



**ADA Guidance: Inclusionary, Accessible Messaging and
Effective Communication
March 13, 2014**

INCLUSIONARY MESSAGING

It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles that all materials are to be developed with inclusionary messaging, meaning that our documents should be provided in accessible formats and integrate the needs of persons with disabilities. In addition, the City must arrange for auxiliary aids and services to provide effective communication to persons with disabilities. The guidance below is a general baseline for departments. Departments may add additional internal policies and procedures or request assistance from DOD to develop guidance for their specific departmental needs.

A. Language Usage

Use appropriate language when referring to persons with disabilities.

1. People First Language

Use “people first” language when talking about people with disabilities. For example, say: “Person who is blind” rather than “the blind”. (See Council File: 10-0002-S94 which removes the words “Mental Retardation” from all legislation and documents and replaces it with “Intellectual Disability”.)

Examples of People First Language

People with disabilities	The handicapped, the disabled, the impaired
An individual or person with a disability	Disabled person
Access and functional need	Special needs, vulnerable
Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing loss, sensory disability	Deaf and dumb, the deaf, mute
Accessible communication, effective communication	Special communication
He has a speech disability	He has a speech impairment, speech impediment
He is blind, he has low vision	The blind, sight impaired
She has a mobility disability	She’s mobility impaired, wheelchair bound, physically challenged, crippled, an invalid, lame, differently-abled, bedridden, house-bound, a shut-in

2. Plain Language

Use “plain language”. This means language that is understood the first time you hear it. Use the simple most understood word when choosing between words. I.e. Use “walk” instead of “ambulate”, use “get” instead of “obtain” etc. (It is suggested that you utilize a “third grade” English level.)

B. Multiple Delivery Methods and Redundancy

Use multiple methods to send your messages.

1. There is no one medium that will reach everyone. Make your messages are compatible with multiple mediums / transmission systems.
2. Use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram when possible.
3. Use your department alert and notification system(s), if you have them, such as Nixle or Everbridge.

Note: Alert and Notification systems that send text messages are usually limited to 140 characters. You may need to send several messages to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed.

Know your community. Meet with community leaders, agencies and advocates. Know how people with disabilities are impacted by the programs and services your department provides. (E.g. transportation, water and power, etc.)

ACCESSIBLE MESSAGING

It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles that all materials are to be developed with inclusionary messaging, meaning that to the best of our ability documents should be provided in accessible formats and integrate the needs of persons with disabilities. The guidance below is a general baseline for departments. Departments may add additional internal policies and procedures or request assistance from DOD to develop guidance for their specific departmental needs.

A. Document Accessibility

NOTE: This information is intended as a broad guidance, and should be tailored and incorporated into individual Department SOP's as appropriate.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and, if the government entities receive Federal funding, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, generally require that State and local governments provide qualified individuals with disabilities equal access to their programs, services, or activities, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of their programs, services, or

activities or would impose an undue burden. One way to help meet these requirements is to ensure that government websites have accessible features for people with disabilities. Section 508¹ of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794d) has documented standards established by the US Access-Board to help agencies comply with the law.

It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles that all City Elected Officials and City Departments ensure that all webpages, documents, PDFs, spreadsheets, power point presentations and/or multimedia posted to City webpages or sent via email or shared on social media will be accessible and useable by persons with disabilities, including persons using assistive technology. City staff should know and follow §508 standards for creating accessible messaging.

Each Department shall develop a plan for making your existing web content more accessible; Ensure that staff and contractors responsible for web page and content development are properly trained; Provide a way for visitors to your webpages can request accessible information or services by posting a telephone number or E-mail address on your home page.

B. Electronic Documents

Each Department shall develop a plan to ensure that all documents, power points, spreadsheets, PDF documents and any other documents are created in accessible formats; ensure that staff and contractors creating any of the above documents are properly trained; ensure that public flyers and documents have the required language on them for persons with disabilities to request auxiliary aids and services.

Accessible documents, products, services, or environments are those that can be used by people with varying abilities, may be mandated (e.g. Sec. 508, ADA); require additional planning, and is cheaper to include from the beginning instead of fixing after the fact.

Office documents are used by people, text-based, do not include audio, video, or embedded interactivity, and are typical of office work such as reports, letters, presentations, spreadsheets, etc.

Each software program has specific built in accessibility tools that users will need to become familiar with in order to create accessible documents.

