

AGENDA

ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To be held at Saanich Municipal Hall
Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
Wednesday October 01, 2025 at 5:00 PM

The District of Saanich lies within the territories of the ləkʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat Nations.

We are committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community. We are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.

A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

1. CHAIR'S REMARKS

- UBCM 2025 Convention Update

2. SUNFLOWER CAMPAIGN

- Follow-up to September 3, 2025 meeting

3. ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

- Presentation from accessibility consultants Marco Pasqua and Karin Pasqua from Meaningful Access Consulting, and the accessibility consultant Noah Senecal-Junkeer from Easy Surf Consulting.

4. ACTION LIST

B. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: November 05, 2025 at 5:00 PM

In order to ensure a quorum, please contact Angela Hawkshaw at 250-475-5494 ext. 3505 or angela.hawkshaw@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

ADEI Advisory Committee Report

Recommendation

That the ADEI Advisory Committee ask Saanich Council to direct staff to:

- Have the District of Saanich join the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign,
- Take the necessary steps to implement the distribution of sunflower lanyards and other materials in public facilities in the district,
- Include instruction on how to engage with people who choose to identify a hidden disability by wearing a sunflower lanyard in staff training.

Executive Summary

The adoption of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign represents a practical, compassionate, and policy-aligned step toward enhancing accessibility and inclusion in the District of Saanich. This initiative would allow individuals with non-visible disabilities to identify themselves in a discreet, voluntary manner, enabling municipal staff to provide more empathetic and responsive service. By participating in the campaign, Saanich would join a growing network of municipalities, public institutions, and transportation hubs already embracing the Sunflower as a tool for equity and inclusion.

Implementing the Sunflower campaign would directly support Saanich's Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion objectives and reinforce commitments set out in the Official Community Plan. It would also demonstrate meaningful progress toward removing social and attitudinal barriers that still limit full participation for many community members. With a modest investment in materials and staff training, Saanich can significantly improve the daily experiences of residents living with hidden disabilities.

For these reasons, the ADEI Advisory Committee requests that Saanich Council to direct staff to have the District of Saanich join the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign, and to take the necessary steps to implement the distribution of sunflower lanyards and other materials in public facilities in the district and to train staff on how to engage with people who choose to identify a hidden disability by wearing a sunflower lanyard.

Background: Hidden Disabilities in Canada

Hidden or non-visible disabilities, also known as invisible disabilities, include a wide array of conditions that are not immediately apparent but significantly affect a person's daily life. These can range from mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, PTSD), learning and cognitive disorders (e.g., ADHD, autism, dyslexia), chronic pain, fatigue, and episodic illnesses, to neurological conditions, hearing or vision challenges,

and other chronic health issues.¹ Individuals with hidden disabilities often face unique barriers because their needs may not be immediately recognized, leading to misunderstandings, skepticism, or inadequate accommodations.

According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, 27% of Canadians aged 15 and older (about 8 million people) have at least one disability that limits daily activities, up from 22% (6.2 million) in 2017.² Of those with disabilities, 39% reported a mental health-related condition, the largest increase among disability types since 2017.³ Additionally, 10.4% of Canadians (nearly 3.1 million individuals) had a mental health-related disability in 2022, and over half of them experienced attitudinal barriers resulting from misconceptions or assumptions in the preceding year.⁴

These statistics highlight the growing prevalence and impact of hidden disabilities across Canadian society. Attitudinal barriers are substantial: 37% of Canadians with disabilities encountered obstacles due to others' behaviours, misconceptions, or assumptions, many in everyday interactions or while accessing public services.⁵ This underscores the need for programs, like the 'Hidden Disabilities Sunflower,' that signal hidden needs and foster more understanding, inclusive, and accessible municipal services.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a globally recognized initiative that empowers individuals with non-visible disabilities to discreetly signal their needs for extra time, understanding, or quiet support. Originating in 2016 at Gatwick Airport in the UK, the Sunflower, a distinctive green lanyard adorned with yellow sunflowers and optional accompanying ID card, enables wearers to be "discreetly seen" by staff trained to offer additional assistance.

¹ Government of Canada. (2024 June 10). "A way with words and images: guide for communicating with and about persons with disabilities." Available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/words-images.html>

² Statistics Canada. (2024 April 3). "The disability rate in Canada increased in 2022." Available at <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/5980-disability-rate-canada-increased-2022>

³ Statistics Canada. (2024 April 3). "The disability rate in Canada increased in 2022." Available at <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/5980-disability-rate-canada-increased-2022>

⁴ Statistics Canada. (2025 January 22). "Mental health-related disabilities, 2022." Available at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2025010-eng.htm>

⁵ Hachouch, Y. et al. (2025 January 27). "Barriers to accessibility related to behaviours, misconceptions or assumptions: Findings from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability." *Statistics Canada*, Reports on Disability and Accessibility in Canada. Available at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2025002-eng.htm>



Participation in the program is entirely voluntary and does not require individuals to disclose the nature of their disability. The symbol is intentionally discreet yet recognizable to trained personnel, making it especially valuable in settings where hidden disabilities can otherwise go unnoticed. Organizations that participate in the campaign distribute lanyards and related materials free of charge to community members, helping to create a more inclusive and supportive public environment.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower organization is a UK-based social enterprise that manages the global Sunflower campaign. Organizations join by paying a yearly membership fee (\$2,940). Organizations that become Sunflower members gain access to comprehensive support materials, including digital toolkits, brand guidelines, posters, and webinars designed for staff training. These resources enable staff to:

- Recognize the Sunflower lanyard and associated signage;
- Respond with discrete, empathetic service, offering extra time, quieter spaces, gentle communication, or simplified directions;
- Respect privacy by asking, “How can I help you today?” rather than making assumptions

Member organizations also receive modular training and best practice guidance, including scenario-based learning and role-play exercises, which Saanich staff can adapt to create a bespoke “made in Saanich” toolkit to train staff for the local Saanich context and staff needs. The compulsory training video is less than 9 minutes in length,

and it explains hidden and non-visible disabilities, the Sunflower, and what to do if you see someone wearing one. There is an optional 10 minute video sharing Sunflower Wearers lived experience. Staff that are trained in this way can wear a white pin or lanyard identifying themselves as a supporter/someone who can be approached for assistance.

The sunflower campaign offers additional training opportunities. The most basic entails a short introduction video and a 10 minute video about people's lived experiences with hidden disabilities and the campaign. Additional materials are available from the campaign that provide more information on how to support folks with sixty different conditions, developed in collaboration with people with these conditions. These are valuable resources that can help support staff learning and save the District considerable time and resources developing their own guidance.

The campaign also hosts numerous drop-in webinars and training sessions, and members are entitled to a 30-minute guided session each year. The Sunflower campaign recommends that at least 80% of front-facing staff receive the basic training before the campaign is launched to the public.

Member organizations can purchase official Sunflower products (lanyards, pins, cards, etc.) at bulk rates.

Sunflowers Around the World

The Sunflower has seen widespread adoption: over 300 airports, airlines, transit systems, retail chains, and civic institutions globally use the emblem, including major Canadian airports like Toronto Pearson Airport, Vancouver International Airport, Montréal-Trudeau Airport, and the Victoria International Airport.⁶ Around the world, hotels chains, universities, companies, local governments, conventions, healthcare facilities, stadiums and other actors/spaces provide sunflower lanyards at their sites.⁷ Lego has even introduced a minifigure wearing a sunflower lanyard.⁸

The benefits of adopting this program include improved customer confidence, reduced anxiety, fewer service delays, better staff interactions, and greater autonomy for people with hidden disabilities. By simply allowing wearers to be identified as someone who may need a little more assistance, the system fosters compassion without demanding disclosure, shifting public services toward truly inclusive engagement.

⁶ Hidden Disabilities Sunflower (n.d.). "Air Canada are first airline in North America to launch the Sunflower." Available at <https://hdsunflower.com/us/insights/post/air-canada-are-first-airline-in-north-america-to-launch-the-sunflower>; and see Victoria Airport Authority. (2024 November 14). "Victoria Airport Authority (VAA) Launches Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program." Available at <https://yyj.ca/victoria-airport-authority-vaa-launches-hidden-disabilities-sunflower-program/?langselected=1>

⁷ Hidden Disabilities Sunflower (n.d.). "News." Available at <https://hdsunflower.com/us/insights/category/news>

⁸ See Wood, Z. (2024 December 3). "New Lego characters aim to represent hidden disabilities such as autism." *The Guardian*. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/dec/03/lego-introduces-characters-wearing-hidden-disability-sunflower-lanyard>

One Times Colonist news story, reporting on the impact of the program for Vancouver International Airport, which distributed over 4,000 lanyards in the first two years of the program, described how the sunflower program significantly reduces stress and uncertainty by reducing “explanation stress” and promoting more consistent service delivery tailored to individuals’ needs.⁹

Sunflowers in Saanich

To implement the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign in Saanich, a phased in approach is recommended. Many organizations choose this approach, and some may roll out the program internally at first, in order to give employees time to familiarize themselves with the program. Different phased in approaches can be explored in order to ensure a smooth and effective roll out. We can either explore rolling out the program internally or choose one or more facilities for an initial implementation.

A phased approach could begin with a pilot at one or two recreation facilities, followed by an evaluation period and subsequent expansion. This would allow for feedback gathering, refinement of training, and logistical preparation before broad implementation. Ultimately, the rollout strategy, including phasing, training delivery, and communications, should be developed by staff based on operational considerations and in alignment with Saanich’s accessibility and inclusion goals.

Participating facilities would be stocked with sunflower lanyards, which would be made available free of charge to community members who wish to use them. Staff at these facilities would be trained to recognize the Sunflower symbol and respond with understanding, flexibility, and discretion; offering extra time, clear communication, alternative navigation options, or simply a compassionate approach. Staff training in this way are given the option of wearing a white pin, which helps identify them as someone who supports the program, as compared to a green lanyard or pin, which identifies someone with a hidden disability.

Budgetary Implications

Participating in the Sunflower campaign involves paying a small annual membership fee to join and gain access to the campaigns IP (\$2,940), providing staff with appropriate training (included in membership fee and not particularly time consuming), and the purchase of necessary lanyards and pins. Members get access to bulk rates for purchase lanyards and pins.

It is hard to calculate the exact number of lanyards and pins that may be needed for any given facility and for a wider rollout overall. The exact number depends on a number of factors that include the number of unique visitors, awareness of the program, and the

⁹ Hui, V. (2024 May 6). “YVR support for hidden disabilities reduces 'explanation stress'.” Times Colonist. Available at <https://www.timescolonist.com/transportation/yvr-support-for-hidden-disabilities-reduces-explanation-stress-8706106>

demographics of visitors. Phasing in the program will provide greater insight into the number of lanyards and pins that may be distributed in any given year/for any given facility.

A phased approach will permit us to better understand the cost of the program. Speaking with people from the Sunflower Campaign, they report that a bulk order of 250 lanyards costs \$939.75 (or \$3.76 a lanyard), and 25 pins costs \$55.

Additional Requirements

To support implementation, a communications and awareness campaign should accompany the rollout. This would include visible signage in participating facilities, information available on Saanich websites, and in printed materials, and public outreach through the District's communication channels such as social media, recreation guides, and e-newsletters. The Sunflower Campaign provides some of these materials as part of membership, and works with members to design and approve communications and outreach materials.

The awareness campaign would serve two key functions: informing residents about the availability and purpose of the sunflower lanyards, and educating the broader public and staff on the importance of respectful and inclusive interaction with people who may be navigating non-visible disabilities.

Staff will also need to complete the short training associated with this program. This can be incorporated into other existing training opportunities and included in new employee onboarding materials.

Sunflowers and Saanich Values

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign directly supports and enhances multiple pillars of the District of Saanich's Official Community Plan (OCP), as well as our Accessibility Plan.

With respect to the OCP, this policy fits directly into Section 13, Community Well-being. The objectives of this section include:

1. Foster a diverse, equitable and inclusive community where all residents are engaged and feel a sense of belonging.
2. Provide a range of recreation, arts, and culture opportunities for people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities.
3. Recognize First Nations heritage and the community's colonial past as part of Saanich's path towards reconciliation.
4. Create a healthy, safe, and resilient community.

5. Incorporate heritage resources and values into planning and placemaking.

Specific policies within the OCP that are supported by this initiative include:

13.1.2 Continue to work with Neighbourhood Associations, service organizations, sports groups, businesses and other stakeholders to support and strengthen the community.

13.1.7 Encourage and support a wide range of educational and learning opportunities which aid in community capacity building and strive to meet a broad range of community needs.

13.1.8 Continue to encourage resident involvement in civic affairs.

13.2.3 Review recreational programming and facilities, as necessary, to ensure they are meeting current and emerging needs.

13.2.4 Ensure District recreation facilities and programs are accessible to people of all ages, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities.

13.2.6 Undertake awareness building and education programs to encourage individuals to develop and maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.

The Sunflower initiative clearly aligns with these goals by proactively creating an environment where individuals with hidden disabilities can more confidently and comfortably access municipal services, resources, and spaces without needing to disclose personal details.

With respect to Saanich's Accessibility Plan, the sunflower lanyards program is particularly well-suited to helping tackle attitudinal and informational communications barriers, but could also help tackle systemic and sensory barriers, as well as other barriers. The Accessibility Plan notes that "The District of Saanich strives to create an inclusive and welcoming culture, where people of all ages and abilities feel included and can equally access the facilities, services, programs and information. In our daily work, we endeavour to apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of what we do."¹⁰

The plan outlines a number of objectives that are directly supported by this program. These include:

- 1.1 Ensure information relative to accessibility is available to the public and employees.
- 1.2 Promote inclusive behaviors and support employee knowledge and awareness of:
 - the needs of people with various disabilities.

¹⁰ District of Saanich. (2023 December 11). "District of Saanich Accessibility Plan 2023 - 2026." Available at <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/accessibility-diversity-equity-inclusion/accessibility-plan.html>

- accessibility barriers and strategies.

1.2.1 Provide training to new and existing employees on the following topics:

- why accessibility & inclusion matters;
- accessibility legislation
- types of disabilities, invisible disabilities, and intersectionality;
- barriers to accessibility & inclusion: attitudinal, physical/environmental, communication, technological, systemic and sensory;
- strategies for minimizing barriers to accessibility and inclusion; and
- inclusive language and creating a sense of belonging.

1.2.3 Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness.

1.2.5 Create an effective model for staff training to support persons with disabilities that are in Saanich Parks, Recreation and Community Services programs.

2.1 Improve the physical accessibility in Saanich facilities to ensure persons with disabilities can access services and gain employment with the District of Saanich.

3.1 Create policies, procedures and tools to support inclusivity, accessibility, and safety.

3.1.4 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The adoption of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign represents a practical, compassionate, and policy-aligned step toward enhancing accessibility and inclusion in the District of Saanich. This initiative would allow individuals with non-visible disabilities to identify themselves in a discreet, voluntary manner, enabling municipal staff to provide more empathetic and responsive service. By participating in the campaign, Saanich would join a growing network of municipalities, public institutions, and transportation hubs already embracing the Sunflower as a tool for equity and inclusion.

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Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

A robust program to improve accessibility
for those with hidden disabilities

Sept 3, 2025

Agenda

1. Impact
2. Program Details
3. Commitment
4. Q&A

Global Community

We are officially represented in **56 countries**

Used in over

90
countries



Over

800

Charity Sunflower
Members



Sunflower Members

Aviation: 337 airports and 23 airlines worldwide

Healthcare: over 500 health organizations including
78 hospitals

Education: over 800 schools, colleges and universities

3

islands

32

cities

116

states &
councils

**Approximately
35% of people
with disabilities
use the Sunflower
in the UK**

Some of the challenges



“ I worry about what people must think if they see me in the street having a sensory overload.”

