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# Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings



## Knowing Your Participants





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Communications

# Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings

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Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

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## Knowing Your Participants

Canada

# Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings



## Knowing Your Participants



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Publications Services  
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
140 Promenade du Portage, Phase IV, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0J9

Fax: **(819) 953-7260**

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# Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings

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# ▶ 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why plan an inclusive meeting?

Well-planned meetings are an essential communication tool for any organization. Meetings in the workplace and in volunteer and community groups regularly bring people together to share information, develop strategies, work toward common goals and celebrate successes.

The success of any meeting depends on the active participation of all invited participants. Given the amount of time, effort and resources spent on planning meetings, it makes good business sense to think of and organize meetings in a way that supports full participation.

An area often overlooked by meeting planners, or dismissed as too difficult, is how to make the meeting accessible for people with disabilities. By considering accessibility as part of the planning process, you ensure that everyone can participate and be involved, which means a successful meeting.

This guide is based on a valued, inclusive approach to every individual. We have chosen to highlight points of importance for people with disabilities to address specific planning considerations, but these principles of inclusion can apply to a broader range of the population.

The goal of this guide is to help planners learn to organize meetings that are inclusive and for this to become a permanent part of all meetings, no matter who attends.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) has a general duty to accommodate guideline that outlines the obligation to meaningfully

incorporate diversity into the workplace. This duty involves eliminating or changing rules, policies, practices and behaviours that discriminate based on a group characteristic, including disability. You can learn more about the duty to accommodate at the CHRC Web site. For links to the CHRC and other resources, see section 5 on page 21.

Users of this guide from public institutions should note that the duty to accommodate is further reinforced through legislation and policies such as the *Employment Equity Act* and the Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service. For links to more information on these, see section 5 on page 21.

## 1.2 Updating the Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings

This new version of the guide updates information from the 2002 edition, and includes practical tips and advice on planning meetings in a way that allows people with disabilities to actively engage and participate.

In updating this guide, the Office for Disability Issues held focus groups to consult with people with disabilities and experts in the disability community and government. As a result of these consultations, the guide has been updated and content has been added. This version of the guide focuses exclusively on planning meetings. For information on hotel accommodation and transportation, please consult a professional event planner.



## ▶ 2. Planning the Meeting

### 2.1 Knowing your participants

When you plan a meeting, make sure you give participants the opportunity to identify their accommodation needs early in the process. You can do this in your initial notice or invitation, which will support an inclusive environment from the beginning of the planning and set the tone for the meeting.

Appendix B on page 51 contains a sample registration form that you can use to request accommodation information from participants.

### 2.2 Scheduling considerations

Invite participants well before the meeting date so that you have time to arrange for appropriate accommodation requests.

The earlier you receive accommodation requests, the easier it will be to keep expenses to a minimum—you will pay only for the services that you need, and you will avoid extra charges for last-minute requests. Arranging accommodations in advance is particularly important when the number of requests for a service could outstrip the availability of a single accommodation service provider.

When you plan, make sure you allow sufficient time to:

- give participants enough time to arrange their transportation
- request sign language interpreters and real-time captioning for people who are deaf or deafened and amplification systems for people who are hard of hearing

- arrange for conversion of conventional print material to alternative formats such as Braille, DAISY, audio, large print or plain language and offer them before the meeting
- provide meeting materials in advance for those who need more time or quiet to gain better comprehension

## 2.3 Budgeting for inclusiveness

It is important to include accommodation costs in your planning. Your initial budget should allow for potential costs of accommodation services or products that you might need. Section 4 covers the most common requests. Some of the items you budget for may not be needed or affordable, but starting the process with a firm idea of possible costs is an important step for any successful meeting.

Estimating costs for services can be difficult, since they vary based on time, location, availability of service providers and the type of service required. Costs for accommodation services vary depending on the length and location of your meeting. Costs for alternative formats will also depend on the time allowed for completing the work. It is important that you call service providers as early as possible and get estimates based on your actual needs. The list of resources in section 5 on page 21 contains many useful links to organizations that either provide services themselves or can quickly direct you to those that do. If you work in the federal public service, first contact your financial branch to see if there are any existing contracts with service providers.

Call local service providers to obtain quotes during the planning process to help you project your budget. National organizations such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) can help you locate service organizations through their local offices.

Services are not always easy to get—remember to be creative and involve your participants to find available solutions.

## 2.4 Selecting accessible facilities

Wherever you plan to hold your meeting, it is important to do a thorough check of the physical site before booking the location. While facility owners or managers often promote their sites as accessible, interpretations of accessibility vary. An accessible entrance does not necessarily mean access throughout the facility. Visit the site to assess whether a facility will meet the needs of all participants.

Whether your meeting is held in your office building or off-site, use the Accessibility Checklist for Planners, in Appendix A on page 35, during the initial planning stages to conduct a site assessment. The checklist is not exhaustive, but it has useful information that you can expand upon according to the needs of the participants.

An accessibility assessment should include the meeting space and the facility in general.

