

GUIDE TO

Conducting Accessible Meetings





For More Information

Visit: www.omssa.com

Email: info@omssa.com

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Preface

About OMSSA

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) is the association of the 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). OMSSA's members plan, manage, and deliver integrated human services in housing, homelessness, employment and income support, and early learning and childcare.

Why OMSSA?

OMSSA members champion the integration of human services to create a system that is effectively coordinated, seamless and tailored locally to the needs of people so that they can maximize their potential, enhance their quality of life, and contribute to their community.

This vision of integrated service delivery is founded on four principles:

- Using a **people-centred approach** to make programs and services truly responsive to the needs of those they serve.
- Developing a **common vision and language** to remove the barriers caused by programs delivered from silos.
- Using a **systems approach** in human services delivery to transcend program boundaries and respond effectively.
- Using outcomes-based planning and **evaluation** in the spirit of continuous improvement to ensure that the process of

human services integration continues to work towards the desired outcomes.

OMSSA believes that to achieve this vision, it is critical that all residents have the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them and their communities. It is therefore essential that meetings and events that residents participate in are accessible and inclusive.

As service system managers, OMSSA's members have a strong history of engaging with their communities and community partners to plan, manage, and deliver effective integrated human services responsive locally to people's needs. To support members, OMSSA has developed individual training supports and comprehensive community capacity-building resources in the fields of early learning and childcare, and long-term planning of housing and homelessness programs.

This guide was developed by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association through an EnAbling Change Partnership with the Government of Ontario. It is a supplement to OMSSA's Guide to Accessible Public Engagement.

The purpose of the Guide to Conducting Accessible Meetings is to help meeting planners organize meetings big or small, virtual or face-to-face that are accessible to all participants, including people with disabilities.

Together, the two guides provide organizations with the resources they need to develop and support accessible public engagement.

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We thank the following people for their key contributions to this project:

OMSSA EnAbling Change Project Advisory Committee

Doug Ball (Chair)

Manager, Social Planning and Program Support,
County of Lambton

Lucille Berlinguette-Saumure

Accessibility Specialist,
City of Ottawa

Lois Davies

Program Manager, ODA/
AODA, Community and Health Services, Regional Municipality of York

Charlotte Gravlev

Interim Manager,
Citizen Service, Region of Waterloo

Jan Janssen

Manager, Early Learning & Child Care, Children & Community Services,
County of Simcoe

Debbie Kirwin

Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee,
Town of Huntsville

Christine Malone

Training Coordinator,
City of Ottawa

Barbara Millions

Ontario Works Program Manager, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board

Steve Murphy

Accessibility Advisory Coordinator,
Regional Municipality of Niagara

Steven Murphy

Emergency Services/
Accessibility Coordinator,
County of Dufferin

Dick Winters

Special Services Program Manager, Children's Services,
City of Toronto

The **Accessibility Directorate of Ontario**, Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Employment, for providing content regarding accessible meetings.

Introduction

Meetings come in a variety of formats and sizes – from small workshops with participants who know each other to large public meetings. Regardless of size or format of the meeting you are planning, it is critical to ensure it is fully accessible from the registration forms to the meeting rooms and the presentations. By planning ahead, you can build accessibility into all aspects of the meeting. This will allow everyone to participate fully, including people with disabilities.

There are two main areas you need to consider when planning a meeting or event.

- Physical access to the meeting space
- Access to the content and proceedings of the meeting.

Physical access to the meeting includes accessible spaces for parking, accessible entrances and washrooms, and meeting rooms that are large enough to accommodate participants who use wheelchairs, scooters and service animals.

Access to the content and proceedings of the meeting includes making background and presentation materials available in accessible, electronic formats as well as alternate formats such as large print and Braille.

People with disabilities have different needs. Talk to the participants with disabilities ahead of time and find out what they require. One size does not fit all. Be flexible. Look for alternatives.

There are 1.85 million people in Ontario with disabilities. Make your meeting or event accessible from start to finish so that everyone who wants to participate is able to do so.

How to use this guide

This guide takes you through three steps to organizing and running accessible meetings.

Step 1: Planning the meeting

Step 2: Conducting the meeting

Step 3: Evaluating the meeting

Planning the meeting is the most detailed step. The more you plan before a meeting, the smoother it will run and the more time you will have to deal with any unexpected issues that may arise during the meeting.

The guide also includes appendices with additional information including checklists, tips for speakers and a list of resources on accessibility.

Barriers seen and unseen

Not all barriers are physical obstacles, such as stairs. Some barriers can be hard to see. Here are examples of the types of barriers that may exist at a meeting or conference and make it difficult for people with disabilities to participate fully.

Attitudinal barriers discriminate against people with disabilities.

Example

- The assumption that a person who has a speech impairment would not be a valuable contributor to a meeting.

Information and communication barriers occur when a person cannot easily understand information.

Examples

- Print is too small to read.
- Signs are not clear.

Technology barriers occur when a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices.

Example

- Captioning is not provided for a video that is used at an event.

Systemic barriers are policies, practices, or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities.

Example

- A day-long meeting that does not provide enough time between sessions for people who use wheelchairs, scooters or service animals to easily move from one session to another.

Architectural and physical barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.

Examples

- Hallways and doorways are too narrow for people using wheelchairs, scooters, or other types of mobility devices and there are no ramps or elevators.
- Parking spaces are too narrow for a driver who uses a wheelchair.

Step 1: Planning the Meeting

It is a good practice for your organization to have approved protocols in place for planning and conducting accessible meetings. This may include a commitment to work with participants to accommodate their accessibility needs; ensure accessible promotional and presentation materials; and improve meeting planning based on feedback from meeting participants.

TIP: Plan your meeting and send out the invitations or promotional material early so that participants can respond and identify any accommodation needs they have. By doing so, you send the message that your meeting is accessible and you give your team enough time to make the necessary arrangements.

