



Inclusive Engagement Guide

A practical resource for
leading with Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion & Access

Created by the NoCo Works
Economic Inclusion Subcommittee

nocoworks.com



The Economic Inclusion Subcommittee of NoCo Works identified the creation of a DEIA checklist for event planning as a priority deliverable because we know that having a strong talent pipeline, a thriving economy, and an engaged healthy community cannot happen without intentional efforts to create welcoming and inclusive spaces. Collective commitment to this work will allow our region to harness the intellect, talent, and skills of our diverse workforce. This tool was created for the purpose of assisting users in the planning and implementation of events that are equitable and accessible for all. In the spirit of collaboration, Monarca Group shared their organization's DEIA checklist with members of the subcommittee, which gave this work a strong starting point. Numerous members of the subcommittee as well as many community stakeholders contributed to the checklist. Notably, individuals who have often experienced barriers to participation and individuals working on the front lines of inclusive efforts provided invaluable insight on the development of this tool. We are also thankful to have had the input of business leaders, event planners, and staff working in operations to ensure the tool is clear and readily applicable.

Economic Inclusion:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access (DEIA) checklists

We acknowledge that it can be overwhelming to try to plan a DEIA event and “nail it” on every single category. The below Principles are meant to help guide efforts in working towards inclusive and more diverse spaces. Any efforts in creating more equitable spaces will ultimately help the mission of planning DEIA events. The results of being engaged in planning DEIA events are more inclusive and welcoming environments.

Guiding Principles:



- **Accessibility Considerations:** Have you implemented various ways for those with differing accessibility to interact with you/your event?

- **Digital Accessibility:** Ensure that all online content, including websites, job postings, and videos, complies with accessibility standards (WCAG–Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Provide alternative text for images, closed captioning for videos, and readable fonts for better accessibility.
- **Design with people in mind:** Ensure that all communication and physical space is focused on your target audience, employers, parents, students, job seekers, etc. Find out what the best time schedule is for your audience, day and time of the day.
- **Tech Literacy Support:** Offer tutorials, guidance, or assistance for individuals who might not be as proficient in using specific social media platforms or navigating online job portals. Make sure resources can be used with screen readers.

- **Language and Cultural Sensitivity:** What steps will you take to enhance your reach with differing languages and cultures?

- **Multilingual Content:** Provide information in multiple languages to cater to diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Tailor content and outreach strategies to resonate with various cultural backgrounds and avoid cultural biases in language and imagery.
- **Language Sensitivity:** Use inclusive language that avoids stereotypes or discriminatory terms, creating a welcoming and respectful environment for all. Use person-first language, for example “Chris is a person who uses a wheelchair.”

● **Inclusive Engagement:** What can you incorporate into your planning to have more diverse representation and more diverse community participation? Identify where/why diversity is lacking.

- **Representation:** Ensure diverse representation in the content shared and group compilation, featuring individuals from different backgrounds, abilities, and gender identities to reflect inclusivity.
- **Community Input:** Actively co-create with and seek feedback from diverse groups to understand their needs, preferences, and any barriers they face in accessing online resources or participating in digital events.

● **Equitable Opportunities:** How can you promote opportunities to more diverse audiences to increase representation in your organization? Are you communicating in terms that would be understandable to different languages and cultures?

- **Equal Exposure:** Offer equal exposure and promotion opportunities to all job openings, avoiding bias towards certain roles or departments.
- **Transparent Processes:** Clearly outline the recruitment and application processes, ensuring fairness and transparency in hiring practices.

● **Training and Support:** How can you enhance training and development opportunities within your organization to bring in community members who are generally not in attendance?

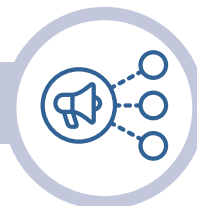
- **Digital Literacy Training:** Rather - Plan for varying levels of digital literacy. Provide training sessions or resources to enhance digital literacy for those less familiar with specific online platforms.
- **Technical Assistance:** Offer dedicated support or hotlines for individuals facing technological difficulties in navigating online job portals or accessing information.

● **Broadening Reach:** What actions can you add to broaden your organization's reach? Who is currently not being represented and/or included?

- **Access Beyond Technology:** Implement offline components or supplementary materials for those with limited internet access or technological resources.
- **Engagement Across Channels:** Offer options for engagement beyond digital platforms, such as toll-free phone lines, print materials, or in-person sessions.

• **Fair Algorithms and AI:** What actions can you add to your marketing plan to strive for inclusivity when utilizing technology to reach the community?

- **Algorithmic Fairness:** Ensure fairness in AI-driven processes, like recruitment algorithms or chatbots, to prevent biased decision-making or recommendations based on demographics. This includes usage of various languages.



