

PLANNING

Phase 1: Community Identification

1. List 3 communities you're connected to or interested in
 - a. **Inclusion on Purpose**
 - b. **ASBC Support Groups**
 - c. **Inclusive Acres Boulder County**
2. For each, write one sentence about what they do
 - a. **Inclusion on Purpose** – A Boulder County organization that supports neurodivergent people, especially those at risk of isolation, by creating connections, offering mentorship, and educating others.
 - b. **ASBC Support Groups** – Autism Society of Boulder County offers support groups for parents/guardians, and spaces to share info, experiences, get resources.
 - c. **Inclusive Acres Boulder County** – A nonprofit farm in Longmont that offers free “Open Farms” on Saturdays for neurodivergent youth (ages 5-18) to socialize with peers and interact with animals.
3. Circle the one that interests you most for this project
 - a. **Inclusive Acres Boulder County**
4. **Partner Discussion**
 - a. What this community does
 - i. Inclusive Acres Boulder County is a nonprofit farm that gives neurodivergent kids ages 5–18 a fun and safe place to hang out, play, and connect. They do free “Open Farm” days where kids can be outside, meet animals, explore, and just be themselves in a really supportive environment. It’s about helping kids build confidence, make friends, and feel included.
 - b. Why you chose them
 - i. I picked Inclusive Acres because it honestly feels like the perfect fit for me. I love working with kids, I love animals, and my brother has autism—so this community ties all of that together in one place. It combines all the things I care about most, which makes it feel really special and meaningful for me to focus on.
 - c. What you already know about their needs
 - i. I know Inclusive Acres depends a lot on volunteers and community support to keep things running. They also need ways to get the word out so more families know about their programs. Plus, parents probably need easy ways to find info about events and sign up, so having clear, accessible resources is really important.

Phase 2: Needs Assessment Research

1. **Research Methods:**
 - a. **Direct Observation:** What challenges do you see this community facing?

- i. Inclusive Acres depends on donations and volunteers, so funding and staffing can be tough. Transportation to the farm is a challenge for some families, and events are limited to certain times. Making activities work for a wide range of neurodivergent needs is also ongoing.
 - b. **Existing Resources:** What tools/websites do they currently use? What's missing?
 - i. They use a website, Facebook, email, and donation pages. What's missing is an easy sign-up system, event reminders, transportation help, and a place for families to connect with each other.
 - c. **Community Voice:** Can you find forums, social media, or other places where this community discusses their needs?
 - i. Mostly on their Facebook page, through emails with staff, and on fundraising sites like ColoradoGives where families share stories.
- 2. **Research Questions to Explore:**
 - a. What information does this community need quick access to?
 - i. Event dates, sign-up details, what kids should bring, and any accommodations available.
 - b. What tasks do community members need to accomplish online?
 - i. Register kids for events, see calendars, contact staff, donate, and get reminders.
 - c. What barriers prevent community members from accessing existing resources?
 - i. Limited event times, transportation issues, and scattered info across emails, website, and social media.
 - d. How does this community currently communicate and share information?
 - i. Through their website, Facebook page, emails, and donation/fundraising sites.
 - e. What would make their lives easier or their community stronger?
 - i. A central online hub or app for sign-ups, reminders, info about accommodations, and a space for families to connect.
- 3. **Documentation (10 minutes):** Create a brief research summary:
 - a. **Community:** [Inclusive Acres Boulder County – A nonprofit farm that provides neurodivergent youth (ages 5–18) with a safe, supportive place to play, socialize, and interact with animals.]
 - b. **Primary Needs:**
 - i. [Easy access to event dates, sign-ups, and program details.
 - ii. Information about accommodations and what kids should bring.
 - iii. Ways for families to connect and get support.]
 - c. **Current Gaps:**
 - i. [No central online hub for registration, reminders, or detailed info.
 - ii. Limited tools for transportation coordination or accessibility info.
 - iii. Few spaces for parents/caregivers to connect directly.]
 - d. **Target Users:**
 - i. [Parents/caregivers of neurodivergent children.
 - ii. Volunteers helping run events.
 - iii. Staff organizing programs and sharing updates.]

e. **Success Metric:**

- i. [Increased event sign-ups and participation.
- ii. Positive feedback from families about ease of finding info and connecting with the community.
- iii. More volunteer engagement and smoother communication between staff and families.]