Budgeting

- Incorporate accessibility planning into your budget from the beginning. Budgeting for accessibility considerations may require you to set aside funds to provide an accessible venue and materials to meet the needs of participants with disabilities. You may also want to set aside money for arrangements that have to be made at the last minute.
- Obtain quotes for services such as sign language interpretation and note-taking, and include these potential costs in your budget. Consider arranging for these services in advance on a tentative basis. Some service providers need significant advance notice.

By booking ahead, you may avoid paying higher fees for last-minute requests.

- Consider ways in which you can be accessible and cost-efficient. For example, ask speakers to provide copies of their materials in advance so they can be put into accessible formats.

Selecting the venue

- Conduct a site visit before booking a venue to ensure it is accessible and that any potential challenges to accessibility can be addressed early. Inspect the meeting rooms to ensure they are large enough and can be set up so participants who use wheelchairs, scooters or service animals can move about easily.
- Make sure the venue has at least one accessible washroom that can easily accommodate a wheelchair or scooter.
- Once you have identified an accessible venue that meets the needs of your meeting and your participants, reserve it as soon as possible.
- Consider alternatives that you can put in place if the venue you have chosen is not able to fulfill all your accessibility requirements. For example, if your meeting room does not have an automatic door opener, provide a greeter to open the door. If the elevators do not have Braille beside the floor numbers or audio announcing the floors, then consider posting a volunteer at the elevators to help people who are blind or have low vision.

- Obtain information about accessible lodging for participants even if accommodations are not part of the meeting planning.
- Determine the number of designated accessible parking spots needed by participants with disabilities by asking for this information on the registration form.

TIP: The definition of accessible rooms can vary from one facility to another. If possible, find out about the requirements of your participants first and then conduct a site visit to ensure that lodgings meet their accessibility needs.

When the venue is virtual

Today, many meetings are partly or entirely virtual. In some cases, conferences held in one city are broadcast or telecast to participants gathered in other cities or towns.

Virtual meetings may take the form of teleconferences, web conferences or video conferences. Whatever technology you choose for your meetings, it should be accessible.

Developing the agenda

- Make sure there is enough time for participants with disabilities to move from plenary sessions to break-out meetings to lunch with ease.
- Confirm that speakers and presenters understand how they can contribute to an accessible meeting.

TIP: When planning the lunch and morning and afternoon breaks make sure there is enough time for participants with service animals to take them outside for a walk.

- Ask presenters and speakers if they need any accommodation, such as a ramp to the stage.
- Schedule enough time for speakers and audio visual specialists to set up the equipment.
- Make sure that if a site visit or tour is part of your meeting or conference, the vehicles being used can accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, if needed.

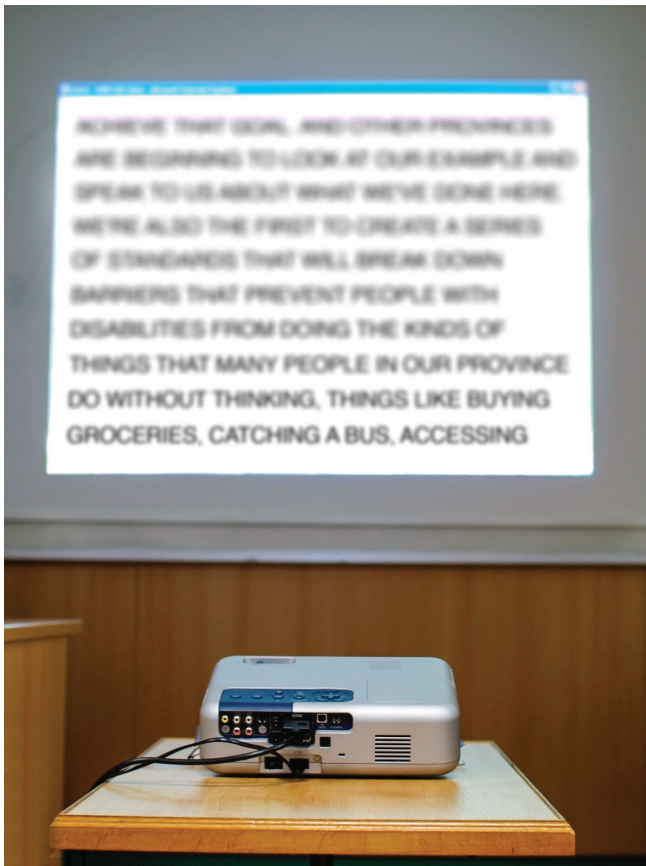
Inviting participants and promoting the meeting

Promote your meeting using a variety of formats — print, email, online, telephone and social media. Smaller meetings may only need to be promoted via a single format such as email.

- Make sure that information, brochures and registration forms posted on your website are accessible. For more information, see [Appendix D](#).
- To learn about designing accessible printed documents, see the link to the CNIB's Clear Print Guidelines in [Appendix D](#).

TIPS:

- For public meetings, open houses, or other events for which participants do not register in advance, try to anticipate and prepare for general accessibility needs. Ensure that all notices and advertisements about the event include information about accessibility.
- Try to provide materials in advance so participants can review the information and, if possible, have volunteers available to offer support to participants with disabilities.



Registering participants

Whether your meeting requires a simple RSVP or a formal registration form, this is the ideal time for participants to identify their accessibility needs.

On your meeting invitation and registration form, ask those who wish to attend the meeting to identify the accessibility supports they require.

- Set a deadline to request certain types of accessibility supports so that you have enough time to acquire them.
- Consider listing the accommodation supports you are able to offer. These supports may include the following items:
 - note-taking services
 - material in accessible formats
 - real-time video captioning
 - sign language interpreters
 - assistive listening devices
 - personal support workers
 - special diets
 - accessible accommodation
 - accessible parking
 - other – identified by the participant.
- Follow up with the participant to discuss the supports or combination of supports that will best address their needs.

TIP: Even if you receive no advance requests for accommodation, you may receive last-minute or on-the-spot requests for accessibility supports. Know what options are available to you if this happens.



Making presentations accessible

Accessible presentations are crucial to the success of your event. Share the following tips with your presenters.

