

Age Friendly EVENT PLANNING Guide



Thank you to City of Brantford staff for their assistance in developing this Age-Friendly Event Planning Guide.

INTRODUCTION

This Guide was developed by the Grand River Council on Aging (GRCOA).

BACKGROUND

The City of Brantford's Healthy Aging: Age-friendly Plan highlights the importance of community connection and social participation. In 2017, the City of Brantford was recognized as an "Age-Friendly Community" by the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO defines an age-friendly community as one that "optimizes opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

The GRCOA is a registered charitable non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging an age-friendly community for residents of all ages and promotes the "voices of lived experience". The GRCOA has provided support and consultation to the City of Brantford in the development and implementation of the Healthy Aging Plan and continues to support efforts to create a community that is accessible and barrier free. The City of Brantford and GRCOA recognize the importance of age-friendly events and activities in creating healthy communities and share a commitment to foster community engagement and promote inclusion.



1. CHOOSING A VENUE - Consider the Following:

1.1 Accessibility

- Select a venue that has accessible parking, washrooms, and is easy to navigate with mobility assistive devices (e.g. walkers, wheelchairs, scooters)
- Venue has a hearing loop system/FM Hearing System (a system where the speaker wears a microphone, and the listener can hear them directly through headphones)
- There is a space for service animals to relieve themselves

1.2 Environment

- The venue is pleasant, clean, safe and secure, and the inside of the building has good lighting and acoustics
- Venue is convenient and easily able to be found or has good signage to be able to locate, for those who may be unfamiliar with the area
- There is sufficient and appropriate seating options including chairs with backs and chairs with arms
- There is a quiet area for individuals with children or individuals with sensory issues

1.3 Parking

- There is accessible parking available close to the entrance or site of the event
- If parking is not available close to the entrance, drop-off and pick-up zones are available
- There are safe and well-maintained crosswalks that permit participants to get from the parking area to the venue safely
- Parking lots are well-maintained (e.g. snow removal, level and accessible for mobility assistive devices)
- If street parking is required, that it is not on a busy street where individuals may not be able to park and leave their cars
- If parking is not free, participants are notified of this ahead of time or consider reimbursement

1.4 Indoor venue specific details

- Entrance to the building has accessible doors with sliding doors or automatic door openers
- Building is equipped with elevators, ramps with railings, railings for stairs, accessible bathrooms, wide hallways and non-slip flooring
- Adequate lighting is available in hallways, bathrooms and the room that the activity is taking place in
- If the weather is poor, a coat rack and mats are available

1.5 Outdoor-specific details

- Location has walkways available with smooth, level, non-slip, and well-maintained pavement that tapers off for mobility assistive devices
- Accessible washrooms or accessible portable toilets are available
- Location has appropriate signs helping direct participants to parking, washrooms, entrance, and exits
- Seating in the shade is available, and seating (such as benches or picnic tables) accommodates mobility assistive devices
- There is adequate shelter available given changes in weather

2. ACTIVITIES - Consider the Following:

2.1 Timing

- Activities are held at a convenient time for expected participants. For example, during the day for seniors or in the evenings after school for youth
- There is enough time in between activities so that participants with disabilities or older adults have sufficient time to move from one place to another
- There is sufficient time to take bathroom breaks and be mindful of individuals who may have service animals or disabilities

2.2 Cost

- The event is at a low or no cost. If a cost is associated with the event, ensure this is communicated prior to the event and that it is affordable with no hidden or additional cost

2.3 Inclusivity

- There is a broad range of activities available for the diverse populations who may participate, being mindful of different ages, cultures, races, genders, and abilities
- Event or activity materials are available in various formats (e.g. print, audio, visual) to accommodate disabilities and language barriers
- Provide the option that participants can attend the event with a friend or seniors can attend with a caregiver to increase participation
- Include seniors in events that are offered to families for further social inclusion
- Offer intergenerational activities as a way for seniors to learn from youth and vice versa or for seniors to share their knowledge, history and experience with others

3. FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS - Consider the Following:

3.1 Meeting dietary needs

- Provide a variety of food options and alternatives to meet the various dietary needs of participants (e.g. gluten-free, lactose-free, Halal, vegan)
- Offer both hot and cold food options