Outreach Checklist:

- Identify Target Audience:** Specify the demographic groups or communities you aim to engage. Also, be deliberate in identifying what groups have been historically excluded to make sure they are part of your outreach efforts.
- Cultivate Relationships:** Establish partnerships with related local organizations, educational institutions, and community leaders to expand outreach.
- Community Input:** Prioritize community input and involve diverse perspectives in the development of outreach strategies to better understand the needs and preferences of target groups.
- Feedback Loop:** Establish a feedback mechanism that invites input from diverse communities to improve outreach strategies continually.
- Diverse Outreach Targets:** Identify and engage with underrepresented communities, minority-owned businesses, and marginalized groups through targeted outreach efforts.
- Tailored Messaging:** Develop culturally sensitive and inclusive communication materials that resonate with diverse groups.
- Accessible Communication:** Ensure all outreach materials and communication are accessible, considering different languages, formats (audio, visual, written), and readability levels.
- Engagement with Intersectionality:** Acknowledge and address the intersectional needs of individuals belonging to multiple marginalized groups. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Unhoused community members
 - Low- to medium-income communities
 - Communities of color & Indigenous people
 - Those who speak languages other than English

- People with disabilities and chronic conditions
- Older adults
- Young children
- People with criminal records
- The LGBTQ+ community
- Refugees and immigrants
- Undocumented/DACA community members
- Victims of domestic violence
- Nontraditional families

Accessibility and Plain Language: Ensure all outreach materials, whether printed or verbal, use plain language and avoid jargon. Make information easily understandable for everyone.

- Provide multiple language options if the targeted community has diverse language preferences.

Utilize Multiple Platforms: Consider utilizing various methods such as social media, community newsletters, texting, and local radio/TV stations to reach a wider audience.

Budget: Consider your organization's budget to ensure you have the funding necessary for an equitable, inclusive and diverse outreach strategy.

Traditional Outreach Approaches:



In-Person Engagement: Recognize that not all community members are tech-savvy individuals. Consider traditional methods such as:

- **Community Events:** Attend local job fairs, community gatherings, or career expos to engage with individuals directly. These events provide face-to-face interactions and opportunities to distribute printed materials.
- **Workshops and Seminars:** Organize or participate in workshops or seminars in community centers, libraries, or educational institutions that focus on job hunting, resume building, and career development.

Printed Materials and Direct Mail:

- **Flyers and Brochures:** Create visually appealing and informative flyers or brochures detailing important information.
 - Place marketing collateral in locations with high-traffic of diverse people, e.g., carnicerias, tortillas, community centers, etc.
- **Direct Mail Campaigns:** Send out physical letters or postcards to targeted demographics highlighting important information.

Collaboration with Community Organizations:

- **Local Partnerships:** Collaborate with local community centers, churches, NGOs, or advocacy groups that cater to the demographic you're targeting. These organizations often have established networks and can assist in spreading the word through their channels.
- **Workshops:** Host or participate in community workshops in partnership with these organizations, offering guidance on job-seeking strategies, resume building, and interview skills.

Phone-based Outreach:

- **Hotlines or Helplines:** Establish dedicated phone lines or helplines staffed by knowledgeable staff to provide information and guidance to those seeking jobs. This method offers direct assistance and eliminates the need for online navigation.
- **Text Messaging Campaigns:** Implement text messaging campaigns to provide job alerts, career tips, and links to resources. Many individuals, including Gen Z, prefer communication via text messages.

Word-of-Mouth and Referral Programs:

- **Community Referral Programs:** Encourage community members to spread information about your program.
- **Community Ambassadors:** Recruit community members or influencers who have a strong presence in non-digital spaces to advocate for your program.

Online Outreach:



Social Media Engagement:

- **Utilize Preferred Platforms:** Focus on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, in addition to established platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter. Use engaging visuals, videos, and concise messaging to capture attention.
- **Content Creation:** Create content that resonates with this audience, including job tips, career advice, success stories, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of company culture.

Online Job Platforms and Websites:

- **Optimize for Mobile:** Ensure content is mobile-friendly since most underserved communities predominantly use smartphones for internet access.

Virtual Events and Webinars:

- **Webinar Series:** Host webinars or online workshops.
- **Virtual Career Fairs:** Organize or participate in virtual career fairs that allow direct engagement with job seekers in a virtual environment.

Influencer Marketing and Brand Ambassadors:

- **Engage Influencers:** Partner with social media influencers or industry-relevant personalities to promote job opportunities and career-related content.
- **Brand Ambassadors:** Employ employees, community leaders, or advocates within your organization as brand ambassadors to connect with potential candidates on social media platforms.

Email Marketing and Online Newsletters:

- **Targeted Email Campaigns:** Send personalized and targeted emails.
- **Newsletter Subscriptions:** Encourage subscription to newsletters with informative, relevant and engaging content.

