



**Protecting What Matters.
Building What's Next.**

CORNELL
**Inclusive
Excellence**
SUMMIT
2026

HR.CORNELL.EDU/SUMMIT

Guide to Hosting a Watch Party for the 2026 Cornell Inclusive Excellence (IE) Summit!

The Inclusive Excellence Summit on March 24, 2026, offers an opportunity to explore critical themes like inclusion, equity in access to health and employment opportunities, engaged partnerships, and respectful discourse. Hosting an **In-Person Watch Party** for your team, department, or community is an enriching way to actively engage with the virtual Summit, create a space for shared learning and discussion, and allow participants to reflect together. Read on for tips to plan and execute a meaningful and enjoyable Watch Party!

1. Plan Your Watch Party!



Location and Equipment:

Choose a venue that is accessible and has appropriate seating and AV capabilities to accommodate the group size, and be sure to test the equipment ahead of time:

- A facility and room that are wheelchair accessible.
- A large screen or projector for clear viewing.
- High-quality speakers to ensure everyone can hear the program easily.
- Adequate lighting.
- Seating that can be arranged in a way that promotes visibility and engagement (e.g., a U-shaped or semicircle seating/table arrangement for ease of conversation).
- Accessible entrances, pathways, and restrooms.
- Adequate lighting in the room.
- Clear signage directing participants to the space and the facilities (all-gender restrooms, lactation rooms, exits, etc.).

Make it Inclusive:

When you promote the event or open registration, **ask participants in advance** to let you know what other accessibility accommodations they need to fully participate. Examples may include:

- Visual or auditory aids (e.g., microphones, turning on captions, materials in larger print, or reserved seating near the screen).
- Dietary accommodations if you're providing snacks or refreshments.
- Requesting attendees refrain from wearing scents.

For more information about accessibility, check out [Cornell's Accessible Meeting and Event Checklist](#).

Determine a Food and Beverage Plan:

Decide if you are providing food and drink during the event or if you need to let attendees know what their options are for bringing in food/drink, and plan accordingly. If you're not providing lunch, prepare to communicate to attendees ahead of time that they can bring their own lunch and provide a list of nearby locations where they can get lunch. If providing food, offer a variety to accommodate dietary preferences, such as vegan, vegetarian, or gluten-free options. If your group knows each other well and would enjoy it, consider hosting a potluck and invite participants to sign up to bring a dish or snack to share (provide notecards so that participants can label their items for dietary restrictions and common allergens (e.g., vegetarian/vegan, eggs, dairy, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts). Other possible offerings include:

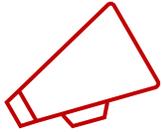
Pre-packaged Snacks: Trail mix, fresh fruit, granola bars, pretzels, popcorn, or cookies.

Coffee & Tea Bar: Set up coffee and tea with condiments for customization.

Hydration Station: Offer a place to refill water bottles, or provide bottled or infused water, like lemon-cucumber or berry-mint.



2. Publicize Your Watch Party



Announce the Watch Party with plenty of advance notice. Include:

- **When:** March 24, 2026. 8:45 AM – 4:00 PM (add extra time at end if you'd like to)
- **Where:** Provide the exact location (and relevant details such as parking if needed).
- **What:** Highlight the Summit themes and the various ways the Watch Party will enhance the experience (e.g., group discussion, community connections). Encourage full day participation but let people know it is ok to come and go if work obligations necessitate this.
- **Food and Accommodations:** Communicate the food and beverage plan and/or options, and provide a contact person or registration option to collect access accommodation requests.
- **Registration for Summit:** Encourage folks to also formally [register for the IE Summit](#) so that they will receive email updates and access to the Summit Feedback form.

Spread the word through email lists, flyers, social media, or in person and online discussions in your community or workplace. Emphasize that the Summit is open to both Cornell and non-Cornell members to maximize participation. Refer to the [Inclusive Excellence Summit webpage](#) for event details.

3. Create a Welcoming and Fun Environment



Set the Tone:

- Send emails ahead of the Summit to convey excitement and details as needed.
 - Create signs (if needed) as to where the restrooms are located.
 - Have blank nametags and markers on hand for folks to fill out.
 - Consider simple and fun activities to help folks meet one another before the event officially starts and throughout the day.
-

4. Design the Watch Party to Align with the IE Summit Agenda

Use the 2026 Summit schedule to guide your Watch Party plan. During all breaks, there will be discussion prompts and polling questions provided virtually that you can facilitate engagement with. Allow space for folks to participate in ways that are comfortable for them (e.g. quietly by themselves, actively with others, staying in the room or leaving to take break by themselves):

8:45-9:00am: Welcome participants and facilitate mingling/introductions (e.g., Ask folks to share where they work or what they are most excited to learn today).

9:00-10:00am: Welcome Remarks and Opening Activity

10:00-10:15am: Break

10:15-11:15am: Why DEI Still Matters in Organizations: Evidence, Misconceptions, and What Works in Practice

11:15-11:30am: Break

11:30-12:30pm: Disagreeing Better

12:30-1:30pm: Lunch Break

Use this time for casual conversations and ensure that folks know where the closest lunch locations are if they need to leave to get something and where there are private spaces if one needs to step away independently.

1:30-2:15pm: Engaged Partnerships for Improving Access to Employment: A Panel Discussion

2:15-2:30pm: Break

2:30-3:15pm: Engaged Partnerships for Healthier, Equitable Communities: A Panel Discussion

3:15-4:00pm: Closing Remarks and Activity



5. Going Forward

Concluding the Party:

Thank everyone for participating and encourage folks to share contact information if they were new to one another. Remind them to submit the Inclusive Excellence Summit Feedback Form too!

Continuing the Networking:



After the Summit concludes, you may want to offer time for **informal networking and socializing**, perhaps over light refreshments/beverages in a relaxed environment. This can deepen connections and allow attendees to reflect more casually on the day's learnings.

Collecting Feedback & Ideas:

Invite and gather participant feedback either informally over conversation/email or formally via a survey to assess:

- What they appreciated about the Watch Party (from advertising through implementation).
- Highlights or takeaways from the group discussions and reflections.
- What they suggest to enhance future similar gatherings.
- How engaging in the Watch Party enhanced their overall experience of the Summit.
- Ideas they may have to encourage continued engagement and networking around shared goals and values.
- Interest in reconnecting with fellow Watch Party attendees in future to continue the day's conversations or to keep engagement and momentum going.

Following Up:

Consider ways to facilitate the attendees keeping in touch with each other or to build avenues for ongoing sharing of information, resources, ideas, and inspiration as they all continue to protect what matters and build what's next!