*2020 Hidden Disabilities Sunflower survey of 1,771 people in the UK.

Sunflower Wearer Jaden says



“Knowing what to expect, I’ll be prepared...
I want to encourage others with special needs to
feel more confident.”

Collaboration between Sunflower Member
Ottawa International Airport and the
Children’s Hospital of Easter Ontario (CHEO)

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHbo9EaRvZ6>

What is the impact of the Sunflower?



Sunflower Wearers say:



Over **90%**

Would be more likely to visit a Sunflower-friendly destination

Up to **70%**

Check whether a venue supports the Sunflower before visiting them

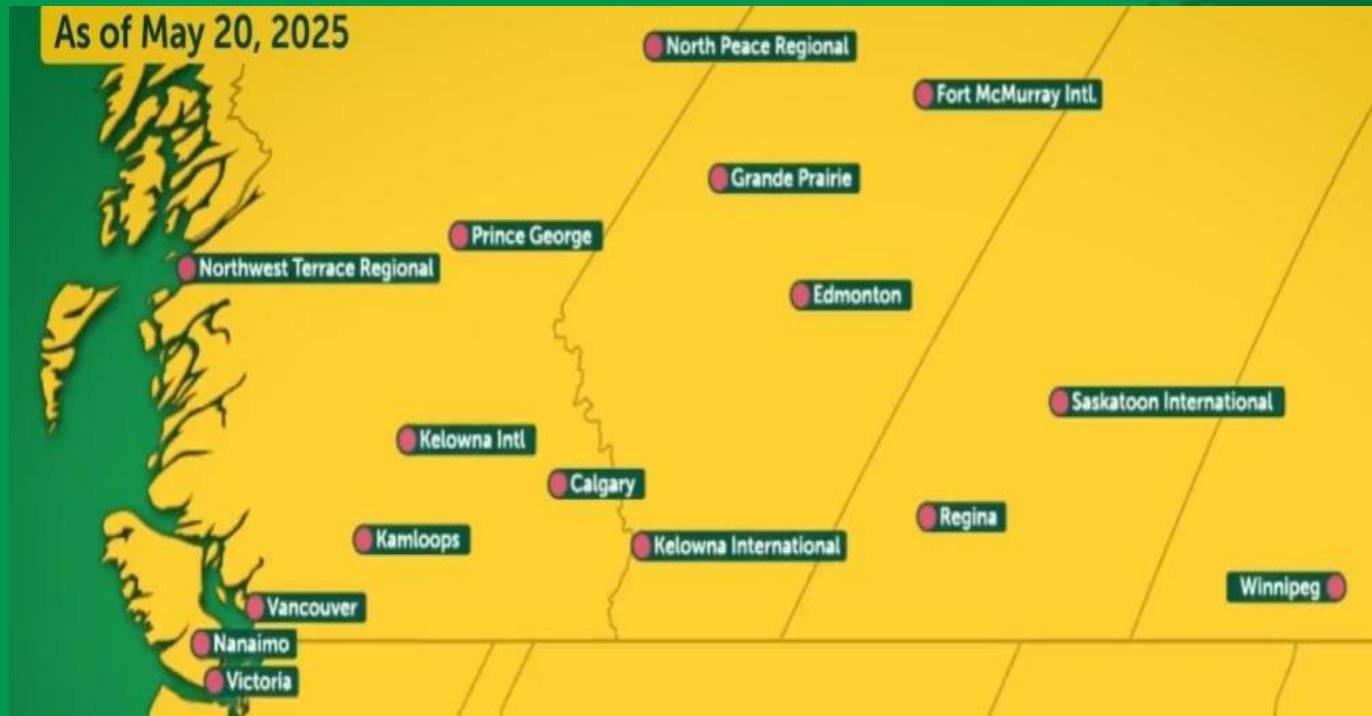
95%

Would recommend a venue that recognises the Sunflower

Airports around the world – as of May 20, 2025



Airports in Canada



The Sunflower in Canada

Sunflower Members

Aviation: over 25 airports and 2 airlines; third party planning launch

Transit: 4 transit agencies, another imminent; ferry services

Municipalities: Regions, cities, and towns

Attractions: Park, Zoo, Farm

Event spaces: Convention centres planning launches coast to coast

Charities: Building relationships with numerous charities

Finance: Major bank internal launch

Agenda

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Corporate Membership helps you

1

Build **BRAND** equity

2

Attract & retain **EMPLOYEES**

3

Better serve **RESIDENTS**



Build brand equity

1

BRAND

- Associate your community with the Sunflower and be seen as a Canadian organization **leading accessibility**
- Do more than meet regulatory requirements
- Effectively share the Sunflower program **building brand awareness and equity** for both your brand and the Sunflower program



Attract and retain employees

2

EMPLOYEES

- Foster a disability-inclusive culture to **attract talent** and invite **increased employee engagement and retention**
- Easily keep the Sunflower program in your employees' minds
- Learn about relevant **workplace considerations**



Better serve customers

3

CUSTOMERS

- Provide an accessible and inclusive experience to **attract the loyalty and significant spending power of disabled residents** and their families
- Continuous learning to **offer richer support**
- Access insights to **drive product and service innovation**

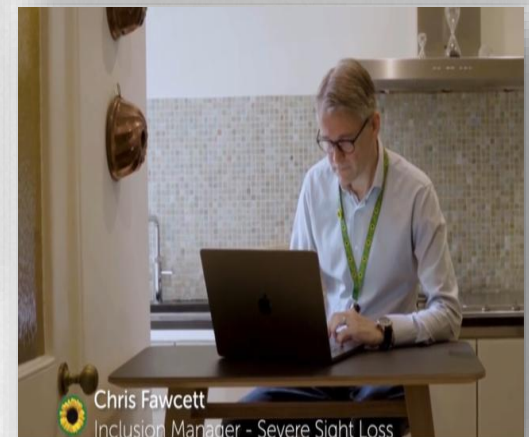
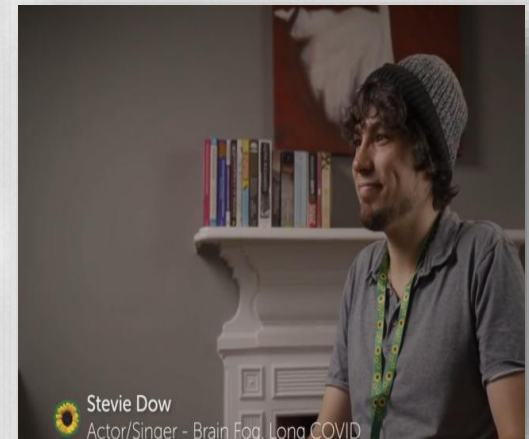
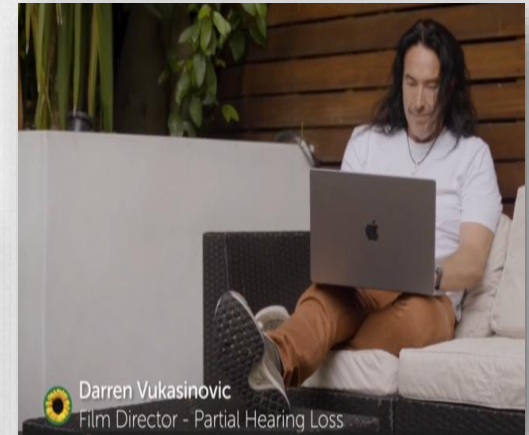
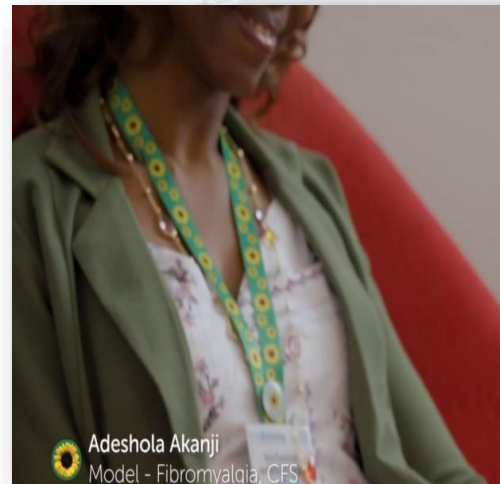


Awareness Training – Short Videos

IMPLEMENTATION

Awareness Training

Access the 10-minute film with Sunflower wearers sharing lived experience in addition to the 9-minute animated video. Use either or both.



Development*

4 informative webinars

30 minutes plus Q&A

Insightful sessions to better understand hidden disabilities and explore strategies for greater inclusivity.

Sunflower Training**

Four hidden disabilities

Disability-inclusive language

Communication

Development

Invisible disabilities index – example – Multiple Sclerosis

MS is an invisible disability



Not Contagious
MS is not contagious or hereditary



It is an autoimmune condition
that attacks the central nervous system



MS is the most common
condition of the central nervous system affecting young adults



MS is a lifelong condition
but it is not a terminal illness! background



It's nearly 3 times
more common in women than in men



2.8 million people are estimated
to live with MS worldwide is not contagious or hereditary



MS is different for everyone
so no two people will have the same range and severity of symptoms

Symptoms of MS

The early signs of MS are not the same for everybody and can be a combination of symptoms for some people. However, problems with vision and sight are the most common first signs to show in people.

Symptoms of MS may vary and continually evolve, and a person with MS may experience all or any of the following:

Look out for these Sunflower icons



I may need more time



I cannot stand for long periods of time



I may need a place to sit down and rest



I have sight loss



I have a hidden disability

Living with MS and challenges faced in daily life

The symptoms experienced by someone living with MS can have an extreme and life changing effect that impacts on the person's day to day life. Here are some challenges faced by people living with MS:

- Difficulty in focusing because of coordination and concentration problems
- Visual problems could affect and make work that involves operating machinery, computer, or screens difficult
- Delayed thinking can affect the ability to make quick decisions
- Constant tiredness and fatigue
- Inability to notice imminent danger because of delayed sensation and slow response to touch

Development

Invisible disabilities index – full access

- Overview of most common symptoms
- Barriers in Everyday Life
- How to Assist
- Making the Workplace Accessible

Short form video clips

Stuttering and interviews

HIDDEN
disabilities 



Kirsten Howells
Stamma

Sunflower Team Support

STRATEGY

Account management

Clare Kumar, proud sunflower wearer and supporter

Discuss objectives and strategies to meet them.



Quarterly Sunflower Meetings

- One-hour live Zoom meeting with other members and those interested in joining. [Register here](#).
- **Sunflower update** – recording available for Corporate members only
- **Member highlight** – recording available for Corporate members only
- **Q&A** – not recorded – safe space for open conversation

Sunflower Team Support

IMPLEMENTATION

Onboarding Call and Order support – Tasha Aiken

Facilitated introduction to your account



Marketing & communications support – Holly Tyrer

Launch support, social media shares, featured articles



Account support – Rebecca Mears

Location mapping support, Online account support



Agenda

1. Impact
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Commitment

1

Commit to provide ongoing awareness of at least 80% of your workforce.*

2

Provide Sunflower Wearer products to colleagues and residents free of charge.

3

Submit Sunflower-related marketing and communication materials for review and approval.



Corporate membership benefits

PRODUCT

- 15% Discount on all products
- Complimentary
Corporate Starter Pack
– value \$278.25



Raising Awareness Onsite

Complimentary Signage

Digital signage is offered at no charge. We recommend a mix of digital and analog signage to accommodate those who have difficulty reading screens. Bilingual products are under development. Customization is available for a fee.

Door decals*



Printables



Investment

Annual subscription fees

Canada - **\$2,940 CAD** (+ tax) per year



Investment

Sunflower Member Wearer products*



100 Lanyard + ID cards + Covers
- \$464.00
Effective Unit price \$4.62



10 Lanyards - \$16.80
Effective Unit price \$1.68



250 Custom branded - \$514.50
Effective Unit price \$2.06



100 Clear wallets - \$126.00
Effective Unit price \$1.26



50 Wearer pins - \$120.75
Effective Unit price \$2.41



10 Wristbands – \$26.25
Effective Unit price - \$2.63

MAKING THE INVISIBLE **VISIBLE**

[Access the shop in Canada](#)

* Prices here noted in CAD as at January 12, 2025. Before any applicable discounts. Please refer to websites for current pricing. Website pricing shall prevail.

Investment

Sunflower Member Supporter Products*



250 Custom branded lanyards-
\$939.75
Effective Unit price \$3.76



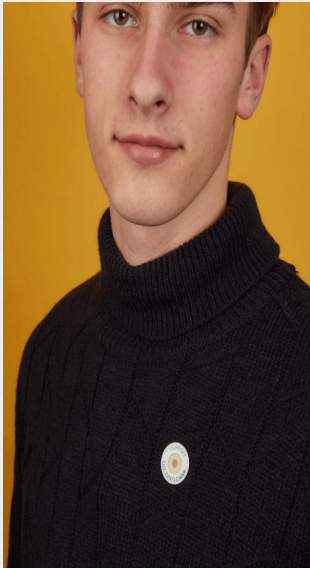
250 Custom branded
Supporter ID cards - \$514.50
Effective Unit price \$2.06



10 Supporter ID Lanyards -
\$23.10
Effective Unit price \$2.31



10 Supporter ID cards + Covers
- \$31.50
Effective Unit price \$3.15



25 Wearer pins - \$37.80
Effective Unit price \$1.51



Wristbands
250 Custom branded - \$672.00
Effective Unit price \$2.69

25 Non-branded – \$78.75
Effective Unit price - \$3.15

MAKING THE INVISIBLE **VISIBLE**

[Access the shop in Canada](#)

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Investment

Sunflower Member Bilingual Products*



Sunflower Roller Banners

\$345.00



Custom Branded Front of Sticker

\$10.00

Minimum order 100



Custom Branded Supporter Lanyard

\$640.00

Packs of 250
Effective Unit price \$2.56



Custom Branded Supporter Lanyard

\$895.00

Packs of 250
Effective Unit price \$3.58



Custom Branded Supporter Lanyard

\$490.00

Packs of 250
Effective Unit price \$1.96



Pack of 25 Enamel Support/S...

\$55.00

Pack of 25
Effective Unit price \$2.31



Custom Branded Poster Packs

\$155.00

In development – let's discuss
Pack of 5-25 (dep size)
Effective Unit price
From \$6.20 - \$39.00

MAKING THE INVISIBLE **VISIBLE**

[Access the shop in Canada](#) and search for "bilingual" products. Within each product, select the language option from the dropdown menu.

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More examples of Sunflower products



Sunflower wearers

Product name



Lanyard (with company logo)



Bespoke



ID card with clear plastic wallet



(with company logo)

Bespoke



Circular pin badge



Silicon wristband



Fabric wristband



Chest ribbon



Sunflower supporters

Product name



Lanyard (with company logo)



Bespoke



ID card with clear plastic wallet



(with company logo)

Bespoke



Circular pin badge



Silicon wristband



Badge with clip and pin



Training guide and clear plastic wallet



Sunflower Members

Product name



Front of house sticker



Strut cards and roller banners



Business corporate Starter pack

Personalised Sunflower posters



A0

A1

A2

A4

We are resolved to **improve everyday experiences** for everyone whose needs are not immediately obvious.

