



2024 Bridge Conference Access and Inclusion Resource Guide

School's Out Washington (SOWA) seeks to create a welcoming space for all attendees at our Bridge Conference. We are committed to working on these areas for event accessibility:

ACCESSIBILITY

- Accessibility Accommodation Requests
- Location Accessibility

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility Accommodation Requests

SOWA strives to ensure our events are accessible to all individuals. If participants have any specific accommodation requests related to one or more disabilities or language access, please include your request when you register and email us directly at bridge@schoolsoutwashington.org. Please reach out as soon as you are aware of your access need and at least two weeks prior to the first day of the conference.

While we seek to expand the designation of resources for accessibility accommodations, our budget is limited. Our current policy is first-come, first-served when addressing accommodation requests. **Please reach out as early as possible with your request and/or inquiry.** We will do our best to meet the accessibility requests and/or work with you to identify alternative solutions if we're not able to meet the exact need.

Location Accessibility

- **Parking & Transportation:** Parking lots for the Greater Tacoma Convention Center (GTCC) are operated by Republic Parking and managed by the City of Tacoma. Accessible parking is available in Parking Lot A garage and can be accessed via the ramp from Commerce Street. Standard parking rates: \$6 for 0-4 hours, \$12 for all day parking. The [Tacoma Link Light Rail](#) is free, the Convention Center Station is directly across from the GTCC, and parking is free at the Link garage next to the Tacoma Dome Station. Visiting Tacoma for the first time? Plan your trip with resources from [Travel Tacoma](#).
- **Conference Venue:** The conference will take place primarily on the 3rd and 4th floors of the GTCC (view [floor plans](#)) and the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Marriott Tacoma Downtown Hotel, accessible via a shared hallway. The GTCC and Marriott Tacoma Downtown both have public elevators, accessible on all floors. Check out more information about the [accessibility features of the Marriott Tacoma Downtown](#), and the [accessibility features of the Convention Center](#).
- **Restrooms:** All are encouraged to use the restroom of their choice. These are the available restrooms:
 - 2nd Floor, Marriott: Men's, Women's, or Single Stall Restroom
 - 3rd Floor, Marriott: Men's, Women's, or Single Stall Restroom
 - 3rd Floor, GTCC: All-Gender, Women's, or Single Stall Restroom
 - 4th Floor, GTCC: Men's, Women's, or Single Stall Restroom
- **Nursing Room:** A nursing (lactation) room is located on the 3rd floor of the GTCC.
- **Mindfulness and Quiet Area:** If you are looking for a quiet space from noise or distractions, we recommend the Pre-function area outside the Ballroom on the 3rd floor of the Marriott. We have reserved rooms 403 and 407, located on the 4th Floor of the Convention Center as quiet spaces for participants to use. The Greater Tacoma Convention Center provides Sensory Bags, equipped with noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, verbal cue cards, and weighted lap pads will also be available to all guests at the Convention Center who may feel overwhelmed by the environment, as part of their [Accessibility services](#).



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Bridge Conference space comes to life with your perspective, wisdom, and questions. We value your presence and your participation and want you to get the most out of our time together.

Sharing Pronouns

In the spirit of creating an inclusive space for everyone, **we invite you to add your pronouns to your nametag when signing in.** Creating an explicit culture around [sharing pronouns](#) is one way to support people's right to determine how they want to be addressed, and affirms the dignity of trans, non-binary, intersex, and gender non-conforming folks.

We All Belong Here

It is our goal to cultivate a sense of belonging for everyone at Bridge. If you experience discrimination or bias based on race, religious belief, national origin, immigration status, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, or Veteran status during your stay at our hotel partner, at the venue, or during your Conference experience, we encourage you to let us know so we can follow up to address the matter or remedy the situation in order to create an environment where all are welcome and valued.

To report an incident, you may approach any School's Out Washington staff member, notify us at bridge@schoolsoutwashington.org, call our Conference phone number, or an anonymous form.

Considerations for our collective learning

- **All languages** are welcomed, accepted and encouraged.
- We recognize that **we are a neurodiverse community**: we all take in knowledge, navigate environments, and express ourselves differently. We encourage you to participate via one or more modes – active listening, note taking, asking questions, and/or sharing in group discussions.
- **We seek to meet you where you are at.** Our intention is to offer an array of sessions that match different learning preferences, from interactive workshops with group discussions and activities to presentations, and workshops tailored for those with beginning, intermediate, or advanced knowledge of specific subjects.
- We strive to **support you with any questions and feedback.** In addition to the presenter(s), each session will be supported by at least one staff or volunteer, and live customer service support will be available before, during, and after the conference.

Encouraging Mindfulness and Restoration

- **Breaks Between Sessions:** We intentionally scheduled transition periods and breaks of 15-20 minutes in-between sessions to encourage participants to take care of basic needs and move to the next session.
- **Give yourself and others grace:** We invite you to collaborate with us to cultivate a community of care.



FOOD AND MATERIALS

Food

We provide **breakfast**, **lunch**, and an **afternoon snack** each day. Food items are labeled with ingredients to support those with dietary restrictions, and designated cards may be used to request specially designed meals for plated meals.

Conference Program

Your hard-copy Conference Program will include the schedule and session titles. The full Conference Program with session descriptions, presenter details, and more will be available on the online platform Sched at least four weeks prior to the Conference. Conference workshops and schedule are subject to change at any time.

Workshop and Keynote Presentations

We will encourage presenters to use 20-point font and color contrast for presentation slides, and upload PDFs of slide decks and other materials to our virtual platform for attendee review.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Venue Health and Safety Protocols

Review the current [COVID-19 guidelines](#) from our lead venue, the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, and current [practices for health and safety](#) from our partner venue, the Marriott Tacoma Downtown, which are subject to change at any time.

Proactive Precautions

To center those most vulnerable in our community, we strongly encourage attendees to proactively take precautions, including mask-wearing prior to, during, and after the Conference, being up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters, administration of a rapid COVID test in the 24 hours prior to attending the Conference to confirm that you are COVID-negative, and frequent handwashing and hand sanitizing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other viral illnesses.

No person in any Conference role should attend or stay in attendance if they are currently experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, as identified by the CDC. Although refunds are not available after October 4, 2024, we strongly encourage anyone in this situation to consider transferring their registration to another individual, such as a colleague, who can attend.

*Some of these norms were adapted from CompassPoint's workshop expectations.
This document will be updated periodically. Version 7.5.2*