

Accessibility

Accessibility in program design, particularly when applying for grants, must consider intersectionality, addressing diverse needs beyond physical or cognitive disabilities. This ensures equitable access and participation for all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, gender, or geography.

Accessibility is not solely about physical access but also about inclusivity and recognising potential barriers. In grant applications, demonstrating your program's accessibility is vital to showcase your commitment to equity.

It is essential for accessibility considerations to be integrated into program design rather than added reactively, ensuring inclusivity from the outset.

Imagine the contrast between hastily rearranging tables and chairs to accommodate the arrival of someone who uses a wheelchair, versus proactively designing your program with wheelchair accessibility in mind from the outset.

Aspects of accessibility

- **Physical accessibility:** Ensure that program facilities, venues, and activities are accessible to individuals with physical disabilities. This may involve providing wheelchair ramps, accessible entrances, designated parking spaces, and accessible restrooms. Consider the layout and design of spaces to accommodate mobility aids and assistive devices and ensure that signage and pathways are clear and easy to navigate for individuals with mobility impairments.
- **Cognitive accessibility:** Recognise that participants may have diverse cognitive abilities and learning styles. Provide clear and concise communication, instructions, and materials, using plain language and avoiding jargon or complex terminology. Offer alternative formats, such as visual aids, audio recordings, or written summaries, to accommodate different learning preferences and cognitive needs.
- **Digital accessibility:** Ensure that program materials, resources, and communication channels are accessible to individuals with varying levels of digital literacy and access to technology. This may include providing alternative formats, such as printed materials or phone-based options, for those with limited internet access or technological proficiency.
- **Language accessibility:** Recognise that participants may have diverse language backgrounds and proficiency levels. Provide multilingual resources, translation services, or language support to ensure that all participants can fully engage with the program content and activities.
- **Bandwidth and connectivity:** Recognise that individuals may have limited access to high-speed internet or reliable connectivity, particularly in rural or remote areas. Design program activities and communication methods to accommodate lower bandwidth and data usage, such as using text-based communication or providing offline resources.
- **Financial accessibility:** Consider the financial barriers that participants may face in accessing the program, such as registration fees, transportation costs, or the need to purchase equipment or materials. Explore options for reducing or eliminating financial barriers, such as offering scholarships, subsidies, or alternative payment arrangements.

- **Resource accessibility:** Consider the availability of resources and materials needed to participate in the program, such as equipment, tools, or facilities. Ensure that these resources are accessible and affordable for all participants, or explicitly asked for in your budget (with consideration to the grant guidelines).
- **Class and socioeconomic accessibility:** Acknowledge the socioeconomic disparities that may impact participants' ability to access and engage with the program. Design program activities and requirements to be inclusive of individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and consider the financial, social, and cultural barriers that may affect participation.
- **Geographical accessibility:** Consider the geographic location of participants and the potential challenges they may face in accessing program activities or resources. Explore options for remote participation, virtual engagement, or decentralised program delivery to overcome geographical barriers and reach participants in diverse locations.
- **Time accessibility:** Recognise that participants may have competing demands on their time, such as work, caregiving responsibilities, or other commitments. Offer flexible scheduling options, asynchronous learning opportunities, or alternative session times to accommodate participants' schedules and availability.

Access to your program

When designing your program, it is crucial to consider how young people will access the project, especially those who may face transportation challenges. Providing transport to and from the project can enhance accessibility and participation. However, relying on Youth Justice or the QPS for transportation may not be feasible, as their primary focus is not on program delivery. Instead, explore other transportation options, such as partnering with local transport providers, community organisations, or arranging group transportation, to ensure all young people can attend and benefit from the program. Prioritising accessibility through transport support will help maximise the program's impact and reach.

By addressing these elements of accessibility, you can ensure that your program is inclusive and equitable, reaching, and engaging participants from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.