- Use clear formats for presentation materials — easy-to-read slides using large, sans serif fonts and good colour contrast with white or pale yellow as a background and black for the print. For more information, see the link to the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments’ tips on creating accessible presentations in [Appendix D](#).
- Turn off projectors when they are not in use to reduce ambient noise.
- Use a microphone and ask participants to use a microphone when they ask questions and to identify themselves before they speak.

- Speak at normal pace and offer a clear view of your mouth and face.
- Stay within the time allocated for the presentation.
- Provide presentation materials in advance so that the materials can be transcribed into accessible formats.

Training staff and volunteers

- Make sure that the venue staff who will be assisting at the meeting have been trained on serving people with disabilities.
- Show all staff and volunteers the location of elevators, accessible washrooms, accessible fire exits, and areas for service animals.
- Make sure all staff and volunteers are comfortable with and understand the need for service animals and know where they can be taken for a walk.

Emergency planning

When you visit the meeting venue discuss the facility's emergency plans and procedures with the facility manager. Ask the manager whether the emergency plan is available in accessible formats.

You should set aside time to do the following:

- Designate staff to help specific individuals who may need assistance in an emergency. These staff members should be easily identified by identification badges or vests.
- Explain the venue's emergency plan to your staff and volunteers. Ensure that they know where the emergency exits are located and how to use them.

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, organizations that have written emergency plans that are available to the public must make them available in accessible formats on request.



Step 2: Conducting the Meeting

Walking through the venue

On the eve or day of the meeting, walk through the venue to make sure that everything is in place including any special arrangements for participants with disabilities.

- Look for unexpected construction or repair work that has left hallways, ramps, entrances, or exits cluttered with equipment or building materials.
- Use signs, staff, or volunteers to redirect participants, if the equipment or materials cannot be cleared.
- Ensure that the area where the registration table is located has enough room for participants who use scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, or service animals to manoeuvre.

Beginning the meeting

At the start of the meeting ensure participants know the following.

- Where volunteers and support people are stationed and how they can be identified, e.g., they are wearing identification badges or vests.

TIP: Even if you had no advance requests for documents in accessible formats, it is a good practice to have large-print format as well as electronic (Word) versions of all documents on hand. If possible, make sure that the electronic versions are accessible.

On the day of the meeting there may be some last-minute requests for accommodation that cannot be completely met. If this happens, it is important to be flexible and to work with the participant to find a temporary and respectful solution.

If the issue is unanticipated, the success of the solution will be based on your willingness to make last-minute changes and to involve the participant in the process.

- The guidelines for accessible meetings such as keeping aisles clear and identifying yourself when you speak or ask a question.
- What resources, speeches or presentations are available and in accessible or alternate formats.

Taking a break

- During breaks, arrange the refreshment tables so that there is room for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, or service animals to manoeuvre.
- Provide sit-down service for people with disabilities if lunch is a buffet.
- Ensure that there is enough food for support persons who accompany participants who have disabilities.

Step 3: Evaluating the Meeting

Evaluating a meeting is a two-step process that includes debriefing your staff, volunteers, and presenters as well as soliciting feedback from participants.

Debriefing staff, volunteers, and presenters

After the event is over, hold a meeting to debrief your staff and volunteers. This can be done in person, by teleconference, or by email. If you include the presenters in your debriefing you may have to debrief by telephone or email.

- Invite ideas on how to make future meetings more accessible for people with disabilities.
- Ask staff, volunteers and presenters whether or not they think the participants with disabilities were adequately supported during the meeting, and if they were themselves fully prepared or needed further training.

Inviting participant feedback

As part of your planning process, develop an evaluation form that asks participants if their accommodation needs were met, and what more could have been done to make the meeting accessible. This is in addition to your questions about the meeting in general, the content, and the speakers. The evaluations will help you plan future accessible meetings.

TIP: Make sure that the evaluation form is available in accessible formats.

Planning future meetings

Share the lessons learned and best practices with all staff in your organization so they can benefit from your experience when they organize meetings.

TIP: If you plan meetings for a committee that meets regularly, ask your committee members or participants to identify the best way for you to communicate with them. Build additional time into schedules to allow group members with disabilities to participate. Identify any accessibility issues that could create barriers for any group member to receive and work with information required for the meeting. Finally, make accessibility a recurring agenda item to provide an opportunity to check in with members about any concerns.

Appendix A: Meeting Checklist

The following checklist will help you track your progress as you plan your accessible meeting. This list is not exhaustive; there may be additional issues to consider.

Step 1: Planning the Meeting

Budget

- Quotes received for accessibility services such as sign language interpretation, real-time captioning, note-taking services, and assistive listening devices
- Funds allocated to acquire accessibility supports such as preparing meeting materials in accessible formats
- Funds allocated for accessible venue

Venue selection — exterior

Transportation and path of travel

- Venue easily accessible by car and accessible public transit
- Drop-off area covered and close to accessible entrance
- Path of travel from parking lot or drop-off area to meeting entrance is free of barriers
- Ramps have gradual slopes and handrails on both sides

Parking

- Sufficient number of designated accessible parking spots available for estimated number of people with disabilities

- Arrangements made for more designated parking spaces if necessary
- Designated accessible parking spots wide enough for accessible vans with side ramps
- Designated accessible parking spots on firm, slip-resistant surface.
- Designated accessible parking spots are located close to entrance of building, if not, then path to building is free of barriers
- Parking areas clear of snow and ice in winter

Signage

- Street address and/or building name clearly visible
- Street address and/or building name well-lit for evening events

Venue selection — interior

Entrances and lobbies

- Entrances wide enough for people using a wheelchair or scooter — one metre or wider is optimal
- If the main entrance not accessible, then there is clear, visible signage at front of building indicating the location of an accessible entrance