3.2 Accessibility

- If the event is buffet-style, plates, cutlery, food, and drinks are easily reached by those using mobility-assistive devices
- Give consideration to the various abilities of your participants and have items such as bendable straws or cups with handles available for those with limited use of their hands
- Seating and eating areas are accessible to those with mobility assistive devices

4. TRANSPORTATION - Consider the Following:

4.1 If you are providing transportation

- Vehicles used are easy to identify, are accessible with low steps, have wide and high seats and are clean and well-maintained

4.2 If you are not providing transportation

- Public transit options are available to get to your venue (i.e. bus stops are located close by)
- Public transit is affordable, reliable and frequent (i.e. operates on evenings and weekends)
- Bus stops have shelters with seats
- Bus stops are accessible with ramps and appropriate platforms

5. STAFFING AND OTHER SUPPORTS - Consider the Following:

5.1 Preparing your staff

- Staff are easily able to be identified with name tags or identifiable apparel
- Staff are aware of the details of your event such as instructions for parking, where washrooms are, where stairs and elevators are located, and what to do in case of an emergency

5.2 Respectful and inclusive

- Staff and volunteers are polite, helpful, and courteous to all participants
- Staff have an understanding of how to respond to individuals of all ages (children, youth, seniors)
- Staff provide accessible customer service

5.3 Additional staff

- Provide an American Sign Language Interpreter at events for those who may have a loss of hearing
- Provide First Aid personnel at your event

6. MARKETING AND REGISTRATION - Consider the Following:

6.1 Marketing

- Market your event in a variety of ways - print (newspaper, flyers, posters), social media, radio broadcasts, television commercials, on your website, telephone calls, and/ or word of mouth.
- Print and visual materials are simple and clean, use accessible large fonts (Arial size 12 is AODA compliant), and have a solid background behind the text (no reverse print)
- When using oral marketing speak slowly, clearly, and provide all details
- All marketing materials use plain language (e.g. simple, familiar words, short sentences)
- Include marketing signage outside of the building and inside of the building, to direct participants to the right area of where the event or activity is taking place
- Marketing materials use images of diverse populations to display inclusion
- Marketing materials outline all event details: location, date, time, food, parking, activities, transportation options/ schedules and fares, accessibility, cost and how to register if required
- Outline how individuals can contact the host with any questions, concerns, or accessibility needs. If it is a number to call, ensure someone is available to answer the phone or an answering machine service gives instructions clearly and slowly and has the option to repeat the message. If it is via email, answer promptly or provide an automatic message with response times.
- Consider the target audience and their preference for receiving information
 - Youth prefer social media
 - Seniors prefer oral communication such as through public meetings, community centers, clubs, and broadcast media
 - Many individuals who are more isolated get information about events and activities through individuals with whom they interact such as home support workers
- Personal invitations as a way to encourage participation and address those who may be more isolated

6.2 Registration

- Provide different ways to register to meet various abilities and preferences. For example, register online, call to register, providing a location to register at.
- If registration occurs on the day of the event, there is a seating area for those waiting in line

7. VIRTUAL EVENTS - Consider the Following:

- Internet connection is strong and stable
- Provide instructions to participants on how to access the event- websites they may need to go to or links they may need to click on. Share these details in your marketing efforts or email instructions and materials directly to participants
- The platform that you use has accessibility features such as chats or closed captioning
- Designate roles to individuals helping with the virtual event- someone to admit participants, assign who will share their screen, who will announce speakers, who will manage time and agenda, who will monitor the chat and field questions, and who will take meeting minutes.

Age Friendly EVENT PLANNING Guide Checklist



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1. CHOOSING A VENUE - Consider the Following:

1.1 Accessibility

- Accessible parking
- Accessible washrooms
- Easy to navigate with mobility assistive devices (e.g. cane, walkers, wheelchairs, scooters)
- Has a hearing loop system/ FM hearing system
- Space for service animals to relieve themselves

1.2 Environment

- The venue is pleasant, clean, safe and secure
- Inside has good lighting and acoustics
- The venue is convenient and easily able to be found
- The venue has good signage so it is easily identifiable
- Sufficient and appropriate seating- chairs have backs and arms (when possible)
- Quiet areas available for individuals with children and sensory issues

1.3 Parking

- Accessible parking close to the entrance or the venue site
- Drop-off and pick-up zones are available
- Safe and well-maintained crosswalks from the parking area to the venue
- Parking lots are well-maintained (e.g. snow removal, level and accessible for mobility assistive devices)
- Street parking is not on a busy street (when possible)
- Participants are notified of parking fares or reimbursement

