Hosting a Covid-Safe In-person National Unity Week Event

To keep your attendees safe and healthy, it may make sense to host a virtual event. If hosting an in-person event, consider ways you can allow participants to maintain social distancing. *Make sure to check in with your city and state's updated regulations and recommendations for covid-safe events.*
Below are some questions and tips to consider when planning your event.

VENUE/EVENT SPACE
- What are the venue's policies and guidelines related to COVID-19?
- What kind of cleaning and sanitation will the venue do prior to your event?
    - Do you need to budget for increased cleaning costs?
- Will the venue assist with messaging of preventative measures to event attendees?
- Does the event space have handwashing and hand sanitizing stations?
- Is the event space big enough to accommodate for social distancing?

ATTENDANCE
- Does your state have a limit on the number of attendees for events?
    - If yes, what steps will you take for enforcing that limit?
- Will you be able to use multiple points of entry and exit for attendees to avoid crowds?
- If your event is outdoors, which setups does the venue allow?

COMMUNICATION
- Should your event need to be postponed, cancelled, or moved to take place online, what is your plan to communicate this change to attendees/registrants?
- Make sure your communications about the event clearly outline COVIDSafe plans & requirements
- Ensure visible signage at the event listing all safety requirements, including those demonstrating social distancing
- Make sure all staff and volunteers know the required safety protocols and their responsibilities

FOOD AND BEVERAGE
- Proper hydration, especially for outdoor events, is important.
- If you do provide beverages, consider offering bottled beverages or hands-free water station
- Any food offerings should be pre-packaged or individual items
- For defined eating areas, be sure that table placement adheres to social distancing guidelines

Onsite Supplies to Consider
In addition to the standard supplies for your event, we encourage you to include the following:
- Soap and water stations (if not already onsite)
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content
- Paper towels, tissues
- Disposable face masks and gloves
- No-touch trash cans

National Unity Week 2020 Online Events – Creating an Inclusive Event

- **Timing** — Choose a date that does not overlap with key religious or cultural events or holidays, unless it is related to that event .

- **Networking** — While you will maximize participation by making sessions available on demand, schedule at least one networking session at different times of the day to ensure all can participate.

- **Registration cost** — Consider creating a scholarship with reduced or complimentary registration and unbundle the price so that people can opt out of certain aspects of the event.

- **Program** — Make sure you have diversity within the program committee and/or internal team. Commit to ensuring gender, ethnic, racial, age, and abilities diversity in all of your speaking roles, and enforce as a strict policy.

- **Moderator** — If having panel discussions is part of the digital program, appoint a moderator to make sure each member of each panel is given an equal opportunity to speak and avoid having panelists monopolize the discussion.

- **Interactivity** — According to the guide, research shows that men are more likely to ask a question during Q&As; however, this changes if the first question is asked by a woman. If you are taking one question at a time, try starting with a woman, member of a minority group, or early-career professional, although this may or may not be possible to determine in a digital setting, depending on the platform you are using.

- **Communications** —
  Before the event: Create a clear equality and diversity statement specifically for the event and publish a code of conduct that spells out zero tolerance for harassment or discrimination (which also applies to social media around the event). Make sure your online images promoting the event and on social media give equal visibility to women, young professionals, races, and disabilities.
  During the event: Open the event by making a statement about efforts towards inclusion, equality, and diversity.
  After the event: Collect feedback from participants on the inclusivity of the event

Diversity matters, whether it's a face-to-face or virtual event. As REACH's **guide notes, "A diversity of perspectives and people means a wider variety of ideas, discussions, and potential collaborations. Ultimately, this means a better event."**

Tips from: Michelle Russell; 7 Steps to Creating an Inclusive Digital Event