Examples of physical features of an accessible facility include:

- automatic doors and obstacle-free pathways for people who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs
- doorways to meeting rooms that are about one metre wide to allow easy access
- tactile signage such as Braille for people who have a visual impairment
- access to the outdoors to allow people to walk their guide or service dogs during meal and health breaks

- meeting rooms with layouts that allow ample space for participants to move around freely
- meeting rooms that are large enough to accommodate assistive listening systems, translation booths and seating for sign language interpreters
- restrooms that meet or exceed Canadian Standards Association (CSA) accessibility standards, including doors that allow easy access, and at least one stall that is configured to accommodate mobility aids (you can find more information on the CSA in section 5 on page 21)
- restrooms on the same floor as the meeting area
- lever door knobs instead of the “globe” or round kind

If you identify barriers in your facility that are not covered by building access standards, talk to the facilities manager. The manager may be in a position to help remove them.

People with disabilities have a wealth of knowledge and experience in accommodation, so consult them if you can when you begin to organize your meeting. This can lead to creative solutions, based on past experiences with similar situations. For example:

- Noises from ventilation systems can make it difficult for people who use assistive listening devices to participate in dialogue. Verify sound quality in the meeting room before the event, and ask the facilities manager to turn down the ventilation fan during the meeting. Ask the participants if this accommodation is satisfactory and invite suggestions.

- The quality of the lighting in the room may affect people with different disabilities. Those with visual impairments may require higher or lower levels of light, while those who have photosensitive epilepsy may have difficulty with poor-quality fluorescent lights, which flicker at a slower rate and can sometimes induce seizures. Verify lighting quality in the meeting room beforehand, and if possible, select a room that offers non-fluorescent lighting.
- People who are blind or have a visual impairment may have difficulty navigating in unfamiliar environments. Audio floor-level indicators in public elevators and tactile signage to help find restrooms and meeting rooms may not be available. If not, volunteer assistance may be required. Again, ask the participants if this accommodation is satisfactory and invite suggestions.

If there is some uncertainty about the chosen location, you may want to hire a company to walk through the site with you to help identify possible problem areas. Companies that do accessibility audits can be found throughout Canada. Contact local offices of organizations such as the CNIB or CHS and ask them if they know of any in your area. You can also find a list of accommodations consultants on the Web site of Industry Canada's Assistive Devices Industry Office; the address is in section 5 on page 21.

## 2.5 Planning safety and evacuation procedures

Whether your meeting is on-site or off-site, it is important to ensure that all participants know how to evacuate safely if an emergency occurs. Discuss evacuation plans and procedures with the facilities manager in the early planning stages.

Invite meeting participants to identify ahead of time their particular evacuation needs when they confirm attendance. Provide the facilities manager with a list of participants who will need assistance if there is an emergency evacuation.

At the beginning of the meeting, tell participants where the nearest emergency exits are located.

To help make a possible evacuation quick and efficient, arrange for volunteers to help people who have identified a need for assistance.

## ▶ 3. Conducting the Meeting

Successful business meetings are conducted with common courtesy, decency and respect. These values are crucial to planning and supporting inclusion.

Inclusion relates to every person being able to participate as a valued member of the organization.

As an organizer, a chairperson or a presenter at a meeting, keep in mind that people with disabilities can face a variety of barriers, not all of them physical. They may experience difficulty hearing what is said, seeing small print on an invitation or understanding the context and information if it is presented too quickly.

Ensuring that your meeting is successful requires the full participation of everyone attending. With planning and help from this guide, organizing meetings that are accessible from start to finish can be easy. Below you will find planning tips and best practices that can help maximize the possibility of success.

### 3.1 Tips for a successful meeting

Meeting organizers, chairpersons and presenters help set the tone of the meeting. They are in the best position to ensure accessible and inclusive communication. Keeping things simple and applying a little extra attention to detail can help put all those attending the meeting at ease. Here are some tips that can help achieve this goal.

## Tips for organizers

- Make sure interpreters, interveners, advisors, note takers and captionists are introduced to the participants for whom they are providing service.
- Check to see if your organization or department has an adaptive technology centre or research person.
- Plan the meeting space to ensure there is room for participants who use mobility aids to move around freely. Make sure there are space allowances made for participants who use wheelchairs (e.g., remove chairs from a couple of places so participants can more easily join the group).
- If food is to be served, keep in mind that people with mobility or agility impairments can find buffet-type service challenging. Solutions to this could include offering a sit-down service, or ensuring that volunteers or staff can assist people at the buffet.
- Make sure the agenda includes regular health breaks. Breaks can be up to 20 to 30 minutes depending on the length of your meeting.
- Promote a scent-free environment by asking presenters and participants to refrain from using perfumes and scented toiletries. Include this request in the original invitation.
- Keep in mind the needs of various participants and their service providers, such as seat allocation nearest to the sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.
- Provide, and have the chairperson mention, a feedback mechanism, such as an e-mail address, to all participants at the start of the meeting or in the meeting materials.



- Ask for advance copies of presentation materials from presenters to forward to service providers (e.g., sign and simultaneous language interpreters, advisors, note takers and captionists) and all participants before the meeting.
- Prepare event signage using large print and contrasting colours (e.g., directions to meeting rooms and restrooms, scent-free environment poster, emergency exits, participant nameplates and name tags).
- Ensure the presence of attendants and interpreters during networking breaks to allow inclusion and participation for all those attending.
- Find participants willing to help people with disabilities who would require assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Provide high-contrast name tags to all participants if it is a large meeting.
- Provide a copy of the list of tips and best practices to the chairperson and to the presenters to help them prepare communications and make presentations that are accessible and inclusive.