Elements of Electronic Documents

In addition to creating accessible print documents (found in following sections of this guidance); the main elements that must be addressed for electronic document accessibility are:

¹ Current 508 Standards: <http://www.accessboard.gov/sec508/standards.htm>
Draft Text from Refresh 508: <http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/refresh/drafrule.htm>
Public Comments on the draft text: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=ATBCB-2010-0001>

1. Add alternative text to images and objects

Alternative text, also known as alt text or Alt Text, appears when you move your pointer over a picture or object. Alt text helps people who use screen readers to understand the content of images in your document. For many readers, this is the only information they have about the images and objects in your document. Alt text should be included for any of the following objects in your document:

- a. Pictures, Clip Art, Charts, Tables, Shapes (that don't contain text and are not in groups), SmartArt graphics, Groups (all objects in this list, with the exception of shapes, should also have alt text when in groups), Embedded objects, Ink, Video and audio files.
- b. See [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, table, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#) or [appropriate use of alternative text](#).

2. Specify column header rows in tables (Excel Spreadsheets)

In addition to adding alt text that describes the table, having clear column headings can help provide context and assist navigation of the table's contents.

3. Use styles in long documents

Heading and paragraph styles, as well as tables of contents when necessary, make it easier for all readers of your document to follow it more easily. In longer documents, these elements can add structure for users who are using a screen reader, or who rely on the visual cue of section headings to navigate as they read.

Create your own heading and paragraph styles. To learn more about this, see [Add a heading](#) or [Create a Custom Style Set](#).

4. Use short titles in headings

When you use headings in a document, be sure to keep them short (fewer than 20 words). In general, headings should be, at most, one line long. This makes it easier for readers to quickly navigate the document, either by scanning it, or by using the [Navigation pane](#).

5. Ensure all heading styles are in the correct order

By using heading levels in a logical order, for example Heading 4 is a child of Heading 3, not Heading 2, assists users in navigating the document and finding information.

6. Use hyperlink text that is meaningful

Hyperlink text should provide a clear description of the link destination, rather than only providing the URL.

7. Use simple table structure

By not using nested tables, or merged or split cells inside of tables, you can make the data predictable and easy to navigate. For example: When you are designing a form, the entire document is often based on a heavily formatted table, which makes it very difficult for users to navigate it with a screen reader, and requires them to piece together the content of each cell, read to them in an unpredictable order, to get an idea of the form's content.

8. Avoid using blank cells, rows or columns for formatting

Using blank cells, rows, or columns to format your table could mislead someone using a screen reader that there is nothing more in the table. You can fix this by deleting unnecessary blank cells, rows or columns. If your table is used specifically to layout content within your document, you can clear all table styles.

9. Give all sheet tabs unique names

Sheet names should provide information about what is found on the worksheet, making it easier to navigate through a workbook. Any blank sheets in a workbook should be removed.

10. Structure layout tables for easy navigation

If you use a layout table check the reading order to be sure that it makes sense. Verify the table reading order by tabbing through the cells to check that the information is presented in a logical order.

11. Avoid using repeated blank characters

Extra spaces, tabs and empty paragraphs may be perceived as blanks by people using screen readers. After hearing "blank" several times, those users may think that they have reached the end of the information. Instead, use formatting, indenting, and styles to create whitespace.

12. Avoid using floating objects

Objects that are not in line with text are challenging to navigate, and they may be inaccessible to users with vision impairment. Setting text-wrapping around objects to **Top and Bottom** or **In Line With Text** makes it easier for people with screen readers to follow the structure of your document.

13. Include closed captions for any audio or video

If you use additional audio or video components in a document or workbook, ensure that the content is available in alternative formats for users with disabilities, such as closed captions, transcripts or alt text.

14. Check the reading level of your document.

Microsoft Word can check the readability of sentences. Readability is a measure of how hard a sentence is to follow.

PowerPoint Files²

PowerPoint presentations may include audio, video and embedded information. It is important to ensure that all PP presentations are made accessible to persons with disabilities.

1. Add alternative text to images and objects

Alternative text, also known as alt text or Alt Text, appears when you move your pointer over a picture or object. Alt text helps people who use screen readers to understand the content of images in your document. For many in your document. Alt text should be included for any of the following objects in your document:

- a. Pictures, Clip Art, Charts, Tables, Shapes (that don't contain text and are not in groups), SmartArt graphics, Groups (all objects in this list, with the exception of shapes, should also have alt text when in groups), Embedded objects, Ink, Video and audio files.
- b. See [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, table, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#) or [appropriate use of alternative text](#).

2. Specify column header information in tables

In addition to adding alt text that describes the table, having clear column headings can help provide context and assist navigation of the table's contents.

3. Ensure that all slides have unique titles

Slide titles are used for navigation and selection by people who are not able to view the slide.

4. Use hyperlink text that is meaningful

Hyperlink text should provide a clear description of the link destination, rather than only providing the URL. Additionally, you can include **ScreenTip** text that appears when your cursor hovers over a hyperlink, and can be used in a similar way to alt text.

5. Use simple table structure

By not using nested tables, or merged or split cells inside of data tables, the data is predictable and easy to navigate.

