Integrating a Disability Equity Lens into SJC Initiatives

February 23, 2023

Activating Change

Today's agenda

1. How to get started

2. Integrating disability into your equity framework

3. Building partnerships with disability & Deaf communities

4. Identifying and removing access barriers

5. Building out disability and language access

6. How Activating Change can support your work

Getting Started

Reflect on what is within your realm of control

Learn about what is happening for people with disabilities and Deaf people in your community

Think broadly about sources of data

- Courts, jail, etc.
- Public health and behavioral health depts
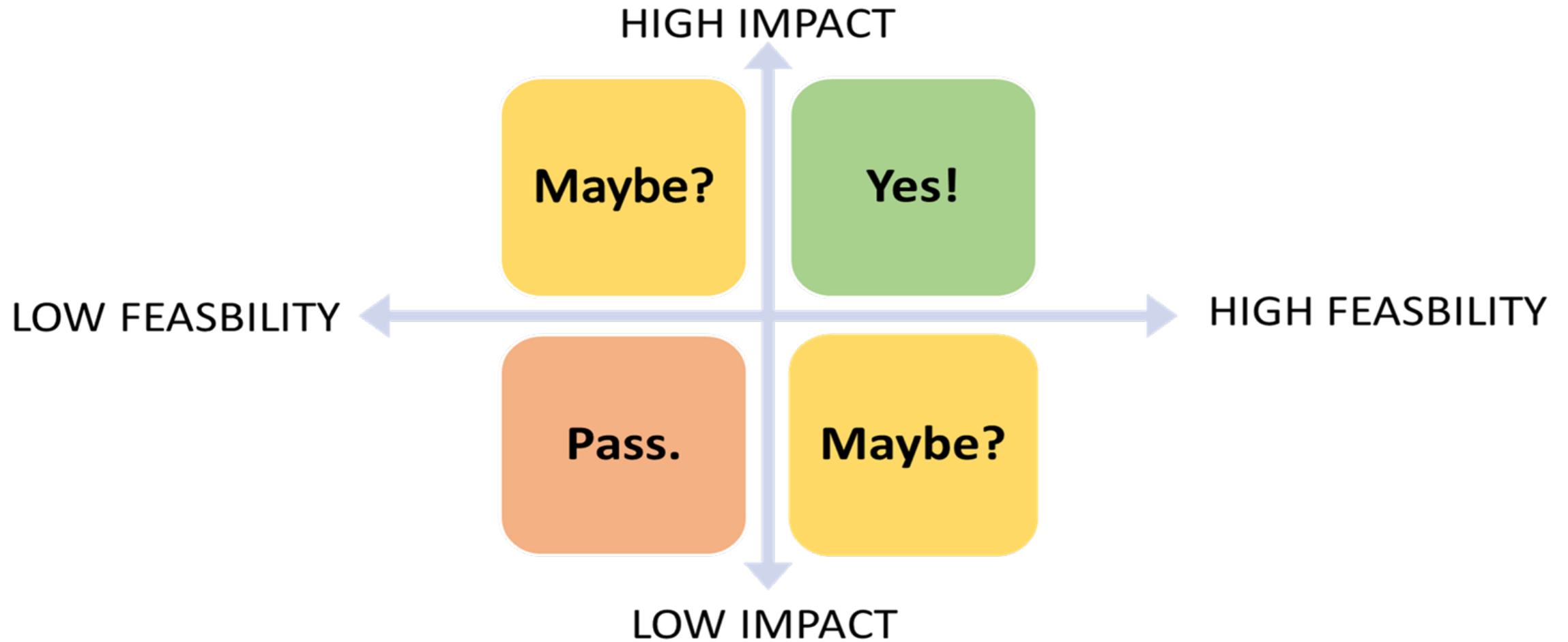- Census data
- Other county offices or initiatives

