

How Inclusive Are We?

A Self-Assessment Tool for Synagogues

How to Use this Self-Assessment Tool:

The Self-Assessment Tool is intended to open the door to discussions about what inclusion means to your congregation. It is meant as a starting point for you to assess where your community is in regards to inclusion and where you want to be in the future. It is designed to be used internally by professional staff and key lay leadership, including Inclusion Committees.

There are two pages of this self-assessment tool. One page addresses areas of Architectural Accessibility and the other addresses the areas of Synagogue Life. Please review all sections before you begin to complete the checklist. Let us know of areas that we may have omitted.

1. Please take the time to walk through your facility and review materials with the eyes of inclusion.
2. Read down each column and then check all items relevant to your congregation today.
3. Look ahead to becoming an "ABLE Awarded" Congregation by meeting each of the criteria marked with a " * ," with the goal in mind of creating a congregation made whole by all of its members.

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COST KEY:

No Expense (NE), Low-Moderate Expense (LME), Moderate-High Expense (MHE)

If you have any questions regarding this tool, please contact:

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"For My house shall be a house of prayer for all people."

Isaiah 56:5

Architectural Accessibility

Efforts are made to make all physical areas of the building, all programs and materials accessible to individuals with disabilities and their families

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
PARKING AREA/ENTRANCE					
*Assistance is provided for all events when the door does not open easily	NE				
Accommodations are made for drop off to allow for those in need, including senior adults, to facilitate access to the building before parking the vehicle	NE				
All signage is clear for those with and without visual disabilities	LME				
Walkways to and from parking area are clearly marked, well lit and free from obstructions	LME				
*Parking lot maintains appropriately spaced reserved spots clearly marked with the International Symbol of Access close to accessible entrances	LME				
Accessible entrance to building is clearly marked from the outside for those with mobility disabilities	LME				
Mezuzot (or a second mezuzah) are placed low so they are accessible to someone using a wheelchair	LME				
*Main entrance, or clearly marked side entrance, to building accommodates a wheelchair	MHE				
OTHER:					
	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
NON-WORSHIP AREAS					
*Doorways and halls are free from obstructions and swing open without impediment for those with mobility disabilities	NE				
Use of non-fragranced soaps in rest room areas	NE				
All signage is clear for those with and without visual disabilities	LME				
At least one water fountain on each floor is accessible from a wheelchair OR a supply of paper cups mounted at an appropriate height next to sink/water fountain to allow for an accessible alternative	LME				

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
*Classroom and public meeting areas provide seating that is designed so all individuals can have access to a desk or table when necessary	LME				
*Restrooms (at least 1 per floor) are complete with accessible toilets, sinks, mirrors, towel dispensers and doorways	MHE				
Elevators, lifts or ramps provide accessibility to entire facility	MHE				
Doorways swing open automatically without impediment for those with mobility disabilities	MHE				

OTHER:

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
WORSHIP AREAS					
*Seating is reserved for individuals with physical disabilities and seating is arranged to allow extra space for individuals using wheelchairs	NE				
Individuals who are hard of hearing are welcomed and encouraged to sit up front	NE				
Tallitot and kippot are easily accessible to people with physical disabilities	NE				
*Accommodations are made to move the podium and microphone to floor level to be accessible for someone with physical disabilities, when bimah is not accessible	NE				
Large print prayer books are readily available to those who need them	LME				
Assistive listening devices are readily available to those who need them	LME				
Sign language interpreter is provided when needed	LME				
Adequate reading light/visibility on the speaker's face to facilitate speech/lip reading or sign language	LME				
All signage is clear for those with and without visual disabilities	LME				
Torah ark is accessible or made accessible to someone with physical disabilities	MHE				

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
The bimah, including the podium and microphone, is accessible to someone with physical disabilities	MHE				
OTHER:					

Synagogue Life: Attitudes, Practices & Policies

A culture of inclusion for individuals with disabilities and their families is created, allowing them to fully participate in all aspects of synagogue life

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
COMMUNICATION/PUBLICITY					
*Synagogue's mission statement includes a statement about inclusion of individuals with disabilities	NE				
*Membership packet, distributed to all prospective members, includes the synagogue's disability policies	NE				
*Membership application requests information regarding disabilities and necessary accommodations	NE				
Early childhood, religious school, youth group, and adult education applications publicly state that all learners are welcome	NE				
*Publicity (bulletin, e-blasts, website) includes a statement regarding inclusiveness and available accommodations	NE				
*Synagogue announcements/website include information about community programs for individuals with disabilities	NE				
*Individual is designated to be the contact person regarding accommodations	NE				
OTHER:					
	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
FORMAL EDUCATION					
*Early childhood, religious school, youth group and adult education programs have clear plan to accommodate individuals with disabilities, either in house, or by referral	NE				
*Information about resources available to individuals with disabilities is distributed to all families	NE				
*Early childhood, religious school, youth group and adult education curriculum include teaching acceptance of differences	NE				

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
IEP's are developed and/or monitored for children who need accommodations in the classroom	LME				
Participation by educators in inclusion workshops	LME				
*Synagogue provides accommodations to students with disabilities for Shabbat, b'nai mitzvot or holiday series	LME				
*Early childhood, religious school, youth group and adult education programs offer inclusive programs for individuals with disabilities or make referrals to an appropriate program	LME				

OTHER

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
RESOURCES					
*The Greater MetroWest ABLE list of available community resources for congregants and community members with special needs is readily available	NE				
*There is an Inclusion Committee that serves as a resources and/or liaison to families and professionals regarding synagogue practices and policies for those with disabilities	NE				
Transportation to services and/or programs is provided to people in need of a ride	NE				
Support group(s) are provided for the congregation based on needs	LME				

OTHER:

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
AWARENESS/TRAINING					
*System is in place to ensure that staff and key lay leadership are made aware of congregants with disabilities	NE				
*Ushers and/or designated individuals are prepared regarding appropriate ways to greet and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities	NE				

	Cost	Yes	Some	No	Notes (exceptions, descriptions, challenges)
*Participation in Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month	NE				
Participation in Greater MetroWest Madrichim - Teen Advocate Training Program	NE				
*Staff and lay leadership annually review and update disability procedures	NE				
A disability awareness program or awareness training is offered to congregation, religious school, youth groups, professional and/or lay leadership	LME				
OTHER:					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this self-assessment. Please use the reverse of this page to let us know if you have any amplification about your responses, or any suggestions for improving this tool.

If interested, Greater MetroWest ABLE will review the self-assessment in collaboration with your congregation. ABLE will use this initial self-assessment to develop a snapshot of our community at this time (without attribution to specific congregations) and in consultation with lay and professional leadership, develop different levels of inclusion that all Greater MetroWest synagogues may aspire to achieve over time. ABLE will develop guidelines and best practices for Greater MetroWest synagogues to implement so that our community will be as inclusive as possible. We also plan to make resources available to assist synagogues in reaching those standards.

Thank you very much for your active participation in this process.

Date of Completion:

Self-Assessment Completed by:



