

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Space Considerations Checklist

The hope and vision of Open Society’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts are that we can align our personal and institutional values. All communities fall short in that endeavor sometimes, but with commitment and effort, we can achieve the vision of a truly open, diverse, and inclusive work environment while we collectively build more open societies. The aim is to create a culture in which everyone feels valued and respected and is recognized as a contributor to the work of the Open Society Foundations and the larger Open Society community.

We aspire to proactively create more inclusive workplaces that consider all aspects of our staff so that employees can show up to work as their whole selves. Inclusive workplace design encourages and motivates staff to be more effective and high performing.

We hope you will find these considerations, questions, and resources useful as you embark on a space design and/or redesign. This is meant to act as a starter, as consultations with inclusive design expertise would need to follow these initial considerations.

Table of Contents

1. Location	2
2. Physical Space Accessibility.....	2
3. Audio Accessibility.....	3
4. Neurodiverse Accessibility	3
5. Sensory & Medical Accessibility.....	3
6. Cultural & Personal Accessibility.....	4
7. Meeting Accessibility	4

Questions to Consider

1. Location

- 1.1 Is the office located in a part of town where staff of all gender, racial, and ethnic identities will feel comfortable?
- 1.2 Are there accessible public transit options nearby so that attendees are not forced to walk too far from transit locations to the office?

2. Physical Space Accessibility

- 2.1 Does the space have ramps? Working entrance buttons on most doors? Working elevators that are accessible to people with disabilities that go to all floors and spaces?
- 2.2 Is there information in braille that provides the name of the building? Can the rooms, elevators, and space be easily navigated with braille?
- 2.3 Do the rooms feature high contrast for those with low vision? Are there spaces with natural light?
- 2.4 Are the doors and hallways wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs? Are the paths clear for wheelchairs and people who have visual disabilities?
- 2.5 Does the surrounding area of the office have flat, accessible terrain? Are there curb ramps? Are there restaurants and hotels close by?
- 2.6 Are the office desks and meeting areas height accessible for wheelchair users? Can everyone see the front of the meeting room? Do the chairs have backs for people who have balance and back issues? Is the accessible seating integrated with the non-accessible seating, so people do not feel separated from the group?
- 2.7 Are the bathrooms accessible and easy to find and use? Are there gender-neutral bathroom options?
- 2.8 Does the building have an evacuation plan for people with mobility related disabilities?
- 2.9 Is there clear signage throughout the building? Is there signage in colors, fonts, and sizes that are appropriate for people with disabilities?

- 2.10 Are the refreshment facilities accessible from seated positions? For example, do areas for eating and drinking have tables, counters, and utensils that are accessible from seated positions?

3. Audio Accessibility

- 3.1 Are there work areas and meeting rooms where hard of hearing people can hear without strain?
- 3.2 Is there a lot of background noise in the space? Will there be music playing? Do you know how to access a sign language interpreter if one is requested? Are microphones available?
- 3.3 Will there be captioning for all audio during meetings?
- 3.4 Are captioning and sign language forms of interpretation available as well as alternative formats for transcripts of video?

4. Neurodiverse Accessibility

- 4.1 Does the office use fluorescent lighting? While this can be good for low vision, it can be an impediment for those with sensory disabilities. Consider having fragrance free spaces, no flash photography, availability of noise canceling earmuffs, sensory free spaces, rooms that are cool and comfortable and not too warm.
- 4.2 Are the color schemes throughout the office designed not to cater to those who are neurodiverse? Neurodivergent people tend to prefer muted and pastel hues and neutral tones; it is best to avoid bright, contrasting colors in the space.

5. Sensory and Medical Accessibility

- 5.1 Is the office located at a high altitude or on an upper floor that can make folks with vertigo, migraine, and other chronic illnesses uncomfortable?
- 5.2 Are snacks and water readily available (or in the general vicinity of the office) for those who may be diabetic, have low blood sugar, protein deficiencies and have other dietary concerns?

- 5.3 Are there pharmacies near the office for those who may have pain-related issues or other medical concerns? Is there access to a well-stocked first aid kit as well as someone who can confidently use it?
- 5.4 Is there a sick room where someone can relax and close their eyes if they fall ill? This is especially helpful for those who live with migraines or nausea or other chronic illnesses.

6. Cultural and Personal Accessibility

- 6.1 Are gender neutral bathrooms available? If there are cultural restraints that prevent the venue from having a gender-neutral bathroom, is there a separate disabled bathroom that can easily be accessed by trans or nonbinary attendees? (Cultural norms also need to be considered.)
- 6.2 Does the office have a multi-faith prayer room with a place to wash hands and feet before entering?
- 6.3 Do the catering options provide a diverse array of options for kosher, halal, vegan, vegetarian, and other common dietary requests?
- 6.4 Are there spaces for lactating parents to nurse their children and pump and store milk or formula?
- 6.5 Are there changing tables that are easily accessible for all parents regardless of sex and gender identity?
- 6.6 Are menstruation products readily available in all restrooms regardless of sex?

7. Meeting and Events Accessibility

- 7.1 Have you checked the calendar to ensure your meeting or event does not fall on a religious or important cultural holiday?
- 7.2 Is it possible to access presentation materials prior to the meeting or event so that neurodiverse attendees can review and digest the information more easily rather than being overwhelmed by receiving it all at once?
- 7.3 Is it possible to create detailed guides for the space with pictures of all rooms and facilities at least one month in advance of the meeting or event? Is it possible to send agendas with breaks and meals listed within

one month in advance of the meeting or event so participants can acclimate themselves to the program?

- 7.4 Will participants have access to nametags? Consider implementing diverse learning methods, schedule breaks, and allow folks to move around the space as needed.
- 7.5 Have you advertised your meeting or event in multiple ways? Have you made sure that folks with a range of disabilities can access your meeting or event posting through easy-to-read formats like large print and contrasting colors?
- 7.6 Will your digital communication be compatible with screen readers? The Open Society Communications team can provide accessibility standards as a guideline.
- 7.7 Have you provided listings and information about accessible hotels, transportation, and other options in materials describing and promoting your meeting or event, so people feel included?
- 7.8 Will there be language translators and/or sign language interpreters available if necessary?