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Clare Kumar

Regional Director, Canada

clare@hdsunflower.com

647-444-3535

MAKING THE INVISIBLE **VISIBLE**



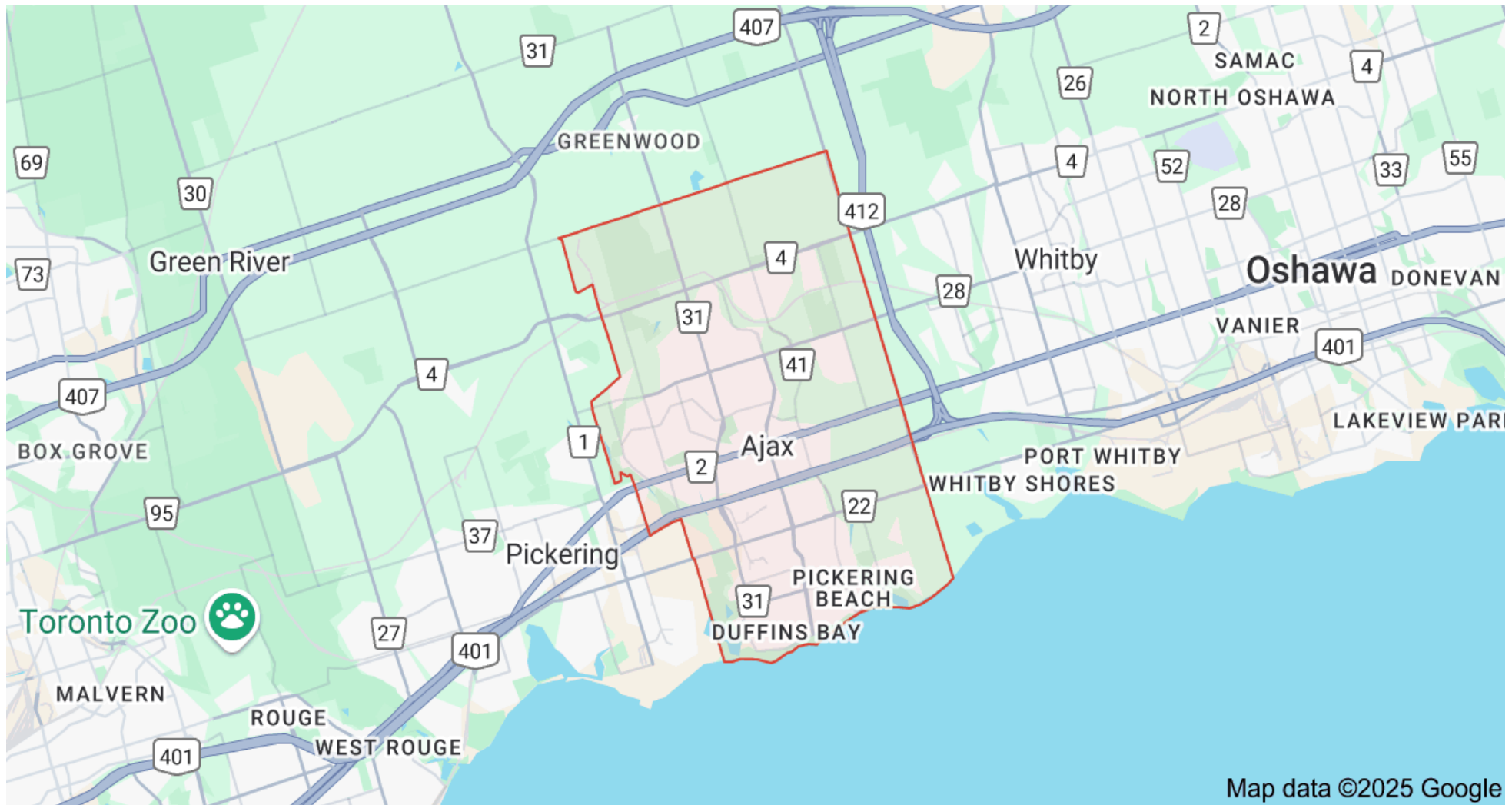
Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

Making the invisible, visible.



Sarah Moore
Legislative Specialist,
Corporate Services - Town of Ajax

A little Town called Ajax...



How'd we become involved with Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?

- Presentation by Metrolinx at ONAP conference
- Brought the information back to Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee and manager

Why it was important:

- ✓ Support your diversity and inclusion objectives and organizational partnerships
- ✓ Increase 'customer' inclusion
- ✓ Build greater staff awareness of hidden disabilities
- ✓ Expand recognition of international program across public service organizations

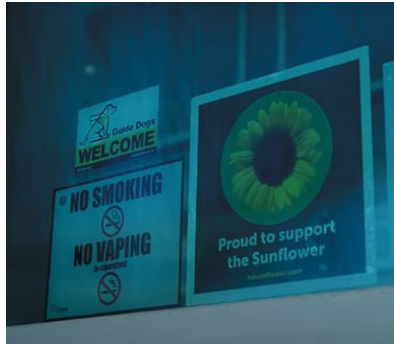


From Implementation...

- Two-phased launch
 - Internal vs. Public launch
- Internal: during Customer Service Week
 - Staff e-blast
 - Intranet web page
 - Launched training requirement
 - Started creating promotional assets for public launch

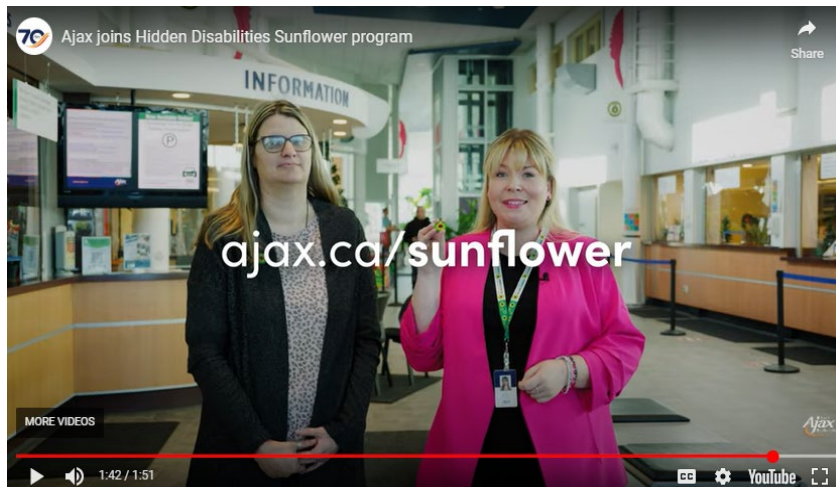


...to Public Launch!



~ Approx. 2 months to hit staff training completion target (80%)

- Now included as part of new hire on-boarding
- Facility decals at main entrance
- Front-counter displays
- Promotional Items:
 - News release, social media, video, web page: ajax.ca/sunflower



Request Process:

1. Requester completes online form

(staff are also able to assist with completion over the phone/in-person)

- Name & contact info.
- Is request for your self or on behalf of someone?
- Are you an Ajax resident?
- Do you reg. access Town facilities/services?
 - **If no, contact requester to explain the program**

2. Requestors can choose one item:

- pin with locking back
- waterproof wristband
- lanyard

Request Process continued

- 3. Staff review the request and mail out to requester (requests processed once/week)**
- 4. Item is sent via regular letter post with a flyer about the program, encouraging them to share feedback**
- 5. Bulk orders are accommodated on request (e.g. Community Living Summer Camp program participants)**

Q1-3 Summary

12/18/24 – 09/18/25

Volume of requests

278 requests in the first 9 months since public launch:

- **pin** (49%)
- **lanyard*** (29%)
- **waterproof wristband*** (22%)

*added option as of July 2025



12/18/24 – 09/18/25 cont.

Interest in the Program

- **48%** of requests were made on behalf of a family member or friend with an invisible disability
- **61%** of requests came from Ajax residents
- **81%** of requestors actively participate in Town of Ajax programs, services, and facilities
- **84%** of requests were sent by mail

Engagement

How did requesters hear about the Town's participation in the program?:

- **Social Media – 53%**
- Info. displayed in a Town facility – 15%
- Town of Ajax website – 10%
- Word of mouth – 12 %
- Other – 10%

Outreach & Collaboration

- City of Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Lakeridge Health Senior Support Programming Staff
- Residents of Ashley Manor and Westwood Manor (via Lakeridge Health Senior Support Group)
- Durham Region Transit
- Region of Durham Accessibility Ambassadors Group
- Region of Durham Accessibility Coordinators
- Region of Durham Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Ajax Accessibility Fair Event
- Older Adults BBQ
- District of Saanich

Building Awareness

- Summer social media blast for wristband availability (in time for aquatics programming and summer camps)



- Information station at staff luncheon providing wearer and supporter materials; “Garden of Inclusion” art project: Staff were encouraged to “plant” a sunflower with messages of inclusion (106 staff participated in a two-hour period!).

Recognition:

Town of Ajax was thrilled to be recognized as the Accessible Employer of the Year at the 2025 Abilities Centre Accessibility Awards! (May 2025)



Receipt of this award highlights the Town's ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion across our programs, policies, facilities and services, like participation in the Sunflower program.

Testimonials

 **Don't underestimate the internal impact!**

Sarah,

This is the best program by far that the Town and you have got us involved with.

Someone like me who is completely deaf on my right side and now with an autoimmune disease are truly appreciative of this initiative 😊

Thank you so much for this and although I am on an exemption working from home undergoing some medical treatment, I would appreciate if you provided me with a pin to wear when I return 😊

Thank you Sarah, great work!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



A Quiet Moment of Understanding at Town Hall

Shortly after the Town of Ajax publicly launched its participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, a resident entered Town Hall wearing a sunflower pin. The individual, who lives with a non-visible disability, had come to renew a permit—a process that can be stressful and overwhelming due to sensory sensitivities and anxiety.

At the front desk, a contracted facility security staff member—newly trained—immediately recognized the sunflower symbol. Instead of the usual brisk check-in, the staff member offered a warm greeting, slowed their pace, and gently asked if the visitor needed any assistance or extra time. The resident later shared that this small gesture made them feel seen and respected in a way they rarely experienced in public spaces.



Sunflowers in the Wild!

Hi Sarah.

Thank you for my sunflower pin. We have just returned from two months of travelling, involving several flights. A flight attendant on AirTransat noticed my pin and recognized it! It is a great programme. The driver of an airport "golf cart" also saw it and gave us a ride....very much appreciated! I saw several others wearing the sunflower lanyard, too. 😊

Thank you for your understanding and for promoting such a helpful programme.

Looking Ahead

Looking Ahead:

- **Seeds are sowing!!!**
 - Durham Region Transit
 - City of Pickering
 - Service Durham
 - Region-wide? --? goal
- **Evaluation & Metrics**
 - Partnering with DRT to evaluate program participation
- **Continued Outreach and Expansion in Ajax**
 - Supporter materials for staff (lanyards, laptop decals)
 - Continuing awareness presentations, promotion



Thinking of joining HDS?



Considerations:

- **Budget**

- Membership fee
- What items will you provide? (e.g. pins, lanyards, supporter items)
 - Keep in mind, items ship from UK (+duties extra, longer to ship)
 - ~approx. \$3-4 per request including postage

- **In-house materials**

- Materials created using the Sunflower image require advance approval from HDS communications team → need to build review into project timelines

- **Demand**

- How will you manage requests?
 - Centralized through accessibility coordinator; online form, priority access for Ajax residents and those individuals who regularly access Ajax facilities and services
 - Items delivered by Canada Post mail (1-2 pins covered by regular Canada Post letter postage)

- **Growth**

- How to keep the program relevant and top of mind both internally and externally



Expenses to date:



Q1 Expenses (Dec. 18 2024 - March 18 2025)	Cost	CBSA Fees	Total
Membership	\$ 1,470.00	\$ -	\$1,470.00
100 pins; 10 decals	\$ 236.39	\$ 119.29	\$ 355.68
Display stands for facility frontline (18)	\$ 76.23	\$ -	\$ 76.23
Postage	\$ 98.40	\$ -	\$ 98.40
Q2 Expenses (March 19 - June 18 2025)			
Postage	\$ 39.36	\$ -	\$ 39.36
150 pins; 25 support pin; 50 wristbands	\$ 469.91	\$ 124.01	\$ 593.92
Q3 Expenses (June 19 - September 18 2025)			
Membership renewal	\$ 1,550.00	\$ -	\$1,550.00
250 supporter lanyards; 200 wearer lanyards; 150 laptop decals; 50 wristbands	\$ 1,214.50	\$ 124.41	\$1,338.91
Postage	\$ 165.34	\$ -	\$ 165.34
			\$5,687.84

- *Graphic design, videography and social media was overseen in-house by Town of Ajax staff*

HDS Canada Contact:

Clare Kumar

(she/her, AuDHD, HSP)

Regional Director - Canada, The
Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Team

hdsunflower.com

1-647-444-3535

clare@hdsunflower.com



Questions?

Thank you!



Sarah Moore

Legislative Specialist

Corporate Services

Town of Ajax

sarah.moore@ajax.ca

905-619-2529, ext. 3347

365-885-2161 (cell)

Intro to document accessibility

Checklist

General

Category	Guidelines
Accessible by design	Think about accessibility from the start—like adding blueberries before baking muffins.
Keep it simple	Create simple documents with text, headings, images (with alt text), and simple tables (with one header row).
Text & layout	Use at least 18pt font for presentations and 12pt for other documents. Space out text (1.5 line spacing), keep it left-aligned, and break it into short paragraphs.
Headings	Use real heading styles in a logical order (H1 for titles, H2 for sections, etc.).
Links	Write clear, descriptive links (e.g., "Learn more about accessibility" instead of "Click here"). Underline and use colour so links stand out.
Images	Add alt text for meaningful images, mark decorative images as such, and include image descriptions when more context is needed.

Tables	Use tables only for data—not for layout. Keep them simple with a single header row.
Emphasis	Highlight important info using text like “Important” instead of relying only on colour, visual methods, or symbols.
Colour	Use high-contrast colours and check contrast ratios with tools like WebAIM’s contrast checker . Also, avoid relying on colour alone to convey information visually or in text (e.g., “the items in red”).
Accessibility Checkers	Use built-in checkers in Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Adobe Acrobat to catch common issues.
Manual checks	Always double-check accessibility manually—automated tools can't catch everything. Review: alt text accuracy, proper reading order, and logical content structure.

Word

Category	Best practice
Headings	Use real heading styles and don’t skip levels.
Table of contents	Use Word’s built-in table of contents to leverage headings and ease navigation, especially for speech recognition users.
Lists	Group related content with real lists to communicate structure to assistive technologies and layout content intuitively.

PowerPoint

Category	Best practice
Design themes	Use built-in design themes for better structure and reading order. Avoid complex backgrounds with gradients and patterns. Modify colours in Slide Master.
Slide titles	Add a clear, distinct title to each slide. This helps all users—especially screen reader users—navigate and understand the content (Review > Check Accessibility > Slide Title).
Reading order	Add content in logical order and review the reading flow with the Selection Pane—title first, then body text.

Excel

Category	Best practice
Worksheet names	Use unique, descriptive worksheet names instead of default “Sheet1” names. Delete unused sheets.
Cell A1	Start with Cell A1 for orientation info. Avoid blank A1 cells.
Text visibility	Ensure text in cells is fully visible using "Wrap Text" or resizing columns.
Blank and hidden content	Avoid blank sheets, rows, and columns. If needed, add one blank row to separate tables. Mark intentionally blank cells with "No data". Avoid hidden rows and columns.