² If you're using PowerPoint 2010, you can download and install the [Sub-titling text add-in for Microsoft PowerPoint \(STAMP\)](#), which lets you easily create closed captions for video and audio in your presentations.

6. Avoid using blank cells for formatting

Using blank cells to format your table could mislead someone using a screen reader to believe that there is nothing more in the table. You can fix this by deleting unnecessary blank cells or, if your table is used specifically to layout content within your presentation.

7. Include closed captions³ for any audio or video

Whenever you use additional audio or video components in a presentation, ensure that the content is available in alternative formats for users with disabilities, such as closed captions, transcripts or alt text.

8. Ensure that the reading order of each slide is logical

People who cannot view the slide will hear slide text, shapes and content read back in a specific order. If you are using objects that are not part of the slide template, it is important to be sure that they will be read by a screen reader in the order that you intend them to be.

9. Increase visibility for colorblind viewers

Colorblindness affects a significant number of people, most often as an inability to distinguish between red and green, or seeing red and green differently. When creating presentations, it's important to choose elements that increase visual contrast so viewers who cannot rely on color distinction can still understand what they're seeing. Some things you can do when building a slide deck include:

- Avoid using orange, red, and green in your template and text.
- Use texture in graphs, instead of color, to highlight points of interest.
- Circle or use animation to highlight information, rather than relying on laser pointers or color.
- Keep the overall contrast in your presentation high.

Additional Information for City Department staff

1. Word 2010 Accessibility Checker

Word 2010 includes a new accessibility checker that allows you to check for accessibility problems. The accessibility checker makes it much easier to identify and

³ If you're using PowerPoint 2010, you can download and install the [Sub-titling text add-in for Microsoft PowerPoint \(STAMP\)](#), which lets you easily create closed captions for video and audio in your presentations.

repair accessibility issues. To run the accessibility checker, select *File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility*.

2. PowerPoint 2010 Accessibility Checker

PowerPoint 2010 includes a new checker that allows you to check your presentation for accessibility problems. The accessibility checker makes it much easier to identify and repair accessibility issues. To run the accessibility checker, select *File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility*.

The Accessibility Checkers will show accessibility errors (e.g., images with no alternative text), warnings (e.g., unclear link text) and tips (e.g., slide reading order). Feedback about the importance of each item, as well as tips on how to repair it, is included.

3. Docx and PPTX Formats

The "docx and pptx" formats are the default file format for documents and files created in Word 2007 and newer or PowerPoint 2007 and newer. The format has some advantages (such as smaller file size), but is not as widely supported as the old "doc" or "ppt" format. Although there is a free download that allows users to open the newer format in older versions of Word or PowerPoint, [some content will be lost in the conversion process](#). If the Word or PowerPoint file is going to end up on the web, or if you're going to send it to someone and are not doing anything that relies on the newer docx or pptx format, consider saving files as Word 97-2003 Document (*.doc) or PowerPoint 97-2003 Presentation (*.ppt) in Office 2007 and 2010.

4. Convert Word to PDF

Many Word documents end up as PDF files. It is a convenient way to preserve formatting and accessibility information, assuming the file is converted correctly. Read more on [converting a Word document to accessible PDF](#) in our Acrobat/PDF article.

5. Export PowerPoint to PDF

PDF is often the best format to display PowerPoint presentations on the web. The file size is relatively small, distracting slide transitions are removed, and everyone has a PDF reader. Most importantly, heading structure and other accessibility information will remain intact if you export the file correctly. If you have a presentation with tables, and if you know how to add additional accessibility information in Adobe Acrobat, it might be possible to create a PDF file that is *more accessible* than the original PPT file.

Resources

There are many resources on the internet that can assist you in ensuring that your documents, spreadsheets and presentations are made accessible. Below are a couple of these resources. We encourage City staff to become familiar with the accessibility features in programs they utilize to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations. You Tube has several postings on "How to make accessible", we encourage staff to view these videos if necessary.

- Accessibility Features in Word - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/accessibility-features-in-word-HP010132010.aspx>
- Creating Accessible Word Documents - <http://webaim.org/techniques/word/>
- Accessibility Checker Word - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/check-for-accessibility-issues-HA010369192.aspx>
- Accessibility Features in Power Point - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/web-apps-help/accessibility-features-in-office-web-apps-HA010380212.aspx>
- Creating Accessible Power Point presentations - <http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/>
- Accessibility Checker Power Point - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/check-for-accessibility-issues-HA010369192.aspx>
- Accessibility Features in Excel - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/accessibility-features-in-excel-HP005198434.aspx>
- Creating Accessible Excel Workbooks - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/creating-accessible-excel-workbooks-HA102013545.aspx>
- Accessibility Checker Excel - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/check-for-accessibility-issues-HA010369192.aspx>
- Creating Accessible PDFs - <http://www.howto.gov/web-content/accessibility/create-accessible-pdfs>
- Accessible Digital Office Documents - <http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/>

C. Videos and Multimedia Accessibility

It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles that all Elected Officials and City Departments ensure that all video and/or multimedia will be made accessible for persons with disabilities by knowing what §508 requirements apply to your media.

