

Hatfield Resident Fellowship Project Brief

Accessibility in Public Meetings and Healthcare

Project Dates: July/2023-March 2024

Project Goal

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Equity and Inclusion Division carries out more than 16 distinct functions for the agency and state, providing expertise and technical assistance on equity, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-oppression, universal accessibility, and social justice topics. The project goal was to create a means for OHA staff to incorporate inclusive and accessible practices in public meetings. My role as a Hatfield Fellow was to streamline, consolidate, and create accessibility guidelines and resources on public meetings for OHA staff. Additionally, I was to facilitate and support the development of a series of webinars that would enhance the understanding of accessible healthcare among OHA staff and Oregon healthcare providers.

Strategy

My primary strategy was to get organized, create a timeline, and develop a plan for each project. As part of my strategy for the resource page:

- Used project management tools to lay a scope of the work and achieve project deliverables.
- Conducted interviews across teams, departments, and divisions to gain an understanding of gaps in the resources.
- Consulted with subject matter experts to implement best practices in the resources.
- Worked with communications team to share resource page widely across the agency.

For the webinar development:

- Created timelines, matrixes, and project deadlines to lead the project forward.

- Identified strategies, such as continuing education credits, that would incentivize attendance.
- Coordinated with communications team to develop a communications plan for outreach.

Challenges

In the initial stages of the project, I encountered a set of challenges that prompted a need for reflection and strategic adjustment.

- Securing time from agency personnel for project discussions proved initially challenging due to busy schedules and the inherent difficulty in reaching out as a newcomer without established connections. Recognizing this hurdle, I pivoted my approach, seeking recommendations and, as a result, successfully met with all required individuals and teams.
- Midway through the fellowship, an unforeseen personal emergency

necessitated a two-week hiatus. Despite the frustration of disrupting my momentum, upon return, I efficiently regrouped and prioritized tasks, leading to significant progress, particularly in developing a substantial part of the resource site during that month.

- A notable hurdle involved dependencies on individuals tied to specific aspects of the project who faced challenges meeting deadlines. Delays in the landing page and webinar promotions occurred. Although these setbacks did not significantly impact the project overall, they were nonetheless frustrating. Post-production, there was a concerted effort to disseminate information widely to compensate for the delay. This experience underscored the importance of setting both external and internal project deadlines for better planning in future endeavors.

Navigating through these challenges, the project eventually achieved its objectives, offering valuable insights for future projects in terms of outreach strategies and meticulous deadline planning.

Take-Away

This experience was enriching to my career, and I take the following learning experiences with me:

- No matter the size of an organization-human connection is key to moving any project forward.
- Accessibility should be incorporated in everything we do. Something can be accessible, but not necessarily useable for people with disabilities.
- Equity is a discipline in itself with methods and principles.

Results

During my time as I fellow I was able to present the following project deliverables:

- An OWL resource page with guidelines to virtual, hybrid, and in-person public meetings.
- Custom resources for internal staff: virtual platform comparison sheet, post-meeting survey template, FAQ on Accessible Public Meetings, Planning Accessible Meetings Guide, Accessible Hybrid Meetings guidelines.
- 170-200 registered attendees at first webinar. 200 registered for second webinar.
- Continuing Education Credits by NASW for webinar series.

TO HEAR AN AUDIO VERSION OF THE PROJECT BRIEF,
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