## Tips for chairpersons

- Advise all participants of the services available (e.g., sign language interpretation, attendant care, note taking, captioning) at the start of the meeting.
- Ask attendants to identify themselves at the beginning of the meeting for anyone requiring assistance.
- Ask participants to identify themselves each time they speak for the benefit of participants who have a visual impairment.

- Inform participants of the nearest emergency exits and accessible restroom facilities.
- If the meeting room is physically large, make sure that an audio system is installed and that all participants use the microphones provided.
- Encourage all presenters to speak clearly and at a moderate pace to make the information easier to understand and communication easier for interpreters, interveners, note takers and captionists.
- Some people take longer to express ideas than others; allow time for people to respond at their own speed.
- Briefly describe the content of the agenda and handout materials.
- Clearly indicate changes in topics, health breaks and adjournments during the meeting.
- Advise participants to minimize interruptions. Interpreters, intervenors, captionists and note takers need to concentrate.
- Advise participants that interpreters will say everything that is signed, and sign everything that is said. Interpreters will not add words, edit or censor a conversation.
- Remind participants that the event is scent-free.
- During question and answer periods, remind people to speak slowly and clearly and state their name before beginning.

### **Tips for presenters**

- Adhere to a planned schedule.
- Work with the meeting organizer to make arrangements to produce handout materials in alternative formats, such as Braille, DAISY,

audio, large print, diskette, CD, DVD or flash drives. If alternative formats are not available at the meeting, send them as soon as possible. Make sure you ask specifically what type of format the participant requires.

- Try to provide conventional print and electronic handouts to the meeting organizer well before the event so that other formats can be produced and distributed before the meeting.
- Prepare audiovisual aids using at least 18-point sans serif fonts—such as Arial or Verdana—with high-contrast colours (black type on a white background is best). For more information on sans serif fonts, see section 4 on page 15.
- Ensure that video material is captioned for participants who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. Provide descriptive narration format for people who are blind or have a visual impairment (particularly for charts and graphs).
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Be sure to face the audience during the presentation.
- Periodically check with the audience to see if the message and presentation material are understood. Clarify as needed.
- Allow adequate time for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing to process on-screen messages and for the interpreters to communicate the spoken word through sign language.
- Use plain language and presentation materials that are crisp, to the point and concise. Slide presentations that are too busy can cause information overload.
- During question and answer periods, remind people to speak slowly and clearly and state their name before beginning.



## ► 4. Providing Accessible Services and Materials

The most successful meeting is one in which everyone can participate fully and includes the clear communication of ideas, strategies and common goals. It is important when you are organizing a meeting to remember to provide materials in a format that allows everyone to participate.

A variety of products and services exist to help ensure that individual needs are accommodated in meetings. Although some participants may have the same or similar disability, do not assume that they will request the same accommodation. Accommodations are unique to each person and dependent on a variety of factors.

Written materials are easiest to read when printed using a sans serif font in high-contrast colours. Sans serif fonts are types that do not have serifs, which are the little extra strokes that often look like tails found at the start and end of the letter. The most widely used serif font is Times New Roman. Examples of sans serif fonts are Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Futura, Univers and Franklin Gothic. The CNIB has developed an accessible design standard for printed material, called the Clear Print Guideline, which you can access on the CNIB Web site. For a link, see section 5 on page 21.

Some people may have disabilities that make it difficult or impossible for them to read printed material. This includes people who are blind or have a visual impairment; it also includes people with learning disabilities and may include some people with mobility disabilities. These participants may require materials in alternative formats and may identify themselves as having a print disability.

A person who is blind or has a visual impairment may ask for materials in Braille, while others may request material on diskette, CD, DVD, flash drive, digital talking books (often DAISY), audio or other alternative formats.

Some people who are hard of hearing may request an infrared system, while others may ask for the services of a note taker or real-time captionist.

People with intellectual disabilities may require documents in plain language. Plain language means the words are direct and straightforward, and the material in documents is organized logically and the sentences are constructed clearly and simply. Use only words that are necessary, and avoid long sentences with complex construction. It is important to remember that it is not “baby talk,” nor is it a simplified version of language. A good organization to consult about plain language is Clear Language and Design (CLAD). For more information about CLAD, see section 5 on page 21.

## 4.1 Interpreter and intervenor services

**Note:** See the glossary on page 54 for definitions of sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, intervenors and advisors.

The simplest way to begin planning interpreter services for your meeting is to contact the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) or the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) and have them direct you to local service providers. The Web addresses for these organizations are in section 5 on page 21.

If you have people in attendance who require the services of an intervenor, the CHS can direct you to services offered in your area. You can also contact the Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association (CDRA), which has local chapters throughout the country. The Web address for the CDRA's national office is in section 5 on page 21.

**Translation Bureau:** For those who work in the federal public service, the Translation Bureau at Public Works and Government Services Canada offers the following services:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Langue des signes du Québec (LSQ)
- Deaf-blind intervenor services
- Simultaneous interpretation

The Translation Bureau provides these services for:

- participants at federal government conferences, public hearings or other public meetings
- federal public service employees who need help communicating with a person who is deaf
- federal public service employees who are deaf who need help communicating with people who do not use sign language

Requests by federal public servants for other services not mentioned above can be arranged for a fee through local organizations for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. A list of organizations that offer these services is available from the Translation Bureau.

