



Making Your Websites Accessible to All Families: Questions and Answers from the “Ask Me Anything” Webinar

This document answers common state and territory questions about Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) consumer education website requirements and innovative practices for website design. A strong understanding of these requirements and practices will help you provide high-quality consumer education information to families.

This document was prepared in response to questions posed by webinar participants who attended the May 9, 2019, webinar [“Making Your Website Accessible to All Families.”](#)

Translation

Our website is translated, but we link out to other websites, and some of those sites may not be translated. Do you have advice on how to handle this?

- ◆ The best thing you can do is let the user know what will happen when they click on a link. Several techniques can help you achieve this. For example, some sites ensure that the link title and descriptive text near the link clearly indicate that the link is going to leave the website. Some sites also use a specific icon to indicate to users that the link is external. Other sites also use an interstitial web page (an “in-between” page) that provides a disclaimer to users before they exit the website. These web pages often pop up before users leave a website and provide extra information when they navigate from one page to the next.
- ◆ You should also think about the external links that you want on your site and include those that are helpful to families and other stakeholders. Generally, you want to avoid having a long list of external links, which will cause your users to click on them and leave your website. A more effective and efficient approach is to include as much original content as possible on your site for search engine optimization purposes.

Additional Questions?

If you have questions about whether your planned website enhancements meet CCDF requirements, please consult with your Office of Child Care regional office for guidance.

If you would like additional technical assistance on developing and enhancing your consumer education website, contact the State Capacity Building Center (CapacityBuildingCenter@icf.com) or the Early Childhood Quality Assurance Center (QualityAssuranceCenter@icf.com).

**Is there a standard “tipping point” or percentage of language speakers in a demographic that we can use to identify which languages to include in translation?**

- ◆ The answer to this question depends on several factors. For example, some states require you to translate content if a certain percentage of the population served by the agency speaks another language, so you should start by checking your state requirements. Otherwise, you can use your web analytics data to identify how many of your website’s users have their browser set to a language other than English. However, if you don’t have any translated content, it’s possible that users have learned this and don’t visit at all. This means that your web analytics alone can’t substitute for conducting user research and asking people what languages they speak.
- ◆ Your state may not offer specific requirements to inform your website translation. If this is the case, your data analytics and stakeholders should determine how to identify which languages to translate your website content into in order to meet your agency’s goals and maximize your website’s accessibility. If you’re looking to extend the reach of your site, and your user research shows that a population is currently underserved by the existing site, it might make sense to translate. For example, you should translate your website if the estimated additional engagement would help you meet specific goals for serving that population.
- ◆ Finally, if you do not have the budget to translate your entire website, consider which pages and resources may be most useful to an underserved population, and prioritize those pages for translation first.

Some of the text on our website is very technical in nature (for example, eligibility requirements for CCDF). How can I ensure that the legal language is translated properly?

- ◆ If a translation is not completed by someone who speaks that language (for example, if it is completed using a translation plugin), it can lose culturally-appropriate guidance and lack context. Certain words can lose their intended meaning, which could have unintended negative consequences. Having accurate translations is especially important for any legal language on the site, such as content about state laws or privacy policies. As such, it’s always a good idea to have a translator who speaks the language carefully read over translated legal content and collaborate with the legal department to ensure all intended context is preserved.

What design features should be considered when preparing to translate a website?

- ◆ One of the most common mistakes in translating web content relates to user interface elements such as site navigation or buttons. Sometimes, words in languages other than English can be significantly longer, which causes text to bleed off design elements or break entirely. This introduces new issues with accessibility and clarity from the user perspective. It’s important to use flexible design patterns and test any translated content with your site’s designs before publishing the translated content. You also want to ensure that behind-the-scenes elements of the site support accessibility. For example, if a page is available in Spanish, the alternative (alt) text and Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA) labels on that page should also be in Spanish. ARIA labels are used as invisible labels that can be read by assistive technology where no text labels exist. They can also help users with vision impairments better understand certain user interface elements.



