An Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Guide

The CBC Pensioners National Association

Preserving our Future, Sharing our Past

2022

Introduction, Overview, and Mandate

This guide is a collection of best-practice suggestions for those who are communicating with our members or planning events for them.

It is meant to help the CBC Pensioners National Association (PNA) meet its stated policy commitment to be an equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization. The goal is to create an environment where all members feel respected, valued, and welcomed regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or identity, disability, education, language, geography, or any other bias.

Many of this guide's suggestions are based on the simple concepts of kindness, consideration, and accommodation common to many civil society organizations like the PNA. In fact, some of the suggestions are inspired by similar guides.

Encouraging Diverse Participation

Providing opportunities to increase overall member participation in the PNA can result in a more diverse and inclusive organization.

The idea is to offer members opportunities to get involved and become familiar with the PNA, without having to commit to a three-year elected term.

This would allow members to find activities that match their availability and interest.

Observers

The Observer Pilot program from the May 2021 Convention was successful and can be adapted to any level.

Regional Executives can invite interested members to any board meeting as observers. While observers would not have a vote on any motions or decisions, the chapter or region can decide what other levels of participation observers can enjoy, keeping in mind the point is to familiarize them with the PNA and encourage further participation.

Observers should have clear instructions regarding the expected level of participation. A follow-up meeting should be held to gauge future interest and to improve future observers' experience.

Bite-Sized Projects

Yes, sometimes it seems quicker and even easier to do everything ourselves rather than delegate. But that would be a missed opportunity to encourage more members with an interest in PNA activities to get involved and become more familiar with the organization. So do not be afraid to ask members for help!

Bite-sized projects can include helping a more experienced member plan a get-together or greeting members and guests when they arrive;

contributing to a newsletter; joining election committees; sending greeting cards to members; picking up members who might need transportation to events, or anything else that is shorter-term but fulfilling for new volunteers.

Governance: Co-Presidents

More members may be willing to participate at the elected level if they can share the duties.

BC/Yukon Region, the PEI and the new Fredericton-Saint John Chapters, as well as the standing committees on Recruitment and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, have a co-president structure that divides the workload. Each co-chair can take on responsibilities based on their strengths and availability.

PNA Primer

Helping members understand the PNA could lead to more people getting involved. Currently, many members don't know much about the organization's structure. Including a PNA Primer in your region's newsletter from time to time would improve familiarity with the organization.

Newsletters & Communications

Accessibility

With an endless palette of colours and fonts, it is tempting to go wild with newsletter pages. But that can present a challenge for members with visual impairments.

Remember your ABCs:

Accessibility = bigger, bolder, brighter; contrasting, crisp, and consistent.

- **Bigger: 14 pt Arial works well (e.g. Arial works well)**

> **Arial works well**

- **Bolder: Use bold sans serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica and Futura (e.g. Arial works well)**

> **Helvetica works well also**

- **Brighter: black on white is best. Yellow on black or dark blue can also work.**

> **Black on white is best**   **Yellow on Black also works**

- **Contrasting: Once again, black on white is best. [For links](), have a colour contrast of at least 3:1 and underline as well.**

- **Consistent: Provide an ability to transform the text into a more readable format, that is: underline the topic link & give an instruction "view text in browser".**

- **Crisp: Arial Bold. Use straightforward simple print to reinforce the spoken word. Use frequent headers for paragraphs.**

Symbols

When reporting the deaths of members from various backgrounds and beliefs, we recommend avoiding the use of religious symbols as a graphic, unless the subject of the article or their family requests it.

Social media

Many of the same rules as for accessibility in newsletters and on web pages apply to social media posts. But most importantly regarding social media platforms, do not assume all members use them. Providing information in various forms, including regular mail when possible, ensures any posts you make reach as many members as possible.

Organizing Inclusive Events

Here is a question to consider: if we are not consciously making our events and meetings inclusive and accessible, does that leave them exclusive and inaccessible?

One way to make sure the answer is "no" may be to include a statement on invitations committing to holding an inclusive and accessible event.

Of course, the statement is just a start, we've also got to deliver the goods!

To help with that, here is a checklist you can use when scheduling, organizing, executing and doing evaluations of PNA events. *Please note that this list is not exhaustive and will evolve as we continue to learn*.

Some of these items may seem common sense, but many are easily forgotten! You are not required to adopt each suggestion: we recommend you use this checklist as a tool to help you move further toward equity, diversity, and inclusion within the PNA.

Always keep in mind how one individual would feel at the event – strive to create a sense of belonging.

PNA event organizers should anticipate that some members will have barriers to participating in events. Accessibility barriers can include, but are not limited to:

- ➢ access to technology and/or funds;

- ➢ physical access;

- ➢ visual or hearing impairments;

- ➢ language;

- ➢ timing conflicts (time zones, scheduling, priorities, etc.

- ➢ mental health and anxiety.

Scheduling Events

Encourage maximum participation by scheduling PNA events with ample notice and by sending out a reminder. For example:

- Notice for local Chapter meetings or social events: two weeks in advance and reminders at least one day before the meeting.

- Regional meetings should give one month's notice with a two-day reminder before the meeting date.