For the Web address of the Translation Bureau, see section 5 on page 21.

Depending on how long the meeting will be, you should ask the service providers how many interpreters will be needed. Interpreters need a break every 15 to 20 minutes, so if your meeting is longer than 20 minutes you should plan on hiring two sign language interpreters.

**Note:** Interpreters, interveners, captionists and note takers may require hands-free earphones to process the information in their language of work when simultaneous interpretation services are provided.

## 4.2 Real-time captioning and note taking services

Real-time captioning can enhance communication for people who have a hearing loss, people who have certain types of learning disabilities and people whose first language is neither English nor French. It also has the added benefit of providing an electronic record of the meeting's proceedings.

The delay between the speech and the appearance of the written text is typically less than two seconds, allowing readers to participate fully in the proceedings. If both anglophone and francophone participants require real-time captioning, plan on having two captionists, along with their related equipment, at the meeting.

The captionist's text output may be transferred to a monitor or projected onto a screen. Where they are available, a laptop computer may be used for one-on-one meetings, while larger gatherings may require a projection screen.



Consult local associations for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing for contact names of real-time captionists and note takers. Examples of these associations are listed in section 5 on page 21.

### **4.3 Alternatives to print formats**

People who have print disabilities may rely on alternative formats such as Braille, large print, DAISY, audio, diskette, flash or jump drives, CD, DVD, or a format that can be downloaded. Converting materials may require some time, so you need to consider these requests in your overall planning.

Producing material in alternative formats could be as simple as removing specialized formatting; saving as a text file (.txt) rather than a Word format (.doc); or saving the document in a separate file to be transferred to CD, DVD, or downloaded from the Web. However, the process can be more complicated, depending on the format. Always check with the person who made the request about the format needed.

### **4.4 Captioned material**

Videos and film clips used during meetings should be captioned to ensure participants who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing can access the information presented.

Captioned products can be viewed with a standard television. Television sets manufactured after 1993 have built-in captioning microchips. The television menu or closed caption (CC) button on the remote control provides access to the captioning.

## 4.5 Assistive listening devices

People who use hearing aids may need an assistive listening device, which requires an amplification system. If participants are seated at tables, make sure each table has microphone(s). Larger meetings may require hands-free microphones in addition to the traditional podium microphone.

Local associations for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing can provide information on where you can rent or purchase amplification systems. Some telecommunications or audiovisual companies can also advise you on the specific auditory requirements of a meeting.

## ▶ 5. Resources

The following service providers and organizations are a good starting point if you are looking for more resources and sources of information. There are many more organizations than we can include in this guide.

### A

#### **Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD)**

**[www.ala.ca](http://www.ala.ca)**

Phone: 1-800-771-0663 or 613-244-0052

TTY: 1-888-771-0663 or 613-244-0008

Fax: 613-244-4857

E-mail: **[ala@ala.ca](mailto:ala@ala.ca)**

The ALACD promotes active, healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities through individual and community partnerships.

#### **Arthritis Society**

**[www.arthritis.ca](http://www.arthritis.ca)**

National Office

Phone: 416-979-7228

Fax: 416-979-8366

Toll-free: 1-800-321-1433

E-mail: **[info@arthritis.ca](mailto:info@arthritis.ca)**

The Arthritis Society is a national organization committed to the funding and promotion of arthritis research, programs and patient care. Local office locations can be found on the Web site.

## **Assistive Devices Industry Office, Industry Canada**

**[www.at-links.gc.ca/zx15100E.asp](http://www.at-links.gc.ca/zx15100E.asp)**

This list of Web-based resources catalogues assistive devices, their manufacturers and vendors, and service providers and practitioners in the fields of assistive technology, rehabilitation and research.

## **Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC)**

**[www.avlic.ca](http://www.avlic.ca)**

Voice/TTY: 780-430-9442

Fax: 780-988-2660

The AVLIC provides information about hiring and working with ASL/English interpreters, resources that support professional interpreting and an online directory of its members.

## **A Way With Words and Images**

**[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/reports/way\\_with\\_words/way\\_with\\_words.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/reports/way_with_words/way_with_words.pdf)**

This booklet developed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada seeks to promote a fair and accurate portrayal of people with disabilities. It recommends current and appropriate terminology to help you reach this goal.

## **B**

## **Brain Injury Association of Canada (BIAC)**

**[www.biac-aclc.ca](http://www.biac-aclc.ca)**

Phone: 819-777-2492

Toll-free: 1-866-977-2492

Fax: 819-595-2458

E-mail: **[info@biac-aclc.ca](mailto:info@biac-aclc.ca)**

The BIAC strives to improve quality of life for those living with brain injuries, and promotes injury prevention. The BIAC is an umbrella organization made up of regional associations from across the country.

## C

### **Canada Public Service Agency – Diversity and Employment Equity**

**[www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/ee-eng.asp](http://www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/ee-eng.asp)**

Employment equity in the public service means eliminating barriers to employment for four designated groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

### **Canadian Abilities Foundation (CAF)**

**[www.enablelink.org](http://www.enablelink.org)**

Phone: 416-923-1885

Fax: 416-923-9829

E-mail: **[able@abilities.ca](mailto:able@abilities.ca)**

The CAF provides information on disability resources. It publishes a magazine and other on-line and print publications to help promote opportunities for people with disabilities and facilitate discussions.