PDF

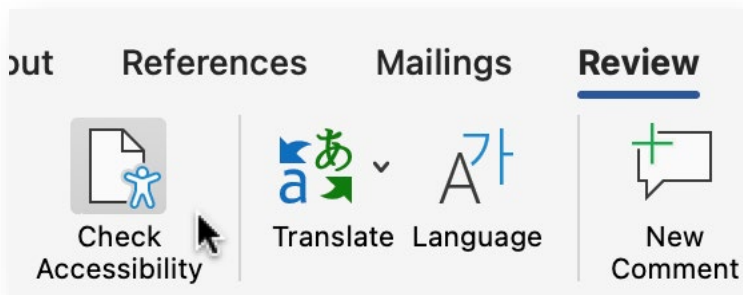
Category	Best practice
Word vs. PDF	Provide multiple formats (like Word). Only offer essential PDFs (editable forms) to reduce remediation costs.
Save as PDF	Use "Save as PDF" with accessibility options enabled—never "Print as PDF." Steps vary slightly by program.
Document title	Add a document title under File > Document Properties > Description > Title.
Tag order	Make sure the tag order follows a logical reading flow for screen reader users. Tags at the top are read first, regardless of visual layout. Adjust by dragging tags in the Tags panel.
Accessibility Checker	From the All tools pane, go to Prepare for accessibility > Check for accessibility > Start Checking. If any issues remain, right-click them and select Explain to learn how to fix them.
Table headers (if needed)	Table headers might not be tagged correctly when converting to PDF. In the Tags panel, ensure each header cell is tagged as <th>, nested inside a <tr>, and rows inside a <table>. To fix a tag, double-click and type <th>, or right-click > Properties > change the Type to Table Header Cell .

How to open the Accessibility Checker

Word, PowerPoint, and Excel

The instructions are the same across Word, PowerPoint, and Excel on Windows, macOS, and Web versions.

1. Select the **Review** tab.
2. Select **Check Accessibility**.



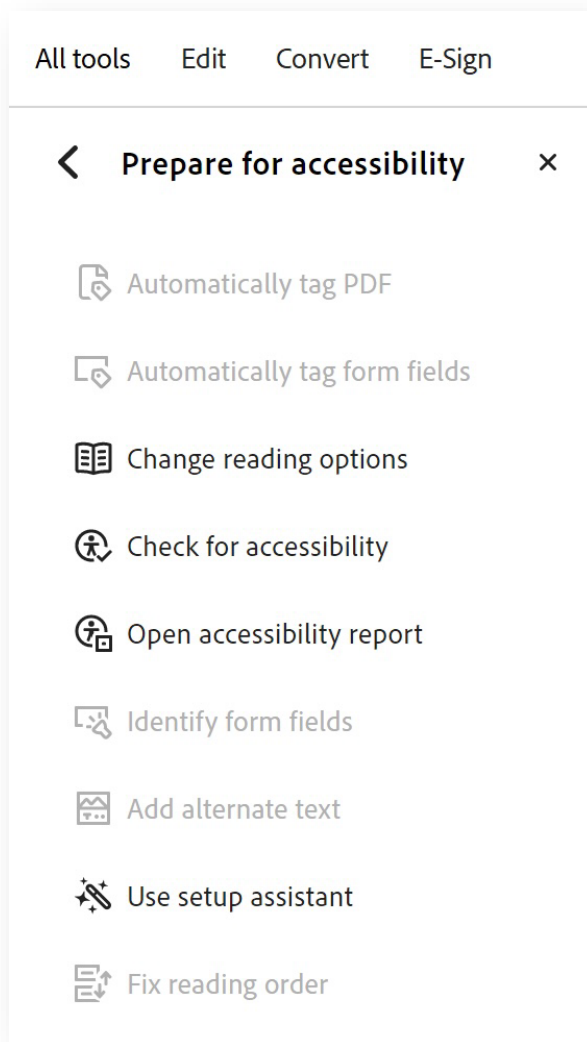
The *Accessibility* pane will open on the right.

To learn more, see Microsoft's support article [Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker](#).

Adobe Acrobat Pro

1. From the global bar, select **All tools**.
2. From the left panel, select **View more > Prepare for accessibility > Check for accessibility**.

3. From the *Accessibility Checker Options* dialog, keep **all options** selected and select **Start Checking**.



The *Accessibility Checker* panel will open on the right.

To learn more, see Adobe's support article [Create and verify PDF accessibility](#).



Guidelines for document accessibility

For the District of Saanich

Table of contents

How to use this document.....	4
General.....	4
Design.....	4
Text and layout.....	5
Headings.....	5
Links.....	6
Images.....	6
Tables.....	8
Emphasis	9
Colour	9
Accessibility checkers.....	11
Word	13
Headings.....	13
Table of contents.....	14
Lists.....	15
Accessibility Checker	16
PowerPoint	17
Design themes.....	17
Slide titles	17
Reading order.....	18
Excel.....	19
Worksheet name	19

Cell A1.....	19
Text.....	20
Data.....	20
PDF.....	21
File formats.....	21
Approach.....	21
Save as PDF	22
Document title	23
Tag order	24
Accessibility Checker	25
Tables.....	26
Resources.....	27

How to use this document

This guide outlines best practices for creating accessible documents. It's here to help you build accessibility in from the start—removing the most significant barriers and making your content easier to use for everyone, including people who use assistive technologies.

While it doesn't cover everything needed for full accessibility conformance, these steps will take you a long way and can greatly reduce the time and cost if professional support is needed for more **complex** or **important** documents.

General

Design

- **“Bake in” accessibility from the start:** Like adding blueberries before baking muffins, build accessibility into your document from the beginning—not after it's finished.
- **Create simple documents:** Simple is better. Try to avoid complexity and stick to text, links, headings, alt text for images, and tables with one header row.



Text and layout

- **Use readable font sizes:** Aim for at least 18pt for presentations and 12pt for other documents to keep text easy to read.
- **Use 1.5 spacing:** Provide extra space between lines to help users with reading or cognitive disabilities track text more easily. Avoid exceeding 2.0 line spacing in most cases.
- **Stick to left-aligned:** It's the easiest to read as it keeps a consistent starting point for each line (for left-to-right languages like English).
- **Use short paragraphs:** Keep paragraphs short and focused on one idea. This creates white space, makes content easier to read, and encourages users to keep going. It's okay to use a one-sentence paragraph—just not too often.

Headings

- **Use real heading styles:** Don't just use large bold text.

- **Maintain a logical order:** Use Heading 1 for titles, Heading 2 for sections, Heading 3 for subsections. Don't skip levels.
- **Write concise, meaningful headings:** Make them clear and informative.
- **Customize styles:** Use the "Modify" option to adjust heading styles as needed.

Links

- **Insert real links:** Make sure links are interactable.
- **Use clear link text:** Describe the purpose or destination.
- **Avoid vague phrases:** Don't use "click here" or "read more."
- **Style links clearly:** Use both underline and colour to set them apart from surrounding text.

Images

- **Add alt text to meaningful images:** Not everyone can see images, so alt text lets screen readers describe them aloud.
- **Consider image descriptions:** You can also add an image description directly into your document to ensure its meaning is clear, especially for people who may struggle with ambiguity.
- **Mark decorative images appropriately:** If you're keeping the file in Word format, type "decorative" as the alt text or use brief alt text for images without meaningful content. If you're exporting to PDF, select "Mark as decorative" instead.



Alt Text


How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?

- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

An ice cream scooper evenly portions batter into a muffin baking pan, each cup lined with a paper baking cup.

Generate alt text for me

☐ Mark as decorative 

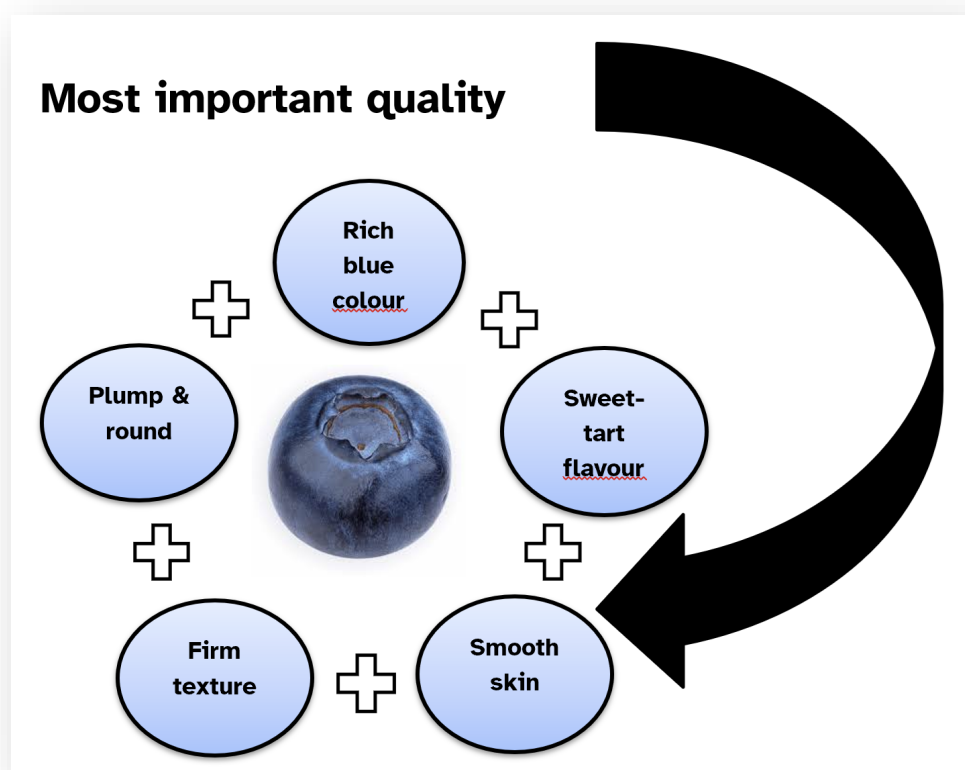
Tables

- **Use tables only for data:** Don't use them for layout.
- **Avoid complex tables:** Skip merged cells, multiple header rows, or too many columns.
- **Split complex tables:** Break them into simpler, smaller tables.

- **Mark the top row as a header:** This helps screen readers read the table correctly.

Emphasis

- **Use text-based emphasis:** For example, add “Important” before warning text—don’t just use the colour red.
- **Don’t rely on colour or symbols alone:** Make sure meaning is clear without visual cues.



Colour

- **Don’t rely on colour alone:** Avoid phrases like “the items in red.”

- **Add alternative cues:** Use text, labels, symbols, or alt text to convey meaning.
- **Use high contrast colours:** Check contrast ratios with tools like [WebAIM's contrast checker](#).

Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

Foreground

Hex Value
#8DB3E2

Color Picker Alpha
1

Lightness

Background

Hex Value
#FFFFFF

Color Picker

Lightness

Contrast Ratio

2.16:1

[permalink](#)

Normal Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Large Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Graphical Objects and User Interface Components

WCAG AA: **Fail**

★
Text Input

Accessibility checkers

- **Use built-in Accessibility Checkers:** Available in Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Adobe Acrobat.
- **Start with automated checks:** They help spot basic issues quickly.
- **Know their limits:** Manual review is still needed for full accessibility.

Accessibility Assistant

✓ ✕

Keep going!

Fix the remaining issues in the document to make it accessible to everyone.

Color and Contrast

Hard-to-read text contrast ✓

Media and Illustrations

Missing alt text 3

Tables

Missing table header ✓

Use of merged or split cells ✓

Document Structure

No headings in document ✓

Document Access

Restricted access ✓

Word

Headings

Proper headings help screen reader users navigate and make it easy to generate a table of contents.

- **Apply real heading styles:** Use built-in styles, not just bold text.
- **Don't skip heading levels:** Follow a logical order (e.g., Heading 2 after Heading 1).
- **Customize if needed:** You can adjust styles to match your design.

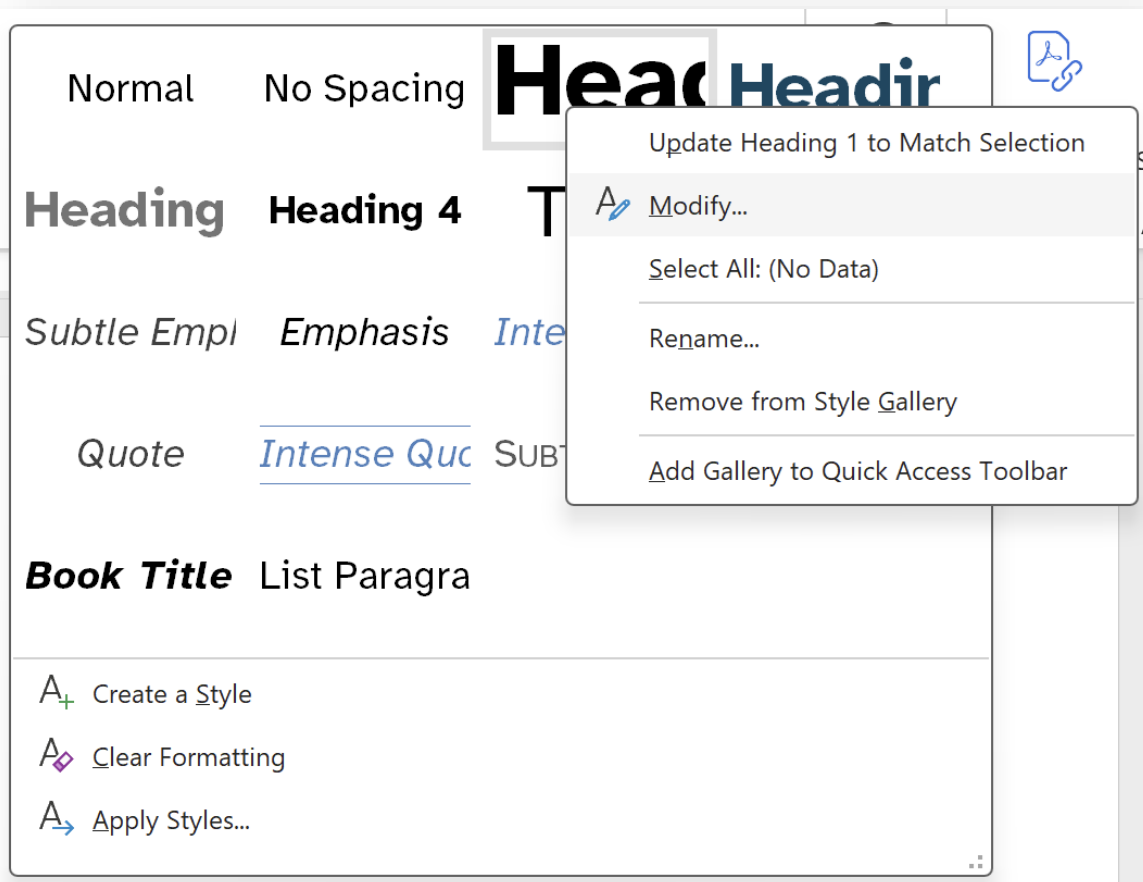
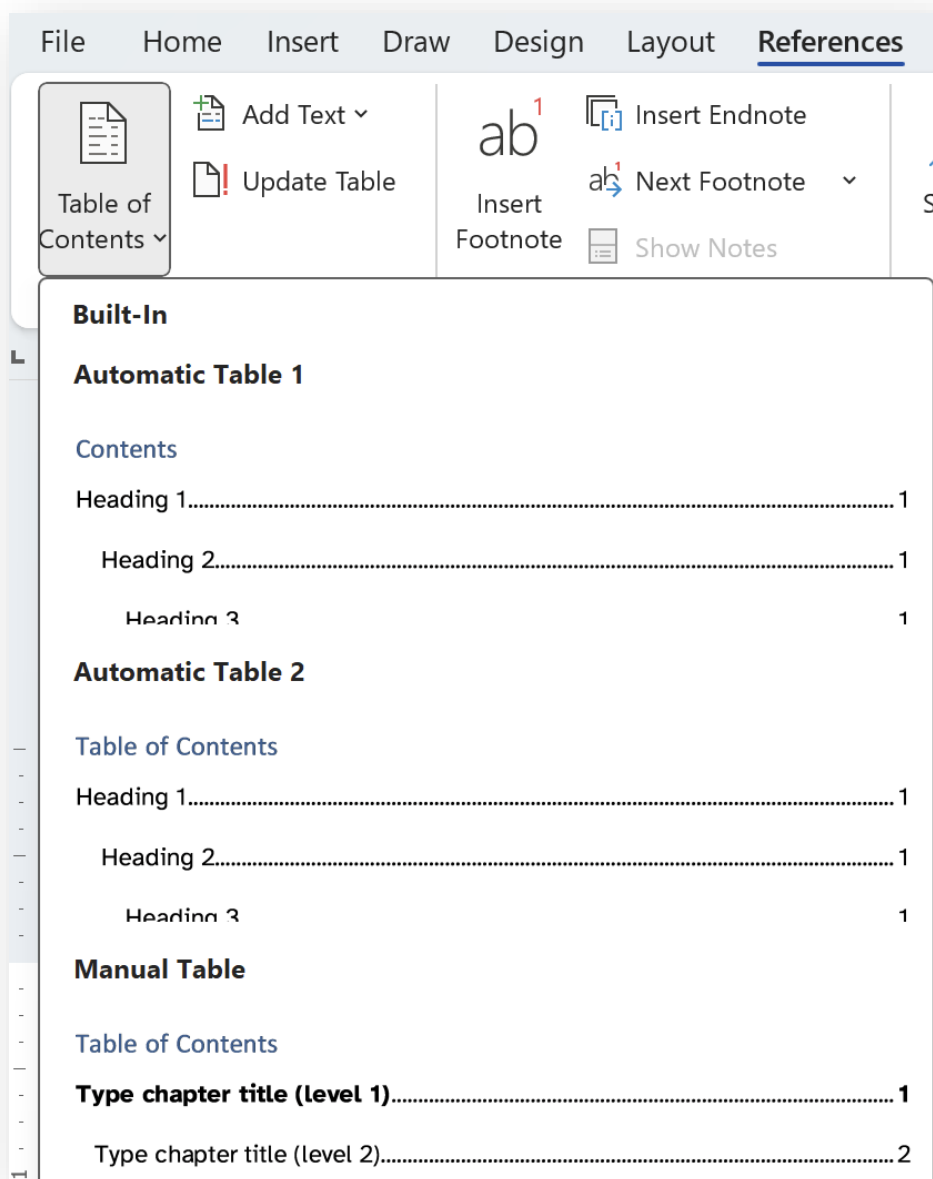