Accessibility

What are some ways I can address barriers to accessibility to help my website become accessible to all users?

The main thing to keep in mind is that accessibility is all about providing flexibility in the way the website communicates with its users. The key is to provide clear and concise content, common sense navigation, and alternative means of digesting the information provided. When trying to determine if your website is accessible, ask yourself the following questions.

- ◆ Is all content marked up so that a screen reader will announce it properly to a user who may have a visual impairment?
- ◆ Is my website fully navigable by using a keyboard? In other words, can I fully navigate the website without using a mouse?
- ◆ Did I provide text equivalents to describe all relevant images displayed on my site? For example, do charts and graphs have text equivalents that fully describe them?
- ◆ Did I offer users with visual disabilities an alternative way to read my content? For example, do informative images have text equivalents? Are labels for form fields associated with their fields?
- ◆ Did I offer users with hearing disabilities an alternative way to access my multi-media content? For example, did I provide synchronous captions for multimedia?
- ◆ Do I use plain language on my website to ensure that content is accessible to a wide variety of readers (for example, young, old, basic English readers)? See plainlanguage.gov for resources on writing in plain language.

If the answer is yes to many or all of these questions, you are well on your way to providing an accessible website to a wide variety of users.

We’ve already implemented our consumer education website, so what is the best way for us to integrate some of these best practices with accessibility?

- ◆ Conduct an accessibility audit for your site. Work with developers to fix any issues found in the audit. If an audit was not completed, ask your information technology (IT) team to use a web accessibility plug-in for their browsers to locate accessibility violations and follow the directions to fix them.
- ◆ Make sure the website can be navigated without a mouse and ensure anything that can be triggered with a mouse can also be triggered with the keyboard.

In the webinar on May 9th, you referenced some best practices for accessible web design. Which one should I start with?

- ◆ Consider starting with one of the Level A Priority Web Content Accessibility Guide (WCAG) 2.0 success criterion which benefit the widest audience and are easier to implement. The criterion can be found using the [How to Meet WCAG 2.0 \(Quick Reference\)](#) guide. For instance, keyboard accessibility—making sure someone using only a keyboard (or keyboard alternative) can move through your website without a mouse—is a great place to start. When you find an issue (for instance, something that can be clicked or activated with a mouse cannot be activated with a keyboard), examine the code to see why this might be happening and fix it.



What kinds of questions should I ask my web designer, IT department, or vendor (whomever does the web design) about accessibility? Are there things they can build into the website to ensure that my consumer education website is accessible to the widest number of people?

- ◆ Ask your designers if they use a contrast ratio tool to make sure colors meet the correct contrast ratio for their size and element. This is important because you want to ensure users can read text that is presented over a background. You can also ask your developer if they use an accessibility browser plugin when they develop the pages. Many plugins can automatically find issues and give detailed information on how to fix them.

A lot of people use smart phones to access information. What are some ways we can address accessibility for smart phone users?

- ◆ Most, if not all, of the accessibility guidelines that apply to desktop views of your site will also apply to mobile devices.
- ◆ Some small screen considerations include the following:
 - Minimize the amount of information on each page—compared to desktop or laptop versions—by providing a dedicated mobile version or a responsive design.
 - Provide a reasonable default size for content and touch controls to minimize the need to zoom in and out for users with low vision.
 - Adapt the length of link text to the viewport width (the user’s visible area of a webpage).
 - Position form fields below, rather than beside, their labels (in portrait layout).
- ◆ Some zoom considerations include the following:
 - Ensure that the browser pinch zoom is not blocked by the page’s code, specifically its <meta> viewport element, which is code that tells the browser how to control the page’s dimensions and scaling. Users should be able to zoom the page to at least 200 percent. Wherever possible, do not restrict how much users can zoom.
 - Support fonts that follow users’ browser preferences for text size.
 - Provide on-page controls to change the text size.