1.4 Indoor venue specific details

- The entrance to the building has sliding doors or automatic door openers
- Building has:
 - Elevators
 - Ramps with railings
 - Railing for stairs
 - Accessible washrooms
 - Non-slip flooring
 - Wide hallways and doorways
 - Adequate lighting

1.5 Outdoor-specific details

- Walkways are available with smooth, level, non-slip and well-maintained pavement
- Walkways taper off for mobility assistive devices
- Accessible washrooms or portable toilets are available
- The location has appropriate signage for
 - Parking
 - Washrooms
 - Entrances
 - Exits
- There is seating available in the shade
- Seating like picnic tables accommodates mobility assistive devices
- Shelter available for weather changes

2. ACTIVITIES - Consider the Following:

2.1 Timing

- Held at an appropriate time for those wishing to participate
- Enough time in between activities to get to and from the event, considering mobility assistive device users
- Time allotted for bathroom breaks with consideration for those with service animals or mobility assistive devices

2.2 Cost

- Event is low or no cost
- If cost is associated with the event, it is communicated prior to the event (e.g. admission fee or parking)
- No hidden or additional costs

2.3 Inclusivity

- A broad range of activities are available for diverse populations
- Event or activity materials are available in various formats (e.g. print, audio, visual)
- Option for participants to attend with a friend
- Option for seniors to attend with a caregiver
- Option for seniors to join in family-based events
- Consideration is given to intergenerational activities

3. FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS - Consider the Following:

3.1 Meeting dietary needs

- Variety of food options and alternatives (e.g. gluten-free, lactose-free, Halal, vegan)
- Offer hot and cold food options

3.2 Accessibility

- If buffet-style, plates, cutlery, food, and drinks are easily able to be reached by mobility assistive device users
- Bendable straws available
- Cups with handles available
- Seating and eating areas are accessible to those with mobility-assistive devices

4. TRANSPORTATION - Consider the Following:

4.1 If you are providing transportation

- Vehicles are:
 - Easy to identify
 - Are accessible with low steps
 - Have wide and high seats
 - Are clean and well-maintained

4.2 If you are not providing transportation

- Public transportation options are available to get to the event
- Bus stops are located close by
- Transportation is affordable
- Transportation is reliable and frequent (operates on evenings and weekends)
- Bus stops have shelters with seats
- Stations are accessible with ramps and appropriate platforms
- Consider reimbursing transportation costs

5. STAFFING AND OTHER SUPPORTS - Consider the Following:

5.1 Preparing your staff

- Staff have name tags or identifiable apparel
- Staff are aware of the details of your event
 - Instructions for parking
 - Where washrooms are
 - Where stairs and elevators are
 - What to do in case of an emergency

5.2 Respectful and inclusive

- Ensure staff and volunteers are
 - Polite, helpful, and courteous
 - Have knowledge and understanding of how to respond to individuals of all ages

5.3 Additional staff

- Consideration given to having an American Sign language interpreter
- Consideration is given to having first-aid personnel

6. MARKETING AND REGISTRATION - Consider the Following:

6.1 Marketing

- Consideration is given to marketing the event in a variety of ways
 - Print (newspaper, flyers, posters)
 - Social media
 - On your website
 - Radio broadcast
 - Television commercials
 - Telephone calls
 - Word of mouth
- Print and visual
 - Are simple, and clean (few words), yet provide all necessary details
 - Use readable large fonts (Minimum size 12)
 - Have a solid background behind the text (no reverse print)
- Oral marketing
 - Speak slowly
 - Speak clearly
 - Provide all details
- All marketing materials:
 - Use plain language (e.g. simple, familiar words, short sentences)
- Consideration is given to the target audience and marketing material is created based on preferences such as:
 - Social media for youth
 - Oral communication or through members they trust for seniors (public meetings, community centers, clubs, broadcast media, through home care workers)
- Consideration is given to personal invitations to address isolation and increase participation
- Information is provided on how to contact the host with questions or concerns
 - If it is a telephone number, someone is available to answer the phone OR the answering machine service gives instructions clearly and slowly with the option to repeat the message
 - If via email, answer promptly or provide an automatic message with response times