- Main entrances and accessible entrances well-lit
- Entrances equipped with automatic door openers
- Door handles easy to open; interior doors should have automatic door openers or lever handles and exterior doors must have automatic door openers
- Signage in main lobby clearly indicates location of meeting rooms
- Signs large and clear enough for people with low vision to read
- Signs mounted at comfortable, readable height for people who use wheelchairs
- No construction or renovation work scheduled during time of event. If construction work is planned, then arrangements are made for alternate routes with signs or greeters to direct participants

Elevators

- Elevators located close to meeting rooms
- Elevators large enough to accommodate people who use wheelchairs or scooters
- Sufficient number of elevators available
- Elevator controls mounted at comfortable height for people using wheelchairs or scooters
- Elevators feature Braille buttons and raised numerals for people who are blind or have low vision
- Elevators include auditory signals for people who are blind or have low vision
- Elevator lobby has visual cue system to alert people who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Accessible washrooms

- Washroom doors have raised (tactile) male or female signs or Braille lettering
- Washroom doors equipped with automatic or push-button door openers
- Washroom large enough to accommodate people who use power wheelchairs or scooters
- Minimum of one accessible washroom on same floor as event
- Faucet within reach of a person using wheelchair or scooter
- Automatic or lever-style faucets
- Soap dispensers and towels within reach of people using wheelchairs or scooters
- Mirrors at suitable height for people using wheelchairs or scooters
- Counter has sufficient clearance underneath for wheelchair
- Minimum of one accessible cubicle with grab bars

Hallways and corridors

- Hallways and doorways used for event wide enough — at least one metre — for people using wheelchairs or scooters
- Hallways and doorways clear of furniture, planters or other obstacles
- Door handles easy to open; interior doors have automatic door openers or lever handles
- Floor coverings allow people using wheelchairs or scooters to move easily throughout facility
- No loose carpets

Meeting rooms

- Meeting room located on entry floor or easily accessible by elevators
- Meeting room large enough to allow seating and circulation for anticipated number of participants using wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility aids, and service animals (two spaces allocated for each of these participants)
- Reception and refreshment areas large enough to accommodate people who use wheelchairs, scooters, other mobility aids, and service animals
- Stages and speaking areas including lectern and podium accessible to people with limited mobility
- Area free of distracting background noises such as noisy ventilation systems
- Drapes or blinds available to reduce light or glare
- Room lighting levels adjustable
- Portable microphones available
- Well-lit spaces available for presenters and sign language interpreters

Refreshment and dietary considerations

- Participants can indicate their dietary requirements ahead of time, such as when registering for event or responding to the invitation
- Bendable straws, lightweight cups, and cups with large handles available and within easy reach of people using wheelchairs or scooters or who have dexterity difficulties

- Sugar-free beverages, juices, and water available for people with dietary concerns, such as diabetes
- Fresh fruit and vegetables available for people with dietary concerns
- If food is served buffet-style, someone is assigned to assist people with visual and physical disabilities
- Food placed within easy reach of a person using a wheelchair or scooter
- Access to outdoors so service animals can be walked during meals and health breaks

Emergency plans and procedures

- Venue has emergency plan that is available to the public and in accessible formats
- Evacuation plan in place that considers the needs of people with disabilities
- Visual fire alarms available and working
- Venue's staff and your event staff and volunteers are familiar with locations of elevators and accessible fire exits
- Event staff designated to assist individuals who may need assistance in an emergency
- Designated staff identified by vest, armband, or badge

Additional accessibility considerations

- Water bowls and suitable relieving area available for service animals
- Accessible restaurants/café identified if food not provided
- Lodgings with accessible rooms identified
- Facility staff trained in providing accessible customer service

Agenda, invitations, registration, and presentations

Agenda

- Written agenda uses minimum 12-point, legible font, such as Arial, Verdana or Georgia
- Time allocated at beginning of agenda to inform participants of accessible conduct such as leaving aisles free and identifying themselves when speaking
- Sufficient number and length of breaks allocated so people with disabilities can move easily between sessions
- Key points in agenda when people with disabilities might need assistance identified. For example, if a speaker plans to hold up a copy of a book or DVD a person with low vision might need to be told what the speaker is doing
- Time allotted for sign language interpreters or note-takers to take breaks

Invitations and promotional materials

- Invitations and event information provided in accessible formats for people who require or request them
- Promotional materials, invitations and registration forms posted on the Internet are accessible. **For more information, see Appendix D.**
- Invitation and promotional materials clearly indicate that participants can request any additional requirements such as special diets, accessible accommodation, accessible parking, or special assistance
- Promotion of event in variety of methods such as print, email, telephone, website, and

social media. Materials designed using the CNIB's Clear Print Guidelines ([see Appendix D](#))

Registering participants

- Participants asked to specify accessibility needs on registration form
- Deadline to request accommodation needs clearly communicated
- Participants can register in multiple ways such as on paper, by telephone or online
- Website or online registration process is accessible
- Multiple ways to pay registration fee (if required)
- Registration process states what is expected if participants accompanied by support persons (typically there is no fee for support persons)

Meeting materials

- Printed materials use minimum 12-point, legible font, such as Arial, Verdana or Georgia, and follow the CNIB's Clear Print Guidelines
- Floor plan included
- List of accessible restaurants/cafés included if food is not provided at event
- Presentation materials available in advance and in accessible formats on request
- Quantity of documents in accessible formats calculated according to anticipated audience
- Package of materials for participants requesting dietary accommodation includes arrangements that have been made

Presentations

- Presenters reminded of role in ensuring an accessible event
- Presenters given deadline to provide copies of materials, such as presentations, to be transcribed into accessible formats
- Presenters provided with tip sheet on how to make their presentations accessible

Additional accessibility considerations

- Staff and event volunteers trained in providing accessible customer service
- Accessible buses, cars, or taxis available for off-site visits or tours

Virtual Meetings

Virtual meetings may take the form of teleconferences, web conferences, or videoconferences.