Gamification and Interactive Tools:

- **Gamified Assessments:** Implement gamified tools or quizzes that evaluate skills and knowledge, providing an interactive and engaging way for candidates to showcase their abilities.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) Experiences:** For tech-oriented industries, offer VR experiences that showcase the work environment or specific job roles.

Online Communities and Forums:

- **Engagement in Online Forums:** Participate in industry-related forums or communities like Reddit or specialized forums where job seekers discuss opportunities and seek advice.

Tabling Events Checklist:



- Budget:** Ensure your organization has enough funding to participate in community events.
- Event Selection:** Choose events that attract diverse audiences and align with the objectives of economic inclusion. Understand who the organizer is and how connected they are to the community you're trying to connect with. Review your current involvement and identify gaps within the community where your organization is not currently being represented (marginalized communities). E.g. Table at cultural events organized by CBOs serving target audiences
- Resource Preparation:** Create engaging materials showcasing NoCo Works' vision and the benefits of economic inclusion and career opportunities. Materials should cater to various sensory needs and consider diverse cultural backgrounds and people with disabilities. Also ways to engage people of different ages - families with small children.
- Accessible Event Spaces:** Choose venues that are physically accessible and provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Ensure that your event has clear communication in the resources and space being offered for your event.
- Inclusive Booth Setup:** Ensure booth designs and materials cater to various sensory needs and consider diverse cultural backgrounds, different languages, and people with disabilities.
- Representation in Materials:** Use diverse imagery and content in promotional materials that reflect the demographics of the target audience. Share your outreach story and efforts in reaching diverse audiences.
- Language Access:** Provide interpretation services or multilingual staff to assist attendees who speak different languages. Make efforts to use a person's first language. All signage is clear and accessible.
- Quiet Spaces and Rest Areas:** Create designated spaces for attendees who may need a break or a quiet area for relaxation.
- Diverse Representation:** Ensure the team tabling at events reflects diversity to establish a welcoming environment.

- Interactive Engagement:** Plan interactive activities or discussions to encourage meaningful conversations and gather feedback.
 - Provide gift cards or swag to community members engaged/interested in your job careers, surveys, etc.
- Bring Internet HotSpot** to ensure members can be engaged in your online activities.
- Follow-Up Plan:** Develop a strategy for follow-up interactions post-event to maintain connections and relationships established.



Meetings/Events Checklist:

- Identify Target Audience:** Specify the demographic groups or communities you aim to engage. Also, be deliberate in identifying what groups have been historically excluded and plan for their participation.
- Inclusive Event Planning:** Consider diverse perspectives in the planning phase, including venue accessibility, dietary preferences, interpretation, transportation, childcare, and cultural/religious considerations.
- Staff Training:** Train staff to adapt to the needs of participants, especially those people with barriers that were not expected. For example, participants that speak a language other than Spanish and English, people with low vision and people with social anxiety.
- Accessibility Considerations:** Choose venues with accessibility features, including wheelchair access, hearing loops, and gender-neutral restrooms.
- Inclusive Agendas:** Develop agendas that incorporate diverse perspectives and ensure a variety of voices are heard during discussions.
- Diverse Speaker Panel:** Invite speakers and panelists from various backgrounds to provide diverse viewpoints and targeted audience feel represented. As available, compensate speakers for their and expertise as a person with lived experience.
- Facilitation Guidelines:** Train facilitators to create an inclusive environment that encourages participation from all attendees. Ensure there are team members that can speak other languages than English.
- Appropriate Pacing:** Build regular breaks and a variety of presentation types (video, interactive, etc.) into the agenda.
- Accommodations for Disabilities:** Provide accommodations like sign language interpreters, closed captioning, and materials in accessible formats.

- Cultural Sensitivity:** Consider cultural practices and preferences when planning food, scheduling breaks for prayer, etc.
- Transportation and Location:** Ensure event locations are easily reachable via public transport and consider providing transportation support for those in need.
- Promotion and Accessibility:** Ensure event promotion follows the “outreach checklist” above to reach a diverse audience and make provisions for accessibility needs.
- Gather Feedback:** Implement a process for attendees to provide feedback anonymously if needed, ensuring all voices are heard. Listening to those most impacted by the event and intentionally stay open to their feedback both in real-time and after events, and commit to continuous improvement.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the following organizations for their contributions to this checklist. We appreciate your commitment to building strong communities.

- Alianza NorCO
- Banner Health
- Care Housing
- Centennial BOCES
- City of Greeley
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Employment Services of Weld County
- Envision
- fnbo, Heart & Sol
- Hewlett Packard Enterprise
- Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado
- Kaiser Permanente
- Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development
- Monarca Group
- North Front Range Medical
- Partnership for Age-Friendly Communities in Larimer County
- Poudre School District
- The Family Center/La Familia
- The Weld Trust
- Unified Workforce

