BC FEDERATION OF LABOUR GUIDE TO CREATING ACCESSIBLE ONLINE AND IN PERSON EVENTS

Image: A beige square with twelve blue icons on it representing in order from left to right top to bottom; cognitive accessibility, vision impairment accessibility, hearing impairment accessibility, American Sign Language, cognitive accessibility, braille, parking, cane accessibility, service dog accessibility, wheelchair accessibility, accessible elevator and wheelchair ramp.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The physical offices of the BCFED are located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ílwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations, and as a provincial organization, we recognize that the work we do takes place in the largely unceded territories of at least 203 First Nations.

In addition, we acknowledge that a disproportionate number of Indigenous people live with a disability, and that many of these disabilities result from the impacts of ongoing colonial policies, including the legacy of residential institutions.

The BC Federation of Labour and its affiliates are engaged in and support the ongoing and important work of Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and we recognize that this work includes accountability to all Indigenous workers in this province. Our Reconciliation Action Plan Framework document is available on our website, and outlines the BCFED's commitment to engagement in and accountability to the work moving forward.

INTRODUCTION

This guide was created by the BCFED Accessibility Workers Caucus (AWC) for use by affiliates of the BCFED. Its purpose is to assist affiliate unions to organize accessible events, both in-person and online.

The AWC recognizes that workers with disabilities are diverse, with many different needs and experiences. As such, the caucus acknowledges that this document is imperfect, and that there is always room for learning and growth. The AWC intends for this guide to be a living document that is reviewed, refined and revised over time. Affiliates are encouraged to contact the AWC caucus chairperson to suggest changes to the guide.

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

(a) Have delegates received registration forms that provide opportunity for delegates to identify accessibility needs?

(b) Does the registration form include reminders for delegates to bring any accessibility/medical devices with them? For example, does the form include reminders about bringing an epi-pen to the event in order to prevent life-threatening, or long-term harm.

(c) Does this registration form enable delegates to identify whether they will have an assistant attend the event in order to assist with accessibility needs?

SAMPLE REGISTRATION STATEMENTS:

If you have a disability and may require accommodations in order to fully participate, please indicate here_____.

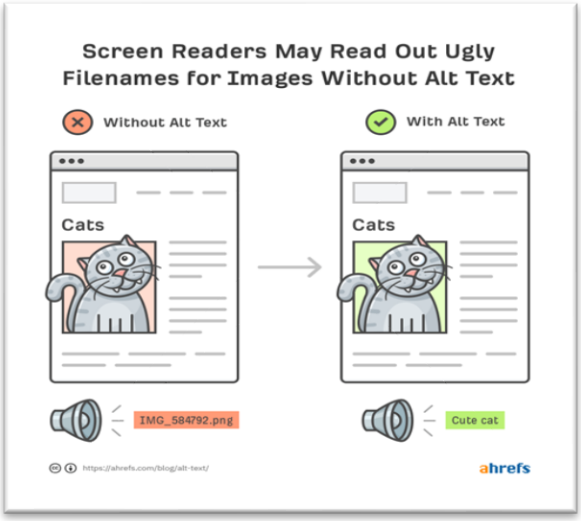
How would you like to be contacted to discuss your needs?_____.

I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:
__ ASL Interpreter
__ Communication Access in Real Time (CART services)
__ Large print
__ Braille
__ Wheelchair access
__ Assistive Listening Device
__ An Assistant will accompany me
__ Closed captioned videos

(d) Has an accessibility audit of the physical site been performed in coordination with representatives of workers with disabilities (for example, the BCFED would include nominated Accessibility Workers Caucus members)?

(e) Does the event website follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines?
1) Does it include alt text on images?
2) Is there captioning on videos?
3) Is there a transcript included with any audio-only content?
4) Are all fonts scalable and easy to read?
5) Can the website be navigated via keyboard?