- Clear protocols and procedures established so participants with disabilities can communicate with other participants including designated speaking opportunities and giving them the option to signal that they would like to speak
- Telecommunications devices such as teletype devices (TTY) available for people with disabilities participating in teleconferences
- Captioning and alternative input devices available to people with disabilities attending web and video conferences

Step 2: Conducting the Meeting

General

Venue

- Signs to venue, conference hall, meeting rooms and accessible washrooms are clear, appropriately placed
- Staff in place at building entrance and along route to meeting room to provide navigation and assistance
- Signs are large and clear for people with low vision and readable at a comfortable height for people who use wheelchairs or scooters
- Hallways and access routes clear of items such as furniture, planters, or low-hanging or protruding objects
- Travel routes, doorways, elevator buttons, and washroom paper towel dispensers not obstructed
- Entranceway clear of snow, ice, wet leaves, and standing water
- Sidewalks and curb cuts clear of snow, ice, or debris
- Staff in place along route to exit to ensure participants find their way out safely and to help participants connect with their booked transportation, if necessary

Meeting rooms

- Tables numbered and reserved
- Reserved seating at the front of the room for participants who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or have low vision

- Sight lines clear for people using sign language interpreters
- Seats removed to allow freedom of movement for people using wheelchairs or scooters and to give them enough room to back up and turn around
- Designated aisle seating for participants using service animals
- Cables, wires, and microphones secured away from aisles and traffic areas
- All technology tested
- Floors are not slippery, wet, or blocked by any items
- Participants informed of availability of information in accessible formats, guidelines for accessible meeting conduct, and the location of personal support workers, and staff or volunteers designated as emergency assistants

Registration table

- Sufficient space for people using wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids to approach and move around as necessary
- Handouts organized according to format and placed at edge of table for easy access
- Sign language interpreter available in registration area if required
- Staff aware of participants who requested accessible documents and special diets

Refreshment areas

- Sufficient space for people using wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids to approach and move around as necessary
- Tablecloth corners taped or tied down so they do not pose a tripping hazard or get entangled in a wheelchair
- Food for dietary accommodations clearly labelled
- Staff or volunteers assigned to assist people with visual or physical disabilities
- Food, plates, glasses, utensils, and napkins within easy reach of people of short stature and those who use wheelchairs or scooters
- Bendable straws, lightweight cups, and cups with large handles within easy reach of people using wheelchairs or scooters or who have dexterity difficulties

Step 3: Evaluating the Meeting

Debriefing staff, volunteers, and presenters

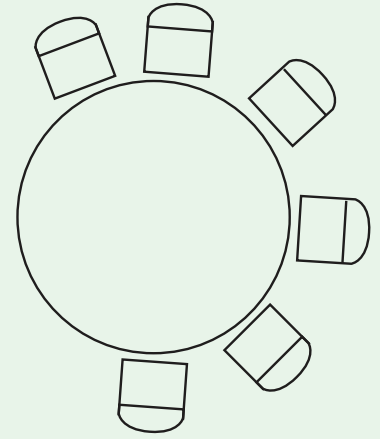
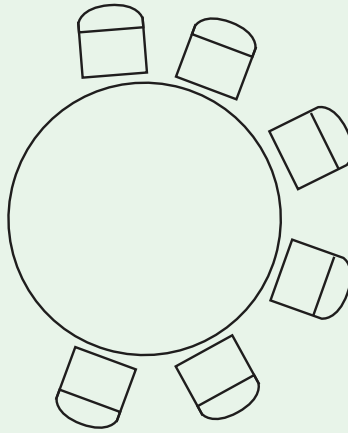
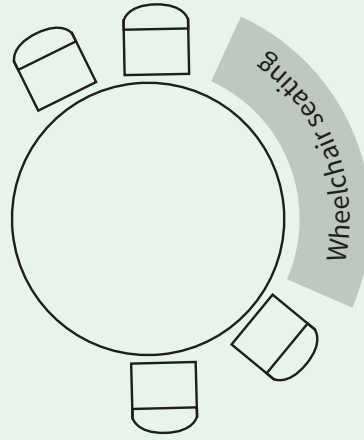
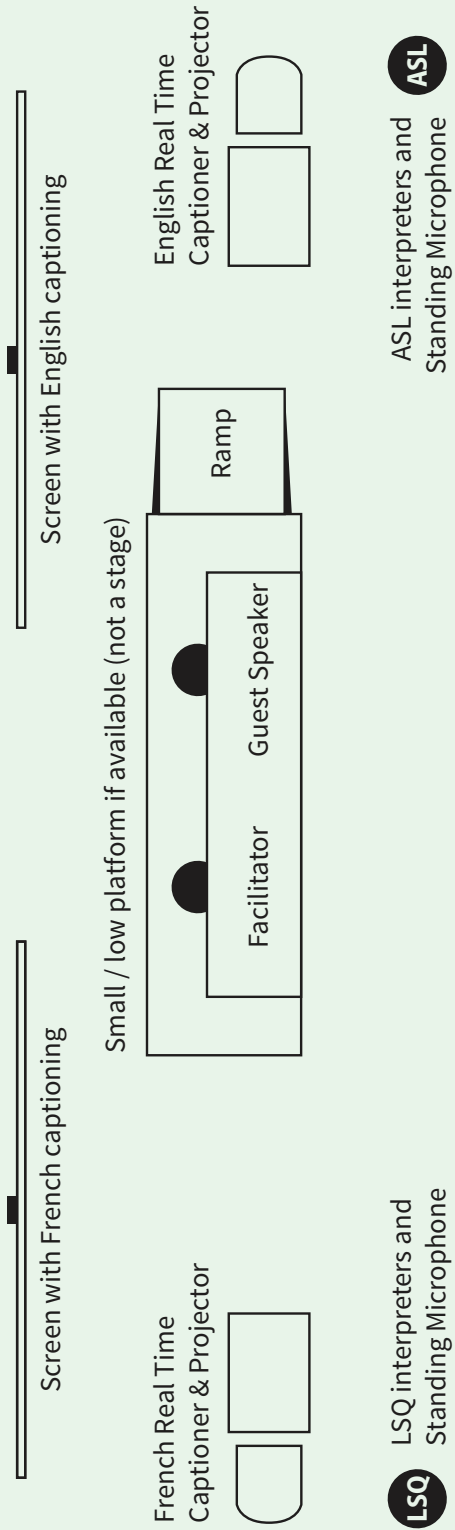
- Registration process allowed participants to identify accessibility needs
- Accessible parking and transport options available
- Meeting facilities accessible
- Presentations and discussions easy to follow
- Meeting schedule/agenda spaced just right
- Dietary requirements met
- Accessibility needs of people with disabilities met
- Unexpected situations that arose were dealt with satisfactorily