Table of contents

A table of contents gives readers an overview and helps with navigation, especially in long documents.

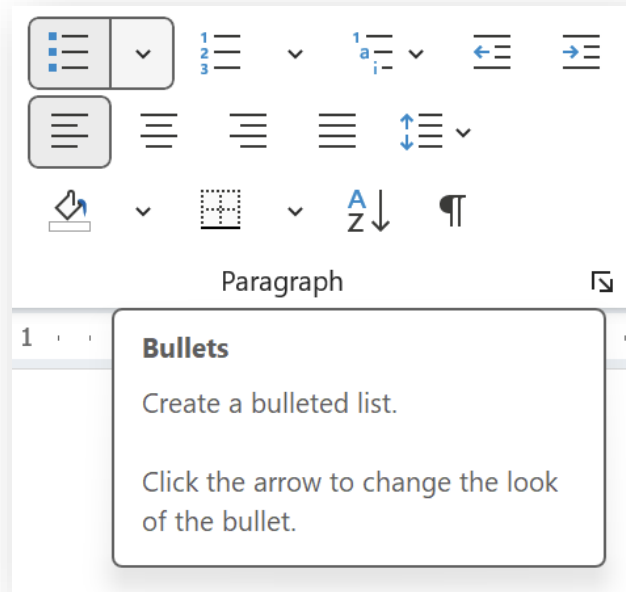
- **Use real headings to create a table of contents:** Add one via References > Table of Contents > Select a style.
- **Keep it updated:** Refresh it after editing to stay accurate.



Lists

Real lists communicate structure to assistive technologies effectively. They also group related items and layout content intuitively.

- **Insert real lists:** Use built-in list tools—not tabs, dashes, or manual numbering. This ensures screen readers can identify and navigate them effectively.



Accessibility Checker

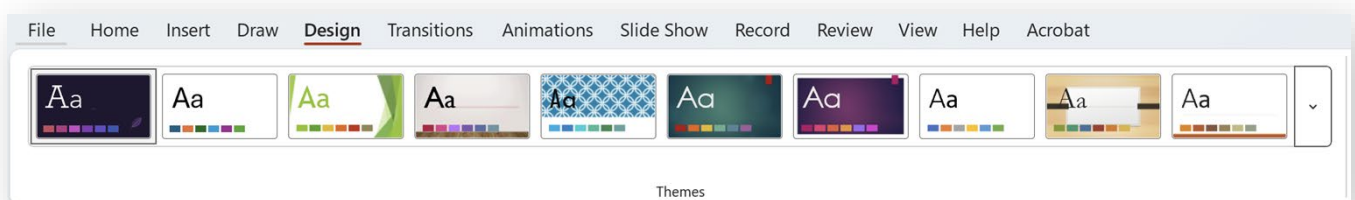
Use Word's Accessibility Checker:

1. **Open the tool:** Go to Review > Check Accessibility.
2. **Review results:** The task pane displays issues, explanations, and suggestions.
3. **Fix issues:** Follow the steps provided for each error, warning, or tip.
4. **Double check alt text:** Edit the automatic alt text to make it concise and meaningful.

PowerPoint

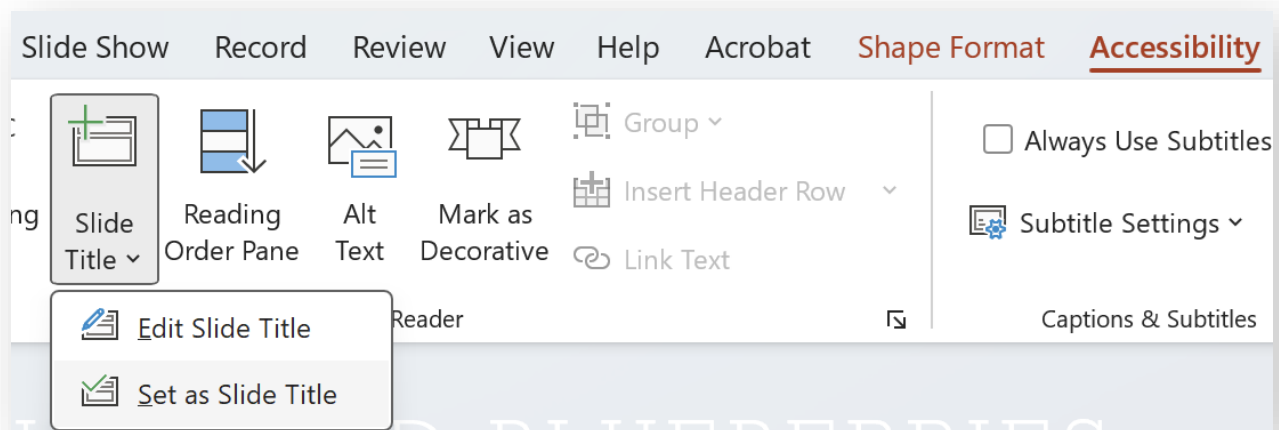
Design themes

- **Use built-in themes:** They ensure accessible structure and logical reading order.
- **Avoid complex designs:** Skip background patterns or gradients that reduce readability.
- **Modify colours in Slide Master:** Fix contrast or readability issues across the entire presentation.
- **Add content in logical order:** This maintains proper screen reader flow (e.g., title first, then body text).



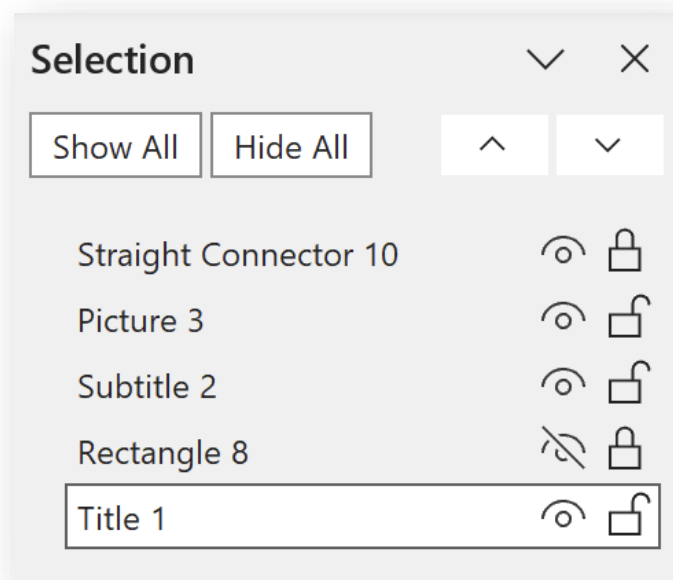
Slide titles

- **Use unique, informative slide titles:** This helps all users—especially screen reader users—navigate and understand the content (Review > Check Accessibility > Slide Title).



Reading order

- **Check the reading order:** Screen readers follow the order items were added to the slide—it might not be logical.
- **Fix it in the Selection Pane:** Reorder items so titles come first, followed by body text and other content.



Excel

Worksheet name

- **Use unique worksheet names:** Make them concise and descriptive to help users navigate efficiently.
- **Avoid defaults:** Replace names like “Sheet1” or “Sheet2.”
- **Delete unused sheets:** This keeps the workbook simple to use.

Cell A1

Cell A1 is especially important—it’s the first cell screen readers read. So using it well sets the tone for an accessible experience.

- **Use Cell A1 for orienting information:** For example, worksheet or workbook summaries, the number of sheets, or navigation instructions for complex workbooks (an index).
- **Avoid leaving Cell A1 blank:** This ensures screen readers announce the content on the worksheet.
- **Format text in Cell A1 using “Wrap Text”:** This keeps descriptions concise and readable without cropping or spilling out.

	A	B
1	The pie chart highlights how blueberry muffins are enjoyed across three main categories: homemade (50%), store-bought (30%), and those from cafes or bakeries (20%).	
2		

Text

- **Make text fully visible:** Avoid cropping or overflowing.
- **Keep content clear, readable, and accessible:** Users shouldn't need to scroll or adjust settings to read it.
- **Use “Wrap Text” for longer text:** This keeps everything readable within the cell.
- **Resize columns and rows for shorter text:** This prevents cut-off content.

Data

- **Avoid blank or hidden content:** Screen readers can get stuck or skip important information.
- **Use only one blank row between tables:** More than one can confuse users.
- **Remove unused sheets:** This streamlines navigation.

- **Mark blank cells clearly:** Use text like “No data” instead of leaving them empty.
- **Avoid hidden rows and columns:** They’re hard to detect and can frustrate assistive tech users.

PDF

File formats

- **Provide multiple formats:** PDFs are popular and offer design control but often don’t work well with assistive technology. Include an accessible Word version.
- **Only offer and remediate essential PDFs:** Focus on key documents that aren’t just informational, like editable forms. This saves on remediation costs.
- **Hire a professional if needed:** Especially for important or complex PDFs.

Approach

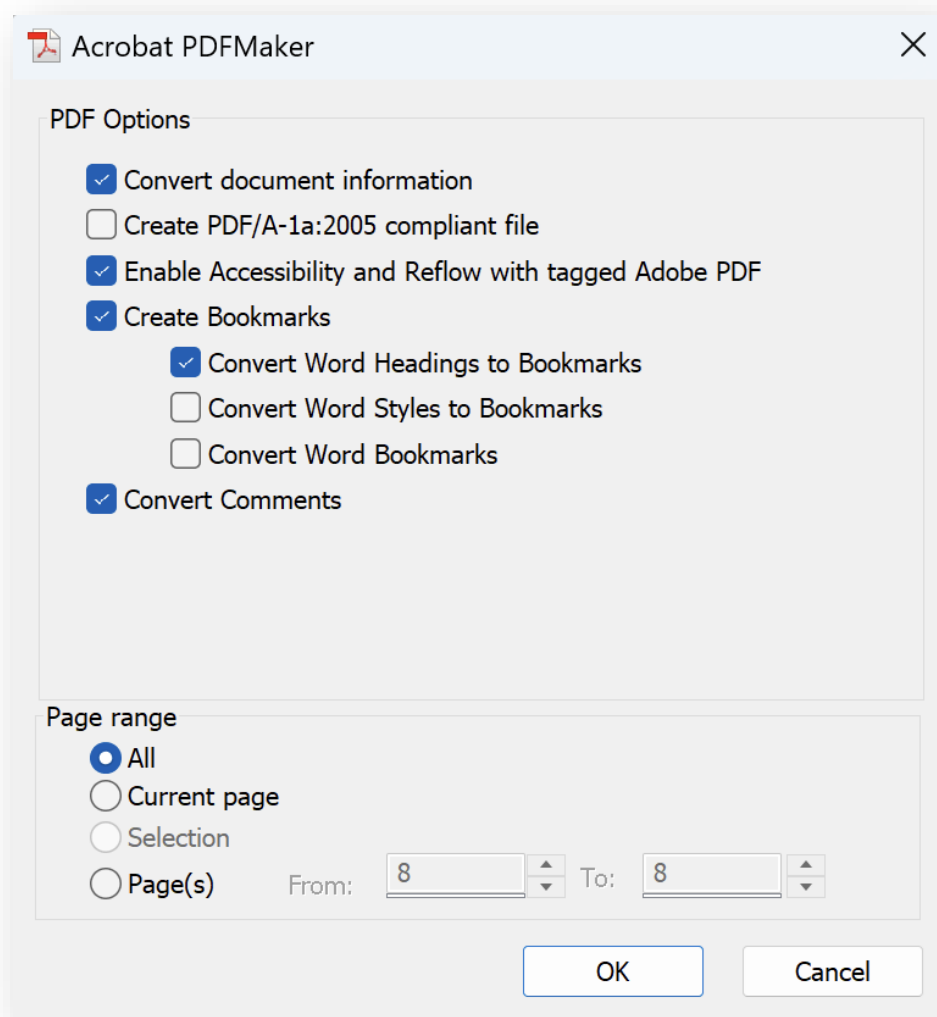
Follow these steps to remove the most significant accessibility barriers:

1. Make the source document accessible.
2. Save as a tagged PDF.
3. Add a document title.
4. Review the tag order.
5. Run the Accessibility Checker.

6. Fix remaining issues it finds (e.g. table headers).

Save as PDF

- Don't "Print as PDF".
- "Save as PDF" instead:
 1. Select **File > Save as Adobe PDF**.
 2. In the pop-up dialog, select **Options**:
 - Check **Enable Accessibility and Reflow with tagged Adobe PDF**
 - Check **Convert Word Headings to Bookmarks**.

