Partnership for People with Disabilities
Linking people. Changing lives.

ACCESSIBLE PDF FILES

NOTE: Depending if you are on a Mac or PC and if you are using Acrobat Pro or Acrobat Pro DC, some of the steps to be might be slightly different.

PROPER DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

In order to ensure the reading order follows a natural, logical flow, please use HEADINGS (H1, H2, H3, etc.) to organize your content.

TAGGING

Without tags, a PDF might be unreadable or out of order on screen readers. Please tag headings, paragraphs, lists, tables and other structural elements. How? 1. You can manually add or adjust tags using the READING ORDER tool or the TAGS panel 2. Click AUTOMATICALLY TAG PDF or AUTOTAG DOCUMENT, review for accuracy 3. Click ALL TOOLS, then click PREPARE FOR ACCESSIBILITY.

ALT TEXT IMAGES

Please provide clear and concise alt text descriptions to images/charts/graphs. How? TOOLS, PREPARE FOR ACCESSIBILITY, FIX READING ORDER, right-click image, click EDIT ALT TEXT. TIP: Mark decorative images as ARTIFACTS so they are ignored by screen readers.

LOGICAL READING ORDER

To ensure the reading order is read accurately, please follow these steps: Click TOOLS, PREPARE FOR ACCESSIBILITY, FIX READING ORDER, SHOW ORDER PANEL. The numbers on the boxes around your content indicates the current reading order. You can change the reading order by opening the desired page and using drag and drop.

MEANINGFUL LINKS

Please ensure your links are accurate and tagged in a descriptive way (e.g., "Download the report" instead of "Click here").

TABLE HEADERS/DATA

TH tags represent TABLE HEADER cells, such as column or row headings, while TD tags represent TABLE DATA cells within a table structure. TIP: Please avoid complex merged cells that disrupt reading order.

LANGUAGE SPECIFICATION

Please set the primary language of the document for screen readers and mark sections with different languages appropriately.

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TIP: It's always best to prepare your document for accessibility in the source file. Example, word, excel etc. and then finish in Acrobat.

ACCESSIBLE FONTS AND COLORS

Please use clear, legible fonts (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Verdana). Ensure high color contrast (e.g., dark text on a light background). TIP: Avoid using color alone to convey meaning.

INTERACTIVE FORM FIELDS

Please use fillable form fields for user input and label fields properly for assistive technologies.

BOOKMARKS & NAVIGATION AIDS

Bookmarks assist users in navigating longer documents, 9 plus pages. Why? Bookmarks provide a sense of structure and organization by allowing the ability to jump to specific sections with a single click. Add bookmarks after tagging content. How? Open the Bookmarks Panel on the right side vertical toolbar, click •••, click NEW BOOKMARKS FROM STRUCTURE, select H1 and H2 tags, rename "Untitled" to " Bookmarks." TIP: Use a table of contents with internal links.

OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION (OCR)

You can convert scanned documents into searchable text using OCR. How? Drag and drop your PDF or click "Select a file" to upload the PDF you want to OCR. Acrobat will automatically use OCR technology to recognize the text in the PDF.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECK & TESTING

Run Adobe Acrobat's Accessibility Checker. How? TOOLS, ACCESSIBILITY, CHECK EVERY BOX, START CHECKING, the left navigation panel will open up to show the report results. Expand a section to see the details. You can also test with screen readers (e.g., NVDA, JAWS, VoiceOver).

CONVERTING A PDF TO WORD

When converting a PDF to Word, everything can become scrambled, therefore, please ensure the original document is tagged, using the Accessibility Checker, and preserving document structure when saving as a PDF, or using tools like Adobe Acrobat to convert and check for accessibility.

CANVA ACCESSIBILITY

Canva PDFs are designed to be readable by screen readers. Canva offers a feature called "Design Accessibility" which auto checks and corrects. How? Click ••• the ELLIPSIS ICON, ACCESSIBILITY, then CHECK DESIGN ACCESSIBILITY. How to add alt text? Click on the image, click •••, click Alt Text. When exporting your design, please choose "PDF Standard" to ensure the document is accessible.