Feedback from participants

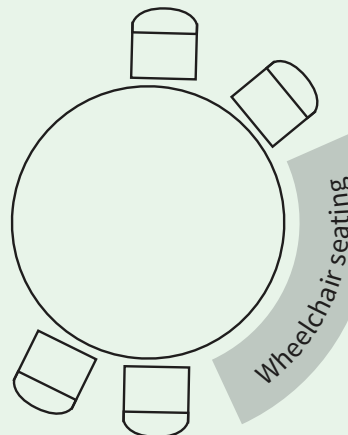
- Participants advised on how to submit feedback
- Feedback forms available in accessible formats
- Participants able to provide feedback electronically after event
- Staff available to answer questions and to assist with completion of evaluations

Appendix B: Sample Meeting Room Set-ups

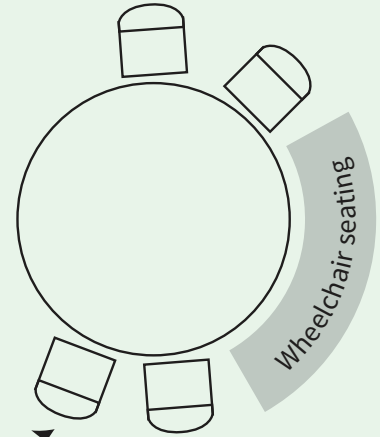
Banquet Table Seating



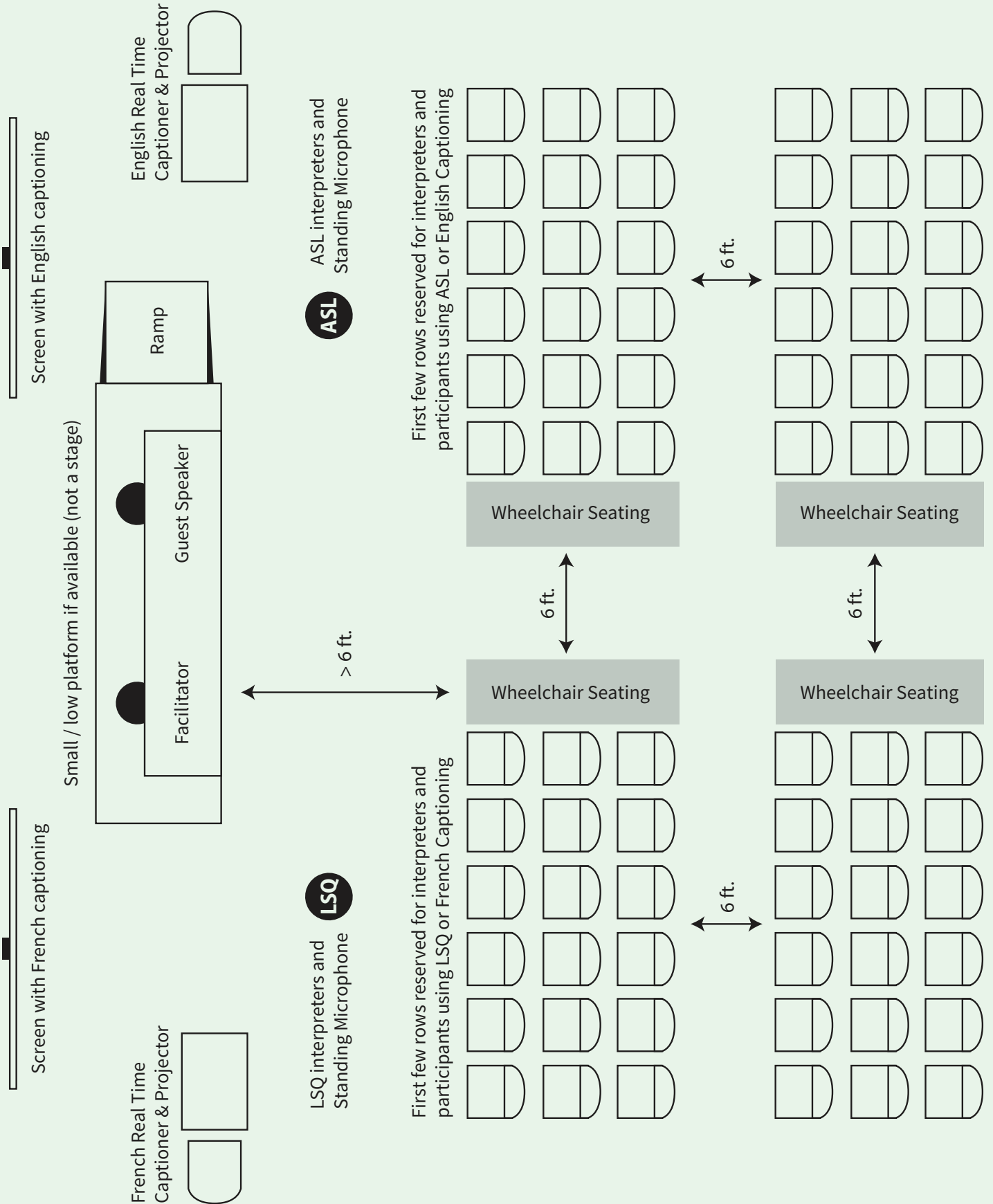
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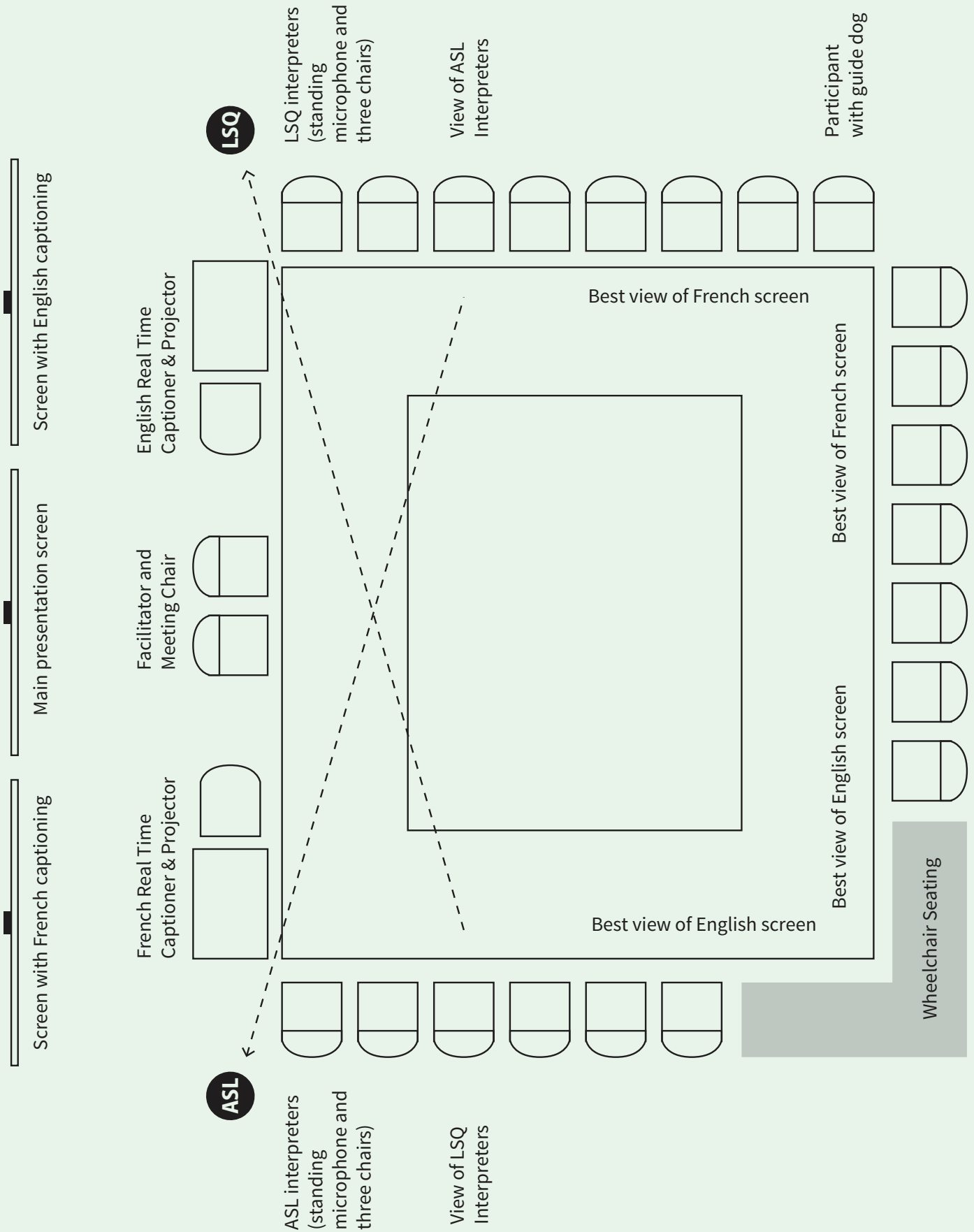
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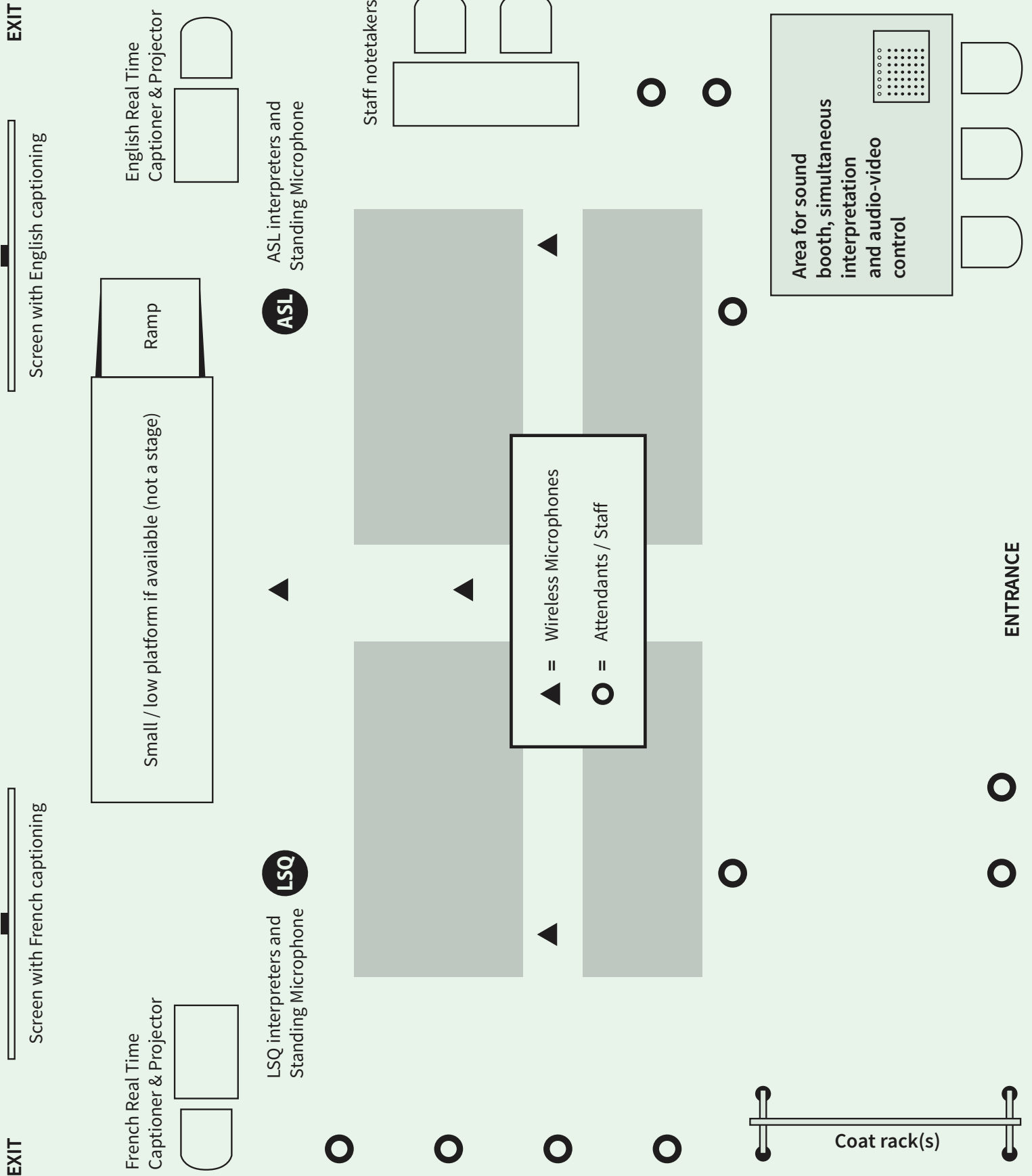
Theatre Seating



