



BELONGING AT YALE

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Checklist for Event Planners

Yale Conferences & Events is in the business of bringing people together and creating memorable experiences. Our goal is to make events successful for the client, and perhaps transformative experiences for everyone in attendance.

Over the years, we have witnessed the evolution of events, where we sat in uncomfortable chairs for hours while straining to see presentations, to events where we account for all accessibility needs, and more.

It is critical that we ensure that all our events are inclusive on every level, intentionally, and by design. As planners and hosts, it is our responsibility to ensure that every attendee feels welcome and has equal access to everything the event has to offer. By optimizing an individual's experience based on their specific needs, we create an environment where we all belong.

The following pages hold things to consider when planning your next event.

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Programming

Consider these points when conceptualizing your event

- ✓ Consider attendees' religious and other obligations: be mindful and check for conflicts with holidays, holy days, and local school schedules. Start on Monday and end on Thursday to support family life balance.
- ✓ Ensure the planning committee, speakers, and/or moderator represent a broad variety of gender, race, LGBTQ+ status, national origin, ability, veteran status, geography, etc.
- ✓ Consider supplier/vendor diversity
- ✓ Find expert perspective on topic/content beyond your own circles
- ✓ Ask speakers to identify their pronouns in their introductions (and on the screen when virtual)
- ✓ Eliminate titles or use gender-neutral titles. Inform speakers of design and delivery practices that enhance inclusive presentations.
- ✓ Allow anonymous questions
- ✓ Offer language interpretation if feasible/needed
- ✓ A virtual event will allow you to reach a greater audience and allow for greater geographical reach for your speakers
- ✓ Offer scholarships for groups that face the most barriers
- ✓ Conference organizers book travel and/or accommodations on behalf of travel scholarship recipients, rather than asking recipients to pay and be reimbursed

Resources

- ✓ Make individuals who are planning events aware that Yale has an Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) which provides different forms of consultations and educational support.
- ✓ Make note of the different diversity partners that are located on campus as additional resources.
- ✓ Share Yale's get support link for guidance, assistance, or information.

Location and Set-Up

Consider these points when choosing venues and transportation

- ✓ Be sure that your event's location is a good fit for your audience. For example, a 50th reunion should avoid a location with many stairs or transitions.
- ✓ Look at parking options at the location you are considering for proximity and number of handicapped spaces.
- ✓ Consider offering transportation to a location that might pose access challenges or distance challenges. Look for vehicles that can accommodate a wheelchair.
- ✓ Keep in mind mobility, especially if the event requires participants to walk any distance or use stairs or escalators. Do a site visit and visually inspect the ramp and elevator options to make sure they are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure adequate space is allocated for someone in a wheelchair to navigate the room. If the speaker is in a wheelchair, ensure the stage has a ramp.
- ✓ Ensure that a wheelchair can roll under tables and that there is sufficient space for wheelchairs/scooters throughout the premises.
- ✓ Avoid positioning wheelchairs in front or back of room. Middle is best.
- ✓ Consider offering quiet and private spaces for nursing parent or prayer room.
- ✓ Ensure inclusive signage is used and that all gender restrooms are available.
- ✓ Provide chairs when you expect participants to be standing, for those who want to sit.
- ✓ Consider reserved seating for hearing or vision impaired guests.
- ✓ Consider adding a land acknowledgement at the beginning of your event.

Resources

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with Yale's campus by exploring this detailed and interactive [map of Yale](#).
- ✓ Read through Yale's [Campus Access](#) webpage to learn more about accessible parking and transportation.

Food and Beverage

Consider these points when planning your catering needs

- ✓ Consider personal and religious food restrictions and serving restrictions (kosher, vegan, fasting, etc.).
- ✓ Be aware of food preferences and create a quick reference chart for confirmed guests.
- ✓ Share event menus in advance where possible.
- ✓ Consider customizable menus or stations. Provide identifiers to include ingredients on buffets and menu cards.
- ✓ Solicit an array of locally owned caterers through outreach.
- ✓ Consider inviting chef/manager to discuss menu items and why they are a part of the event.

Registration

Consider these points when building your registration forms

- ✓ Include an ADA statement on your registration form
- ✓ Inquiry about specific needs, such as:
 - Do you require sign language interpretation?
 - Do you have a service animal? What do they need?
 - Do you require a mobility assistant? What do they need? (do not charge a registration fee for a mobility assistant)
 - Do you have any dietary restrictions?
- ✓ Have a process within the registration system to request additional accommodations and communicate a deadline for making requests.
- ✓ Allow registrants to opt-out of selecting gender pronouns for their nametag.
- ✓ Share your code of conduct at registration/on your app/in your program to set the tone for your event.

Resources

- ✓ See the [Accessibility FAQ Page Generator](#).

Marketing

Consider these points when promoting your event

- ✓ Utilize diverse images in your marketing materials for a more equitable and inclusive promotional effort. Representation matters.
- ✓ Design materials (hard copies and digital) with accessibility as a priority. Routinely audit your materials for accessibility.
- ✓ Ensure that text is large enough for everyone to read and that materials are compatible with the range of hardware and software used by persons with disabilities. Run PDFs through an Optical Character Recognition software.
- ✓ Hyperlink text in documents so screen-reader users are made aware of where there are links instead of being dictated a long URL, which is difficult to follow.
- ✓ Color contrast is important. Check the [color contrast analyzer](#) for the best color combinations.
- ✓ Add image alt text to all images on web materials, left justify text for easier reading, and auto-caption your promotional videos.

Resources

- ✓ See the Yale [Communicators' Toolkit](#) and [Web Accessibility](#) page.

Virtual Programming

Consider these points when hosting a virtual audience

- ✓ Ask speakers to include subtitles in videos they share and offer live captioning for live streamed events (use Zoom auto-captioning at minimum).
- ✓ Spotlight speakers so it is easier to see who is speaking. When doing introductions, consider physically describing yourself.
- ✓ Share presentations before the event and review presentations for readability.
- ✓ Save the chat content if resources were shared and distribute it to attendees afterwards.
- ✓ Consider varied time zones when selecting time/date for your event.

Resources

- ✓ See [Accessibility Best Practices for Zoom](#) and [Accessible Virtual Conferences](#).