Have informal conversations

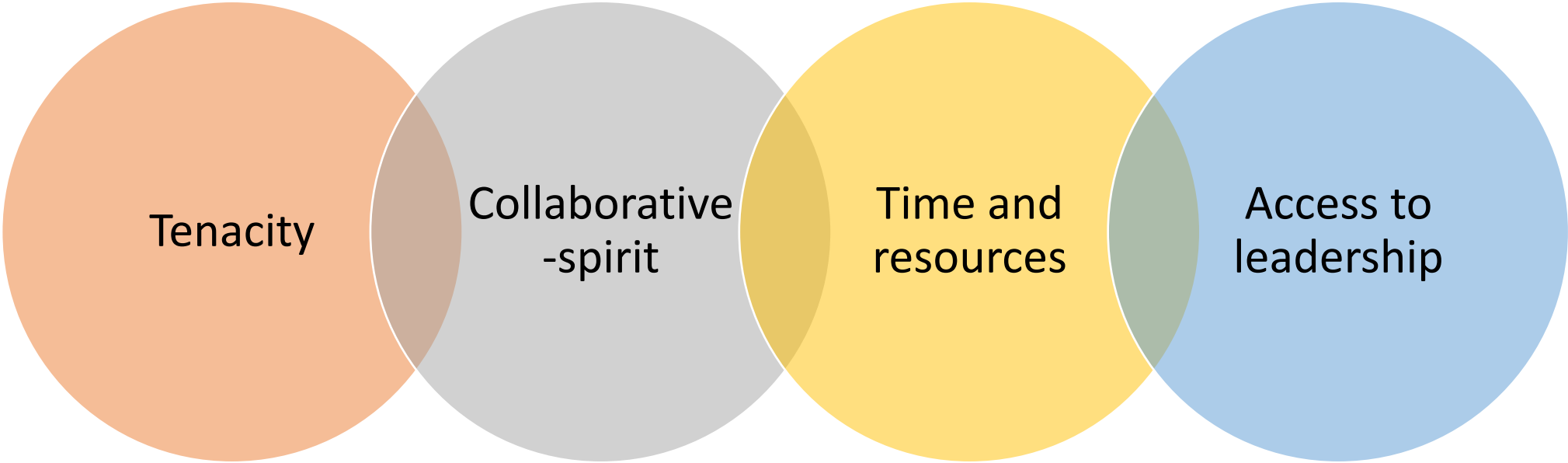- Peers
- Inter-agency colleagues
- Service providers

Consult pre-existing bodies and collaboratives

- Reentry councils
- Public health initiatives
- Criminal justice coordinating councils
- Local non-profit/advocacy alliances

Consider feasibility & impact

Identify and cultivate champions

Integrate Disability and Language Access Into Your Equity Framework

Disabled people for future!

What is disability and language equity?

Recognizes that disability rights are inseparable from human rights.

Recognizes that disability rights and language justice movements are as critical as the movements for racial, economic, and gender equity.

Recognizes that people with disabilities and Deaf people must be at the forefront of any successful fight for justice.

What is disability & language equity? (continued)

Recognizes that oppressions are inextricably linked.

Recognizes that people with disabilities and Deaf people have intersecting identities.

Values collaboration across movements. Center the priorities of people with disabilities and Deaf people with diverse backgrounds and identities.

Incorporate disability equity

→ Incorporate disability into:

　→ Who is at the table

　→ Your analysis of the problem

　→ Your design solutions

　→ Who benefits and who is left out

Steps you can take

→ Incorporate disability and language equity into your equity framework.

→ Make a commitment to incorporating disability and language access into your framework.

→ Document your commitment - joint statement or proclamation.

→ Incorporate disability and language access into your analyses – data collection, research etc.

Steps you can take (continued)

→ Bring people to the table

  → People at the intersections

→ Meaningfully Involve them in participation

  → Bring them in early

  → Be willing to re-examine what you are doing and how you are doing it

  → Bring as many people living at the intersections as you have from systems and mainstream programs

  → Compensate them for the time and expertise

Sample questions

Have we meaningfully included disability and Deaf communities and organizations in the conception, design, implementation, and evaluation of this initiative?

Your community is establishing a bail fund:

→ How do we make the application process for bail relief accessible to the widest audience possible, including for people with disabilities in jail?

→ Do our Bail Disruptors and service providers have training and resources they need to effectively communicate with Deaf people and people with disabilities?

→ Do our eligibility criteria inadvertently disadvantage people with disabilities and Deaf people?

→ Are spaces for critical processes & support services fully accessible to people with physical disabilities? Is critical information and communication available in sign language?

→ How will this initiative impact disability and Deaf communities at large?

