

## Creating an Inclusive Environment for Your Financial Education Program

The following checklist will help your organization remove barriers to participation by individuals with disabilities and create an inclusive environment. Creating an inclusive environment starts with the actions and attitudes of staff that set high expectations about a barrier free environment that encourages everyone to be sensitive and solution oriented to individual differences.

### Self-Evaluation Checklist

#### Spirit of Inclusion

- Are participants with disabilities treated as full participants in the classroom?
- Are the expectations for participants with disabilities the same as for other participants?
- Are staff using “people first language” and focusing attention on abilities, interests, and aspirations in the same way as for other participants?
- Have staffed participated in a disability awareness training course?

#### Remove Physical Barriers

- Is there an action plan to remove physical barriers in place?
- Do the plans consider relocating to space without physical barriers?
- Do the plans consider reorganizing space?
- Do all events take place in barrier free locations?
- Is the location on an accessible bus route or reachable by other accessible means of transportation?
- Are the bathrooms accessible?

### Remove Communications Barriers

- Are staff familiar with and making available different kinds of alternative formats for materials?
  - Large print
  - CD
  - Audio Tape
  - Braille
- Do program staff know how and where to secure interpreters, assistive listening devices, or real-time captioning?
- Are participants asked about their needs and preference for communication access?
- Are staff and participants familiar with program procedures to handle requests for accommodations?
- Is your website accessible for persons with disabilities?
- Do you use visual information (words, charts, and graphics) to reinforce what is presented orally?

### Remove Program Barriers

- Do you let participants have additional time to complete assignments or take a test?
- Do you offer the participant an aide, volunteer, or flexibility to bring a friend or family member to help maintain attention and understanding?
- Do you offer follow up instruction, individually, as needed?
- Do you provide a balance of active and passive activities within a lesson?
- Do you use real life examples and concrete materials whenever possible?
- Do you provide an overview of the content or expected learning objectives at the beginning of the session?
- Do you repeat, paraphrase, and summarize all important points?
- Do you encourage participants to ask questions?
- Do you limit lectures and encourage participants to work in pairs or small teams to learn by doing?
- Do you use hands on activities, pictures, or diagrams to provide alternative ways of learning abstract or more complex concepts?

### Utilize Community Resources

- Have you developed relationships with community disability organizations to learn more about removing physical, communication, or program barriers?
- Have you asked leaders with disabilities in your community to either identify resources or help provide reasonable accommodations?
- Have you invited the leaders or community disability organization staff to assess your barrier-free environment?
- Have you invited these leaders to help train your staff to be proactive in identifying and solving accessibility challenges?

### Technical Assistance Resources

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has established 10 regional centers to provide information, training and technical assistance to employers, people with disabilities and other entities with responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The centers act as a “one-stop” central, comprehensive resource on ADA issues in employment, public services, public accommodations, and communications. Each center works closely with local business, disability, governmental, rehabilitation and other professional networks to provide ADA information and assistance. Programs vary in each region, but all centers provide the following:

- Technical Assistance
- Education and Training
- Materials Dissemination
- Information and Referral
- Public Awareness
- Local Capacity Building

Call the toll-free number – (800) 949-4232 (V/TTY) – for information, materials, technical assistance or training on the ADA. This number will automatically route your call to the Center in your region. The contact information for the 10 Regional ADA Centers is as follows:

**Region 1 (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)**

**[New England ADA Center](#)**

Institute for Human Centered Design (formerly Adaptive Environments)

180-200 Portland Street, First floor

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Phone: (617) 695-0085 (V/TTY)

Fax: (617) 482-8099

E-mail: [adainfo@newenglandada.org](mailto:adainfo@newenglandada.org)

Web site: <http://www.NewEnglandADA.org>

**Region 2 (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands)**

**[Northeast ADA Center](#)**

Cornell University

201 Dolgen Hall

Ithaca, New York 14853-3901

Phone: (607) 255-6686 (Voice and TTY)

Fax: (607) 255-2763

E-mail: [dbtacnortheast@cornell.edu](mailto:dbtacnortheast@cornell.edu)

Web site: [www.dbtacnortheast.org](http://www.dbtacnortheast.org)

**Region 3 (Delaware, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia)**

**[Mid-Atlantic ADA Center](#)**

TransGen, Inc.

451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 700

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Phone: (301) 217-0124 (V/TTY)

Fax: (301) 217-0754

E-mail: [adainfo@transcen.org](mailto:adainfo@transcen.org)

Web site: [www.adainfo.org](http://www.adainfo.org)

**Region 4 (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi,  
North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)**

**[Southeast ADA Center](#)**

Project of the Burton Blatt Institute – Syracuse University

1419 Mayson Street

Atlanta, Georgia 30324

Phone: (404) 541-9001 (V/TTY)

Fax: (404) 541-9002

E-mail: [sedbtacproject@law.syr.edu](mailto:sedbtacproject@law.syr.edu)

Web site: [www.sedbtac.org](http://www.sedbtac.org)

**Region 5 (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin)**

**[Great Lakes ADA Center](#)**

University of Illinois/Chicago

Department on Disability and Human Development

1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 405

Chicago, Illinois 60608

Phone: (312) 413-1407 (V/TTY)

Fax: (312) 413-1856

Web site: [www.adagreatlakes.org](http://www.adagreatlakes.org)

**Region 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)**

**[Southwest ADA Center](#)**

Independent Living Research Utilization

2323 South Shepherd Boulevard, Suite 1000

Houston, Texas 77019

Phone: (713) 520-0232 (V/TTY)

Fax: (713) 520-5785

E-mail: [dlrp@ilru.org](mailto:dlrp@ilru.org)

Web site: [www.southwestada.org](http://www.southwestada.org)

**Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)**

**[Great Plains ADA Center](#)**

University of Missouri/Columbia

100 Corporate Lake Drive

Columbia, Missouri 65203

Phone: (573) 882-3600 (V/TTY)

Fax: (573) 884-4925

E-mail: [brinkhoffj@missouri.edu](mailto:brinkhoffj@missouri.edu)

Web site: [www.gpadacenter.org](http://www.gpadacenter.org)

**Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)**

**[Rocky Mountain ADA Center](#)**

Meeting the Challenge, Inc.

3630 Sinton Road, Suite 103

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907

Phone: (719) 444-0268 (V/TTY)

Fax: (719) 444-0269

E-mail: [technicalassistance@mtc-inc.com](mailto:technicalassistance@mtc-inc.com)

Web site: [www.rockymountainada.org](http://www.rockymountainada.org)

**Region 9 (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Pacific Basin)**

**[Pacific ADA Center](#)**

555 12th Street, Suite 1030

Oakland, California 94607-4046

Phone: (510) 285-5600 (V/TTY)

Fax: (510) 285-5614

E-mail: [adatech@adapacific.org](mailto:adatech@adapacific.org)

Web site: [www.adapacific.org](http://www.adapacific.org)

**Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington)**

**[Northwest ADA Center](#)**

University of Washington

6912 220th Street SW, #105

Mountlake Terrace, Washington 98043

Phone: (425) 248-2480 (V)

Fax: (425) 771-7438

E-mail: [dbtacnw@u.washington.edu](mailto:dbtacnw@u.washington.edu)

Web site: [www.dbtacnorthwest.org](http://www.dbtacnorthwest.org)