

# Event Planning Checklist for Accessibility\*

When planning an event, either at Congregation Rodef Shalom or at another location, please consider the following to ensure accessibility for all:

## Planning Ahead

- ☐ Give ample notice for the upcoming event, which allows people to arrange transportation or other accommodations and supports they may require. Indicate start and finish times for the event.
- ☐ If needed, reserve sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, note takers, attendants or other supports in plenty of time to ensure availability. Contact the office at Rodef Shalom to set this up.
- ☐ Set aside some money in the event budget early in the planning process for physical accessibility, communication supports (e.g., microphones for speaker and audience if questions will be asked) and visual accessibility (e.g., large print materials and fonts more easily read by dyslexics, closed captioning for videos, etc.).
- ☐ For every event, consider ways to make it accessible both in person and virtually. Determine whether live-stream or a Zoom option is most appropriate. Make closed captioning available on platforms that allow for it, such as Zoom.

## Publicity and Registration (Communication)

- ☐ Make sure the registration form is in an easy-to-read font (e.g., 16 point type or larger and fonts more easily read by dyslexics) and made accessible to all online, through snail mail or email. Include start and end times. Always make telephone registration available.
- ☐ Provide space on your registration form for people to specify allergies that could produce a severe reaction (e.g., a potential anaphylactic response). Provide your contact information (phone number and email address) so that attendees can reach you to discuss their needs.
- ☐ In the registration process, provide a means to request accommodations. State “We will do our best to accommodate your needs. Your early registration/ communication will give us more time to meet your individual needs or to alert you to our difficulties in meeting your needs”. Clearly indicate an accommodations request due date.
- ☐ Follow up with people who request accommodations in a timely fashion in order to:
  - Identify their needs.
  - Brainstorm with them and other parties, if necessary, about accommodations that can be provided.
  - Explain what accommodations they can expect.
  - If a need cannot be met fully, respond with the following four components:
    - Specifically acknowledge what you could not do.
    - Respectfully apologize.
    - Explain why a need could not be accommodated.
    - Thank the person for sharing their needs and asking for accommodations.

- If appropriate, explain that we hope we can provide additional accommodations in the future.
- On posters or information sheets, if applicable, use accessibility symbols to indicate access offered by your event and facility. Use this link to download a file containing the 12 standard symbols:  
<https://graphicartistsguild.org/downloadable-disability-access-symbols/>

## Parking and Accessibility

- Make sure all participants know the location of the designated accessible parking spaces.
- For a large event, consider whether additional accessible spaces should be temporarily designated and whether signs are needed to indicate accessible parking and accessible entries.

## Logistics prior to booking an event: Indoor and Outdoor Space Set-up

- If at all possible, make an advance site visit.
- Make sure that all visitors can safely and easily move through the venue (e.g., sufficiently wide bathroom doors and aisles, firm surfaces for wheelchair users, avoiding deep gravel and grass).
- Make sure a ramp is available for any step higher than 13 mm (0.51 in.).
- Allow for easy movement through your event space for anyone using an assistive walking device (wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters). Choose a room with wide aisles and plenty of space around tables. You may need to rearrange furniture.
- Review current public health advisories regarding seating and spacing configurations.
- Provide seating and/or complimentary tickets for personal assistants or caregivers.
- Provide reserved seating for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, vision impaired or need mobility assistance.
- Include accessible seating areas interspersed throughout the room including the front, middle and back.
- If a stage is being used, ensure it and any projection screens are easily visible.
- Arrange for assistive listening devices (e.g., an FM system).
- Cover electrical cables or cords that cross over aisles or pathways so all participants can easily and safely traverse over them including wheelchair users and those using walkers and canes.
- If the front doors to the event are heavy or difficult to open, assign a volunteer to open doors as needed.
- Make sure that volunteers are easily identifiable by use of nametags or other identifiers.
- Place trash receptacles in a number of locations scattered throughout the event space.
- Provide accommodations for service animals.

## Food

- Offer and label a variety of food options to accommodate different dietary needs (e.g., kosher, dairy, pareve, nut free, gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian) and keep them on separate platters to avoid cross-contamination.

- ☐ List ingredients for each dish for both catered and potluck events.
- ☐ Assign staff or volunteers to help serve attendees who may need help.

## Content, Presentation, Handouts

- ☐ Share program materials with participants in advance when appropriate.
- ☐ Check for needs of speakers and presenters with disabilities.
- ☐ Produce print materials in large font (16 point type or larger and a font more easily read by dyslexics) and have materials available electronically in case of a request for such a format. For electronic presentations, ensure a minimum of 24 point font and consider if the visuals can be seen at the back of the room.
- ☐ Ask presenters to verbally describe contents of videos or any written materials, including overheads or whiteboard notes for audience members.
- ☐ Encourage presenters to use captioned videos, use a microphone while addressing the audience and have a microphone for audience questioners or, if not, repeat questions prior to answering them.

## Evaluation

- ☐ Include questions about inclusion and accessibility on event evaluations. For instance,
  - Were there any barriers to accessibility or inclusion that limited your participation?
  - How might we make future events more accessible and inclusive?
- ☐ Consider soliciting informal feedback from individuals with disabilities about their experience at the event and any suggestions they might have for future improvements.

*\*This event checklist was originally developed by Congregation Har HaShem in Boulder, Colorado, adapted for use by the Inclusivity Committee of B'nai Havurah in Denver and revised by the Disability Awareness and Inclusion Committee of Congregation Rodef Shalom in Denver.*