

MCN Policy on Religious Observances & Inclusive Events

Philosophy

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) seeks to create an inclusive environment for individuals to participate in MCN’s educational events, committee meetings and public gatherings (hereafter referred to as *events*). As such, MCN seeks to increase access to our events by taking into consideration the dates, venues and menus of our events.

Accommodations Regarding Dates

When scheduling events, MCN seeks to reduce conflicts between our events and major religious observances of our staff, board members, organizational members and other stakeholders. While MCN recognizes that the organization cannot avoid conflicts with all religious observances, the organization has sought input from trusted allies in order to identify meaningful ways to increase access.

Recommended Actions: After consulting with nonprofit leaders representing various major faith traditions, MCN will:

- avoid scheduling events on major religious observances (below);
- avoid scheduling conflicts with other key events within the nonprofit sector and other key observances that impact attendees of MCN’s events;
- plan menus and venues while keeping in mind major religious traditions or observances.

Annual Religious Observances:

Observance	2018	2019	2020
Christian: Christmas	December 25	December 25	December 25
Christian: Easter	April 1	April 21	April 12
Hindu: Diwali (Deepavali)	November 7	October 27	November 14
Islamic: Eid al-Fitr*	Sundown June 14 thru June 15	Sundown June 4 thru June 5	Sundown May 23 thru May 24
Islamic: Eid al-Adha*	Sundown Aug 21 thru August 22	Sundown August 11 thru August 12	Sundown July 30 thru July 31
Jewish: Rosh HaShanah (this holiday starts at sundown and continues for the 2 following days)	September 9 (sundown) – September 11	September 29 (sundown) – October 1	September 18 (sundown) – September 20
Jewish: Yom Kippur (this holiday starts at sundown and continues for 24 hours)	September 18 (sundown) – September 19	October 8 (sundown) – October 9	September 27 (sundown) – September 28

* MCN will observe these holidays starting at sundown on the first eve and continuing through all of the first day of the holiday. These dates are updated and clarified, when possible; MCN seeks to follow the dates recognized by the Islamic Society of North America.

MCN will consider other requests for religious holiday observance on a case by case basis.

Accommodations Regarding Menus

For all events where a meal is served, MCN will ensure that standard and vegetarian meals will be provided, as well as vegan and gluten-free (attendees may ask a server if they have questions on the day of the event). Additionally, when menu items are selected, if only one entrée or vegetable option is available, that menu item will not include pork and will not be flavored with bacon, ham or other pork products.

Accommodations Regarding Venues

MCN hosts many events in our own conference room which meets the following accessibility requirements. As needed, the room setup (tables and chairs) may be re-configured in order to meet specific requests for accommodations.

When planning events off-site, MCN will select venues that are accessible to all participants without limitations based on physical ability or religious practices. MCN will take into consideration the following criteria when selecting venues for events:

Parking and Entrance:

- Nearby ADA designated parking is available.
- A ramp is available where exterior steps lead to the entrance.
- Clear signage to an accessible entrance (if main entrance is inaccessible) is present.
- If the door is not automatic or held open, there is a way for participants to get support.

Event Location:

- Accessible seating options are available for participants with mobility disabilities.
- The lighting and acoustics are appropriate to allow participants with limited hearing or vision to be fully involved.
- Restrooms with accessible stalls are located near event location(s).
- Clear signage indicates location of accessible restrooms and elevators.
- Venues will not include locations that are principally focused on the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages (i.e., breweries or bars).
- For large events, reserved seating is available both near the front and near a door, to allow options for individuals with limited mobility, hearing or vision.
- For large events, MCN will make a priority to find a venue with (1) a prayer/meditation space, (2) a new mother's room, (3) a gender neutral bathroom, and (4) nearby transit option(s).

Accommodation Requests

MCN strives to ensure that all of our events are accessible to all individuals. If participants / attendees have specific accommodation requests, such as sign language interpreters or other accessibility requirements, they may contact MCN's program coordinator via email at least two weeks prior to the event. Conferences and other large events may have earlier deadlines for accessibility requests, as stated on the event's registration policies page. Although we will attempt to meet all accessibility requests, late requests may not be fulfilled.

Information about accommodation requests is included on MCN's "Events & Trainings" webpage. Additionally, for large events such as conferences, specific information for the event will be added to the event's registration policies page.

For webinars and virtual events, MCN will attempt to accommodate in-person attendance for individuals who require sign language interpreters or other accommodations.

Definition of Events

The following MCN events will follow all 3 components (dates, venues and menus) of this policy:

- Any MCN-sponsored activity to which the public is invited. This includes conferences, paid workshops, and free activities. Generally, these events are listed online at www.minnesotanonprofits.org/events.
- Any meeting of the MCN board of directors or board committee.
- Any meeting of conference planning committees, the policy cabinet or other committee meetings to which attendees do not have input about the meeting time and location.

The following MCN events are not required to follow this policy in regard to dates. If an event takes place on a major religious observance, the subject matter and/or agenda of the event will be adapted so as to limit conflicts:

- Regularly recurring events such as networking lunches (i.e., a lunch which occurs on the 3rd Tuesday of each month).
- Meetings to which all of the attendees have input about the meeting time and location.
- Events which are co-sponsored by MCN if the date cannot be changed due to previous commitments by the co-sponsoring organization.
- Events which are meant to honor or celebrate the religious observance.

Additional Opportunities for Hosting Inclusive Events

In addition to considering the venues, dates and menus, MCN takes additional steps in order to create inclusive events.

For paid events, MCN attempts to keep registration prices reasonable for a nonprofit audience. Additionally, MCN always offers significant partial scholarships to all paid events. Scholarships allow a large number of nonprofits to attend at a significant discount including nonprofits with small budgets, nonprofits serving immigrants/refugees, nonprofits serving culturally specific communities, nonprofits from Greater Minnesota and individuals who are unemployed, full time students, or full time volunteers such as VISTA.

MCN offers a number of virtual learning opportunities each year as a means of reaching a geographically diverse audience. Additionally, MCN's regional offices in Bemidji, Duluth, Fargo/Moorhead, Mankato, Rochester, and Saint Cloud provide trainings, conferences and networking lunches in cities across Minnesota.