

AFP-NYC Event Planning Toolkit

This document has been created to work in conjunction with the [AFP-NYC IDEA Board Resolutions and Definitions](#) and to help ensure AFP-NYC events are reflective of our stalwart commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA). What follows are suggestions about how to incorporate IDEA values at each stage of the event planning process.

Establishing Event Goals / Date / Content / Theme

Inclusion: Be sure that the date, content and theme of the event engage different groups of participants and that those groups are represented in both the planning of the event as well as the event itself.

Diversity: Consider event content that engage a broad representation of individuals and perspectives, and/or prioritize groups that have been historically marginalized or ignored.

Equity: Consider event goals and content that create a level playing field for individuals or groups according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Accessibility: Consider event goals that promote equity and diversity and allow people to maximize their contribution.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Throughout the planning process, stop to ask who the event is for and how we might engage all prospective attendees. Consider adding an IDEA line item to your budget for accommodations.
- Which groups and communities might be assumed audiences for the selected theme? Has any element of the event excluded, alienated or tokenized a particular community? How will this event attract, retain, accommodate and involve a range of people and/or a group of people that has been historically marginalized or ignored?
- Are there sectors which have been historically underrepresented at AFP-NYC events?
- Does the event's date exclude groups of people (i.e. religious holidays, times of day etc.)?
- Who holds the power at the event? Does the distribution of power replicate problematic structures?

Helpful Links:

- [Budgeting For Access](#)
- [Making Meetings & Events Accessible](#)



Identifying Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities

Inclusion: As planning meetings are scheduled, ensure all committee members are able to attend and fully participate. If some members are unable to attend, implement a process to maintain their inclusion.

Diversity: Committee members will come to the planning process with different ideas, opinions and preferences. Differing perspectives will bring strength to the planning process and open communication and active listening is recommended.

Equity: Ensure responsibilities are split equitably across the group and pay special attention to the way responsibilities are assigned.

Accessibility: Make sure committee members' talents are lifted up, valued and accommodations are made when needed.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Consider what assumptions might have been made coming into the planning process and open yourself up to the contributions and capabilities of fellow committee members.
- Step Up Step Back: How do you typically interact in group settings? Awareness of the dynamics in a group will make you a stronger collaborator and more aware of your collaborators' dynamics.
- Look at the power dynamics: Who is leading? Is it hierarchical? Do the dynamics promote full participation of all members?
- What are the roles and responsibilities that need to be assigned and have they been well distributed across the group? Have committee members volunteered for those roles or were they assigned? If they were assigned, consider how bias, tokenism or stereotyping may have played a role in that decision.
- Are there existing networks of relationships within the group? Consider how existing relationships might impact those who are less closely networked and make space for their leadership.
- Are committee planning meetings conveniently located, formatted and timed to encourage full participation by all members?
- To foster accountability, promote equitable participation and allow for measurable success indicators, set specific responsibilities and expectations early in the process.

Helpful Links:

- [Diversity, Inclusion and Culture: How to Build Great Teams](#)
- [Designing Teams and Assigning Roles](#)
- [Diversity and Work Group Performance](#)

Securing Event Space

Inclusion: Be sure the event space is different enough from past events to maximize AFP-NYC's reach to new audiences.

Diversity: Be sure the event space is welcoming and does not cater to only one type of person.

Equity: Be sure the event space follows fair workplace standards.

Accessibility: Be sure to center the comfort and abilities of others when researching potential spaces to ensure that the event location is enjoyable by those with various abilities.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Be sure the event space will be equally enjoyable for attendees regardless of any demographic factors. Pay attention to the details and don't be afraid to ask the vendor to defend the ways in which their venue meets our needs.
- Who owns the venue? Who benefits from AFP-NYC bringing our business into their space? What policies are in place to protect their employees?
- Is the venue ADA Compliant and Wheelchair Accessible? Does the location have ramps, accessible bathrooms and automatic doors? If there is no automatic door, stationing a doorman to volunteer night of is advised.
- If planning an event with refreshments for purchase, are the prices accessible?
- Is the event space centrally located? Alternatively, can it be intentionally in a different area to attract a different audience?
- How far from the subway is the event space? Is there a close-by subway station that has elevators?
- Who is the typical patron to this establishment? We will be sharing the space with the public and want to be sure multiple identities are commonly represented.
- Are there seating opportunities for guests? Are the chairs comfortable for various body types and abilities?
- Is the venue able to honor any accommodations requested from attendees (open captioning, ASL interpreters, Communication Access Realtime Translation, designating bathrooms to be gender-neutral if not already present etc.)

