TREC TOGETHER RISING AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

TREC DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION RESOURCE

Accessible and Inclusive Events

How can we be mindful of different needs while proactively providing a welcoming and inclusive experience for all at events? Accessibility and inclusion matter just as deeply in temporary spaces where we invite community to join together for dialogue or learning. Here are some considerations to provide a more inclusive and accessible experience to your audience as you go through the event planning process.

Date and Time

- Avoid scheduling events during major religious holidays and festivals, and be mindful of the cultural events in the larger global community as well (check this calendar).

Budget

- Include a budget line item for event space accessibility and accommodations.
- Consider designating funds for childcare during events.

Location

- Make sure all event spaces have an accessible room layout, including wheelchair accessible seating so wheelchair-users can sit with friends and participate in event activities. Routes throughout the venue should be accessible (clear, wide, no steps).
- Choose venues that allow service animals and/or communicate whether they are allowed on promotion and registration materials. Adequate space for service animals and/or wheelchair maneuverability is approximately 3-5 ft. wide aisles/routes.
- Whenever possible, offer multiple types of seats with backs, considering people's variable needs regarding preferences and issues of comfort.
- If restrooms are gendered, re-assign at least one bathroom to be gender neutral.
- Make sure there is always appropriate lighting in the event space(s) for better maneuvering and higher visibility for all. Avoid flashing or strobe lighting to be more suitable for folks with epilepsy or photosensitivity.
- Take care to be considerate of people who have difficulty with movement when making emergency evacuation plans.

Audience and Promotion

- Add a standing webform page on your website for event participants to submit accommodation requests and add that link to all event promotion and registration materials.
- Add time in your planning process to receive accommodation requests and make necessary adjustments prior to the event.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

- Provide details about the nearest accessible public transportation options, and let attendees know which entrances are best for wheelchair access.
- Have free access to water and snacks and provide an inclusive set of dietary foods.
- Have name tags or place cards for attendees that include pronouns and their comfort level with personal touch and interacting with others for conference style events.
- Consider having a wellness kit on hand that includes feminine hygiene products, facial tissues, masks, OTC headache & allergy medications, band-aids, and a travel sewing kit.
- Photograph and videorecord the event to have an alternative way to share the content post-event along with transcripts when possible.
- However, not everyone will be comfortable being in photographs or video. Designate a specified part of the room which will not be recorded/photographed for anyone who does not wish to be in images or video recorded.

Program

- Send program agenda and event details in advance. Be clear about the physical accessibility of the event location.
- Provide an array of formats for all materials – in advance, during, and after events.
- Be intentional in diversifying the set of speakers, vendors, and partners you choose work with for the event and include them in all promotional materials.
- Incorporate photos of all speakers in promotional materials so participants can see how they are being represented throughout your event and feel more welcome.
- Invite staff, presenters, volunteers, and participants to share pronouns on name tags and verbally when making new introductions to signal that It is a safe space to self-identify. Why do pronouns matter?
- Incorporate regular pre-determined breaks in the program, listed in the agenda with designated non-workspaces.
- Provide participants who will be attending multi-day events with lists of welcoming, ADA/ACA accessible, LGBTQ-friendly spaces, vegetarian restaurants, with gluten-free options, etc., whenever possible.
- When contracting speakers, facilitators, and vendors, ensure those partnerships are diverse and reflect the many backgrounds and experiences of your audience.
- Take care to mention the potential of loud noises and strong smells in the program, and have designated areas for participants to opt out of these experiences.

Presentation Considerations

- Have all presenters give clear introductions, ideally at the start and end of their presentation including their pronouns. Include their pronouns anywhere they are mentioned in the programs and promotional materials.
- Be mindful that when speaking in front of and about a population of people, especially when presenting research, people that are part of that population may be attendance. Be mindful of the ways that your own identities may influence and affect your audience, especially if you are not a member of the group that is being represented.
- Include closed captions on all video content or transcripts where not possible

 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

- Describe images, photographs, and other visual "moments" out loud, in a paced way, using accessible language.
- Lack of eye contact and/or the inability to see your lips may make your presentation inaccessible to some. Make attempts to look up throughout your presentation.
- Repeat audience questions. This can provide better access, including for deaf and hard of hearing folks, and individuals with different learning approaches.
- Be careful not to add too much on-the-spot content outside of what is included in the text of the presentation. This is to ensure that you provide the same information to all participants, and participants who are experiencing the event mainly through visuals will not miss anything. Also take care not to speak over your slides and allow participants the opportunity to read it before you move on or add context.
- Materials with text, including PowerPoint slides, should be in large-printed format with:
    - 18 point in Arial or another sans serif font
    - Use high contrast colors
    - Don't over-pack your slides with text or images

Post Event

- Make all materials, recordings, and additional resources available online afterwards.
- Conduct a post-event participant survey and include specific questions about the inclusivity and accessibility of your event.

Additional Resources

- Zoom Accessibility Tools
- Adobe Accessibility Tools
- Video Captioning Resources
- Document Accessibility Checklists – Detailed toolkits for Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Acrobat, Charts, and more
- Cognitive Accessibility Glossary
- American Sign Language Interpreting Services and CART Providers
- Creating Accessible Presentations Resource from the American Educational Research Association
- Universal Design, Creating Presentations that Speak to All by American Sociological Association
- How to be an Ally to Disabled & Neurodiverse Folks
- Example of Accessibility Statement and Accommodation Request Form

 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.