508 Compliant Videos

- Option 1. Use a 508-conformant video player, and host videos with captions—and audio descriptions, if needed—on a government website.
 - Section 508-conformant videos have three main elements:
 1. A 508-conformant video player - Ensure that a person who requires keyboard navigation or an assistive device can navigate the window where the video plays (that is, the video player).
 2. Captions - The audio parts of your video appear as text at the appropriate time and give access to people who are hearing impaired or deaf.

3. An audio description - A description of all a video's visual elements, giving access to people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Option 2. Host a captioned video on a third-party site, and host the video (with captions and audio descriptions) on your government website in a separate, accessible video player.
 - Posting Videos on Third-Party Sites
 1. When posting videos on popular video sharing sites like YouTube, Vimeo, and others, remember that multimedia must be accessible regardless of where it's posted—on Department's own website, on a social media site, or both. In any event, an accessible version **MUST** exist online, even if people have to download it.
 2. Because we can't control the accessibility of media players' on third-party sites, we must host Section 508-conformant, accessible videos on agency sites and provide a media player that is completely usable with assistive technologies (such as speech recognition software, screen readers, etc.)

Captioning

Captioning is necessary for people who are unable to hear the audio in a video. It's also helpful for people with cognitive disabilities, as well as for developing literacy, both in children and adults. Captions include speech and sound effects and indicate music or laughter, and identify multiple speakers.

There are two types of captioning: open captioning and closed captioning.

1. Open captions are words that appear automatically on your video when you hit play; you cannot turn them off.
2. Closed captions don't appear unless you turn them on. You can also turn them off.

Closed Captioning of Videos

All videos should have closed captioning. YouTube has a feature that will automatically caption videos less than 10 minutes. However, you must have a written transcript ready and manually enter the captioning in order to ensure message integrity (get someone to transcribe it (e.g., intern, student, etc.).

After you upload your video to YouTube, make your video "unlisted" at first and turn off the machine translation version that is automatically created. Then upload your text transcript. Let YouTube sync it up. Then you can review and edit the captioning to ensure caption timing matches the video. Once your YouTube video has captions, you may wish to download the captions and use an editor to tidy them up.

You can use the YouTube captioning features even if you are not going to post your video to YouTube. Simply keep your video “unlisted” or “private” and just download the video file with the captioning. Depending on what you use on your own site for embedding video (e.g., JW Media Player), you may need to find an [online converter](#) to convert the YouTube SBT format to DXFP or other format that your video player supports.

Multimedia

Podcasts and other sound files:

A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt," "longdesc," or in element content).

A note about text equivalents: If you post videos or a multimedia presentation, only including text transcripts of these files does not fulfill Section 508 requirements; see the section "Videos and multimedia presentations" for help.

Videos and multimedia presentations

1. Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation, and all training and informational video and multimedia productions which support the agency's mission, regardless of format, ***that contain speech or other audio information necessary for the comprehension of the content***, shall be open or closed captioned.
 - Both of these requirements mean that you must include captions—either open or closed captions—that are synchronized with your video or multimedia presentation.
2. All training and informational video and multimedia productions that support the agency's mission, regardless of format, ***that contain visual information necessary for the comprehension of the content***, shall be audio described.
 - If there is visual information, such as action or expressions, in the video that is necessary to understand the production's content, that information must be described in an audio file, which also must be *synchronized* with the video.
3. Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.

*If you have a media item that contains this type of flashing, strobing, or optical illusions, do not post it. If you find that you're overruled and must post this media, **include a warning on your web page and do not automatically play the media or show the graphic when your page loads**—allow your users to start and stop the media or click to access the graphic if they want to view it.*

Software to play videos, audio, and multimedia

When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with 1194.21(a) through (l).

Modern web browsers often inform users when a missing plug-in is needed to access special content on a web page. It is best to provide a link to the required software (such as QuickTime, Flash, Real, etc.) on the page where your media is located.

