

A TCDG Framework

It is common for people across all cultures to come together in groups to share information, solve problems, create opportunities, and be in community. In our modern era, meetings can be divisive, unpleasant, unproductive and downright harmful to people who have been historically marginalized or excluded. It doesn't have to be this way! With some care and intention, meetings can be a place to build new connections, deepen understanding about complex issues, and create momentum for positive change. Below we offer several resources to help you organize equitable, inclusive and welcoming meetings and events. Don't worry if you aren't able to follow all of these suggestions. We invite you to make your best effort with the time and resources you have available.

I. Before the Meeting

The key to creating an equitable and welcoming space lies in the skill, sensitivity, and respect organizers and facilitators bring to their interactions with people from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Developing these skills is an ongoing process for all of us. To help us be intentional, the checklist below offers a few logistics to keep in mind to ensure that your meeting is as accessible and welcoming as possible.

General

- In advance of the meeting or event, participants have been asked what accommodations they need, who to contact for accommodations, and by what deadline.
- Participants have received a communication that includes
 - The why, what, how, when and where of the meeting or event
 - Relevant decisions or items from previous meetings
 - What you hope participants will contribute
 - What will be offered to participants to create an experience that benefits participants as well as organizers
 - Materials or information have been sent far enough in advance so people have plenty of time to review them
 - Participants have clear directions about how to prepare

Physical Accessibility*

- The entrance to the space is accessible to people with mobility devices (i.e. elevator and/or ramp access, no obstructions, open spots in seating for wheelchair users)
- Signage is clearly visible and written in large, sans serif fonts (Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman)
- Participants are encouraged to not wear fragrances
- Seating includes some chairs without arms and with weight limits above 250lbs

*Here is a helpful resource for planning accessible meetings:

<https://accessibility.harvard.edu/event-planning>

Language Access

- Closed captioning is turned on for virtual meetings or video presentations
- Interpretation services are available for those who need them
- Written materials are translated as needed, and written in at least 12 point sans serif fonts

Participation Supports

- Child care
- Stipends
- Transportation
- Free parking
- Meeting time and place that works best for your audience
- Name tags are provided to all, or at least to the facilitators or presenters.

Safer Spaces for people who are farthest from justice

- Culturally familiar food
- Gender inclusive and ADA accessible bathrooms
- Hosts and facilitators are trusted members of the community

II. Meeting Template

1. Welcome & Meeting Overview

- a. Ensure people feel welcome and know what to expect during the meeting including the meeting purpose, activities, and accommodations that are available so everyone can participate fully.
- b. Thank the people whose work made the meeting possible (for example, cleaning staff, food service workers, etc.)
- c. Establish group agreements

2. Making Connections

- a. Introductions
- b. Story sharing about how the issue impacts us, our loved ones, our neighbors or our community

3. Information Sharing

- a. Brief description of the issue (what we are facing and why it matters)
- b. Briefly share work already underway to address the issue
- c. Share key opportunities or barriers people should be aware of

4. Discussion

- a. Discuss issues and gather feedback, ideas or recommendations
- b. This part of the meeting can be structured in many ways. Depending on meeting goals, people can be invited to participate in an open dialogue, priority setting, cost/benefit analysis, design charrette, choice work or more

5. Opportunities for Action

- a. Share ideas for individual and collective action

6. Closing

- a. Thanks people for participating!
- b. Let people know what will happen next, and how the work done during this meeting will inform action and decision-making going forward

III. After the Meeting

- Immediately after the meeting, participants have received an email, text message or other form of communication thanking them for participating, and letting them know what next steps will happen following the meeting
- Organizers have met to debrief the meeting, decide on next steps, and identify additional people or organizations who should be involved going forward
- One to one follow up with specific meeting participants or partners has happened as needed
- Shortly after the meeting, participants received a communication with notification of completed next steps, or additional opportunities to participate
- Several months after the meeting, participants received an update about what has happened since the meeting, including successful outcomes, barriers or challenges that have happened, and a reminder of how their participation informed outcomes and impacts