

How Inclusive Is Your Speech and Debate Tournament?



We strive to ensure that you are equipped with the knowledge and tools you need to make your tournaments a safe, welcoming, and inclusive place for all. Use the checklist below as a starting point to measure your tournament's inclusion efforts or plan for the future!

CHECKLIST:

- Publish a **Harassment and Discrimination Policy** and consider a **Tournament Equity Office** for inquiries related to it. Include this information easily in your tournament invitation and other materials.
- Consider whether the cost of attending your tournament is reasonable given the budgets of the programs in attendance. Think about ways in which you can assist under-resourced programs in accessing competition.
 - For example, CHSSA provides pre-loaded debit cards for students who request assistance to purchase meals at their state tournament. The NSDA created a **Technology Resource Fund**, sponsored by The Julia Burke Foundation, to provide grants for student technology purchases.
- Build a judging pool that reflects the student body at your tournament.
 - Use **this information from the NCES** as a baseline for national student demographics.
- Recruit a tab room staff that reflects the diversity of the student population at your tournament.
 - If your current tab staff lacks diversity, invite someone new to work and learn in your tab room. Make sure you provide the same level of pay for tabbers-in-training or, for all-volunteer staff, remind them they can earn **NSDA service points** for participation!
- If you're using Tabroom.com, enable diversity tracking for judges.
 - This allows judges to self-identify as diversity enhancing and helps you ensure panels are as diverse as possible. See more general tips for creating inclusive tournaments on Tabroom.com in our **guide**.
- If you're using Tabroom.com, encourage participants to add their pronouns to their profile if they are comfortable doing so.
 - Be sure to remind participants that pronouns will be accessible to other participants in their rounds as well as anyone who is following the entry on Tabroom.com.
- Use inclusive language** for your tournament invitation and materials.
- Utilize our diverse sets of tournament materials for Extemp, Congress, and/or Impromptu.
 - View the collections at **www.speechanddebate.org/inclusion**.

- Ask coaches to share this **free judge training course** with the judges they bring to your tournament to ensure students receive high quality, productive feedback.
- Consider strategies for ensuring access to speech and debate for students with disabilities.
 - Read up on the legal basics **here**.
 - Read **“Giving People who Experience Disability a Place at the Speech and Debate Table”** in *Rostrum* and reflect on the questions at the end of the article.
 - Read the **Accessible Tournament Checklist**.
- Clearly state who coaches should get in touch with about special accommodations.
- Create accommodations for participants with auditory processing differences at your awards ceremony by enabling captions on your ceremony’s recording or including a sign language interpreter. Read more in our **Online Tournament Guide**.
- Use the implicit bias statement on your ballots. If you’re using Tabroom.com, the statement is listed as a default on your ballots!
- If your tournament is online, consider adding this line to your ballots: *“Please remember that the video quality of a student’s performance or speech may be impacted by lighting, internet, access to equipment, and other family members’ presence in the home. To ensure a more equitable experience for our participants, please be sure your decision-making process and comments are related only to the content and quality of the presentation or speech itself.”*
- Ensure your tournament schedule has adequate time for breaks and meals.
- Share the NSDA-recommended **Dress Code Template** with coaches who are attending your tournament.
- Remind your judges that they play an important role in supporting students’ educational and competitive endeavors. They must act as educators when they fill out their paradigm, interact with students, and provide feedback.

IN-PERSON TOURNAMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide **gender neutral restrooms** for everyone.
- Invite administrators** from your district or state, especially from Title I schools or schools without regular access to the activity, to attend or observe online to learn more about speech and debate.
- If students will need to compete on multiple floors, ensure you have access to an elevator.
- Emphasize the need for accessible rooms while creating hotel contracts and publicize the hotels that have these rooms available.
- Provide handicap-accessible parking near main entrances.
- Provide a quiet space for participants to use for prayer, meditation, pumping, or a place to decompress.
- If you’re using Tabroom.com, **note accessible rooms** for students with disabilities.
- Provide a diverse selection of food at concessions and in your judge’s lounge to meet a variety of dietary restrictions.