We post a lot of documents on our website. Can you explain remediation and why it’s important? What do I need to do, and who can remediate our documents?

Remediation allows us to apply accessibility features to fix issues identified after a website or document has been audited or evaluated for accessibility. Without remediation, certain aspects of a document might be difficult or impossible to access unless accessibility features are applied.

Here are some quick and effective accessibility features to include when creating the following types of documents:

- ◆ All files
 - All images have an alt text description applied that is equivalent to the image.
 - Links (especially links surrounded by non-linked text) are distinguished by a means other than color (for instance, they are underlined).
 - Links are in plain language and are not displayed using the actual URLs.



- Contrast ratio between foreground and background colors is at least 4.5:1.
- Tables are simple tables (no more than one row and column header per table), and header cells are distinguished using table style options.
- ◆ Microsoft Word
 - Headings are used, nested appropriately (do not skip heading levels), and briefly describe the content below them.
 - Visual lists are created using the list function.
 - Images are presented in line with text.
 - Paragraph styles are used instead of “hard returns” (created by pressing the Enter key to start a new line of text) for spacing between paragraphs.
 - Columns are not created using tabs but through the column feature in the Layout tab.
- ◆ Microsoft PowerPoint
 - Slides have descriptive titles, and the titles are unique.
 - Slide reading order is logical (Home tab > Arrange > Selection Pane; ensure reading order is bottom to top).
- ◆ PDF
 - PDF files are tagged.
 - Tags represent the content the PDF contains (lists are lists, paragraphs are paragraphs, headings are headings, and so on).
 - Document title is filled out in the document properties.
 - Language of the document is set.
 - Language changes are specified on foreign words or phrases.
 - The accessibility checker is run and returns no errors (other than those that need manual checks).

Additional guidance is available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) at [“ASPA/DCD General Office Document File 508 Checklist”](#) and [“PDF File 508 Checklist.”](#)

Anyone can remediate a document as long as they follow the guidelines above. Both Microsoft and Adobe have tutorials for making their documents accessible. See the HHS [“Making Files Accessible”](#) page for links to Microsoft and Adobe accessibility information.

The more accessible the source file is (for instance, Word and PowerPoint), the less work you will need to make the PDF file accessible. Regardless, you will still need to check and remediate the PDF file to ensure it is accessible.

**What are some good resources to learn more about making my consumer education website more accessible to people with disabilities?**

We listed some good resources in the [May 9th webinar](#). Here's the annotated version:

- ◆ [Berkeley Web Accessibility Videos](#): University of California at Berkeley's website features several videos on various aspects of web accessibility, including accessible PDF files and a screen reader demonstration.
- ◆ [HHS.gov Required Fixes for HTML Files](#): HHS is a leader in web accessibility, and its website offers much information on the subject, including this “Required Fixes for HTML Files” section. Note that there are more required fixes sections for other information and communication technologies.
- ◆ [How to Meet WCAG 2.0 \(Quick Reference\)](#): The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)'s Web Accessibility Initiative provides a quick reference guide to meeting its Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- ◆ [Manual Accessibility Testing Tips](#): An accessibility expert provides guidance on manually testing your website for accessibility.
- ◆ [Section508.gov Accessible Web Content Guidelines](#): This web page provides tools and resources for developers and authors to create accessible digital products and content.
- ◆ [WCAG 2.0 Checklist for Accessible Websites](#): This detailed checklist of the WCAG 2.0 guidelines also includes WCAG 2.1 success criteria.
- ◆ [Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List](#): W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative provides a comprehensive list of tools to evaluate accessibility.
- ◆ [Web Accessibility Initiative Laws and Policies List](#): W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative provides a list of world-wide governmental policies related to web accessibility.
- ◆ [Webaim.org Accessibility Resources](#): This is WebAim's home page. Pretty much anything you need to know about accessibility can be found here in an accessible and usable format.
- ◆ [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#): This is the basis for much of the revised Section 508.

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