- The software to which you link must also fulfill Section 508 requirements for software as outlined in Section 508 1194.21. Briefly, the requirements from this section are that the software must:
 - a. Be navigable using a keyboard;
 - b. Not interfere with accessibility features of other software or the operating system;
 - c. Provide an on-screen indication of the current focus (the currently selected place of action);
 - d. Provide information about the roles, states, and operation of each interface element to assistive technology;
 - e. Use meanings consistently for any images that identify the software's controls, status, or program elements;
 - f. Use the operating system to display text and contextual information;
 - g. Not override any user defined display settings in the operating system;
 - h. Give users the choice of turning off animations and displaying information from the animations in other method;
 - i. Not rely only on color to prompt users, or provide information or context;
 - j. Provide a wide variety of color and contrast settings (only if the application allows users to adjust color and contrast);
 - k. Not cause blinking or flashing at a rate greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz; and,
 - l. Ensure that users of AT are able to fully use and navigate through electronic forms, and provide any necessary cues and directions to the AT.

There are many social networking sites that are widely used by the public, and may not be fully accessible, but agencies may want to use them to provide information and engage with the public. Many agencies have found that a practical approach to providing accessible content is to post videos and presentations on these sites and also post the same content, in an accessible manner, on their own agency sites.

Key Areas to Test for Accessibility

This isn't a comprehensive list but these are important items you'll need to check in addition to your general accessibility testing.

- Use your keyboard to navigate through the multimedia player: Use the tab, enter, and spacebar keys to start, stop, fast forward, rewind, turn on/off captions, maximize/minimize the window, and raise/lower the volume, in addition to any other controls your player uses. When testing with the tab key, be sure the tabbing order makes sense.
- Use a screen reader to review your pages, media player's controls, etc.: Check all of the items you reviewed with your keyboard, plus listen to any directions and cues; make sure there's nothing like "1 button; 2 button" (make sure the buttons are "labeled" with commonly used terms); listen to the entire page/window: isolate links, open lists of graphics and headings; listen to any synchronized audio description tracks); turn off your monitor while you listen to the screen reader and compare it to a script of the exact content that should be heard from the screen reader.
- Make sure your transcripts read exactly as the audio from your media; check the transcripts for proper punctuation; and, if any acronyms have been used, define them.
- Watch your video and check that the captions are visually clear and not "pixelated," especially if open captions have been used; make sure captions have been spell checked and reviewed for proper grammar and punctuation.
- Ask people with different disabilities to test your media project. Their results in using your media may be different from yours.

Resources

There are many resources on the internet that can assist you in ensuring that your video and multimedia information is made accessible. Below are samples of these resources. We encourage City staff to become familiar with the accessibility features in programs they utilize to create video and multimedia information. You Tube has several postings on "How to make accessible", we encourage staff to view these videos if necessary.

- Caption Videos and Multimedia - <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/video/how-to-make-video-captions>

- Making Multimedia 508 Compliant and Accessible - <http://www.howto.gov/web-content/accessibility/508-compliant-and-accessible-multimedia>
- Creating Section 508 Compliant Videos on City websites - <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/video/508-compliant-video-guide>
- How To Add Captions to a YouTube Video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K4WJs94FfY&list=TLIqvgEnkVMTU>
- Google YouTube Add Captions - <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en>

D. Social Media Accessibility⁴

It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles that all Elected Officials and City Departments that use social media will make it accessible for persons with disabilities by following the national guidelines for improving the accessibility of Social Media.

Social media is transforming how the city government engages with constituents, allowing city departments and elected officials to share information and deliver services more quickly and effectively than ever before. This is especially true during emergency and disaster situations. Departments using social media in times of disaster or for preparedness information shall ensure that their messaging integrates the needs for persons with disabilities. In addition to the guidelines found in other sections of this document, departments will follow the guidance below when creating social media messages.

Making Facebook Posts Accessible

Photos, Video, Audio

After posting the photo, video, or audio, immediately post a comment that directs users to the full caption or the full transcript. Always provide a link back to the lacity.org page that hosts a copy of the photo, video, or audio with full caption/transcript.

If you have a YouTube channel, upload your video to your channel and make sure you enable closed-captions (you'll want to upload your own transcript to make sure the captions are accurate). Then post a link to your YouTube video as your status update, rather than uploading the video into Facebook. This will ensure that visitors will be taken to your accessible version on YouTube.

Composing Status Updates

Facebook provides ample space that allows you to spell out acronyms. Spell out the first instance of the acronym and add the acronym in parentheses after (e.g., U.S. Geological

⁴ HOWTO.GOV - <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/using-social-media-in-government/improving-accessibility#part-1>

Survey (USGS)). This is especially helpful for those using screen readers, because after the name is heard the acronym is spelled out, and the user will associate the sound of the acronym with the full name.

Making Tweets Accessible

Photos, Video, and Audio

Put the following prefixes before tweets that have photos, videos, or audio. This allows people using screen readers to know what to expect before it's read out loud. The uppercase formats are for further clarity to sighted users.

- Photos: [PIC]
- Videos: [VIDEO]
- Audio: [AUDIO]

Link back to the page that has a copy of the photo, video, or audio with full caption/transcript.

