

The Art of *Being Water*

October 26-27 • Tacoma, WA

2026 Bridge Conference Health, Access, and Safety Resource Guide

School's Out Washington (SOWA) is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible experience for everyone attending Bridge Conference. This guide outlines available accessibility resources, venue information, learning environment expectations, food and materials information, and health and safety guidelines. We encourage you to review this information before attending the conference and to contact the Bridge team with any questions or accommodation requests.

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ACCESSIBILITY & VENUE INFORMATION

Requesting Accommodations

If you need accommodation related to a disability or language access services, please do the following:

- Include your request during registration.
- Email us at bridge@schoolsoutwashington.org as soon as possible and **at least two (2) weeks before** the first day of the conference.

We are continually working to expand our accessibility resources; however, available accommodations may be limited. Requests are currently reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. We encourage you to reach out as early as possible.

We will make every effort to meet your request. If we are unable to provide a specific accommodation, we will work with you to identify alternative solutions.

Venue Access

Bridge Conference will take place primarily on the third and fourth floors of the Greater Tacoma Convention Center (GTCC) and the second and third floors of the Marriott Tacoma Downtown Hotel. The two buildings are connected by a shared skybridge.

Both venues offer public elevators that provide access to all conference areas.

Additional accessibility information:

- View [GTCC floor plans linked here](#).
- Review [Marriott Tacoma Downtown accessibility features linked here](#).
- Review [GTCC accessibility features linked here](#).

Getting Here

Parking & Transportation

Parking lots for the 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.

Parking Rates

- 0-4 hours: \$8
- All-day parking: \$16

Public Transit

Tacoma is served by [Pierce Transit](#) and [Sound Transit](#) bus systems as well as Sound Transit's Tacoma [Link Light Rail](#) and the Lakewood-Seattle [Sunder Train](#). Orca cards and tap to pay are accepted on all modes of transportation.

The **Convention Center Station** on the [Tacoma Link Light Rail](#) is located directly across from the GTCC. Visit their [page](#) for current fares and schedules. Free parking is available at the parking garage next to the Tacoma Dome Link Station.

First-Time Visitors

Visiting Tacoma for the first time? Plan your trip with resources from [Travel Tacoma](#). Check out our [Travel & Lodging page](#) for more resources.

Elevators/Escalators

The Convention Center has public elevators, accessible on all 5 floors of the venue and public escalators accessible on all floors except the 2nd floor.

Restrooms & Family Facilities

All are encouraged to use the restroom that best meets their needs.

Available restrooms will include:

- 2nd Floor, Marriott: Men's, Women's, and Single Stall Restrooms
- 3rd Floor, Marriott: Men's, Women's, and Single Stall Restrooms
- 3rd Floor, GTCC: All-Gender, Women's, and Single Stall Restrooms
- 4th Floor, GTCC: Men's, Women's, and Single Stall Restrooms

Family restrooms are available near all public restroom locations.

Nursing Room

A nursing (lactation) room is located on the 3rd floor of the GTCC.

Sensory & Quiet Spaces

If you are looking for a quiet space from noise or distractions, we recommend the pre-function area outside the Ballroom on the third floor of the Marriott.

Rooms 403 and 407 on the 4th floor of the Convention Center will also be available as quiet or prayer spaces throughout the event.

GTCC provides **Sensory Bags** as part of their [Accessibility services](#). These bags are equipped with noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, verbal cue cards, and weighted lap pads for guests who may benefit from additional sensory support.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Bridge Conference space comes to life through the perspectives, wisdom, and questions of our participants. We value your presence and 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, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, or Veteran status during your stay at our hotel partner, at the Convention Center, or during your Bridge 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, or call our Conference phone number, at 206-336-6922.

Collective Learning Guidelines

- **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 in a way that allows you to remain engaged – notetaking, small/large group discussions, asking questions, standing in the back/on the side if you need to move your body during a presentation.
- 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 or 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 schedule transition periods and breaks of 15-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

Meals & Dietary Needs

We provide **breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks** 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. **The menus will be available on the conference Sched page 1 week prior to the first day of the conference so you can plan meals accordingly.**

Can't wait for the coffee station to open? See what locally owned coffee shops are ready to get you where you need to be before opening keynote - [Where to Grab Coffee Before Your Morning Session](#).

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 schedules are subject to change at any time.

Presentation Materials

We 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, Sched, for attendee review.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

If You're Feeling Sick

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 the cutoff date, we strongly encourage anyone in this situation to consider transferring their registration to another individual, such as a colleague, who can attend.

Recommended 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, taking 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.

Emergency Support

First Aid

If medical assistance is needed, please contact the nearest GTCC Guest Services Representative.

The Greater Tacoma Convention Center is equipped with a fully stocked First Aid room, including an **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** device, which GTCC staff are trained to use. School's Out Washington staff and volunteers are **not** trained to use these devices.

AED locations:

- First Floor Admin Area (across from Conference Room)
- Third Floor Registration Area
- Fifth Floor Pre-function Area (next to Exhibition Hall Room A and ATM)

If additional medical attention is required, the Tacoma Fire Department can arrive within minutes.

Nearby Emergency Care Facilities

St. Joseph Medical Center

1717 S J St, Tacoma, WA 98405

(253) 426-4101

Franciscan Urgent Care at St. Joseph

1812 S J St Suite 120, Tacoma, WA 98405

(253) 428-2200

MultiCare Tacoma General Emergency Department

315 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Tacoma, WA 98405

(253) 403-1000

Kaiser Permanente Tacoma Urgent Care

209 M.L.K. Jr Way, Tacoma, WA 98405

(253) 596-3400

Questions? Reach out to us by sending an email to bridge@schoolsoutwashington.org

Some of these norms were adapted from CompassPoint's workshop expectations.

This document will be updated periodically. Version 7.5.2