list of ingredients, available.

- Whenever possible offer multiple, varied snacks.

Interpretation and Translation Services

Beyond simply making things easy to hear, are you working to make things understandable to those who cannot understand what is being said, either those who may be deaf or those who may not speak English?

Explore options at your home institution. At Purdue University:

- Purdue University's Assistive Technology Center (ATC) provides acces to information technology for Purdue students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.

- Purdue provides access to Purple products and services for ASL interpretation. Purple has a qualified interpreter team that can provide services of ASL interpreters in English or Spanish.

- Purple interpreters provide services for any in-person interpretation needs, including job interviews, special events such as concerts, parties, and plays; business meetings; conferences; employee training, and other interpreting needs.

For other translation needs, the Purdue School of Languages and Cultures maintains a list of qualified translators. Note: These translators are private contractors and both pricing and expertise may vary.

RESOURCES:

Purdue Assistive Technology Center
https://www.purdue.edu/accessibilityresources/access/adaptive_equipment.html

Purple
https://www.purplevrs.com/

Purdue University School of Languages and Cultures Translation Services List
https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/slc/resources/Translators.html

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