### **Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL)**

**[www.cacl.ca](http://www.cacl.ca)**

Phone: 416-661-9611

Fax: 416-661-5701

TTY: 416-661-2023

E-mail: **[inform@cacl.ca](mailto:inform@cacl.ca)**

The CACL is a national organization that assists people with intellectual disabilities and their families to gain access to services, supports and opportunities that help them articulate and achieve their full potential.

### **Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD)**

**[www.cad.ca](http://www.cad.ca)**

Phone: 613-565-2882

TTY: 613-565-8882

Fax: 613-565-1207

E-mail: **[info@cad.ca](mailto:info@cad.ca)**

The CAD is the national consumer organization of Canada's 300,000 citizens who are deaf. The CAD consults on deaf needs for business, education and the public and private sectors. In addition, the CAD provides support to deaf organizations across Canada.

### **Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association (CDBRA)**

**[www.cdbra.ca](http://www.cdbra.ca)**

National Office

Phone: 1-866-229-5832

Fax: 902-737-1114

E-mail: **[cbdra@seaside.ns.ca](mailto:cbdra@seaside.ns.ca)**

The CDRA assists people who are deafblind to achieve, with intervention, the best quality of life. The CDBRA can provide resources regarding the hiring of deafblind intervenors.

### **Canadian Deaf-Blind Council (CDBC)**

**[www.cdbc-csac.ca](http://www.cdbc-csac.ca)**

E-mail: **[webmaster@cdbc-csac.ca](mailto:webmaster@cdbc-csac.ca)**

The CDBC facilitates research and supports advocacy for all people who are deaf-blind in Canada.

## **Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind (CGDB)**

**[www.guidedogs.ca](http://www.guidedogs.ca)**

National Office and Training Centre

Phone: 613-692-7777

Fax: 613-692-0650

E-mail: **[cgdb@sympatico.ca](mailto:cgdb@sympatico.ca)**

The CGDB is a national, non-profit organization that assists visually impaired Canadians with their mobility by providing and training them in the use of professionally trained guide dogs.

## **Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA)**

**[www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca)**

Phone: 613-526-1584

Fax: 613-526-4718

The CHHA is a national consumer-based organization created and run by and for hard-of-hearing Canadians. The CHHA works cooperatively with professionals, government and the public sector to provide information and solutions about hard-of-hearing issues.

## **Canadian Hearing Society (CHS)**

**[www.chs.ca](http://www.chs.ca)**

Phone: 416-928-3427

Toll-free: 1-877-347-3427

TTY: 416-964-0023

Toll-free TTY: 1-877-347-3429

Fax: 416-928-2506

E-mail: **[info@chs.ca](mailto:info@chs.ca)**

The CHS provides services, products and information that remove barriers to communication, advance hearing health and promote equity for people who are culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

## **Canadian Human Rights Commission – Duty to Accommodate**

[http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/portal\\_portail/duty\\_obligation-en.asp](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/portal_portail/duty_obligation-en.asp)

Phone: 613-995-1151

Toll-free: 1-888-214-1090

TTY: 1-888-643-3304

Fax: 613-996-9661

The duty to accommodate involves eliminating or changing rules, policies and behaviours that discriminate against persons based on group characteristics, such as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, marital status, family status and disability.

## **Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)**

[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

National Office

Phone: 613-745-7750

Fax: 613-745-5522

E-mail: [info@cmha.ca](mailto:info@cmha.ca)

The CMHA offers programs and services that promote mental health and support those who have experienced mental illness.

## **Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA)**

[www.canparaplegic.org](http://www.canparaplegic.org)

Toll-free: 1-888-723-1033

Fax: 613-723-1060

The CPA is a national organization that assists people with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation. It offers a full range of programs and services from its regional offices located across the country.



## **Canadian Standards Association (CSA)**

**[www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca)**

Phone: 416-747-4000

Toll-free: 1-800-463-6727

Fax: 416-747-2473

The CSA serves business, industry, government and consumers in Canada and the global marketplace. The CSA works to develop standards that address real needs, such as enhancing public safety and health. It has developed standards on accessible customer service principles and practices, and accessibility of the built environment for people with disabilities.

## **Clear Language and Design (CLAD)**

**[www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/](http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/)**

Phone: 416- 968-2236

Fax: 416-968-0488

E-mail: **[clad@idirect.ca](mailto:clad@idirect.ca)**

CLAD provides clear (or plain) language and design, editing, writing, training and consulting on a fee-for-service basis. Its Web site also includes a plain language thesaurus that you can use to find alternatives to less easily understood terms.

## **CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)**

**[www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)**

CNIB National Office

Phone: 1-800-563-2642

Fax: 416-480-7700

E-mail: **[info@cnib.ca](mailto:info@cnib.ca)**

The CNIB provides support and information resources for all Canadians affected by vision loss. The CNIB operates regional offices across

the country. It can provide insight into facilitating accommodations to individuals who experience low vision or blindness. Regional office locations can be found on the Web site.

### **Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD)**

**[www.ccdonline.ca](http://www.ccdonline.ca)**

Phone: 204-947-0303

TTY: 204-943-4757

E-mail: **[ccd@ccdonline.ca](mailto:ccd@ccdonline.ca)**

The CCD is a federal advocacy organization that works to improve the lives of men and women with disabilities in Canada, by working to eliminate inequality and discrimination.

