

Operational Policy

Policy title:	Digital Accessibility in Content Creation and Sharing		
Policy number:	ODHSOHA 010-029		
Original date:	11/01/2024	Last update:	11/01/2024
Approved:	Kris Kautz, OHA Seth Lyon, ODHS		

Purpose

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) are committed to providing equitable access to information and services. The agencies are committed to effective communications that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and accessible for a wide spectrum of people who have different communication needs or abilities. This means creating plain language content in formats that give individuals experiencing equity barriers the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services in an equally integrated and effective manner, and with equivalent ease as someone without that barrier. This commitment applies to people who have been socially and economically marginalized and placed at higher risk of experiencing disadvantages, and includes providing the opportunity to communicate in languages other than English, and access for those who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing, people who are blind or have low vision or have color blindness, people with motor disabilities, people with neurodivergence, people with communication, intellectual, cognitive, developmental or learning disabilities, and people who use assistive technology.

Description

This policy ensures any form of digital content created by the agency and provided either internally or externally is accessible because the digital content adheres to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Levels A and AA.

Applicability

This policy applies to all ODHS and OHA staff including employees, volunteers, trainees, interns, contractors, and grantees.

As keepers of the public trust, all agency employees have a responsibility to comply with state and agency policies, administrative rule, and state and federal law. The agency takes this responsibility seriously and failure to fulfill this responsibility is not treated lightly. Employees who fail to comply with state or agency policy, administrative rule, or state and federal law may face progressive discipline, up to and including dismissal from state service.

Policy

1. For this policy, the term “information and communications technology (ICT) solutions” is used to describe information technology content, applications, and services and means:

- a. All hardware and software, including but not limited to web, desktop, and mobile applications.
 - b. Agency created multimedia and electronic content for internal or external users.
 - c. Electronic documents used by ODHS and OHA for communication with the community or each other.
 - d. Web content that conveys information and sensory experience to the user, including but not limited to text, images, and sounds.
2. This policy applies to creating and sharing content using ICT solutions and is complemented by specific policy related to the acquisition, procurement, or remediation of ICT solutions.
 3. Using agency approved tools, ODHS and OHA staff shall ensure any form of digital content created by the agency and provided either internally or externally is accessible because the digital content adheres to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Levels A and AA.
 - a. This includes but is not limited to websites, reports, surveys, dashboards, and documents.
 - b. If it is determined that an exception from the standard is required based on undue burden or fundamental alteration as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the exception shall be approved by a high-level official not lower than a division director.
 - c. Record documentation shall be maintained by OIS in a risk register created for that purpose.
 4. Accessible means plain language content in formats that give individuals experiencing equity barriers the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services in an equally integrated and effective manner, and with equivalent ease as someone without that barrier. People who experience barriers to access may include but are not limited to:
 - a. People who need to communicate in a language other than English.
 - b. People who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing,
 - c. People who are blind or have low vision or have color blindness.
 - d. People who have motor disabilities
 - e. People who experience neurodivergence.
 - f. People who have communication, cognitive processing, developmental or learning disabilities.
 - g. People who use assistive technology.
 5. For this policy, plain language means the simplest vocabulary and sentence structure to convey the needed information and avoiding figurative language when possible. Plain language has been reviewed by a person who is not a subject matter expert with the goal of ensuring readers can find what they need, understand the information, and use the information as it was intended. (See references for resources.) Plain language communication puts readers first by considering:
 - a. What readers want and need to know.
 - b. The readers' level of interest, expertise, and literacy skills.
 - c. The context in which readers will use the information.
 6. When creating and sharing digital content ODHS and OHA staff shall use the appropriate agency ICT solutions, accessible templates, agency-provided or approved checklists and style guides.
 7. When at all possible, public facing content should be formatted as accessible web pages, HTML preferred.
 8. This policy does not apply to:
 - a. Archived web content.
 - b. Preexisting conventional electronic documents.
 - c. Content posted by a third party.
 - d. Preexisting social media posts.
 9. Archived web content means web content that meets the following four criteria:

- a. Was created before April 24, 2026, or recreates the content of other physical media created before April 24, 2026.
 - b. Is retained exclusively for reference, research, or recordkeeping.
 - c. Is not altered or updated after archiving unless such alteration is for the removal of protected health information or personal identifiable information.
 - d. Is organized and stored in a dedicated area or areas clearly identified as being archived.
10. Preexisting conventional electronic documents means web content or content in mobile apps created before April 24, 2026, that is in portable document formats, word processor file formats, or spreadsheet file formats unless the documents are currently used to apply for, gain access to, or participate in the public entity's services, programs, or activities.
11. Content posted by a third party means content posted by an individual or entity other than ODHS or OHA, unless the individual or entity is posting due to contractual, licensing, or other arrangements with ODHS or OHA.
12. Preexisting social media posts means ODHS or OHA social media posts that were posted before April 24, 2026.

References

[Americans With Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Title I](#)
[ADA Title II](#)
[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 \(WCAG\)](#)
[DOJ Rule on ADA Title II in the Federal Register](#)
[HHS Rule on Section 504 in the Federal Register](#)
<https://www.plainlanguage.gov>
[International Organization for Standardization Plain Language Standards](#)

Forms referenced

Related policies

ODHSOHA 010-030 Digital Accessibility in Hardware, Software and Systems

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Policy history

Version 1 ODHS|OHA established 11/01/2024

Keywords

Access, accessibility, Americans with Disabilities Act, digital, procurement, Section 508, WCAG

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