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Guidance on Accessibility for E-Government Program Services

E-Government Program Guidance 2

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E-Government Program Accessibility Guidance

From the State of Oregon E-Government Program in collaboration with the E-Governance Board

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Guidance Statement

This guidance aims to improve the accessibility and usability of information and communication technologies for all State of Oregon government end-users; striving to ensure that online services are accessible to intended audiences.

In order to provide an equitable experience, Oregon.gov websites should strive to comply with the following:

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#) level AA
- Federal Law, as required for specific agencies or programs
- Translation into relevant languages, as appropriate

Oregon.gov websites must also follow the Oregon Plain Language Law ([ORS 183.750](#))¹

¹ <https://plainlanguage.oregon.gov/>

Applicability

This document primarily applies to Oregon.gov websites, but agencies may apply it to any public facing electronic content. This guidance does not apply to external web pages outside of the control of the State of Oregon.

Roles & Responsibilities

Agencies and their staff who are responsible for creating, modifying, or otherwise making available any information and communication technology for external use should apply the accessibility guidance to their work.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1

The E-Government Program strongly recommends that all agencies follow WCAG 2.1 Guidelines, and use tools to verify compliance.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) covers a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. Following these guidelines will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these. Following these guidelines will make your Web content more usable to all users.

The four foundational pieces of WCAG are Perceivable, Operable, Understandable and Robust, often referred to as the POUR principles. For more information on WCAG 2.1 and the POUR principles see:

- [WCAG 2.1 at a glance](#)
- [How to meet WCAG 2.1 Quick Reference Guide](#)

Federal Accessibility Law

The E-Government Program strongly recommends that all agencies or programs receiving Federal funding comply with applicable Federal laws covering accessibility and multi-language requirements and use tools to verify compliance.

Your agency or program may be subject to Federal Law, this typically occurs when your agency or program receives Federal funding. Consult with your local attorney or your assigned Assistant Attorney General (AAG) for the Department of Justice.

Several disability rights laws have been passed at the federal Level. See [A Guide to Disability Rights Laws](#) for a comprehensive list of those laws. Here is a short summary of the two primary federal laws that may affect your agency:

- [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) (known as Section 508) - The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies and in programs receiving federal financial assistance. In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities.
- [Section 255 Telecommunications Guidelines- ICT](#) (known as Section 255) - The Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and customer premises equipment to ensure that the equipment is designed, developed, and fabricated to be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable.
- [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#), as amended (“ADA”) – The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in several areas, including state and local government, to give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all programs, services, and activities.
- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), (“Title VI”) - Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal funds or other Federal financial assistance.

Oregon Plain Language Law

The E-Government Program strongly recommends that all agencies follow Oregon Plain Language Law.

[ORS 183.750](#) requires that “Every state agency shall prepare its public writings in language that is as clear and simple as possible.”

Benefits to writing in plain language:

- Easier for everyone to understand
- Takes less time to read; easier to take an action
- Reduce acronyms, jargon, misspellings, etc.

Multilingual Access and Translation

The E-Government Program recommends that all agencies gain a good understanding of the constituencies that they serve and support multi-lingual access and translation when appropriate.

One important feature of online services is that they serve across barriers, including language. Providing content in languages other than English is needed to better reach underserved communities, particularly when the content could impact them. Consider making content published on the web available to those with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Note: Oregon.gov websites include built in automatic text translation through Google Translate. Agencies may choose to supplement the automatic translation with professional translation services.

Communicating with audiences in different languages on the web can extend past posts and tweets. Your agency’s social media page may receive direct messages and comments to posts in any language. Be responsive to a question or comment in whichever language it is sent; this builds trust and may help you grow your audience.

Know the languages used by your agency’s target audiences. For web content intended for audiences statewide, you may need to prioritize a few languages for translations. Common languages used by multiple state agencies include:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Spanish
- Russian
- Vietnamese
- Simplified Chinese (*can be understood by most Traditional Chinese readers*)

Depending on your target audiences, transcreation (the process of adapting content from one language to another while maintaining the existing tone, intent and style) can be essential for

highly targeted social media advertising campaigns. Unlike translations, which replace words in one language with words in another, transcreation services look at the entire concept of the content. Working with your agency's community partners for social media messages can be important to understand your audiences, such as language localization (e.g. Spanish dialects). Your campaign will be more effective if it is personalized and meaningful to the audience, instead of a single message that is shared with the masses.

Literacy is also important to consider when creating messages. For some languages (e.g. Mam) and to meet the needs of various literacy levels, audio solutions such as video can be better than written messages. It is important to understand the language and the culture for the audience you want to reach.

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