Building Partnerships with Disability and Deaf Communities

Ways to partner with disability and Deaf organizations

→ Serve on committees and workgroups

→ Provide input and feedback

→ Assist with conducting access reviews

→ Provide staff training

→ Connect programs to resources that can help meet accommodation requests

→ Connect you to people with disabilities and Deaf people with lived experience with the criminal legal system

Common disability organizations

→ Centers for independent living

→ Self-advocacy groups or People First groups

→ The Arc

→ Community Health Centers

→ Club Houses

→ Lighthouse for the Blind

Common Deaf organizations

→ State-level Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commissions

→ Local chapters of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

→ Bridges for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

→ Council de Manos

→ National Deaf Black Advocates

→ HEARD

→ National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

NAD organizational affiliates

→ Click [here](#) to view a list of deaf organizations

Organization	Head of Organization
Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS)	Napal Tesfai, Executive Director
Access Interpreting	Brad Leon, CEO
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind	John Mascia, President
American Association of the DeafBlind	Aimee Chappelow Bader, President
Arizona Theater Matters	Jeanmarie Simpson, Founding Artistic Director
ASLTA	James Wilson, President
Blue Ridge Community College ASL/IPP	Hope Turpin, ASL Instructor
Bridges for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Nancy Denning Martin, President
Bridges Oregon	Chad Ludwig, Executive Director
Center on Deafness Inland Empire (CODIE)	Patricia Hughes, CEO
Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization	Mark Hill, President

Key considerations

Accessibility of your work

→ Physical location of your meetings

→ Readiness to provide sign language interpreters

- American Sign Language

- Black American Sign Language

- Mexican Sign Language

Key considerations (continued)

→ Provide information in plain language

→ Compensate partners for their time and expertise

→ Caveats

    → Center whiteness

    → Might not know about criminal legal reform or agree with it

    → Some have a paternalistic approach

Identifying and Removing Access Barriers

What is an access review?

→ A structured process to access barriers

→ An access review can focus on:

   → Physical spaces

   → Communication

   → Policies

   → Attitudes and perceptions

→ How is accessibility measured?

   → Americans with Disabilities Act

   → Universal Design

The process at-a-glance

→ Identify the focus of your review

→ Assemble a small group of reviewers

  → A mix of people who know the program, people who understand disability and access, and people with lived experience

→ Prepare reviewers

  → Review the program and review tool

→ Conduct the review

  → Identify what's working and the barriers you identify

  → Generate ideas for possible solutions in the moment

  → Take notes

The process continued

→ Review findings and develop a plan:

    → Identify priorities [high, medium, low]

    → Draft recommendations and solutions

    → Develop a barrier removal plan

Building Out Disability and Language Access

Using a universal design approach to program planning and reform

→ Assumes the widest-array of people will be participating / engaged in the process or program

→ Adds elements that support everyone being able to understand, communicate, and participate

→ Not requested, but "built-in"

→ Reduces the need for individual accommodations

Enhancing procedural justice

→ **Voice:** your side of the story is heard

→ **Respect**: system players treat you with dignity and respect

→ **Neutrality:** decision-making process is unbiased and trustworthy

→ **Understanding:** comprehension of the process and how decisions are made

→ **Helpfulness:** system actors are interested in your personal situation

Examples of universal design in practice

→ Large print materials

→ Multilingual explainer videos or pamphlets

→ Maps and signage to help navigate different buildings and agencies, made available in person and online

→ Citation re-design

→ Court date reminders in multiple methods & languages

Disabilities can be . . .

Invisible or visible

Acquired or congenital

Temporary, reoccurring, or chronic

Multiple

Individual accommodations

→ Reasonable accommodations are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act

→ Allow a person to fully participate in & benefit from the institution

→ Accommodations require:

  → Someone to disclose their needs and/or disability

  → Trust and quality communication so people feel comfortable making a request

 → Understanding of the process / program in order to make an informed request

Examples of how to ask about accommodations

→ Is there anything I can do to make it easier for you to participate in this process?

→ Are there any additional supports you need to fill out paperwork?

→ Is there anything we can do to help you keep track of important dates and requirements of this program?

→ What is the best way for us to communicate during and between our appointments?

→ We have some written materials about our rules; I can read these aloud if that would be helpful.

→ Do you need any additional accommodations to participate?

Considerations for sign language interpretation

→ Access to sign language interpreters is critical

→ There are many different types of sign language

→ Making sure you have access to interpreters that are fluent in various sign languages is important

→ Video technology can be useful but has limitations

→ Using Deaf Interpreters is highly recommended in order to facilitate linguistic diversity
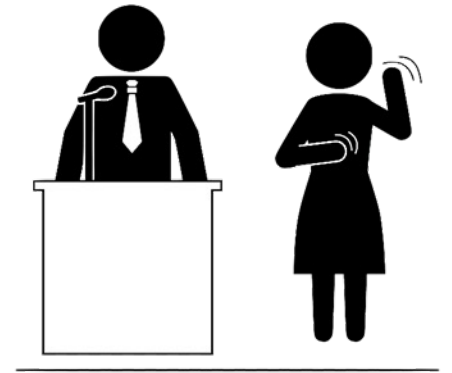
Be prepared to provide accommodations

