

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

# Age-Friendly Community Remote Events Planning Resource

Virtual events and teleconferences are a low-cost way to bring everyone together from the safety of their homes. They enable physical distancing and can also be a great tool to overcome the challenges offered by large geographic distances and inclement weather.

## Before the event

### **Step 1: Think about how to make your virtual event or teleconference most effective**

Draft an event agenda considering the following questions:

- What content will be shared? For example, can the content be shared easily online? Is the type easy to read? Should materials be made available in advance of the meeting via email?
- What platform will best serve the needs of your meeting?  
Some video platforms have a maximum number of participants and a time limit on the session; most offer a chat function which can facilitate question and answer (Q&A) sessions.
- Teleconferences may be the best option in areas where broadband capacity is limited.
- How do you want to engage the audience?  
Consider using chats, polling activities, breakout rooms, question and answer platforms, and content sharing.

### **Step 2: Select your event date & dry run date**

Select your event date in consideration of the following:

- Select a date that gives you enough time to send invitations in advance and make reservations for accessibility services (see below for further details).

- Select your dry run date approximately one week prior to allow for testing of the technology and to practice running through the agenda/script. If any changes are identified, you have one week to make them before your event.

### **Step 3: Draft/put together your event materials**

- Agenda
- Scripts for presenters/panelists
- For virtual events: "Welcome" hold slide (slide that will appear at the start of the event while participants are waiting for it to start, and during any unexpected event interruptions/pauses)
- For teleconferences: Moderator welcomes participants and advises them that the meeting will start shortly
- Visual aids (for example slide decks or images)

### **Step 4: Build your event support team**

- For virtual events: Identify a technical host for your event who will be responsible for the technical aspects of your event (e.g. turn the event "on", admit participants, share screen content and transition between slide sharing and speakers, mute/unmute participants when necessary, troubleshoot, etc.)
- For virtual events and teleconferences: Identify a moderator for your event who will be responsible for announcing speakers, keeping the agenda moving, reading questions from the chat, etc. **\*Note:** in some instances, the technical host and moderator are the same person
- Identify a chat moderator who will be responsible for monitoring the chat, highlighting questions, and ensuring civility
- For virtual events: If using a Q&A or polling platform such as [Sli.do](https://www.sli.do/) (<https://www.sli.do/>) in place of a chat, the chat moderator will need to ensure that the page is set up prior to the event so that people can submit questions
- Identify a note-taker who will transcribe any questions received during the event, along with answers provided, so that they can be made available after the event

### **Step 5: Determine technology needs & make reservations**

- Reserve a virtual video event platform or teleconference line for your event date, as well as a dry run date, so that you can test the technology to ensure that it will meet your event needs

- Determine if you want to record the event either for your records or to make publicly available after the meeting
- Events should be accessible and in compliance with [Ontario's Accessibility requirements](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario>).
- For virtual video-based events American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) services should be made available. Attendees may also request additional support.
  - For American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services consider: The [Canadian Hearing Services](mailto:interpreting@chs.ca) ([interpreting@chs.ca](mailto:interpreting@chs.ca)), [Toronto Sign Language Interpreting Service](mailto:torontosignlanguage@gmail.com) ([torontosignlanguage@gmail.com](mailto:torontosignlanguage@gmail.com)), and [MCIS Interpreting Service](mailto:is@mcis.on.ca) ([is@mcis.on.ca](mailto:is@mcis.on.ca)).
  - For Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) services consider: [The Canadian Hearing Services](mailto:Cart@chs.ca) ([Cart@chs.ca](mailto:Cart@chs.ca)), [Neesons](mailto:Scheduling@neesonsreporting.com) ([Scheduling@neesonsreporting.com](mailto:Scheduling@neesonsreporting.com)) and [Ai Media](mailto:kyle.phillips@ai-media.tv) ([kyle.phillips@ai-media.tv](mailto:kyle.phillips@ai-media.tv)).
- For teleconference-based events consider offering a Teletypewriter (TTY) relay service for those with a hearing or speech disability.

### **Step 6: Get participants "registered" for your event**

- Send out calendar invites with the event access link, teleconference dial-in number, agenda and any other relevant materials to all speakers, panelists and attendees as soon as is practicable for both the dry run date and the actual event. Your invitation should also include a message that asks anyone with accessibility needs to contact you about any accommodations they require.
- Consider sharing a consent form with participants in advance if you think you may want to use quotes from or images of participants.
- Consider scheduling reminder emails as your event approaches
- Include any necessary materials in the invites (e.g. panel member tip sheet)
- Some people may prefer to participate by mail or by speaking with a team member to share their input verbally. Consider offering both options by providing a mailing address and a telephone number.

### **Step 7: Test the technology and make agenda/script changes**

- Use your dry run as an opportunity to test the technology and go through the script with presenters/panelists

- Make any necessary changes and re-share all relevant documents with presenters/panelists

### **Step 8: Day of the Event**

- Send an email to staff a few hours prior to the event reminding them that the event will be taking place soon and pointing them to any event access instructions (i.e. video link or link to Sli.Do Q&A platform, teleconference dial-in number)
- Ensure that all panelists, speakers, and moderators are logged on and ready to go at least 15 minutes before the event
- Ensure that sound and video (if applicable) are working properly
- Begin screen sharing so that all participants logging in can see the welcome slide (if applicable)
- Begin event on time by acknowledging everyone and thanking them for their attendance
- Provide brief overview of web platform decorum and usage instructions (i.e. how to ask a question)
- Ask teleconference participants to mute their phone to minimize noise and distractions
- Remind participants that all questions should be submitted in the Q&A platform (if applicable) or in the virtual meeting platform chat function
- For teleconferences, remind participants to unmute phones if they wish to ask a question or make a comment
- Provide brief overview of event agenda
- Introduce panelists and speakers

## **During the event**

- Manage screen sharing for presenters/panelists who are using slide presentations
- For virtual events: Ensure all participants are on mute and unmute speakers when they are speaking
- Monitor video and attendees for potential issues
- Respond to any logistical questions that come up in chat / Q&A platform (help people get connected where they need support)
- Ensure civility in the chat discussion during the event

- Provide the questions to the moderator who can then voice them during the event
- Create and capture a list of all questions asked, and those that were answered during the session for future reference

## After the event

- Obtain recording of event, if there is one
- Save all event materials to shared repository
- Save all event materials (agenda, slide decks, recording, FAQ, etc.) to shared repository
- Send thank you email to attendees/ presenters/panelists
- Consider linking to post-event evaluation survey
- Email survey to participants to assess their satisfaction with the meeting/event
- Analyze survey data and log recommendations for next event