Make your tweet serve as a descriptive caption so it has context for the item and then link back to the Department website for full accessibility.

Displaying Tweets

Use the Twitter API or Embedded Timelines feature to display your agency's tweets on your departmental site.

Embedded Timelines feature on Twitter appears to have accessibility built-in even for those who do not have JavaScript. You can tab through all aspects of the timeline and use the functions. While it appears that Twitter is building in accessible content within the Embedded Timelines and Embedded Tweets features, you should still test it out on your site prior to making it live. Note that Twitter recommends caching the content you're pulling from Twitter because there is a rate-limit.

Add a link in your bio, or occasionally tweet that you have an accessible format of your tweets at [provide link].

Composing Tweets

Try to place any hashtags or @mentions at the end of the tweet. This allows a screen reader to voice the main content of the tweet more clearly in the beginning, and saving the service-specific speak for the end (the parts that sound confusing).

- If possible, avoid using unfamiliar acronyms that would sound strange if read by a screen reader. If space allows, try to spell out the acronyms instead or use a different way to convey the information.

- If the acronym is well-known and sounds the same when we speak as it's intended to sound (e.g., NASA), you don't need to spell out "National Aeronautics and Space Administration".
- Use "CamelCase" for multiple words for hashtags; that is, capitalize the first letters of compound words (use #SocialGov not #socialgov).

Resources

There are many resources on the internet that can assist you in ensuring that your social media accessible to persons with disabilities. Below are a couple of these resources. We encourage City staff to become familiar with the accessibility features in programs they utilize to create social media information. You Tube has several postings on "How to make accessible", we encourage staff to view these videos if necessary.

- Making Social Media Accessible: What You Can Do Today - <http://www.howto.gov/training/classes/accessible-social-media>
- Improving the Accessibility of Social Media in Government - <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/using-social-media-in-government/improving-accessibility>
- American Foundation for the Blind, Social Media Sites - <http://www.afb.org/info/accessibility/creating-accessible-websites/captchas-on-social-networking-sites/235>
- Making Facebook Accessible for Everyone - <http://www.facebook.com/notes/facebook/making-facebook-accessible-for-everyone/71852922130>
- Caption Videos and Multimedia - <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/video/how-to-make-video-captions>
- LIGHTHOUSE INTERNATIONAL <http://www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/>
- Social Media Messaging <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/using-social-media-in-government/improving-accessibility>
- Making Multimedia 508 Compliant and Accessible - <http://www.howto.gov/web-content/accessibility/508-compliant-and-accessible-multimedia>
- Creating Section 508 Compliant Videos on City websites - <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/video/508-compliant-video-guide>
- How To Add Captions to a YouTube Video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K4WJs94FfY&list=TLlqvgEnkVMTU>
- Google YouTube Add Captions - <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en>

II. Print Messaging

Large Print and Contrast

Provide a text and large text version alternative of the message.

1. Use 18pt or larger, san-serif (Arial, Verdana, etc.) fonts.
2. Exaggerate color, saturation and contrasting colors between foreground and background.
3. When printing, consider using a contrasting background color, such as ecru or off-white.

Creating Audio Files

Recording program materials into an audio file or on cassette tape is a good alternative to providing written material. Some people who are blind or have visual disabilities cannot or prefer not to read Braille or large print, and find audio and/or tapes more useful.

City department should utilize staff to create audio formats in-house:

- Record in a room where there is no background noise;
- Read at a moderate pace and articulate words clearly;
- Identify the reader at the end of the recording. (If using a cassette: identify the side number, the document title, and the page range being read on each side.)

Computer documents provide an efficient, simple means of transferring print information to audible communication. Many individuals now have computers, tablets and phones with recording and voice output. By having an accessible computer document, the electronic process is often the fastest way to allow constituents to use a screen reader or other device to allow for the document to be read. You can also send discs to persons via post or send the information electronically via e-mail

Ensure that any visible information provided, such as phone numbers, addresses, website URLs, etc. are also made audible by saying the information verbally as well.

- Verbally describe images, charts and drawings. Speak slowly and clearly. (I.e. "This pie chart shows that 75%... or this four bar graph shows...")

Braille Conversion

Provide printed documents in Braille.

1. Use GSDs request form to convert word documents to Braille. (Follow the DOD Citywide Procedure for Providing Documents in Braille Format.)
2. *During an emergency situation, if GSD is unable to fill the request for Braille in a timely manner, departments may contact the DOD front desk (213) 202-2764 and submit a request⁵ to have the document converted into Braille*

Visual Images

Provide visual images

1. Pictures should be high quality, and not stretched or blurry.
2. Pictures should match and reinforce the text. Avoid symbols with unclear meanings.
3. All pictures should have a written description describing the image in an alternative tag (text description; ALT tag).