Helpful Links:

- [United States Access Board, Guide to the ADA Standards](#)
- [Accessible Entrances](#)
- [A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities: Site Selection](#)
- [Vera Institute of Justice, Center on Victimization and Safety, Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals Tip Sheet Series \(Specifically: Selecting an Accessible Venue\)](#)
- [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events \(pg. 3-5\)](#)

Determining Ticket Price

Inclusion: Be sure the ticket price is reasonable based on the benefits the attendee will receive.

Diversity: Be aware of the social barriers and systemic challenges currently unresolved in our industry. Who has the most disposable income? Who do we want to attract?

Equity: Be sure the level(s) offered will attract and retain the desired audience.

Accessibility: Be cognizant that everyone comes to the table with different amounts of disposable funds to allocate towards professional development opportunities.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Does the event need to have a fee for entry or are there other opportunities to raise revenue while also providing free content to attendees?
- To encourage inclusive participation, consider the following:
 - Is there an opportunity to offer a sliding scale ticket price?
 - Is there an opportunity to offer an early bird discounted ticket price?
 - Is there an opportunity to offer various levels of tickets to different groups of people?
 - Is there an opportunity to offer a scholarship for those who may need assistance?
 - Is there an opportunity to comp a designated group of individuals like students, volunteers etc.?
- What are the benefits an attendee is receiving? How much are our events 'worth' in comparison to past events or similar market events?
- What is our bottom line and how many tickets do we need to sell to meet this at various price points? Is that number realistic or does it need adjusting? Is it cost-prohibitive for those with limited financial means?

Helpful Links:

- [How to Price Tickets for Your Fundraising Event](#)

Securing Talent

Inclusion: Make sure talent is inclusive of a wide range of demographic factors. Promote the need for talent in diverse networks and communities.

Diversity: Ensure talent is representative of the diversity reflected in New York City.

Equity: Make sure talent is considered equally regardless of their demographics or title.

Accessibility: Create spaces where talent feels welcomed and communicate ways to easily request accommodations.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Note that the talent themselves may need accommodation. Ask talent well in advance whether they require anything.
- Senior leadership positions are often held less frequently by women and people of color. Be sure to be intentional when securing talent from these levels.
- Acknowledge that we may have bias for people from high profile or large organizations when securing talent. Consider lifting up talent from smaller or local organizations.
- Select talent based on their experience/skills in the subject matter and make titles and organizations secondary.
- Provide phonetic spelling for names and preferred pronouns to all moderators and speakers at events.
- What steps are we taking to make sure our talent is consistently diverse? What are the measures of success? Have we attracted a more diverse crowd since implementing these steps?

Helpful Links:

- [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events \(pg. 9-11\)](#)

Marketing Materials

Inclusion: Event promotions should reach different groups of people and invite/allow for accommodation requests.

Diversity: Consider what marketing and outreach will be most successful for different audiences and determine the best types of promotion based on this determination.

Equity: Equitable access to events begins with the promotions. People can only attend if they are knowledgeable of the event and they can only be made aware if they can access the invitation and trust that they will be able to participate equally when attending.

Accessibility: Event should be publicized in a variety of formats and shared through a variety of outlets to increase its reach.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Promote that the event is ADA accessible in marketing materials to encourage and welcome attendance of people with disabilities. Consider making specific announcements to raise awareness around certain event features (i.e. existence of gender-neutral bathrooms, vegan options etc.)
- Include photos and names of talent to promote diversity of program.
- Caption photos and videos to assist with those who use text-to-speech functionality.
- Do the advertisements include a point for contact for individuals requesting program accommodations or is there a place to list accommodation requests on the RSVP form?
- Do the images featured on marketing materials make people of different races, ethnicities, abilities and backgrounds feel welcome?
- Reference checklists in links below to ensure that promotional materials are accessible for people with low vision.

Helpful Links:

- [Accessible Events Checklist: Invitations and Promotional Materials](#)
- [Making Your Webinar Accessible](#)
- [Accessible Web Conferences and Webinar Best Practices](#)
- [How to Make Your Presentations Accessible to All](#)
- [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events \(pg. 6-8\)](#)

Catering

Inclusion: Be mindful of the wide variety of dietary needs, food allergies and other sensitivities that exist. Create an event where the catering considers a broad range of needs.

Diversity: Consider championing catering businesses owned by those from underrepresented populations and select options that promote a variety of cuisines.

Equity: Ensure the event allows for those with special dietary needs, food allergies or other food sensitivities to attend safely and with confidence they'll be able to consume.

Accessibility: Ensure all catering is clearly labeled so guests are aware of what they are selecting.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- When selecting food and beverage options, take into account special diets and common allergies. Did we invite guests with special dietary needs to share that information with someone in advance of the event?
- Does the catering contain common allergens? If so, does the messaging communicate this broadly to guests?
- Will there be alcohol at the event? Has an alternative option been provided?
- Is drinking water readily available, easy for guests to access and clearly labeled?
- Will there be guests from the vision impaired communities in attendance? If so, consider how to message the menu to this community.
- Will there be guests who are differently abled in attendance? How high are the tables where food is presented? Is there accessible seating and tables available?

Helpful Links:

- [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events \(pg. 14-15\)](#)
- [Event Planning and Food Allergy Awareness](#)
- [Harvard University Events: Food Restrictions and Allergies](#)
- [How Workplaces can Make Networking Events Less Focused on Alcohol](#)
- [EANABs: Equally Attractive Non-Alcoholic Beverages](#)

Sponsors & Vendors

Inclusion: Ensure that we are connecting with sponsors and vendors who have the same core values surrounding AFP-NYC's IDEA work.

Diversity: Make deliberate efforts to target vendors and sponsors owned by people from communities that are underrepresented in AFP-NYC's vendor pool. Include their input in the event planning process for additional perspectives.

Equity: Prepare the event budget in advance to ensure that small businesses can be appropriately compensated.

Accessibility: Consider alternating venue locations between Manhattan and surrounding areas to ensure we are connecting with a wide array of vendors.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Researching potential sponsors should occur before outreach to ensure we are promoting businesses with fair practices. Consider things like employment discrimination policies, labor policies etc.
- Vendors selected to partner with AFP-NYC will have access to a wide community of fundraisers and event planners. Diversifying our vendors is a great way to use our platform to promote smaller and local businesses. Invite the vendor to promote their business at the event to ensure they reach a larger audience. Publicize your choice to promote businesses that reflect AFP-NYC's commitment to IDEA.
- Do the businesses we are working with have a charitable arm we can further promote? (for example, is the caterer a nonprofit that creates job opportunities for underrepresented communities?)

Helpful Links:

- [A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities \(Vendors Section\)](#)
- [Working With Sign Language Interpreters At Events](#)
- [Five Questions To Ask Potential Sponsors](#)

Volunteers

Inclusion: When recruiting and training volunteers, make sure that we are engaging different groups of people and that volunteers are treated warmly and equally.

Diversity: Work to build a diverse group of volunteers that reflects the targeted demographic.

Equity: Treat volunteers equally, considering perception of assignments and requests.

Accessibility: Make sure to offer accommodations to volunteers and train them on providing accommodations for guests.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Utilize volunteers to ensure IDEA priorities are being fulfilled (for example, assign a volunteer to stand at the back and indicate to speakers when they are difficult to hear).
- Include a brief orientation for volunteers with instruction on how to respond to requests such as:
 - A need for accessibility services such as captioning, or lowering of lights;
 - Someone arrives with their child or service animal;
 - Someone inquires about gender-neutral restrooms.
- Considered the impact of power dynamics in how roles are assigned. Are volunteers given a full range of roles, including leadership?
- Was there an equitable call for volunteers with a focus on gathering a diverse group?
- Has there been a wide call for volunteers to help encourage those who cannot afford to attend an opportunity to still enjoy the event?

Helpful Links:

- [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events \(pg. 16-17\)](#)

Post Event Follow-Up and Committee Debrief

Inclusion: Make sure that all relevant parties are invited to participate in the debrief. Be flexible in scheduling to encourage the largest attendance.

Diversity: Be conscious of the diverse backgrounds committee members come from. Be open to and accepting of feedback and teachable moments.

Equity: Set ground rules and make sure everyone has the chance to safely voice their feedback.

Accessibility: Take notes for those who could not attend and to reflect on in the future.

Key Things To Consider & Reflective Questions:

- Consider sending a survey to attendees to ensure we are improving over time. Ask specific and targeted questions which address IDEA values.
- Consider welcoming a third party to evaluate or moderate event debrief.
- Reference initial established event goals to help inform measures of success.
- Is the format of this meeting one where everyone is invited to share their opinions? Using a tool such as round robin gives everyone a chance to voice their observations.
- Have all event participants been thoroughly thanked? Consider sending thank you notes, leaving Yelp reviews etc.

Helpful Links:

- [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events \(pg. 21\)](#)

Official IDEA Definitions:

Inclusion: AFP-NYC's ability to attract, retain, accommodate and involve a range of people who are valued, accepted and comfortable at the international, national, regional or local chapter level.

Diversity: an inclusive concept encompassing, without limitation, race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or identity; religion, nationality, age, economic class, educational level, language, physical, mobility and ability, geography and marital and parental status. The state of being diverse means having the broadest possible representation of individuals, experiences and perspectives in all-encompassing terms.

Equity: creating a level playing field for individuals or groups according to their respective needs, which may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but is considered equivalent or fair in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Access: the commitment to foster attitudes, behaviors and procedures to facilitate participation that promotes equity and diversity, fosters inclusion and allows people to maximize their contribution to our association and communities that our members serve.