



# MetroWest ABLE

## *How Inclusive Are We?*

A Self-Assessment Tool  
For Synagogues

*Creating a community that is made whole by the  
inclusion of all of its members*

*Developed by*

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**MetroWest ABLE is a network of professionals and community leaders representing the following agencies:**

Daughters of Israel

Friendship Circle

JCC MetroWest

JESPY House

Jewish Community Foundation of MetroWest

Jewish Family Service of MetroWest

Jewish Service for the Developmentally Disabled

Jewish Vocational Service of MetroWest

Joint Chaplaincy Committee of MetroWest

The Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life

United Jewish Communities of MetroWest

# 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 synagogue. It is a starting point as you 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.

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 the self study. Let us know of areas that we may have omitted.

1. Please take the time to walk through your facility through 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 “\*,” therefore creating a congregation made whole by all of its members.

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

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THANK YOU!

***“For My house shall be a house of prayer for all people.”***

*Isaiah 56:5*

# Architectural Accessibility

Effort is made to make all physical areas of the synagogue and all programs and worship materials accessible to individuals with disabilities and their families

<b>Parking Lot/Entrance</b>	<b>Non-Worship Areas</b>	<b>Worship Area</b>
<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Assistance is provided for all events when the door does not open easily</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Drop off parking area to allow for those in need, including senior adults, to be escorted into the building before parking the vehicle</p> <p><b><u>Low – Moderate Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All signage is clear for those with and without visual challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Walkways to and from parking area are clearly marked, well lit, and free from obstructions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Parking lot maintains appropriately spaced reserved spots clearly marked with the Handicap Access symbol close to accessible entrances</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accessible entrance to building is clearly marked from the outside for those with mobility challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mezuzot (or a second mezuzah) are placed low so they are accessible by someone using a wheelchair</p> <p><b><u>Moderate - High Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Main entrance, or clearly marked side entrance, to building accommodates a wheelchair</p>	<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Doorways and halls are free from obstructions and swing open without impediment for those with mobility challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use of non-fragranced soaps in rest room areas</p> <p><b><u>Low – Moderate Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All signage is clear for those with and without visual challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> At least one water fountain on each floor is accessible from a wheelchair OR</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A supply of paper cups mounted at an appropriate height next to sink/water fountain to allow for an accessible alternative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Classroom and public meeting areas provide seating that is designed so all individuals can have access to a desk or table when necessary</p> <p><b><u>Moderate – High Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Restrooms (at least 1 per floor) are complete with accessible toilets, sinks, mirrors, towel dispensers and doorways</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Elevators, lifts or ramps provide accessibility to entire facility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doorways swing open automatically without impediment for those with mobility challenges</p>	<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Seating is <u>reserved</u> for individuals with physical challenges and seating is arranged to allow extra space for individuals using wheelchairs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individuals who are hard of hearing are welcomed and encouraged to sit up front</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tallitot and kippot are easily accessible to people with physical challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Accommodations are made to move the podium and microphone to floor level to be accessible for someone with physical challenges, when bimah is not accessible</p> <p><b><u>Low – Moderate Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Large print prayer books are <u>readily available</u> to those who need them</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assistive listening devices are <u>readily available</u> to those who need them</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sign language interpreter is provided when needed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate reading light/visibility on the speaker's face to facilitate speech/lip reading or sign language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All signage is clear for those with and without visual challenges</p> <p><b><u>Moderate - High Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Torah Ark is accessible or made accessible to someone with physical challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The bimah, including the podium and microphone, is accessible to someone with physical challenges</p>
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# Synagogue Life: Attitudes, Practices and Policies

To intentionally create a culture of inclusion for individuals with disabilities and their families, allowing them to fully participate in all aspects of synagogue life

Communication/Publicity	Formal Education	Resources	Awareness/Training
<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Synagogue’s mission statement includes a statement about inclusion of individuals with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Membership packet, distributed to all prospective members, includes the synagogue’s special needs policies</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Membership application requests information regarding special needs and necessary accommodations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood, Religious School, Youth Group, and Adult Education applications publicity state that all learners are welcome</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Publicity (bulletin, e-blasts, website) includes a statement regarding inclusiveness and available accommodations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Synagogue announcements/website include information about community programs for individuals with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Language used in sermons, signage and communication includes information about the inclusion of individuals with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Individual is designated to be the contact person regarding special needs accommodations</p>	<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Early Childhood, Religious School, Youth Group and Adult Education programs have a clear plan to accommodate individuals with special needs, either in house, or by referral</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Information about resources available to individuals with special needs is distributed to <u>all</u> families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Early Childhood, Religious School, Youth Group and Adult Education curriculums include teaching tolerance and acceptance of differences</p> <p><b><u>Low – Moderate Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IEP’s are developed and/or monitored for children who need accommodations in the classroom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Participation by educators in Moreh Institute – “A Special Look at Special Needs” workshop series, sponsored by The Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Synagogue provides accommodations to students with special needs for Shabbat, B’nai Mitzvot or holiday services</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Early Childhood, Religious school, Youth Group and Adult Education programs offer inclusive programs for individuals with special needs or make referrals to an appropriate program</p>	<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *The MetroWest ABLE list of available community resources for congregants and community members with special needs is readily available</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *There is an Inclusion Committee that serves as a resource and/or liaison to families and professionals regarding synagogue practices and policies for those with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation to services and/or programs is provided to people in need of a ride</p> <p><b><u>Low – Moderate Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support group(s) are provided for the congregation based on needs</p>	<p><b><u>No Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *System is in place to ensure that staff and key lay leadership are made aware of congregants with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Ushers and/or designated individuals are prepared regarding appropriate ways to greet and meet the needs of individuals with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Participation in the annual Shabbat Shalem weekend (Jewish Disability Awareness Month celebration), sponsored by MetroWest ABLE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Participation in MetroWest Madrichim, shadow training program sponsored by MetroWest ABLE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> *Staff and lay leadership annually review and update special needs policies</p> <p><b><u>Low – Moderate Expense</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A disability awareness program or awareness training is offered to congregation, religious school, youth groups, professional and/or lay leadership</p>
OTHER:	OTHER:	OTHER:	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, 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 MetroWest synagogues may aspire to achieve over time. ABLE will develop guidelines and best practices for 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.



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