Increase visibility for colorblind viewers

Colorblindness affects a significant number of people, most often as an inability to distinguish between red and green, or seeing red and green differently. When creating presentations, it's important to choose elements that increase visual contrast so viewers who cannot rely on color distinction can still understand what they're seeing. Some things you can do when building a slide deck include:

- Avoid using orange, red, and green in your template and text.
- Use texture in graphs, instead of color, to highlight points of interest.
- Circle or use animation to highlight information, rather than relying on laser pointers or color.
- Keep the overall contrast in your presentation high.

Avoid image watermarks

Images used as watermarks may not be understood by people with vision or cognitive disabilities. If you must use a watermark, make sure that the information it contains is also included elsewhere in your document.

III. Universal Language for Messaging

The following language must be included on all department websites, documents, brochures, flyers, or any other pertinent documents:

⁵ *A text-only Word file MUST be provided to DOD in order to complete the request.*

“As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services and activities.”

Or for a meeting flyer, departments must include the following paragraph:

“Reasonable accommodation or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. Due to difficulties in securing Sign Language Interpreters, five or more business days notice is strongly recommended. For additional information, please contact: (Your department contact person, phone number-voice and/or TTY).”

IV. Auxiliary Aids and Services

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting

Submit a Sign Language Interpreter Request to DOD in order to obtain qualified American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters.

1. Meetings and Public Events – Make sure that interpreters are briefed and provided written information prior to the meeting commencing. If the meeting is being videotaped, be sure the ASL interpreter is positioned next to the speaker, that their face and upper body are in the screen shot at all times and that the background is a solid color.
2. Press conferences – Follow the ADA Guidance on *Press Conferences and Interpreter Checklist*. Ensure that the interpreters are briefed and provided written information, specifically names, areas impacted, prior to videotaping or going on air. Ensure that the interpreter is next to the podium and that their face and upper body are in the screen shot at all times and that the background is a solid color

Communication Access Real Time Translation (CART)

Also known as “real-time captioning”, is a service that can be delivered on location or remotely. It is best described as the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and specialized steno translation software. The text produced by the CART provider can be displayed on an computer monitor, projected onto a screen, combined with a video presentation to appear as captions, or otherwise made available using other transmission and display systems.

1. Submit a CART Service Request Form to DOD in order to obtain qualified CART services.

2. When submitting the request, a copy of the agenda, if available with names of speakers should be included. If the agenda/names are not available at the time of request, a hard copy should be provided to the captionists upon their arrival on site, or sent via email or fax if being provided remotely.

Braille Conversion

Staff (project coordinator) or the Departmental ADA Coordinator should e-mail an attached file in Microsoft Word, *which should contain only plain text, no images, charts, etc.* to the Central Duplicating Center at GSD.pubdup@lacity.org.

In addition, Departments should include their IDO# or Fund # in the body of the email.

All embossed documents will be checked for formatting and errors in transcription. GSD staff will inform you once the project is complete and arrange with you for pick up, conventional mail, or overnight courier.

If you have questions regarding the GSD Braille printing process, please contact:

Central Duplicating Center
Lexi Galaz, Reprographics Specialist
201 N. Los Angeles Street, Space 8A
[\(213\) 922-9709](tel:(213)922-9709)
GSD.pubdup@lacity.org

Audio Conversion

Recording program materials into an audio file or on cassette tape is a good alternative to providing written material. Some people who are blind or have visual disabilities cannot or prefer not to read Braille or large print, and find audio and/or tapes more useful.

City department should utilize their staff members to create audio formats in-house:

- Record in a room where there is no background noise;
- Read at a moderate pace and articulate words clearly;
- Identify the reader at the end of the recording. (If using a cassette: identify the side number, the document title, and the page range being read on each side.

Computer documents provide an efficient, simple means of transferring print information to audible communication. Many individuals now have computers, tablets and phones with recording and voice output. By having an accessible computer document, the electronic process is often the fastest way to allow constituents to use a screen reader or other device which allows for the document to be read. You can also send discs to persons via post or send the information electronically via e-mail upon request.

V. Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS)

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), established under Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act, is a telephone service that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. TRS is available in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories for local and/or long distance calls. TRS is regulated by the Federal Communications Commission.

It is the Policy of the City of Los Angeles that TRS calls are to be processed and responded to by city employees as they would with any other telephone call. It is important for city employees to understand that much of the TRS system, particularly the Internet Relay Services, are open for public use, therefore it is possible for anyone with the proper equipment to place calls through one of the relay services described below. This includes people who are not members of the original intended user group, persons who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, or have a Speech Disability.