Image: An infographic with the heading: "Screen Readers May Read Out Ugly Filenames for Images Without Alt Text". A visual comparison of two cartoon images of screens with a written post and an image of a cat is in the centre of the image, with the one on the left lacking alt text reading out the filename IMG_59402.txt and the one on the right describing the cute cat in the image



ACCESSIBILITY PROVISIONS FOR WORKERS WITH PHYSICAL AND/OR MOBILITY CHALLENGES

(a) Are entry ways, exits, hallways and union halls accessible to those who rely on wheelchairs or other mobility assistive devices such as walkers, scooters, etc.

(b) Are washrooms accessible to those with mobility challenges?

(c) Does the site have doors that allow persons in wheelchairs, or persons with other mobility challenges, unable to lift heavy objects, to open and close entry and exit doors without assistance? If not, are all of the doors to meetings spaces propped open?

(d) If the site is a hotel room, does it provide wheelchair accessible showers consistent with *BC Building Code* provisions? (Showers cannot have a lip in them, as these may prevent access).

(e) Does the site have large and wide, easily traversable, walkways and/or, hallways? Note: hallways and/or walkways that are carpeted are often extremely challenging for those who rely on walkers to navigate

(f) Is the facility organized in such a way that wires are kept off the floor or, at least, securely taped to the floor?

(g) Does the facility have microphones that are easily accessed by persons in wheelchair, or persons who use other accessibility aids such as canes or walkers? Are there provisions that allow for people with disabilities to speak to resolutions or raise questions without having to walk to reach a microphone?

(h) Does the site have chairs that allow persons to rest while waiting in line-ups (for example, to speak at a microphone)? Alternatively, have people with disabilities been informed they are allowed to have a person save their place in line?

(i) Has additional seating been provided for delegates who require that a personal attendant attend with them?

(j) Does the site have a safe and comfortable quiet room, with light refreshments and accessible toileting facilities, close to the main convention or main event site, in order to allow people living with disabilities to rest?

(k) Have provisions been made with respect to elevator etiquette in which members with physical disabilities are either provided their own elevator, or delegates are

asked to allow people with mobility challenges the opportunity to enter an elevator first?

(l) Has a "Disabilities Ombudsperson" for events been identified, available by cell phone, to deal with any specific issues or concerns raised by participants with disabilities?

(m) Is a trained first aid attendant "on-call" at conferences or conventions?

(n) Has physical space, and free registration, been provided at events for Personal Attendants?

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS LIVING WITH ALLERGIES

(a) Is there a mechanism for ensuring special dietary needs of event attendees are addressed? i.e gluten, nut or dairy allergies.

(b) Has air flow and air quality been assessed?

(c) Is there an EPI pen in the event's First Aid kit?

(d) Has the need for scent free meeting, conference and convention events been communicated to everyone involved?

ACCESSIBILITY PROVISIONS FOR HARD OF HEARING OR DEAF WORKERS

(a) Is American Sign Language interpretation provided at the event?

(b) Is closed captioning provided at the event?

(c) Have ASL and Closed Captioning Interpreters been provided in advance with available scripts, lyrics, spoken word performances, etc. in advance?

ACCESSIBILITY PROVISIONS FOR WORKERS WITH VISION CHALLENGES

(a) Have large print nametags been provided for all members and staff?

(b) Have materials been provided in advance, via email, to participants who have identified as living with vision challenges?

ACCESSIBILITY PROVISIONS FOR WORKERS WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

(a) Are convention and/or convention or educational materials provided in clear language?

(b) Have arrangements been made to allow delegates to provide post event feedback with respect to accessibility? Is this feedback provided to the venue used to help improve future accessibility?

ONLINE EVENTS

(a) Have accessibility issues been addressed? For example, have closed captioning settings been turned on and have ASL Interpreters been hired? Are delegates aware of how they can "pin" the interpreters in order to ensure access?

POST EVENT COMMUNICATION

(a) Post-event, has feedback been provided to the facility where the event was held, in order to clearly convey the message that the organization will patronize facilities that meet the needs of people living with disabilities and will avoid those that do not do so?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Making Space for Everyone – SPARC BC

REFERENCES

- Cover Image from Meetings Today
- Web Content Accessibility Guide from the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative

View the digital version of this BCFED Accessibility Guide on your device:

bcfed.ca/accessible-events-guide