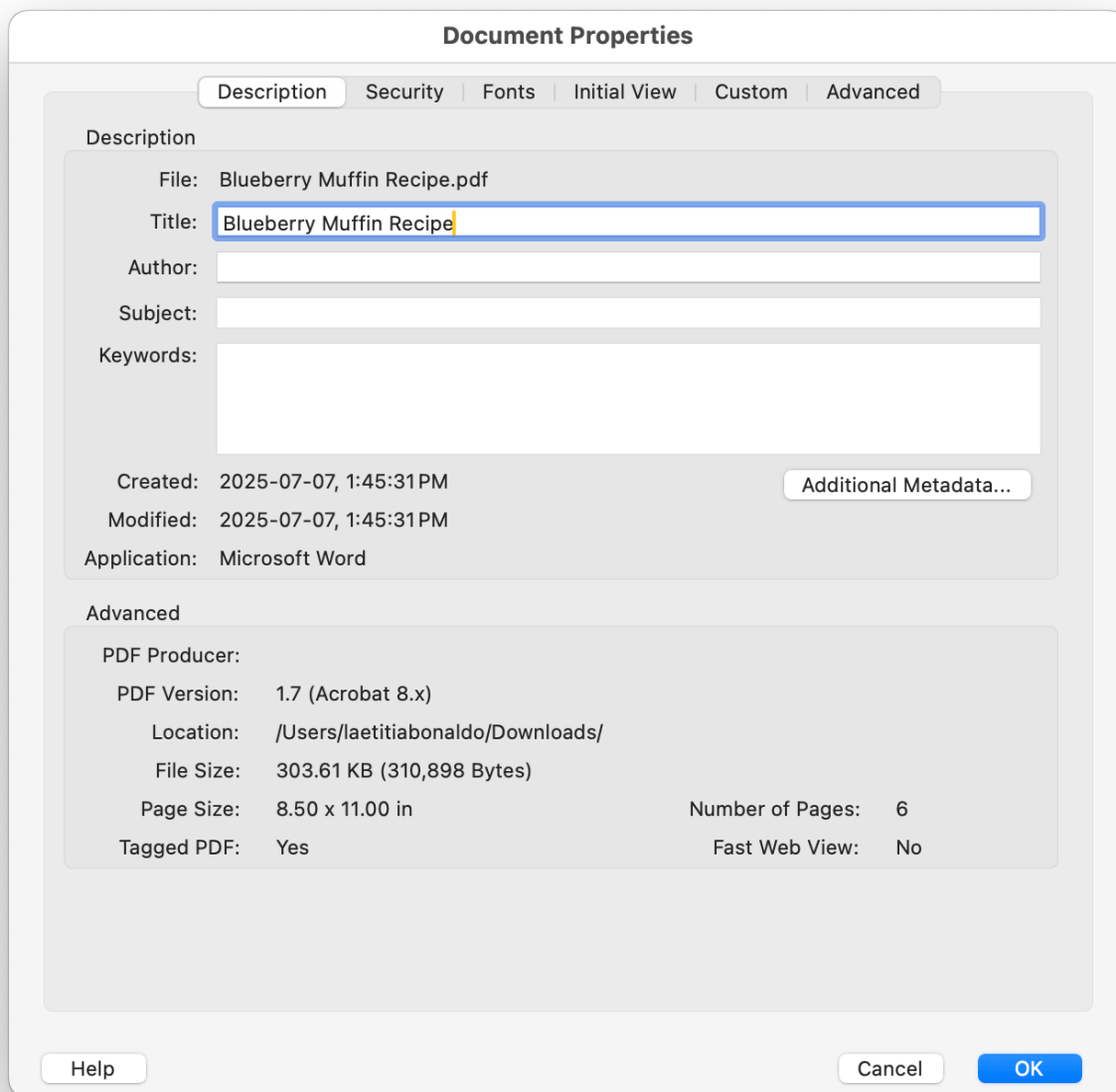


Note: Saving as tagged PDF varies slightly across programs.

Document title

Screen readers announce a document's title first, and sighted users see it in the title bar.

- **Add a document title:** Go to File > Document Properties > Description and enter it in the Title field.



Tag order

Tag order controls how screen readers read content, ensuring it's clear and logical.

- **Review the tag order:** Screen readers read tags top to bottom. Think like a user—what should be heard first?

- **Adjust as needed:** Drag and drop tags to fix the order.

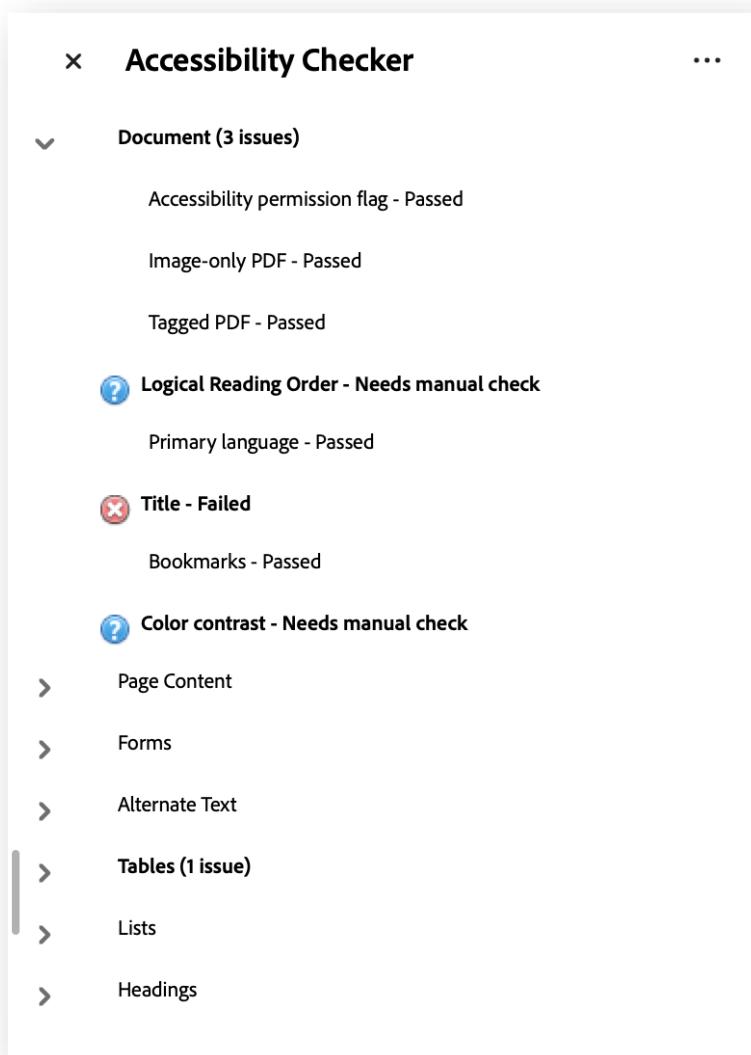
Note: Tag order affects screen reader flow, not visual layout.

Accessibility Checker

From the All tools pane, run the Accessibility Checker:

1. Select **Prepare for accessibility**.
2. Select **Check for accessibility**.
3. In the modal, select **Start Checking**.

If any issues remain, right-click the issue and choose **Explain** to see how to fix it.

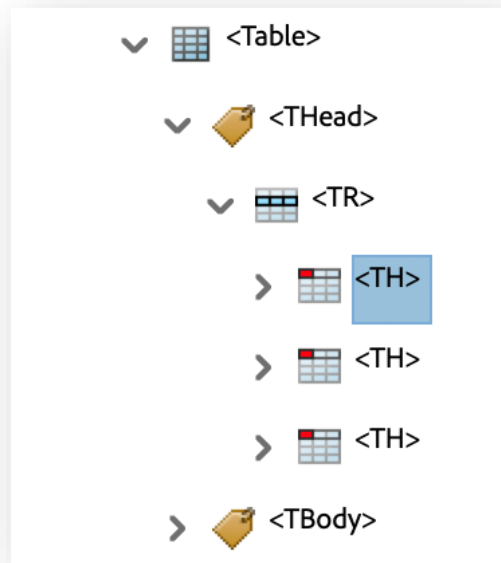


Tables

Table headers might not be tagged correctly when converting to PDF. They can look right visually but still be read incorrectly to screen readers.

- **Check the Tags panel:** Make sure headers are correctly tagged and nested:
 - Each header cell should be tagged as `<th>` (table header).
 - Table headers (`<th>`) must be inside a `<tr>` (table row).

- Table rows must be inside a <table> (table).
- **Add table headers (if needed):** To change a tag to a table header:
 - Double-click the **tag** and type “<th>”, or
 - Right-click the **tag** > select **Properties** > choose **Table Header Cell** from the **Type** drop-down.



Resources

- [Make your content accessible to everyone](#)
- [Make your content accessible in the Microsoft 365 apps](#)
- [Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker](#)
- [WebAIM - Contrast Checker](#)
- [Create accessible PDFs - Microsoft Support](#)
- [Create and verify PDF accessibility - Acrobat Pro](#)



Accessible Events, Meetings and Presentations Guidelines

For the District of Saanich



Table of Contents

Location Selection	3
Parking and Emergency Procedures	4
Attendee Communications and Event Registration	5
Seating	6
Outdoor Event and Gala/Reception Considerations	7
Event Setup	8
Stages and Communication Access	9
Signage and Technology	10
Sensory Considerations	11
Service and Guide Animals	12
Event Accessibility Checklist	13
Physical Access	13
Seating and Tables	14
Communication Access	15
Sensory Access and Staff/Volunteer Training	16
Accessible and Inclusive Language	17
In General and Mobility Device Users	18
People Who Are Blind and People Who Are Deaf	19
People Who Have a Communication Disability	20
What About Expressions?	21
Accessible and Inclusive Vocabulary	22
Accessible Meetings & Presentations	23
Preparing a Presentation	24
Presenting Best Practices	25
Meeting Digitally	26
Why Do Icons Matter?	27
Why Is Contrast So Important?	28

Location Selection

When selecting a venue for an event, it's important to consider the location and whether or not the facilities onsite would work for the majority of participants. Select a location that:

- ✔ Has accessible or universal washrooms (if there are none, consider renting accessible washroom facilities)
- ✔ Includes an elevator in a multi-story building and step-free access to all main areas where the event will be held
- ✔ Provides ample accessible parking close to entrances
- ✔ Maintains clear, wide pathways around the venue/event site
- ✔ Ensure doors are easy to open and have accessible handles or automatic door operators.
- ✔ Has areas of lowered counter space or a table set up with knee clearance at ticketing/reception/will-call

Additional Outdoor Considerations

The outdoor ground surface should be level and smooth, noting that concrete, asphalt or compacted crushed gravel surfaces are far more accessible than grass or wood chips. Wood chips or bark mulch are not accessible surfaces.

Event organizers may wish to install temporary pathways (Mobi mats, plywood etc.) for outdoor events especially if the weather has been very wet.

Avoid sites with a more than 5% slope.

Consider providing a "Welcome & Orientation Tent" with accessible maps, large print schedules, QR codes for screen reader-friendly versions, and verbal orientation by staff.

Parking

Parking, near the entrance and primary event amenities is of key importance. Consider the location of the accessible parking stalls and whether or not it meets the needs of the attendees of the event.

- ✓ There is accessible parking near the entrance
- ✓ Accessible parking ideally includes an access aisle connected to a path of travel preventing individuals from having to navigate behind parked vehicles.
- ✓ If insufficient numbers of accessible parking stalls are available consider providing temporary additional parking (especially for large scale public events and events that are targeted towards seniors)
- ✓ Ensure that vendors and the event team members have dedicated parking including loading areas so not that the accessible parking becomes even more limited.



Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures are important to consider for people with disabilities and ideally instructions should be accessible and available in multiple formats.

- ✓ Emergency evacuation plans include people with disabilities.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers are trained to assist people with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities in emergencies.
- ✓ Audible and visual alarms are in place (where applicable).
- ✓ Clear signage or instructions are provided for shelter-in-place locations or evacuation maps.

Attendee Communications

For ticketed or registered events, it is always a good idea to ask attendees if they have any accessibility needs or accommodations. It is standard practice to leave this question as open ended but if there are limitations to what accommodations can be provided then providing the list of selections is also reasonable.

For all events it is best practice to provide information to attendees on what accessibility features are available but particularly at public events.

Let attendees know of:

- ✓ The location and availability of accessible parking and washrooms.
- ✓ The availability or ability to request ASL interpretation or alternative format materials.
- ✓ Any additional accommodations such as a sensory friendly space, available notetakers etc. or who to contact (email and phone number) regarding an accessibility request
- ✓ Any elements of concern such as strobe lights intense sounds or smells.

Event Registration

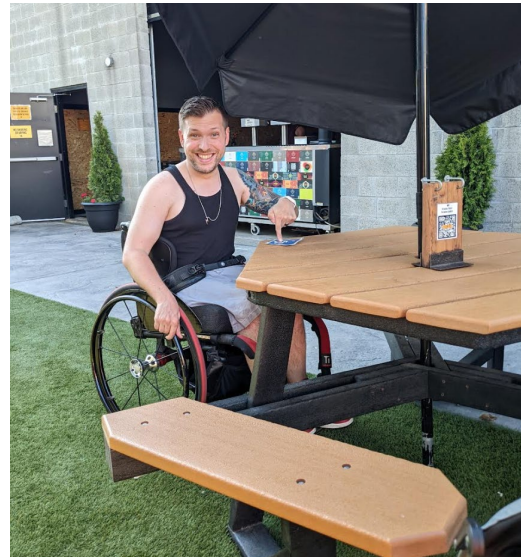
Event registration is the initial point of conversation between an event organizer and an attendee and is the perfect place to begin the accessibility journey for the attendee.

The key factor for event registration is to include the opportunity for an individual to highlight their accessibility needs. It's important to avoid asking for proof or limiting requests related to medical disabilities. Keep it values and trust based.

- ✓ Use an accessible registration platform. Choose a registration tool that is WCAG 2.1 AA compliant (e.g., Jotform, Eventbrite with accessibility enabled and SurveyMonkey are good examples).
- ✓ Test for screen reader compatibility. Ensure all form fields are labeled, error messages are announced, and users can tab through without getting stuck.
- ✓ Avoid CAPTCHAs if possible. If needed, offer an accessible alternative (like audio CAPTCHA).
- ✓ State your accessibility commitment.
- ✓ Send confirmation in an accessible format avoiding Pdfs if possible unless made accessible and include details such as the location of accessible entrances and washrooms maps with large print and information about accessibility accommodations including sensory friendly spaces.

Seating

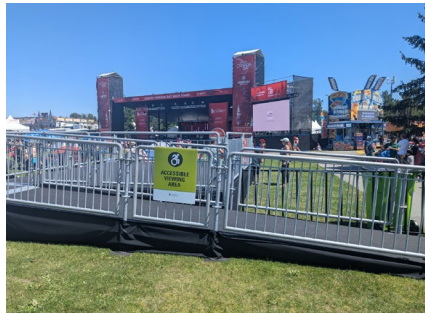
- ✔ Offer a variety of seating options is preferred ideally some with armrests and backrests, including spaces for wheelchairs and those with mobility devices.
- ✔ Reserve accessible seating near entrances and exits for easy access.
- ✔ Consider seating and table set ups – options can create the greatest amount of access for everyone.
 - ✔ Include both cocktail and standard height tables
 - ✔ Include tables with knee clearance
- ✔ Accessible seating areas should always include an area adjacent to the accessible seating area where a companion can be seated.
- ✔ Floor length tablecloth can create barriers for people using mobility devices so consider using half height tablecloths.
- ✔ Consider providing a few cushioned resting chairs in low-traffic areas for participants who experience fatigue, chronic pain, or postural challenges
- ✔ If anticipating lengthy lines consider options to provide seating along line up areas to assist people with standing for long periods.