## **D**

### **DAISY Consortium**

**[www.daisy.org](http://www.daisy.org)**

CNIB Library

Phone: 416-486-2500

Fax: 416- 480- 7700

The DAISY Consortium develops and promotes international standards and technologies that enable equal access to information and knowledge by all people with print disabilities and that also benefit the wider community. DAISY can provide information and resources on conversion of information to alternative formats.

## **E**

### **Employment Equity Policy**

**[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/lo/lsw/we/information/what.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/lo/lsw/we/information/what.shtml)**

The Employment Equity Policy is a program designed to overcome discrimination in employment experienced by members of equity groups, such as people with disabilities.

## G

### **Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health**

**[www.mentalhealthroundtable.ca](http://www.mentalhealthroundtable.ca)**

Phone: 416-552-5937

Fax: 416-552-5650

E-mail: **[bill.wilkerson@gwl.ca](mailto:bill.wilkerson@gwl.ca)**

The Roundtable was formed in 1998. It analyzes information and develops ideas on the links between business, the economy, mental health and work. It consists of business, health and education leaders who support the view that mental health is also a business and economic issue. In this context, the Roundtable is serving a number of goals and working objectives.

## I

### **Independent Living Canada (formerly the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres)**

**[www.cailc.ca/](http://www.cailc.ca/)**

Phone: 613-563-2581

Fax: 613-563-3861

TTY/TDD: 613-563-4215

E-mail: **[info@cailc.ca](mailto:info@cailc.ca)**

Independent Living Canada is a national umbrella organization representing and coordinating the network of Independent Living Centres (ILCs) from coast to coast.

**L****Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC)**

**[www.ldac-taac.ca](http://www.ldac-taac.ca)**

National Office

Phone: 613-238-5721

Fax: 613-235-5391

Toll-free: 1-877-238-5322

E-mail: **[info@ldac-taac.ca](mailto:info@ldac-taac.ca)**

The LDAC is the national advocacy organization for people with learning disabilities and those who support them. The LDAC provides information and resources about the nature and the effects of learning disabilities.

**M****Mental Health Commission of Canada**

**[www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca)**

Phone: 403-943-1234

Fax: 403-943-0148

E-mail: **[info@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:info@mentalhealthcommission.ca)**

The goal of the Mental Health Commission of Canada is to help create an integrated mental health system that places people living with mental illness at its centre. It encourages cooperation and collaboration among governments, mental health service providers, employers, the scientific and research communities and Canadians living with mental illness, together with their caregivers and/or families.

**O****Office for Disability Issues, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (ODI)**

[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/mandate/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/mandate/index.shtml)

The ODI is the focal point within the Government of Canada for key partners working to promote the full participation of Canadians with disabilities in learning, work and community life.

**P****People First of Canada (PFC)**

[www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca](http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca)

Phone: 204-784-7362

Members' phone: 1-866-854-8915

Fax: 204-784-7364

E-mail: [info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca](mailto:info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca)

PFC is a national consumer organization for people labelled developmentally disabled. PFC advocates for equal treatment and supports its members in having their voices heard on issues that affect them.

**R****Rick Hansen Foundation**

[www.rickhansen.com](http://www.rickhansen.com)

Phone: 604-876-6800

Toll-free: 1-800-213-2131

Fax: 604-876-6666

E-mail: [info@rickhansen.com](mailto:info@rickhansen.com)

The Rick Hansen Foundation works to create more accessible and inclusive communities for people with a spinal cord injury, and supports the search for a cure. The Foundation achieves its goals by connecting the people and resources that make innovation possible.

## **S**

### **Service Canada – Persons with Disabilities Online**

<http://www.pwd-online.ca/pwdhome.jsp?&lang=en&geo=ALL&fontsize=0>

Persons with Disabilities Online provides access to services and information for people with disabilities, family members, caregivers and all Canadians.

### **Spoken Text Online**

[www.spokentext.net](http://www.spokentext.net)

This service provides a quick and simple way to convert text content into spoken audio for a minimal cost.

## **T**

### **Translation Bureau**

[www.translationbureau.gc.ca/](http://www.translationbureau.gc.ca/)

Phone: 819-997-3300

Fax: 819-997-1993

E-mail: [Translationbureau@pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:Translationbureau@pwgsc.gc.ca)

The Translation Bureau provides linguistic services for Parliament and Government of Canada institutions, including:

- participants at federal government conferences, public hearings or other public meetings
- public service employees who need help communicating with a person who is deaf
- public service employees who are deaf who need help communicating with people who do not use sign language

Requests by federal public servants for other services not mentioned above can be arranged for a fee through local organizations for people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. A list of organizations that offer these services is available from the Translation Bureau.

### **Treasury Board Duty to Accommodate**

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12541>

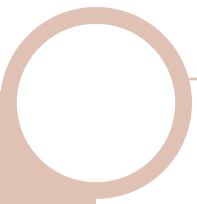
The Treasury Board Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service aims to eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of potential recruits and existing employees within the Public Service of Canada.

## **V**

### **Voiceprint**

[www.voiceprint.ca](http://www.voiceprint.ca)

VoicePrint is a division of the National Broadcast Reading Service, which helps create access to printed materials for people who are vision restricted, learning disabled, mobility impaired, in need of literacy skills, learning ESL, or just getting older.





## ► Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Accessibility Checklist for Planners

Use the following checklists to help you plan your meeting. Each one covers an important aspect of planning a meeting.

Personalize the checklists by adding or deleting items in the spaces provided, or by using the electronic copy provided on the CD, to better represent your specific meeting.

#### 1 Conducting the Event/Preplanning the Meeting

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
<b>Volunteers</b>		
Provide time for training volunteers		
Offer travel money ahead of time		

## 1 Conducting the Event/Preplanning the Meeting *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
<b>Location preparation</b>		
Identify accessible telephones		
Ensure directional signage in the location for floor numbers, level locations for parking (CNIB standards for colours and contrasts)		
Identify accessible restrooms		
<b>Preliminary budget planning</b>		
Ensure fees for all advisors (ASL interpreters, attendants, advisors) are included in the budget		
Provide honorariums beforehand		
Provide cash advances for participants (taxis, meals, etc.)		

**1** Conducting the Event/Preplanning the Meeting *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
<b>Preliminary budget planning <i>(continued)</i></b>		
<b>Presentation</b>		
Provide agendas/ background information ahead of time		
Create plain language material		
Have material available in alternative formats (e.g., audiotape, large print, audio CD)		
Ensure information is accessible and has easy-to-follow instructions		



## 1 Conducting the Event/Preplanning the Meeting *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
<b>Awareness training</b>		
Provide staff training in conjunction with and as part of a best practices policy		
Encourage emergency preparedness in written material		
Promote accessible services in corporate Web sites, brochures, posters, etc.		
Develop a best practice policy which would include proven solutions to common problems		

## 2 Budgeting for Accommodation

	Estimated cost	Comments
Conversion of print to alternative formats		
Note-taker services		
Sign language interpretation (both ASL and LSQ)		
Advisor services		
Adaptive technologies		
Assistive listening devices		
Real-time captioning		
Dietary requirements		
Audio systems		

### 3 Scheduling Considerations

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Notify participants well in advance so they can arrange for accessible transportation, attendant services and other personalized services		
Provide presenters and organizers with reference sheets advising them what is required to ensure accessible communication		
Prepare agenda with adequate meal breaks and health breaks		
Arrange for service providers such as simultaneous and sign language interpreters, note takers and captionists three to four weeks before the meeting		
Allow several weeks for converting printed material to alternative formats or plain language		
Allow time to arrange for renting audio and assistive listening systems		

**3** Scheduling Considerations *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Allow time on the day of the meeting to set up and test audio and assistive listening systems		
Allow time for longer break periods for those with guide dogs or those with intellectual disabilities		

**4** Getting to the Meeting

	Ensured by (Date)	Comments
Accessible routes to the meeting (e.g., no construction barricades, snow removed)		
Accessible parking available close to facility		

**4** Getting to the Meeting *(continued)*

	Ensured by (Date)	Comments
Accessible public transportation available with schedules that work with planned meeting time		
Audio systems at road intersections to indicate light changes for people with a visual impairment		

**5** Meeting Facility

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Facility entrance equipped with automatic door and sufficient room to manoeuvre all sizes of mobility aids		



## 5 Meeting Facility *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Accessibility features operational (e.g., doors, platform lifts)		
Floor surfaces stable, firm and slip-resistant		
Tactile signage (raised pictograms, lettering and dome Braille) on a contrasting background, mounted 1.5 metres (five feet) above floor		
Volunteers in place to greet and direct participants if signage is not available		
Public elevators that can accommodate people who use wheelchairs or motorized scooters (e.g., accessible control panel, large buttons)		
Public elevators equipped with audio floor indicators (voice or chime)		

### 5 Meeting Facility *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Accessible restrooms (e.g., cubicle with accessible grab bar, sink, toilet, soap and towel dispenser) available close to meeting room		
Accessible water fountain		
Eating facilities fully accessible (e.g., includes accessible restrooms)		
Restrooms equipped with a visual alarm system (flashing light)		
Hearing aid-compatible public telephones, with volume controls		
Public telephone equipped with TTY capability		
Public telephones at accessible height		
Designated area available nearby to relieve and walk guide/service dogs		

**5** Meeting Facility *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Ensure lighting is of an acceptable brightness and, if possible, not fluorescent		
Braille or large-print menus in eating facilities		

**6** Meeting Rooms

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Spacious room to accommodate a translation booth, captioning equipment, etc.		
Space for table to accommodate documents, food, refreshments, etc.		
Accessible meeting room entrance		

## 6 Meeting Rooms *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Room set-up allows freedom of movement using mobility aids (e.g., guide dogs, wheelchairs, motorized scooters)		
Reserved seating for people who use wheelchairs and motorized scooters or who are accompanied by guide/service dogs		
Tables at accessible height for wheelchairs, motorized scooters, etc.		
Space for sign language interpreters and/or simultaneous interpreters		
Seating near the interpreters/captionists/note takers reserved for people who are hard of hearing		
Background noise not excessive in meeting room		
Assistive listening devices available		

**6** Meeting Rooms *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Scent-free meeting room (e.g., perfumes or strong odours from newly installed carpet or fresh paint)		

