AMERICA 250
CONNECTICUT

PLANNING GUIDE FOR WELCOMING WIDER AUDIENCES
Strategies for Increasing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access

As a diverse nation, we are continually finding new ways to ensure all Americans can connect with our country's many stories and see themselves in our national narrative. The commission has created this guide to help you and your organization tackle the challenges of engaging with people across differences so you can craft and carry out the best programs possible, ones that align with the commission's vision, values, and themes. We hope that this document will help you as you plan, publicize, implement, and reflect on your programs.

There are many ways of thinking about diversity in our communities. In this guide, we are emphasizing the legal framework of **protected classes under Connecticut state law**. These are: age, ancestry, color, learning disability, marital status, intellectual disability, national origin, physical disability, mental disability, race, religious creed, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and status as a veteran. We encourage you to think about your own community, your organization and its mission, and the many audiences you currently and might serve, and to use the questions below in ways that help you create truly excellent programs that reach the widest possible audience.

If you have questions, please contact the Commission at **info@ct250.org**. When you are ready, we invite you to **share your event with us** for inclusion on our Community Calendar, or share details of your program if it will be accessible for an extended period of time for inclusion **here**. **Affiliated organizations** may use the forms they received when their application is approved in lieu of the linked forms.

PLANNING

- Are all the appropriate people meaningfully involved in the planning process?
  - Be mindful of the phrase "nothing about us without us," and ensure that you are seeking out people from the groups and communities whose stories are being told from the outset as full and equal partners.
  - Be willing to listen and incorporate new ideas.
- Are there partnerships that you could make with other groups or organizations that could shape this program in exciting or new ways?
  - Think about existing partnerships that might want to be involved in a new way.
- What potential barriers might there be for people's ability to participate, and how could you reduce them?
  - Think about price, location, time of day, access via public transit, language, and other factors that could limit ease of access. The design of your program can signal belonging or exclusion from the outset.

PROMOTING

- Have you sought out different channels for promoting your program that will allow you to reach a wider, more diverse audience?
  - **Connecticut Media Directory**
- Have you thought about the language and images you are using to promote your program to ensure they are welcoming to many different groups?
- How are you communicating or highlighting the ways you are making your program more accessible or family-friendly?

IMPLEMENTING

- Have you considered, and attempted to accommodate or address, various barriers to access? This may include socioeconomic, physical, language, or other challenges.
- Have you engaged with people from different backgrounds in the planning stages, and worked to implement your program in a way that will make those from different backgrounds/communities/affinity groups feel welcome?
- Is your program ADA compliant and accessible to the greatest extend possible?

- Was your program successful in attracting guests from different audiences? If not, have you reflected on why they may not have participated?
- Did you watch for any accessibility difficulties, and if any were noted, were you able to address them with the resources available? What additional resources might you need to plan for in a future program?
- Of the changes made in the program planning process, have you identified which were successful (or unsuccessful) in achieving your goals of increased inclusion, diversity, equity, and access?
- Have you identified any additional strategies to incorporate for your next program?
- How did going through this process make you feel? Did you receive any relevant or unexpected feedback?

LET US KNOW!

After your program has concluded, contact us at info@ct250.org to share how this guide worked for you!

RESOURCES

- **Americans with Disabilities Act Guidance & Resource Materials:** Browse various guides relevant to the type of event you are planning
- **American Association for State and Local History 250th Programming Handbook:** Includes a checklist for planning events and ideas for 250th-specific programming
- **Demographic information from Connecticut Department of Public Health:** Links to various state, county, and town datasets
- **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Equity Resources:** Includes strategy information, ideas/case studies for increasing accessibility, and datasets
- **US Census Community Survey Data:** Data tables including demographic, language, disability, etc. information. Data can be pulled for the entire state, or specific zip codes.