Accessibility Best Practices

HEAL Act Community Engagement Plan Resource

Policies regarding accessibility vary across agencies and you should consult the DOH's specific guidelines regarding accessibility in community engagement. In general, some best practices and additional considerations include:

- Community Compensation
- Identifying Accessibility Preferences and Needs
- Translate Written Materials
- Accessibility for In-Person Events
- Power-Sharing

Community Compensation

Timing

You should have your community compensation methodology prepared before you begin planning your event. Make sure you that you have enough resources available to compensate all community members who attend.

Actions

- Develop a process for equitable compensation method
- Provide multiple payment options: gift cards, direct deposit, checks, etc.

Resources

- [Washington State Office of Equity Lived Experience Compensation Interim Guidelines and Best Practices](#)

Identifying Accessibility Preferences and Needs

Survey community partners ahead of time to identify accessibility preferences and needs (include questions to assess access and functional needs). Ask again about access needs in introduction of meetings (keep track of access needs).

Timing

This should be done at least 2-3 weeks before any in-person or virtual meeting date to ensure you can secure accommodations, translation services, etc. ahead of time.

Actions

- At the start of meetings during introductions, ask, either verbally or if holding meeting virtually, in chat, for the following:
  - Name and pronouns (ex. "Jamey, they/she").
  - Visual description of yourself for someone who may not be able to see (ex. "I am a light-skinned multiracial woman of Korean and English American descent in her early 30s with long dark brown hair and blue eyes. I am wearing a red sweater and gold earrings).
  - Access needs (ex. "I need close captioning for this Zoom call").
- Provide interpretation (in-language and/or ASL) during meetings.
- Provide simultaneous or consecutive interpretation.
  - If providing consecutive interpretation, allot additional time for the meeting to ensure adequate time.
- Translate all materials into the languages spoken by the community members you're meeting with.
  - Provide ASL interpretation and closed-captioning.
  - Ensure all materials including PowerPoints are accessible.
- When creating PowerPoint slides:
  - Minimize the amount of text on each slide.
  - The information shared should tell a coherent story.
  - Incorporate graphics/images.
  - Check for color-blindness useability. Avoid combination of colors that blend together [dark black/dark blue/dark lettering on light background (preferably white)].
  - When sharing handouts, be thoughtful about the information included in them. For example, don't just distribute copies of the slides. Instead add context to the information presented in the slides.
- Avoid jargon and technical language that people may not understand or be familiar with. Keep communication clear, direct, and concise.
- Use Hyperlegible font for any written materials or slides and ensure that published materials are legible.
- Make space for support people – let people know they can have someone come with them to provide support including support animals.

Resources

- [Download the Atkinson Hyperlegible Font | Braille Institute](#)

- [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities (microsoft.com)](#)

- [Making information accessible for all | European Blind Union (euroblind.org)](#)

- o [Virtual Meetings: Accessibility Checklist & Best Practices (americanbar.org)](americanbar.org)

Translate Written Materials

Timing

This should be done at a minimum of 2-3 weeks ahead of an in-person or virtual meeting to ensure adequate time to get everything translated.

Actions

- Plain talk all materials before sending them out for translation. Consider asking the translation team to do a review of the English document to ensure key points are translated simply and in a straightforward manner. When you get the translation back, it is always ideal to have it reviewed by another translator for errors.

- If possible, do a cultural review of all materials before translation. This can be completed by someone within the agency or a community partner. If it's the latter, ensure that the community partner is compensated for their expertise.

Resources

- [Special subject estimates | Office of Financial Management (wa.gov)](wa.gov)

- [Washington State Language Access Plan – Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs](#)

Accessibility for In-Person Events

Create an accessibility checklist for events.

Timing

Create this checklist based on what was learned from the community survey you send out and have it prepared at least one week prior to the event to share with your team.

Actions

- Based on the needs identified in your community survey, start brainstorming checklist items. It may be helpful to start by asking the following questions:

  - o Is the event location well-marked using accessible signage (i.e. does it use plain talk, large text, graphics)? Are the signs large and visible for everyone to see?

  - o Is the space ADA compliant? Are there wheelchair ramps and elevators?

- o Are restrooms easily accessible? Are restrooms single occupancy or gender neutral?

- o Is there enough room for everyone to sit?

- o Is the space well-lit? Is it quiet?

- o Is there adequate parking and/or is the space easily accessible by public transportation?

- o What are current requirements for prevention of the spread of COVID-19? Is there enough space for everyone to be comfortably socially distant, if needed?

- In making the checklist, consider both potential outdoor and indoor accessibility needs.

- The day of your meeting, plan to have members of the team greet community members as they arrive to make them feel welcome and identify and meet any additional access and functional needs.

Resources

- [Meetings and Events | Washington State Department of Health](#)

Power Sharing

Timing

Ongoing throughout planning process and community meetings.

Actions

- Recognize community concerns are valid - listen and affirm.

- Check biases.

- Co-develop questions and agenda (i.e. for feedback sessions).

- Share space with communities through facilitation.

- Understand how a feedback session goes and what feedback community gives may not always meet your expectation.

- Understand that it's OK to go off topic/agenda during meetings. Provide space for communities to raise concerns, share experiences.

- Show respect.

Resources

- [Project Implicit (harvard.edu)](harvard.edu)