**7** Alternative Formats

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Documents written in plain language		
Printed material available in Braille, large print, audiotape, and CD, flashdrive or diskette		
Videotape presentations accessible through use of descriptive narration and/or captioning		

## 8 Safety and Evacuation

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Stairwells free of debris		
Detailed evacuation plan in place		
List of participants with evacuation needs provided to facility manager		
Designated person to help evacuate participants with specific needs		

## 9 Event Registration

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Registration form sent to participants confirming accommodation needs		
Sign language interpreters		

## 9 Event Registration *(continued)*

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Oral interpreters		
Assistive listening devices		
Real-time captioning		
Advisors		
Dietary requirements		
Request that participants identify specific evacuation needs		
Request that participants respect scent-free environment		

## 10 Volunteers

	Completed by (Date)	Comments
Volunteers available to assist participants at the meeting		
Volunteers assigned specific tasks		
Volunteers sensitized to the needs of people with disabilities		
Volunteers identifiable (name tags)		
Find a buddy for participants requiring evacuation assistance		



## Appendix B

### Sample Event Registration Form/Application for Accessibility Requirements

You can use the sample registration form on the next page to request accommodation information from the participants.

As an alternative to the form, event planners could ask participants for accommodation information by sending them an invitation that includes the following text:

#### Appendix B.1 Sample Event Registration Form

“If you require documents in formats other than conventional print, or if you have specific accommodation or dietary needs, please let us know so we can make arrangements in advance. Please also identify any assistance you may require in the event of an emergency evacuation. For more detailed information, call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.”

“Please indicate your requirements to help us plan an event that meets your accommodation and inclusion needs. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Appendix B.2 Application for Accessibility Requirements

### A Mobility requirements

- Physical accessibility (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### B Language requirements

- Simultaneous interpretation  
 American Sign Language (ASL)  
 *Langue des signes du Québec* (LSQ)

### C Service requirements

- Oral interpreter  
 Assistive listening system  
 Intervenor  
 Advisor  
 Real-time captioning

### D Alternative media requirements

- Large print  
 Audiocassette  
 Braille  
 Diskette/CD/flash drive (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 DAISY  
 Descriptive video  
 Captioned video

**E Other requirements – Please specify**

Dietary \_\_\_\_\_

Evacuation needs \_\_\_\_\_

Overnight accommodations \_\_\_\_\_

Name of attendant/coach accompanying me to event  
(first name, last name): \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix C

### Glossary

**Advisor** – The equivalent of a language interpreter, an advisor makes it possible for people with intellectual disabilities to understand new language and procedures; in effect, they are contextual interpreters.

**Audiocassette** – Publications are read aloud and recorded on cassette.

**Braille** – Publications are produced in a code of raised dots that are read by touch.

**Chemical sensitivity** – A chronic condition characterized by adverse effects from exposure to low levels of chemicals or other substances in modern human environments. Suspected substances include smoke, pesticides, plastics, synthetic fabrics, scented products, petroleum products and paints.

**Closed captioning** – Text hidden within the lines used to create the television picture, which cannot be seen unless decoded. Just like subtitles, the decoded text appears at the bottom of the screen.

**Descriptive narration** – A video with a described narrative woven into the original soundtrack that meets the viewing needs of a blended audience. It is meaningful for viewers with visual impairments and unobtrusive for the sighted viewer.

**Digital talking book** – The Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) allows users to move around text as easily as someone would on paper. Books and information published in the DAISY format can be read only using a DAISY player or DAISY software on a computer.

**Diskette** – Publications recorded onto a computer diskette using text or ASCII format to facilitate computer access to the information.

**FM system** – Use of radio frequencies to transmit signals to amplify sounds.

**Guide dog/service dog** – Guide dogs can often be used by people who have a visual impairment. Service dogs can be used by people who have different disabilities (e.g., people with reduced mobility).

**Infrared system** – Use of infrared light to transmit signals to amplify sounds.

**Intervenor** – A professional service provider who communicates auditory and visual information to a deaf-blind person using a variety of methods, depending on what works best for the individual. These include visual sign language, tactile sign language, tactile finger spelling, Braille and large-print notes.

**Large print** – Publications printed in a font size that is 14 points or greater.

**Note taker** – A person who provides a text (written or transcribed using a keyboard) of the key messages communicated through presentations and discussions.

**Open captioning** – Text that appears on the television screen at all times, without decoding.

**Oral interpreter** – Some people who are hard of hearing may rely on speech (lip) reading. At larger meetings and conferences, it is difficult to be positioned in front of all speakers to speech read. Oral interpreters repeat the spoken words silently so that their speech can be read.

**Real-time captioning** – A captionist records speech on a shorthand transcription machine, similar to court reporting.

**Sans serif font** – Sans serif fonts do not have serifs, which are the little extra strokes at the start and end of the letters. Serifs look like tails or curls that often lead from one letter to the next. Examples of sans serif fonts are Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Futura, Univers and Franklin Gothic.

**Sign language interpreter** – An interpreter facilitates communication between people who do not share a common language, such as people who are hard of hearing and those who are not. In Canada, sign language interpreters communicate in both American Sign Language (ASL) for anglophones and *Langue des signes du Québec* (LSQ) for francophones.

**Teletypewriter (TTY)** – A telecommunication device that enables conversation over the telephone. It consists of a keyboard, an acoustic coupler and a printer or electronic screen, or both.