Outdoor Considerations

When planning for a festival or an outdoor venue with a stage, consider providing an **elevated viewing platform** for individuals with disabilities which offers direct line of site to the stage.

- ✓ It should be connected to a path of travel and feature a ramp for access and
- ✓ Feature signage that indicates it's intended purpose;
- ✓ Be located near an accessible washroom;
- ✓ Provide a line of Sight to the stage;
- ✓ And provide some shade and removable seating for companions.



Gala/Reception Event Considerations

- ✓ Accessible seating should be located near entrances and exits.
- ✓ Should a VIP with a mobility device be seated at the front of the room then ensuring the path of travel is accessible and sufficiently wide is to be prioritized.
- ✓ Ensure that an individual with a disability is placed at the table at an area without a table leg.
- ✓ Include both cocktail and standard height tables.
- ✓ If there is a stage or presentation ensure that the accessible seating has clear line of sight.
- ✓ For an individual who is deaf or hard-of-hearing placing them near to the front of the room would help with lip reading or viewing the sign language interpreter.

Event Set up

When selecting a venue for an event, it's important to consider the Of all of the amenities and programming elements. Consider the path of travel and how someone may be able to navigate from the accessible parking stall to the majority of the key event spaces.

- ✓ Paths of travel from the entrance to accessible washrooms has been considered
- ✓ When navigating around a venue there is ample space between tables to allow someone to walk comfortably without Accidental injury from someone moving a chair quickly.
- ✓ Are all primary elements of an event reasonably accessible?
- ✓ Where possible, offer shaded seating along key routes for people to rest while navigating longer distances.
- ✓ Consider scheduling "low-stimulation hours" or quiet windows, especially at all-ages or family-focused festivals.

Food Service Considerations

- ✓ Access is considered to any food or beverage stations
 - ✓ Menus and information is easily legible from a seated position
 - ✓ Self service food is at counter height, easily reachable.
 - ✓ Allergens are clearly marked
- ✓ Provide accessible water fountains or bottle refill stations.
- ✓ Staff or volunteers are on hand to provide assistance to attendees in serving or carrying food and beverage items.

Ticketing or Payment Systems

- ✓ Ensure point-of-sale is accessible (height, reach, digital interface).
- ✓ Offer multiple payment methods, including contactless options.
- ✓ Consider an accessibility discount or free support person pass.

Staging for Award Winners

- ✓ If people will be asked to approach a stage unexpectedly, ensure:
 - ✓ There's an accessible path (no surprise stairs).
 - ✓ Someone is available to assist, if requested.
 - ✓ A backup plan exists for alternative presentation (e.g., presenter comes to recipient).

Stages

Accessibility for performers and presenters is often frequently missed. As with asking attendees, asking performers and presented for their accessibility requirements is best practice.

- ✔ Consider stage setup needs including whether or not a stage requires a ramp
- ✔ A stage ramp should be no more than 5% grade and ideally feature handrails
Include both cocktail and standard height tables
- ✔ Provide a wireless microphone or one with an adjustable stand for people who need to sit or use mobility devices
- ✔ Podiums or lecterns should be placed at least one metre away from the stage edge, to prevent accidents and falls for speakers who are blind or partially sighted, who may not be able to see the end of the stage
 - ✔ A height adjustable or universally designed lectern is highly recommended to provide access to people of all heights.
- ✔ The edge of the stage should be high contrast to the surrounding areas providing additional visibility for people with low vision.

Communication Access

Communication access is particularly important for people who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing and is equally important for individuals with neurodiversities. One such methodology is providing a hearing loop or other similar assistive listening device in key areas where information is communicated. A hearing loop is a form of assistive listening device that transmits sound from the AV system directly into someone's cochlear implant or in hearing aids via radio frequencies.

Another key element to communication accessibility is ensuring that anyone speaking is using a microphone. Oftentimes people say that they have a loud booming voice and choose not to use a microphone however in is best practice that anyone speaking utilize a voice amplification system.

- ✔ Is a hearing loop or other assistive listening device available for the primary stage/announcements
 - ✔ A temporary hearing loop can be installed for special events such as galas and VIP receptions
- ✔ Has an ASL interpreter been hired for primary announcements? (An ASL interpreter Should be hired for all public events for primary announcements and for ticketed or registered events upon request).
- ✔ Are closed captions enabled?
- ✔ Has live transcription been considered for large events such as workshops or focus groups?

Signage

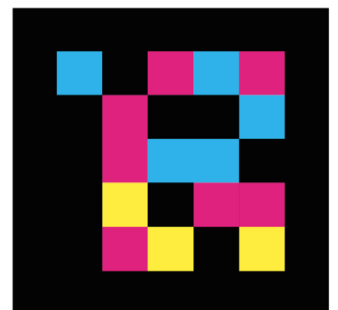
Signage is extremely important to individuals with disabilities as correct signage allows people to determine the shortest path of travel from their location to the amenity they are seeking as well as reduce feelings of anxiety.

- ✔ Signage should be robust and include directional signage at decision points as well as maps with clear icons in key locations.
 - ✔ Use consistent icons and include the location of accessible services such as washrooms, accessible parking, sensory friendly spaces and viewing platforms.
- ✔ Use a text size of at least 14 point font and sans serif fonts as they are easier to read particularly for those with literacy disabilities.
- ✔ Use high contrast ideally seventy percent contrast between the background and the text or icons.
- ✔ When using icons choose ones that are universally understood and obvious as to their intent.
 - ✔ Iconographic signage should be used for washrooms, parking, and the information booth, at minimum
- ✔ Place signage at eye level for people seated in mobility devices, roughly 1200 mm from the floor.
- ✔ Ensure that signage does not block sidewalks paths of travel or create tripping hazards.

Technology

Technology can be an incredibly useful tool particularly for large event space navigation.

- ✔ Consider implementing a navigational tool such as [Blindsquare](#), a self-voicing GPS app that delivers information about location and points of interest at a large-scale event.
- ✔ NaviLens is a wayfinding technology that empowers people who have low vision or are blind, as well as sighted users to navigate the environment with ease. The system uses codes similar to QR-codes that are placed strategically around the environment. For blind users, the app announces the distance to the code as they pan their phone around the space. It provides immediate spatial orientation, letting users know where the code is located and how far away it is. It also provides information that is stored in the code such as the name of the location, information about the location and details of the surrounding area.



Sensory Considerations

People with sensory based disabilities such as neurodiversities, dementia or sensory learning disabilities require some additional considerations for their full participation.

Informing attendees in advance of any sensory stimulation (strobe lights, flashes, loud sudden noises etc) is just as important as letting event attendees know of any accommodations that are available on site.

Consider the lighting and sound levels within an environment. Can the speaker or performers be heard across the entire venue? Are there areas where someone can go to have a quiet conversation? Is there significant glare, heat or differences in lighting levels

Sensory Friendly Spaces

Sensory friendly spaces are calm and quiet areas with activities and seating designed to be supportive for those with sensory sensitivities to recharge. The spaces contain sensory toys (items such as stress balls, fidget toys) and other calm activities and seating that are designed to create a sense of calm when overstimulated, for whatever reason.

They are places where someone can retreat to if they are feeling overstimulated by the environment, allowing for a safe place where they can reintegrate their senses.

Sensory friendly spaces are highly recommended for large scale events.

Sensory Friendly Kits

Some event organizers provide loanable sensory-friendly kits , often available at information booths or the sensory friendly space to attendees with items included such as:

- Noise cancelling headphones
- Sunglasses
- Fidget toys or stress balls
- Basic picture symbols to be used as communication tools

Service and Guide Animals

In British Columbia, guide and service dogs are recognized under the Guide Dog and Service Dog Act (GDSDA) which governs the certification of guide and service dogs as well as specifically certifies specific rights and protections under the BC human rights code.

Guide and service dogs are not pets. They're highly trained partners in mobility and accessibility for people who are blind, Deafblind, who have low vision, have a mobility disability or a health disability such as epilepsy.

Certified Guide and Service dogs have the same rights as individuals without dogs when accessing public services, places and events. These animals are exceptionally well-trained ensuring that the dog is safe calm and stable in public settings. It's important to note that emotional support animals are not covered under this same act and do not have the same rights as guide or service dogs while they may be accommodated in certain situations it is up to the venue or event organizers to make that accommodation.

- ✔ Guide and service dogs are not to be approached touched or distracted while they are working. This is identifiable by the dog wearing a harness and a vest indicating that they are a service dog.
- ✔ Providing water and an area designated for pet relief it's best practice at large outdoor events.
- ✔ Guide and service dogs must be provided access (except to food and beverage preparation areas and pools) provided that the animal is well behaved.



PADs Service Dog, Alma
Credit: <https://pads.ca/>



CNIBC Guide Dog
Credit: <https://www.cnib.ca/en/cnib-guide-dogs?region=on>

EVENT ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

Physical Access

Parking and Transportation

- ☐ Is there accessible parking with clear signage?
 - ☐ Is it sufficient for the event or does temporary additional parking required?
 - ☐ Is it close to an accessible entrance?
 - ☐ Is public transportation readily available and accessible?

Entrances and Exits

- ☐ Is there step-free access to the venue?
- ☐ Are there automatic doors or doors or doors that require minimal force to open?
- ☐ Is the entrance wide enough for wheelchairs and mobility devices?

Onsite Navigation

- ☐ If there is slope, is it low-grade slope(5%) and or ramps with handrails?
- ☐ Do stairs or steps have handrails?
- ☐ Are elevators working and accessible?
- ☐ Are pathways wide enough for two people to pass each other?
- ☐ Can primary facilities be set up along primary paths of travel?
- ☐ Are there any overhead obstructions along the path of travel?

Washrooms

- ☐ Are there accessible, gender-neutral, and family restrooms available?
 - ☐ Are they clear of obstructions? (No items stored inside, for example)
 - ☐ For large events, is there an adult-sized change table available, or one nearby?
- ☐ Is there a sufficient number of accessible washroom stalls or have additional ones been rented?
- ☐ Are washrooms located near primary event activities?

Seating and Tables

- ☐ Is there accessible a range of seating types offered?
 - ☐ Does some seating include armrests and backrests?
- ☐ Are there standard height tables (in addition to cocktail height)?
- ☐ Do any tables have knee clearance?
- ☐ Are table cloths half length?
- ☐ Do any of the tables need to be marked as "accessible"?
- ☐ Has the placement of individuals with disabilities been considered when creating seating charts or event layouts?
- ☐ Is there an elevated viewing platform or does a person using a mobility device have a clear line of sight to the main attraction?

Food and Beverage

- ☐ Is there accessible water fountains or beverage station?
- ☐ Are food and beverage options clearly labelled?
- ☐ Are food and beverage options at a height that is accessible for someone seated?
- ☐ Is the point of sale for food and beverage options an accessible height and reach?

Communication Access

- ☐ Have event attendees been informed of being able to make accessibility requests?
- ☐ Do event publications, invitations, websites etc. include information on accessibility or where to find out more about the accessibility of the event?
- ☐ Does the venue have a hearing loop or has a temporary one been considered?
- ☐ Do electronic communications include accessible best practices (alt text for images, large font etc.)

Signage

- ☐ Are signs clear, large, and in high contrast?
- ☐ Is signage tactile or in Braille where appropriate?
- ☐ Does a map indicate the location of primary amenities and accessible features?
- ☐ Has technology been considered?

Interpretation

- ☐ Has an ASL interpreter been booked?
- ☐ Are closed captions enabled?
- ☐ Have speakers been reminded to use microphones and repeat questions from the audience?

Event Materials

- ☐ Can event materials be requested in alternative formats (e.g. Braille or electronic)?

Sensory Access

- ☐ Is there a sensory friendly space or quiet area?
- ☐ Is a sensory -friendly kit available for loan?
- ☐ Are noise canceling headphones available for loan?

Lighting

- ☐ If indoors, is the lighting adjustable? Can it be dimmed or brightened as needed?
- ☐ Are there shades on the windows to reduce glare?

Acoustics

- ☐ Is there a public address system?
- ☐ Are assistive listening devices available?
- ☐ Are there measures to minimize background noise or a quiet area?

Smells

- ☐ Is the venue aired out to minimize strong smells, especially from cleaning supplies or construction materials?
- ☐ Does the venue have a scent-free policy?

Staff and Volunteer Training

- ☐ Are staff and volunteers trained in communicating with people with disabilities?
- ☐ Are there staff or volunteers available to assist people on site such as with scribing, Assisting with food or beverage service, providing general information et cetera?
- ☐ Are staff or volunteers at key event amenities such as at information, will-call or ticketing familiar with the onsite accessibility accommodations?
- ☐ Is a staff member or volunteer available to act as an escort for individuals who are blind or who have low vision? (For performers with low vision or to assist guests in finding their seats).
- ☐ I've stopped and trained on interacting with a service or guide dog?

Accessible and Inclusive Language

Language changes our perceptions and how we interact with each other. The "Golden Rule" applies to everyone, including people with disabilities. Remember, when in doubt; treat someone the way you wish to be treated and put the person first. It's easy! Talk to the person, not the person they're with. Look at the person, not the interpreter. Make no assumptions about the person's ability or disability.

The best place to start is with the person!

If you need to refer to the person, in relation to their disability, use person-first language and these words with dignity.

- Person with a disability
- Person who uses a wheelchair/walker/scooter/mobility device
- Wheelchair user, white cane user
- Person who is Deaf or hard of hearing
- Person who uses Sign Language
- Person who has a developmental disability
- Person who has an intellectual disability
- Person who has a mental illness/mental health injury
- Person who has bipolar disorder/schizophrenia/anxiety/ depression etc.
- Person who has low vision or is blind
- Person who has dwarfism
- Person who has a communication disability
- Person who has a stutter
- Person who has autism/autism spectrum disorder
- Person who has an amputation
- Person who has a prosthetic limb
- Person who has cerebral palsy/spina bifida/Down syndrome etc.
- Person who has a learning disability

Note: Within the neurodiverse community in particular, there are differences with how people relate to person-first language. Best practice is to use person-first language unless otherwise indicated, otherwise use the term that is preferred by the individual. Many members of the neurodiverse community prefer Autistic person over person with autism, for example.

In General

- Ask “How can I help?”
 - Allow the person to tell you how they would like to be helped
 - If they say “no”, listen
 - If you know of a piece of equipment that could help them, let them know of the availability
- Let them know you are available if they need you
- Focus on the ability not the disability
- Avoid words like “inspirational” unless the person has done something inspirational.
 - For example, attending event is not necessarily inspirational but achieving a new personal best or trying something that scares them is
- Avoid trying to relate to the person based on their disability
 - For example, when talking to someone who uses a wheelchair, don’t tell them how you used a wheelchair for a week when you broke your leg and know how hard it can be
- Speak directly to the person, not the caregiver or interpreter.
- Allow the person to speak for themselves. If they can’t communicate with you, the caregiver/attendant will let you know.
 - Never speak about them as though they are not there
- Always assume a person can understand you, even if they are non-verbal



Mobility Device Users

- Always ask before you touch, push or move someone’s mobility device
- Ask before pushing someone using a wheelchair o Wheelchairs are seen as an extension of someone’s personal bubble – don’t lean on them
- Sit down and be at eye-level with the person if possible, don’t necessarily lean in, reducing their personal bubble
- For many, a mobility device can be part of someone’s self-identity. Colour preference, style, equipment and lights are all custom features that reflect someone’s individuality



People who are Blind or who have Low Vision

- Introduce yourself and anyone else who is part of the interaction
- When passing someone who is visually-impaired, let them know where you are and what side you are passing them on rather than trying to sneak past, this can be very disconcerting
- Assume that they can see you – many individuals have some vision or partial vision
- Never grab or touch someone without them knowing your intention
- Ask if they would like to be guided and ask HOW they would like to be guided o People who are blind or have low-vision have different ways they like to be guided, some like to take the inside of your elbow, others prefer a hand on your shoulder
- Offer to provide a tour of the space and narrate for them where key features are such as the washrooms.
- Provide clear verbal cues using directions such as “on your left” or “there is a set of 5 stairs ahead of you.”