→ Budget for accommodations that require a cost

→ Build up resources and ability to meet requests through partnerships

→ Train staff on available accommodation services and how to utilize these services

→ Build in requests for accommodations into intake procedures; reinforce that new or different accommodations can be provided as needed

→ Have multiple formats and means of communication established

→ Build in time to ask about and secure accommodations; plan ahead

Towards a human-centered and compassionate system
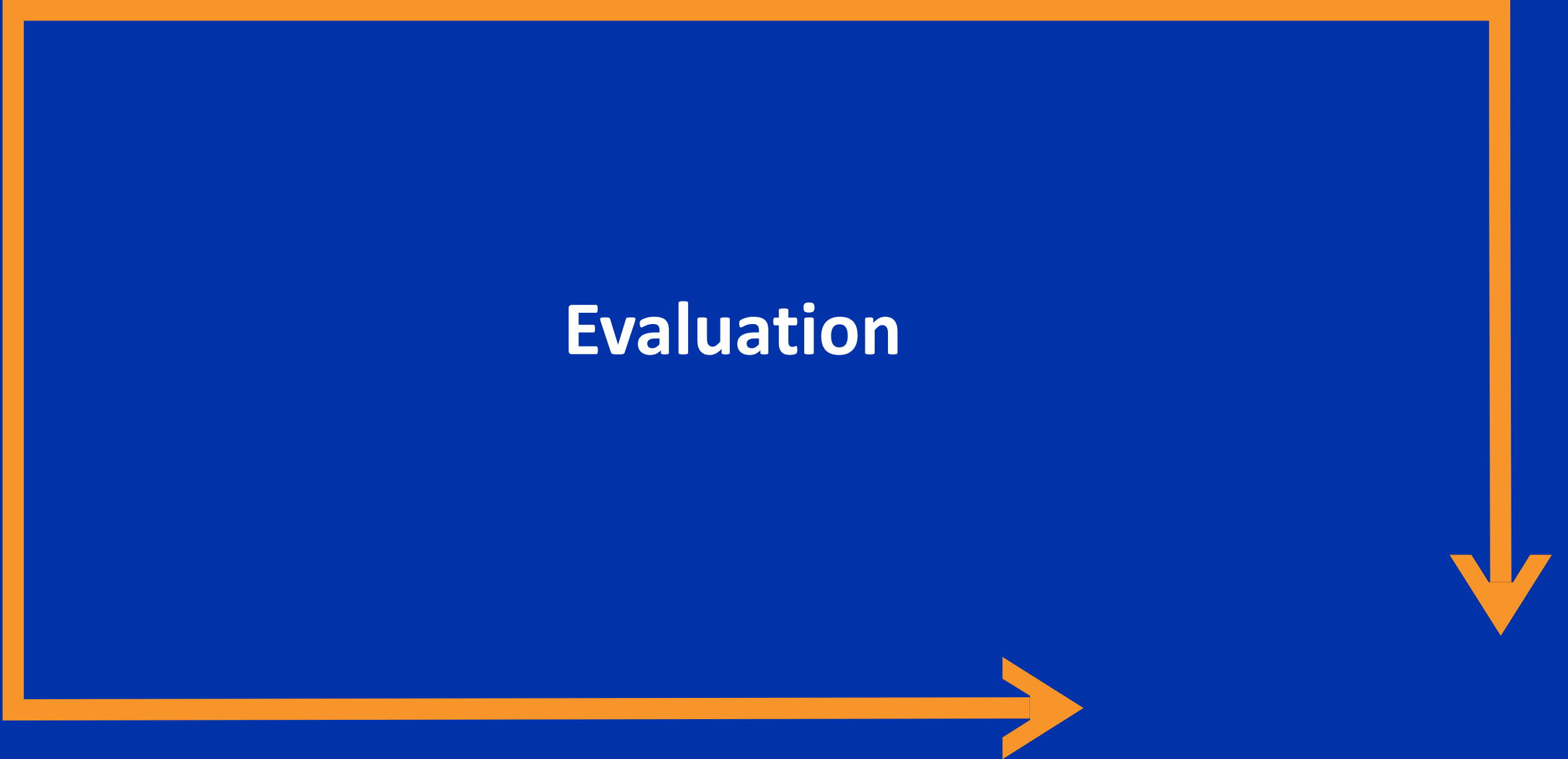
How Activating Change can support your work

→ Forthcoming disability referral network; and assistance with forming meaningful partnerships with disability & Deaf organizations

→ Support in making events, meetings, and spaces accessible

→ Training and technical assistance tailored towards your agency and work

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