Roundtable Seating



Room layout



Appendix C: Tips for Speakers

Tips for giving accessible presentations

- Speak at a normal pace
- Stay within the allotted time
- Make sure there is a clear view of your face and mouth
- Use the microphone at all times
- Turn off projectors and other equipment that make noise when not in use

Tips for creating accessible presentations

- Use up to three or four lines of text per slide
- Use no more than 15 words per slide
- Use white or light-coloured background and dark print such as blue or black
- Use large, legible fonts such as Arial or Verdana
- Avoid busy backgrounds with flashing content
- Have printed versions of the presentation in large-print format and an electronic version in accessible format

Appendix D: Accessibility Resources

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

– Making Ontario Accessible

www.ontario.ca/AccessON

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

– Making your website more accessible

www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/publications/accessON/accessible_websites/toc.aspx

AChecker – Website Accessibility Checker

www.achecker.ca/checker/index.php

CNIB – Clear Print Guidelines

www.cnib.ca/en/services/resources/clearprint/pages/default.aspx

Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments – Tip sheet on creating accessible presentations

www.gaates.org/documents/ICT/TipSheet-Presentations.pdf

Graphic Artists Guild – Downloadable disability access symbols for web or print advertisements

www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols

Human Resources and Skills Development

Canada – Planning for Safety: Evacuating People Who Need Assistance in an Emergency

www.publications.gc.ca/pub?id=358248&sl=0

Inclusive Design Research Centre – Guides for creating accessible office documents using a variety of applications

<http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/>

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food

– Clear writing fact sheet

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/facts/07-049.htm

Ontario Municipal Social Services Association

– Guide to Accessible Public Engagement

www.omssa.com

World Wide Web Consortium – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag

Appendix E: Glossary of Accessibility Terms

Accessibility: Giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

Accessible Formats, Alternate Formats/ Multiple Formats: Formats that enable access by a person with a disability. Common accessible formats include large print, audio cassette, Braille, CD/DVD, descriptive video, signed video, on-screen text/e-text, and plain language or easy read. A tactile diagram or pictograms may be a component of an accessible format document.

Adaptive or Assistive Technology (AT): Technological tools that facilitate computer access for people with disabilities. Technology solutions may involve simple, readily available adjustments such as using built-in access devices on standard computers, or unique combinations of software and hardware such as those needed for voice or Braille output.

Alternative Input Devices: Devices that enable control of the computer through means other than a standard keyboard or pointing device. Some examples of these include smaller or larger keyboards, eye and head operated pointing devices and “sip-and-suck systems” that are controlled by breathing.

American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ): Visual languages with unique vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and social rules of use.

Assistive Devices: Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, including those acquired commercially, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. A barrier may be a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, or a technological barrier. A policy or a practice may also be a barrier.

Braille: A series of raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or whose eyesight is not sufficient for reading printed material.

Communication Access Real-time Captioning (CART): Instant translation of the spoken word into text using a stenotype machine or notebook computer and real-time software. The text appears on a computer monitor or other display.

Clear Print: A design approach that considers the needs of people with vision loss, cognitive disabilities or low literacy by focusing on basic design elements such as font style, type size, contrast, and page navigation.

Described Video: Described video provides audio descriptions of what appears on a screen in video format and enables someone to hear what is being portrayed visually.

Disability: The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 definition includes physical disabilities, mental and intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, and injuries or disabilities for which Workplace Safety and Insurance benefits were claimed and received. To read the complete definition visit ontario.ca/e-laws.

Interpreter/Sign Language Interpreters:

Interpreters who facilitate communication between people who use sign language and people who use spoken languages.

Oral Interpreters: Interpreters who facilitate communication in group situations where deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing individuals rely on speech reading. The oral interpreter mouths the words of the speaker, changing them when necessary to synonyms that are more visible on the lips.

Plain Language: A way of writing and presenting information and complex messages so that they are easy to read, understand and use. Plain language includes writing using simple sentences and uncomplicated grammar. It eliminates unnecessary words and jargon, replacing them with familiar words in a conversational style.

Screen Readers: Software programs that read out loud what is on the computer monitor through digitized speech. Screen reader programs do not require the use of a mouse or other devices that require sight.

Telephone Teletypes (TTY): TTY is an electronic device with a keyboard and a small screen that is used by people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing to communicate via telephone using a text-based system.