Phase 3: Resource Planning

My site will help Inclusive Acres by centralizing event info and sign-ups so families and volunteers can stay informed and connected.

1. **Event Calendar & Sign-Up Form** – Shows upcoming Open Farm days, workshops, and special events; allows parents/caregivers to register kids online.
2. **Activity & Preparation Info Pages** – Details on what to bring, age/ability guidelines, and accommodations for neurodivergent kids.
3. **Family & Volunteer Portal** – Secure login area where families can see past events, volunteers can sign up, and staff can send updates.
4. **Community Connection Board** – Forum or messaging space for families and volunteers to share tips, ask questions, and coordinate carpooling.
5. **Resource Database** – Links to related local organizations, support groups, and educational materials for families and caregivers.

REFLECTION

1. **Discussion Questions:**

- a. **Agency:** How does your navigation give users control over their experience?
 - i. The navigation gives users control by providing a clear, consistent menu across all pages, allowing them to quickly access Home, Resources, Events, or Contact sections. On mobile devices, the hamburger menu allows users to reveal or hide navigation items at their convenience, preventing information overload. Keyboard support and visual feedback ensure users can navigate confidently without relying solely on a mouse or touch.
- b. **Inclusion:** Who might struggle with this interface, and how could you improve it?
 - i. Some users might struggle with this interface if they have limited fine motor skills, are very young, or have low vision. To improve accessibility, I ensured that the hamburger button has a minimum 44px touch target, includes ARIA attributes for screen readers, and responds to keyboard interactions (Enter and Space). High contrast colors and hover/focus feedback make links easier to perceive. In the future, adding larger font size options or a skip-to-content link could further support users with diverse abilities.

- c. **Community Impact:** How might different users in your chosen community (varying ages, technical skills, abilities) experience your navigation differently?
 - i. Different users in the Inclusive Acres community experience the navigation differently. Parents or caregivers with limited technical experience benefit from a simple, clear menu and consistent layout across pages. Volunteers or older youth may prefer quick access to event registration or resource links. The responsive design ensures that whether users access the site from a desktop, tablet, or phone, the interface adapts to their device, keeping key information easily reachable.
 - d. **Choices:** What design decisions did you make that prioritize user empowerment over developer convenience?
 - i. A hamburger menu with accessible toggle functionality for mobile users
 - ii. Keyboard navigation support and ARIA attributes for screen reader users
 - iii. Consistent navigation across all pages for predictability
 - iv. Clear labeling that reflects community priorities (Resources, Events, Contact)
2. **Documentation:** Write a brief reflection connecting your navigation choices to your community research:
- a. How does your navigation design serve your community's specific needs?
 - i. The navigation design serves the Inclusive Acres community by centralizing access to the most important information: event details, sign-ups, resource guides, and contact info. Accessibility considerations—keyboard support, touch-friendly buttons, visual feedback, and ARIA attributes—ensure that users with varying technical skills, ages, and abilities can navigate the site efficiently.
 - b. What accessibility considerations are most important for your target users?
 - i. The most important accessibility considerations for our users include keyboard navigation, screen reader compatibility, and touch-friendly controls to ensure everyone can access the menu and site content. Clear visual feedback, consistent layout, and descriptive labels help parents, caregivers, and volunteers quickly find resources, while responsive design ensures the site works on any device. These features prioritize ease of use for users with varying abilities, ages, and technical skills.
 - c. What would you change based on your testing?
 - i. During testing, users suggested highlighting the current page in the navigation menu to reduce confusion. Future improvements could include:
 - 1. A highlighted “active” page in the menu
 - 2. Optional text labels on the hamburger for extra clarity
 - 3. Improved contrast or adjustable font size options