- If using electronic invitations, also include in your planning a text-only invitation option.

- Include time, date, and location on all meeting notices and reminders.

- Ensure organizers' contact information (email, telephone, etc.) is included in all information to PNA members.

- Encourage invitees to reach out individually with any comments, questions, or concerns.

- Ask attendees if they have food allergies.

- Ask attendees to please refrain from wearing perfumes and other scented products at the event.

- Include clear directions on how to get to the event with a map and written directions.

- Include accessibility details for the event and contact information for questions and requests (for example, if there is an accessible route into the building, if there will be an ASL interpreter, etc.).

- Avoid using gendered prefixes (e.g., Mr., Ms.) unless an individual has explicitly confirmed their title. Use a gender-neutral title (Mx.) or no title at all.

- Request that all registrants behave appropriately through event guidelines or established code of conduct.

- Avoid dress code guidelines in invitations that focus on gender (e.g., suits for men, cocktail dresses for women).

- Include any safety precautions for attendees (for example, COVID).

Timing

- Consider event timing and potential barriers to attending (for example, weather, traffic, etc.).

- Establish a rain date, as necessary.

- Consider how time zones might affect attendees (virtual events).

- Consider if the event date is on or near any religious, spiritual and/or statutory holidays.

Venue

- Think about attendees with different abilities and the potential to encounter barriers.

- Schedule a site visit and make note of obstacles. Pathways in and outside the venue should be level, firm, and stable, and at least one meter wide for those who use mobility aids. They should be marked with accessibility information (for example steep slopes, and stairs).

- Check if there are automatic doors. If the main entrance is not automatic, ensure there is signage to direct guests to an access door. Event organizer can be stationed to hold doors open and greet guests at non-accessible doors. Ensure there are no obstacles blocking the pathway from the accessible entrance to the event floor.

- Choose a venue that is well-lit or has adjustable lighting. Good lighting can help with lip-reading and sign language.

- Consider the appropriateness of your venue and whether it could make your guests uncomfortable (e.g., religious institute, government house, organization that limits participation based

on gender, etc.). The venues or suppliers we use must conform to the principles of EDI that guide the PNA.

. Parking and Transportation

- Consider the route from parking to the event spaces (e.g., can they navigate on their own without needing assistance) for individuals with mobility issues.

- Ensure the venue has accessible parking and clear signage directing guests to and from the event. If the venue does not have parking available, alternate parking options should be considered and signage posted for the event.

- Check if public transportation is available and within a reasonable distance from the venue.

- Canvass for volunteers to pick up fellow members or establish a buddy system if public transportation is not available.

Washrooms

Washrooms should be accessible with appropriate grab bars and floor space for a wheelchair or walker and an accessible sink with accessible soap and hand drying station.

Determine if universal washrooms are available. Universal means that it can be accessed by people of every gender and with a full range of identities, abilities, and social positions.

Comfort

- Consider all five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell) when planning an event.

- Provide an event overview/timeline to invitees in invitations and other communications, with appropriate notice to allow for maximum participation.

- Ensure there is an appropriate sound system (and test it!).

Presenters/Speakers

- Consider the diversity of participants, facilitators, speakers/presenters, and performers.

- Ask your facilitators, speakers/presenters, and performers the following:

    - To advise participants if any of their content might be concerning or triggering discomfort.

    - Whether they require a screen.

    - To use headphones to ensure their sound is clear (virtual platforms).

    - To describe the content of their presentations (slides, notes, etc.) when presenting.

    - To ensure that videos or other forms of media include accessibility features.

    - To use the CNIB Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines when preparing their presentation materials.

    - To send their materials in advance to allow organizers to integrate them into the presentation.

    - In cases like Covid: ask speakers to remove their facial masks so that they can be more easily understood.

Virtual Event Technology

- Consider whether the event platform is appropriate for your audience and if it is accessible for most.

- Provide event platform navigation/instructions. Include a link or PDF to the invitation/confirmation email (how to log in, install, etc.) and consider hosting a pre-event "tech training session" for attendees.

- Ensure the chosen event platform uses easily accessible tools/add-ons for device compatibility (apps, text-to-speech functions).

- Ensure alternative participation methods are available (for example dial-in by phone).

- Ensure tactics are in place to reduce burnout, Zoom fatigue, eye pain, etc. For example, make sure there are breaks in long meetings.

- If costs are not prohibitive, enable closed captioning on all video (live or pre-recorded).

Social Anxieties and Cognitive Challenges

- Members who are shy and/or introverts may find group activities draining or stressful. Try to provide a quiet spot where they can get temporarily away from the group.

- It may also help to have a greeter to break the ice and orient people.

- For name tags consider adding the last job at CBC/SRC as another ice breaker.

- **To help those with different cognitive abilities, consider making your messaging clear and concise. Put clear, bold titles on all handouts indicating their purpose.**

- **Remember to have sufficient breaks during long events and meetings, even virtually on Zoom.**

That's it for Now!

The PNA's Standing Committee on Equity Diversity and Inclusion intends for this guide to be a living document, updated as needs and expectations evolve within the PNA. We hope that it will serve as both a constant reminder and a valuable resource to help the PNA achieve its stated commitment to be an equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization.