

Progress Towards Inclusion

How do I know my efforts toward creating an inclusive environment have been successful?

What are some ways I can evaluate my progress?

Section X: Progress Toward Inclusion

Key Words and Terms

Accessibility Survey

Inclusive Service Environment

Interpreter

Relay Service

TTY/TDD

How do I know my efforts toward creating an inclusive environment have been successful?

The successful creation of an inclusive service environment is sometimes difficult to evaluate since it is not easily quantified. Moreover, just because your program might have a number of participants with disabilities, it is not necessarily inclusive. This section contains suggested indicators for you to use in developing an evaluation plan around inclusion.

What are some ways I can evaluate my progress?

Ask yourself, your program, and your participants — with and without disabilities — and your disability partners:

Environment: Spirit of Inclusion

- Are participants with disabilities full participants in the program and service activities?
- Are they treated as peers?
- Are the expectations for participants with disabilities the same as for other participants?
- Are service descriptions clear in outlining the essential functions?
- Are events planned with accessibility and accommodations considered?
- Are there opportunities for advancement for individuals with disabilities?
- Are individuals with disabilities found at all levels of the organization, including the management and board?

Environment: Architectural

- Is an accessibility survey conducted at least annually?
- Is there an action plan to remove barriers in place? Is it considered whenever plans are made to change locations, renovate, or reorganize space?
- Do all service sites also conduct accessibility surveys on an annual basis?
- Do all events, including retreats, trainings, and celebrations take place in barrier-free locations?

Environment: Communication

- Are accommodations to ensure communication access provided?
- Do program staff know how and where to secure interpreters, assistive listening devices, or real-time captioning?
- Are staff and participants comfortable with Relay calls?
- Do staff and participants know how to use TTY/TDDs?
- Is training in basic American Sign Language (ASL) provided for staff and participants when appropriate?
- If appropriate, is there someone on your staff who knows basic American Sign Language (ASL)?

Environment: Alternate Formats

- Are all staff and participants familiar with the different kinds of alternate formats?
- Do staff know how to provide documents in alternate formats?
- Do staff know how to get documents printed in Braille when requested?
- Are all staff and participants familiar with the program's procedures to handle requests for accommodations?

Environment: Requests and Modifications of Policies, Procedures, and Practices

- Are staff and participants familiar with your ability to handle requests for accommodations and modifications of policies, procedures, and practices?
- Are decisions about whether or not to honor requests made at a management level?
- Are decisions made in a short timeframe, in a matter of days, not weeks or months?
- Are participants with disabilities actively engaged in a discussion about their needs for accommodations?

Administration and Management

- Is all information related to an individual's disability (including medical records and accommodations) confidential and kept in a secure file separate from all other records?
- When interviewing, are the same questions asked of all applicants?
- Is regular training on disability awareness and sensitivity provided?
- Is regular training on Equal Opportunity Employment policy provided?

Collateral Material (brochures, flyers, applications, and websites)

- Are there images of persons with disabilities in brochures and other materials, including your website?
- Is your website accessible to persons with disabilities?
- Is disability included in your statement of non-discrimination?
- Are there clear instructions on how to request accommodations?
- Are materials routinely available in alternate formats?
- Are individuals from the disability community asked to review your materials?
- Have you implemented policies that allow applications to be completed and submitted in different ways, such as online?

Recruitment

- Do you track the number of questions you receive regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in your program?
- Do you ask applicants to voluntarily self-disclose a disability on your application form? Is this information immediately separated and filed separately upon receipt of the application and used solely for statistical purposes?
- Do you track the percentage or number (not the name) of applicants who voluntarily self-disclose disability?
- Do you track the number of national, state, and local referral networks or sources you contact to reach applicants with disabilities?
- Do you track the number of participants with disabilities in your program that you can directly relate to your outreach efforts? (Remember this information must be self-disclosed, and you must ensure the confidentiality of all information relating to an individual's disability.)

Accommodations

- Do you track the number of requests that you receive for accommodations?

- Do you track the number of individuals making such requests?
- Do you track the satisfaction of participants with disabilities who receive accommodations?
- Do you measure the satisfaction of participants with disabilities with their service experience?
- Do you track the number and cost of formal requests that you receive for accommodations?
- Do you track the number of participants with disabilities who successfully complete service?
- Do you track the number of participants who do not complete service? Do you then evaluate their reasons for non-completion?
- Do you evaluate the satisfaction of participants with the program and with the level of inclusion that they experienced?

Collaboration

- Have you developed relationships with disability organizations for the purposes of recruitment, technical assistance, or training?
- Have you asked leaders with disabilities in your community to assist you in evaluation efforts?
- Do you conduct service activities in conjunction with disability organizations?
- Can you identify areas of collaboration with a range of organizations?