



# Inclusivity for Events

A guide for event organisers

National  
Heritage Week  
A Heritage Council programme



Creating an inclusive event ensures that all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, feel welcome and able to participate fully. This guide provides key considerations and practical tips to help event organisers prioritise inclusivity.





# 1

## Understanding Inclusivity in Events

Inclusive event planning goes beyond physical accessibility.

**It encompasses:**

### **Diversity**

Ensuring representation of different communities.

### **Equity**

Providing necessary accommodations for all.

### **Accessibility**

Removing physical, informational, and social barriers.

### **Belonging**

Creating an environment where all are valued.

# 2

## Best Practices for Inclusive Event Planning

### Encourage Participation

Ensuring broad participation requires identifying and removing barriers that might exclude certain groups. Consider outreach strategies to engage with underrepresented communities, such as direct engagement, partnerships with advocacy groups, and providing assistance for those who may face barriers to participation.

### Consider Different Perspectives

A truly inclusive event considers the needs of all attendees. Engage with diverse community groups to understand potential challenges and how best to accommodate them. Evaluate who typically attends your events and take proactive steps to include those who may not have participated before.

### Create an Inclusive Invitation

Crafting an effective and inclusive invitation ensures that all potential attendees feel welcome. Use inclusive language and imagery, and offer multiple formats such as plain text, braille, large print, and digital versions. Provide a contact for accessibility inquiries so attendees can ask questions or communicate their specific needs in advance. Please do consider adopting the invitation to different dialects including Irish.

### Providing Key Event Information

Clear information about event logistics is essential for accessibility. Provide detailed information about the event agenda, run time, venue layout, transportation options, and accessibility features such as toilet facilities, wheelchair access, hearing loops, sign language interpretation, and the availability of quiet spaces at the venue.



# 3

## Accessibility Considerations at your event

### Venue Accessibility

Choosing an accessible venue is critical. Ensure step-free access, wheelchair-friendly seating arrangements, and accessible restrooms. If in-person attendance is not feasible for all, consider providing a virtual attendance option.

### Communication Accessibility

Inclusive communication ensures all attendees can engage with content. Offer captions or sign language interpretation for spoken content. Provide event materials in multiple formats including braille and large print, and use clear, simple language to avoid unnecessary jargon.



## 4

### **Event Timing & Logistics**

Event scheduling should take into account the availability of your audience and participants. You may wish to avoid scheduling conflicts with other events or commitments (such as school times, working hours or rush hour), Ensure that any meal breaks or catering accommodate dietary restrictions. Flexible scheduling and sufficient breaks make events more inclusive for attendees with different needs.

## 5

### **Representation & Inclusivity in Content**

Diversity should be reflected in both the event's content and any event speakers, panelists, presenters, and performers The content of your event should, as far as possible, acknowledge different perspectives, under-represented groups (such at the Traveller community) and experiences, while avoiding stereotypes.

## 6

### **Fostering a Welcoming Environment**

A safe and welcoming environment is crucial to ensuring a positive experience for everyone at your event. Ideally, your staff and volunteers should receive clear information about your policies or approach to accessibility and inclusion to ensure a positive experience for all. Collecting feedback from event attendees that asks specifically about how to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of the event is a great way to learn and develop.



## 7

### Final Steps for Inclusivity

To create an inclusive event, take active steps to engage with diverse communities. Personally invite underrepresented individuals, groups or communities to participate in your event or to collaborate with you. Continuously assess and adapt your event based on feedback to enhance accessibility and increase engagement and participation. Remember, if you or your community group do not already collaborate with diverse communities, include different perspectives or facilitate broad participation, your Heritage Week event is a great opportunity to begin doing this.

# 8

## Five Quick Tips for Inclusive Event Planning

### 1. Engage Diverse Communities

Actively reach out to underrepresented groups and ensure their voices are included in the planning process.

#### Ensure Accessibility

Choose venues with step-free access, provide assistive technologies (e.g., captions, sign language interpreters), and offer multiple ways to engage (in-person and virtual).

#### Use Inclusive Language & Communication

Avoid jargon, provide materials in multiple formats (braille, large print, digital), and ensure signage is clear and easy to understand.

#### Consider Timing & Logistics

Schedule events at suitable times, avoid cultural or religious holidays, and provide flexible break times with diverse food options.

#### Train Your Team & Gather Feedback

Educate staff and volunteers on inclusivity, implement anti-discrimination policies, and collect attendee feedback to continuously improve accessibility.

# Five Tips for a More Inclusive Event

## 3 Maximise Participation

- ▶ Encourage as many people as possible to join.
- ▶ Remove barriers that might prevent participation.

## 6 Consider Different Perspectives

- ▶ Put yourself in someone else's shoes.
- ▶ Ask: Who usually attends your events? Who is missing?

## 2 The Right Invitation

- ▶ Ensure your invitation reaches diverse groups.
- ▶ Make the messaging welcoming and inclusive.

## 4 Information Powers Inclusivity

- ▶ Provide clear details about the event.
- ▶ Let attendees know what to expect.

## 5 Accessibility Matters

- ▶ Venue Considerations:
  - Step-free access and wheelchair-friendly spaces.
  - Availability of seating.
  - Good lighting conditions.
  - Clear visibility of speakers.
  - Adequate sound levels.
- ▶ Ask attendees or specific groups what accommodations they need.



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