The various relay services covered by Title IV of the ADA are explained below:

There are several forms of TRS⁶, depending on the particular needs of the user and the equipment available.

1. **Text-to-Voice TTY-based TRS** – With this type of “traditional” TRS, a person with a hearing or speech disability uses a TTY to call the CA at the relay center. TTYs have a keyboard and allow people to type their telephone conversations. The text is read on a display screen and/or a paper printout. A TTY user calls a TRS relay center and types the number of the person he or she wishes to call. The CA at the relay center then makes a voice telephone call to the other party to the call, and relays the call back and forth between the parties by speaking what a text user types, and typing what a voice telephone user speaks.
2. **Voice Carry Over** - Voice Carry Over (VCO) is a type of TRS that allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the called party and receive responses in text from the CA. No typing is required by the calling party. This service is particularly useful to senior citizens who have lost their hearing, but who can still speak.
3. **Hearing Carry Over** - Hearing Carry Over (HCO) is a type of TRS that allows a person with a speech disability, but who wants to use his/her own hearing, to listen to the called party and type his/her part of the conversation on a TTY. The CA reads

⁶ <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs>

these words to the called party, and the caller hears responses directly from the called party.

4. **Speech-to-Speech (STS) Relay Service** - This form of TRS is used by a person with a speech disability. A CA (who is specially trained in understanding a variety of speech disorders) repeats what the caller says in a manner that makes the caller's words clear and understandable to the called party. No special telephone is needed. For more information regarding STS visit www.fcc.gov/guides/speech-speech-relay-service.
5. **Shared Non-English Language Relay Services** - Due to the large number of Spanish speakers in the United States, the FCC requires interstate TRS providers to offer Spanish-to-Spanish traditional TRS. Although Spanish language relay is not required for intrastate (within a state) TRS, many states with large numbers of Spanish speakers offer this service on a voluntary basis. The FCC also allows TRS providers who voluntarily offer other shared non-English language interstate TRS, such as French-to-French, to be compensated from the federal TRS fund.
6. **Captioned Telephone Service** - Captioned telephone service, like VCO, is used by persons with a hearing disability but some residual hearing. It uses a special telephone that has a text screen to display captions of what the other party to the conversation is saying. A captioned telephone allows the user, on one line, to speak to the called party and to simultaneously listen to the other party and read captions of what the other party is saying. There is a "two-line" version of captioned telephone service that offers additional features, such as call-waiting, *69, call forwarding, and direct dialing for 911 emergency service. Unlike traditional TRS (where the CA types what the called party says), the CA repeats or re-voices what the called party says. Speech recognition technology automatically transcribes the CA's voice into text, which is then transmitted directly to the user's captioned telephone text display.
7. **Video Relay Service (VRS)** - This Internet-based form of TRS allows persons whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with the CA in ASL using video conferencing equipment. The CA speaks what is signed to the called party, and signs the called party's response back to the caller. VRS is not required by the FCC, but is offered by several TRS providers. VRS allows conversations to flow in near real time and in a faster and more natural manner than text-based TRS. Beginning January 1, 2006, TRS providers that offer VRS must provide it 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and must answer incoming calls within a specific period of time so that VRS users do not have to wait for a long time. For more information regarding VRS visit www.fcc.gov/guides/video-relay-services.
8. **Internet Protocol (IP) Relay Service** – IP Relay is a text-based form of TRS that uses the Internet, rather than traditional telephone lines, for the leg of the call between the person with a hearing or speech disability and the CA. Otherwise, the call is generally handled just like a TTY-based TRS call. The user may use a computer or other web-enabled device to communicate with the CA. IP Relay is not required by the FCC, but is offered by several TRS providers. For more information regarding IP Relay visit www.fcc.gov/guides/internet-protocol-ip-relay-service.

9. **IP Captioned Telephone Service** – IP captioned telephone service, one of the newest forms of TRS, combines elements of captioned telephone service and IP Relay. IP captioned telephone service can be provided in a variety of ways, but uses the Internet – rather than the telephone network – to provide the link and captions between the caller with a hearing disability and the CA. It allows the user to simultaneously both listen to, and read the text of, what the other party in a telephone conversation is saying. IP captioned telephone service can be used with an existing voice telephone and a computer or other Web-enabled device without requiring any specialized equipment. For more information regarding IP captioned telephone service, visit www.fcc.gov/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

During disaster or emergency situations, ADA Coordinators, Public Information Officers and Emergency Preparedness Coordinators should utilize DOD's Sign Language Interpreter Request Form or CART Services Request Form when setting up any public communication on site.

There may also be an additional need to assist people with disabilities who have lost or damaged assistive technology. City staff should direct these requests through the EOC Mass Care Branch, DAFN Unit Leader or the Planning Branch, DAFN Technical Specialist.