People who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

- Get the person’s attention via visual cue or a gentle touch on their arm
- Speak clearly and normally – avoid over-enunciating words
- Don’t shout or speak unnaturally slow, this makes lip-reading more difficult
- Face the person and make eye contact
- Find a quieter environment to communicate, if possible
- Use gestures
- Write messages
- Minimize background sounds
- Avoid chewing gum



Did you know?

Deaf, spelled with a capital D is culturally significant as this indicates that a person is part of the Deaf culture. Often, though not always, the person uses ASL and feels connected to their Deaf identity.



People who Have a Communication Disability

- Be face to face and make eye contact
- Watch for understanding
- Say one thing and stop. Give the listener a chance to respond
- Offer a choice of two options (or limited options)
- Keep your language simple
- Don't ask questions you already know the answer to
- Speak age-appropriately, don't use baby talk, especially with an adult or youth
- Use gestures, pictures, written words to help the person understand
- Stick to one conversation topic at a time
- If someone can't think of the word, ask them to describe it
- Ask for clarification when you don't understand
- Listen and wait. If someone has a stutter or difficulty expressing themselves, don't interrupt, just give them time
- If someone is using a communication board or device, remain face to face rather than looking at the board
- If someone has speech that is challenging to understand, repeat back what you've heard for confirmation
- Be patient

What About Expressions?

This one is a bit tricky and it depends on context. Expression such as "Let's go for a walk," "It's nice to see you," "I haven't heard from you in a while," "Did you see that?" are fine and those with a disability will unlikely take offence.

Someone who uses a wheelchair may say that they are going for a walk or choose to say that they are going for a wheel but don't feel uncomfortable if you are walking or inviting them for a walk.

"Are you blind?" "What are you deaf?" "That's so retarded." Are examples of offensive language that should be avoided.

Expressions and Terms to Avoid

Some people and organizations advocate for the use of "diverse abilities" as a euphemism intended to highlight the person's abilities rather than disabilities. Disability is not a shameful word and many with disabilities do not identify with the term 'diverse ability.' This particular term is used almost exclusive by those in Community Living and generally is understood to refer to someone with cognitive and mobility disabilities. For that reason, it is not encouraged to use this term in general use to mean someone with a disability.

Other expressions to avoid include:

- Anything that labels a person in an unflattering way. For example, "She's insane" or "He's a schizo"
- Using the word "challenged" or "handicapped"
- "Special needs" is also not a preferred term outside of the school system and generally not preferred by people with disabilities
- Try to avoid using mental health and mental illness related words that increase stigma such as "happy pills," "psycho" or "lunatic"
- Words that restrict ability such as "wheelchair-bound," "suffering from," "affected with" or "victim"

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE VOCABULARY

**Accessible
Parking Stalls**



**Accessible
Washroom**



**Manual Wheelchair/
Day Chair**



Power Chair



Scooter



Sport Wheelchair



White Cane



**Guide Dog/
Service Dog**



Para Ice Sledge



Prosthesis



Hearing Aid



Cochlear Implant



ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS & PRESENTATIONS



Planning

- ✔ Ask all participants what accommodations they may need to fully participate in the meeting or presentation.
- ✔ Enable captioning for the meeting, including break out rooms.
- ✔ Hire an ASL interpreter, if requested.
- ✔ Provide materials, in advance to the ASL interpreter.
- ✔ Plan to wear a colour that contrasts with your skin-tone, lighting can wash out people's faces, making lip reading difficult.
- ✔ Provide attendees information on how to access the meeting, including alternative means such as keyboard shortcuts and voice commands if virtual and the location of accessible washrooms and other facilities for in-person meetings.
- ✔ If meeting in-person, a u-shape configuration is most accessible for people who are Deaf and those relying on lip-reading.
- ✔ When meeting in-person, provide all pertinent information on parking, wayfinding when entering the site, signing in protocols etc. to guests.
- ✔ Provide an email and phone number for anyone experiencing accessibility or connection issues for hybrid or digital-based presentations.
- ✔ For engagement sessions consider providing note takers or scribes to help people communicate written information.
- ✔ Ensure that signage is clear directing people to the meeting room.
- ✔ Consider providing an area that is quiet allowing people to take a break from the meeting or presentation or allowing people the opportunity to communicate more comfortably especially when someone is hard of hearing.
- ✔ Consider providing materials in advance in digital large print or Braille formats if requested.
- ✔ Communicate accessibility requirements to presenters and ensure that presentation materials are accessible.
- ✔ Ensure stage or speaking area is accessible. If using a podium, confirm it is height-adjustable or there is space to present without it.



Preparing A Presentation

- ✔ Limit the text on each slide.
 - ✔ Use bullet points and spacing to avoid clutter and long paragraphs.
- ✔ Choose a font that is sufficiently large (24 point) and sans serif.
- ✔ Avoid excessive use of italics and underlines.
- ✔ If linking to webpages, ensure the text is a large font.
- ✔ Be thoughtful in your use of motion and animations. Avoid sensory overload. Be mindful of flashing content, loud or abrupt sounds, or visually busy slides.
- ✔ Use high contrast colours for text. For example white text on a dark background or dark text on a light background.
- ✔ Run an Accessibility Check on your presentation (found under “review” in PowerPoint).
- ✔ Include ALT-Text for any visuals, particularly if the presentation will be shared with attendees.
- ✔ Make multi-media fully accessible: turn on closed captions, provide transcripts of videos and give visual descriptions of pertinent visual content.
- ✔ Avoid using tables.
- ✔ Don't rely on colour alone, U shapes labels and patterns to help convey information.
- ✔ Use consistent visual cues. Predictable design elements (e.g., heading styles) help with cognitive processing.



Presenting Best Practices

- ✓ Speak clearly, using simple language and at a moderate pace.
- ✓ Avoid the use of technical jargon and acronyms
- ✓ Give people time to process the information. Pause regularly.
- ✓ Ensure that you are visible. Use good lighting and, if presenting digitally, be centered on camera.
- ✓ Describe all relevant visual information including graphs, charts and pictures.
- ✓ Use a microphone. Even if you have a 'voice that carries.'
- ✓ Limit distractions.
- ✓ Pause to give the audience a moment to read what is on the slide.
- ✓ Repeat questions from the audience, especially if a microphone has not been provided to audience members.
- ✓ Avoid pointing without context. Describe what you're referencing instead of just gesturing.

Presenting Digitally

- ✓ Ensure that both the presenter and the ASL interpreter are pinned/spotlighted.
- ✓ Enable closed captioning, and provide instructions to attendees To ensure they are aware of the ability to turn on closed captions should they need it.
- ✓ Make sure we can see and hear you! Good lighting, microphone and bandwidth are key.
- ✓ Utilize both the chat and hands up feature for questions .
- ✓ Verbally repeat questions asked in the chat.
- ✓ Enable the "Mute Participants Upon Entry" feature.
- ✓ Limit the use of the Zoom Polling Feature as this feature has some accessibility barriers.
- ✓ Describe what you are annotating if you are using the whiteboard feature.
- ✓ Make eye contact with your camera.
- ✓ Record your presentation for later distribution.



Meeting Digitally

- ✓ Ensure that both the presenter and the ASL interpreter are pinned/spotlighted.
- ✓ Enable closed captioning, and provide instructions to attendees to enable the captions themselves.
- ✓ Make sure we can see and hear you! Good lighting, microphone and bandwidth are key.
- ✓ Utilize both the chat and hands up feature for questions.
- ✓ Verbally repeat questions asked in the chat.
- ✓ Enable the "Mute Participants Upon Entry" feature.
- ✓ Limit the use of the Zoom Polling Feature as this feature has some significant accessibility barriers.
- ✓ Describe what you are annotating if you are using the whiteboard feature.
- ✓ Make regular eye contact with your camera.
- ✓ Record the meeting and transcription for later distribution.
- ✓ If possible, enable the AI assistants for note-taking and live transcription.

Zoom Best Practices

- ✓ Review <https://explore.zoom.us/en/accessibility/>
- ✓ Zoom features include: dark mode, focus mode, auto-generated captions, manual captions, multi-spotlight, multi-pinning, re-arrange gallery view, record meetings
- ✓ Under Settings, Accessibility Settings, users can:
 - ✓ Customize the font size of the chat and captions
 - ✓ Explore keyboard shortcuts
 - ✓ Get screen reader support

Microsoft Teams Best Practices

- ✓ Review <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/accessibility-tools-for-microsoft-teams-2d4009e7-1300-4766-87e8-7a217496c3d5>
- ✓ MS Teams features include: sign language view, transcriptions, auto-generated captions, record meetings, using headings in the chat, add alt-text to images in the chat,
- ✓ Team's polling feature is accessible for screen readers.

WHY DO ICONS MATTER?

Iconography

Icons are important for accessibility because they provide visual cues that can be quickly and easily understood by a wide range of users, regardless of their language skills, cognitive abilities, or sensory impairments.

Universal understanding: Well-designed icons transcend language barriers and can be interpreted by people from diverse backgrounds including folks who don't speak English as a first language.

Cognitive accessibility: Icons can help people with cognitive disabilities or learning difficulties to better understand and navigate their environment. Simple, clear icons reduce the cognitive load required to process information.

Wayfinding assistance: Consistent use of standardized icons throughout a building or site can aid in wayfinding, especially for individuals with intellectual disabilities or those who are unfamiliar with the space.

Benefit for people with low vision: When designed with high contrast and sufficient size, icons can be more easily perceived by people with low vision compared to text alone.

Supports non-readers: Icons can convey important information to individuals who have difficulty reading, whether due to a visual impairment, learning disability, or language barrier.

Key Considerations

- Use internationally recognized symbols, like the International Symbol of Access.
- Ensure adequate size and contrast for visibility.
- Place icons on signage that is mounted at an accessible height and providing clear floor space for approach.
- Utilize tactile icons with braille labels on signage to support users who are blind or have low vision.
- Maintain consistency in the design and use of icons throughout a site.
- Incorporate well-designed, universally understood icons to create environments that are more intuitive, easier to navigate, and accessible to a broader range of people.

WHY IS CONTRAST SO IMPORTANT?

Contrast to support people with Low Vision

- Contrast makes things easier to identify and distinguish. High contrast between an object and its background helps those with low vision better perceive shapes, edges, and boundaries.
- It improves legibility and readability. When there is strong contrast between text and its background, it is easier for people who have low vision to read and interpret letters, words, and symbols.
- Contrast provides visual orientation. Things like doorways, handrails, and signage stand out better when there is significant contrast with surroundings. This aids navigation and independence.
- Reduced contrast contributes to eye strain and fatigue. Insufficient contrast makes visual tasks more difficult and tiring for those with low vision.

Contrast for Balance

- Contrast highlights edges and boundaries. When moving from seated to upright, high contrast along the edges of steps, floors, and thresholds makes these changes in level clearly visible. This prepares the body for adjustments.
- It defines spatial orientation. Contrast provides visual cues that help the brain orient itself in space, allowing for better balance control such as knowing where a wall, handrail or counter is helps stabilize our vision.
- Distinct edges guide movement. Clear definition where surfaces change, facilitated by contrast, guides body motions like getting up from a chair or exiting a vehicle.
- It draws attention to tripping hazards. Significant contrast makes irregularities in floors, pavements, ramps readily apparent so they can be navigated safely.
- Low contrast obscures surroundings. With inadequate contrast, visual environment blends together, depriving brain of key reference points needed to maintain equilibrium.



Accessible Social Media Guidelines

For the District of Saanich



Table of contents

Introduction	2
Why Social Media Accessibility Matters	2
General Best Practices	2
Inclusive and Clear Language.....	2
Alt Text and Image Descriptions.....	3
Captions, Transcripts and Audio Descriptions	3
Hashtags and Emojis	4
Colour Contrast and Visual Design.....	5
Links and Formatting.....	5
Sensory Considerations.....	5
Platform-Specific Guidelines.....	6
Facebook	6
Instagram.....	9
LinkedIn	11
X (Twitter)	12
YouTube	13
Tools and Accessibility Check.....	15
Resources	15
Plain Language and Overall Access	15
Alt Text.....	16
Captions, Subtitles and Transcriptions.....	16

Introduction

Social media is a powerful tool for communication, engagement, and community building—but when content isn't designed with accessibility in mind, it can exclude people with disabilities. This guide offers practical tips to help ensure your posts reach everyone in the District of Saanich's community, including those who are blind, have low vision, are deaf or hard of hearing, have cognitive or learning disabilities, or use assistive technologies.

Why Social Media Accessibility Matters

Accessible social media benefits everyone. When content is perceivable, operable and understandable, it reaches a wider audience and demonstrates a commitment to inclusion. Many people rely on screen readers, captions, transcripts or other assistive technologies. Without accessible posts, they miss important information and opportunities to participate. Making content accessible is also a legal obligation under human rights legislation. By prioritizing accessibility, the District of Saanich fosters a culture of respect and ensures compliance with relevant guidelines.

General Best Practices

Inclusive and Clear Language

- **Write in plain language:** Use short sentences, everyday vocabulary, and avoid jargon or acronyms unless you spell them out on first use. Clear communication supports everyone - including people with cognitive disabilities and those using translation tools. Please see ['Plain Language and Overall Access'](#) in the Resources section of this guide for additional tips on best practices on plain language use.

- **Use inclusive language that respects the diversity of your audience:** People-first (such as, “person with a disability”) or identity-first (such as, “disabled person”) language may be appropriate depending on individual preferences; avoid ableist or gendered terms. For example, avoid expressions like “blind to the issues” or “turn a deaf ear.”
- **Maintain a friendly but professional tone:** Use active voice and be mindful of readability.

Alt Text and Image Descriptions

- **Provide alternative (alt) text for all images, graphics and GIFs:** Alt text conveys the essential information conveyed visually.
- **Keep alt text concise but descriptive. Mention key details, context and identities relevant to the content:** Avoid phrases like “image of” because assistive technologies already announce the media type.
- **Be thoughtful about identity:** Include aspects of someone’s identity (like gender expression, disability, or cultural background) in alt text when it’s contextually relevant to the image’s purpose or message. Avoid using labels unnecessarily, but don’t omit important context that helps users fully understand the image.
- **For complex visuals, include a longer description in the post or link to a text description elsewhere:** Alt text should supplement—not replace—image descriptions when more detail is needed.

Example: A photo of a community garden could have alt text: “Raised vegetable beds with sunflowers and children planting seedlings alongside adults of varying ages.”

Captions, Transcripts and Audio Descriptions

Understanding Captions, Transcripts, and Audio Descriptions

Before diving into best practices, it’s helpful to understand the differences between the key tools used to make videos accessible.

Definitions:

Captions

Captions are synchronized text that displays spoken dialogue and relevant sounds, like music or sound effects. They support people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or who prefer to watch videos without sound.

Transcripts

Transcripts are a full written version of a video's content, including spoken words and, where applicable, descriptions of important sounds or visuals. They can be read separately from the video and are useful for searchability and quick reference.

Audio Descriptions (AD)

Audio descriptions are additional narration tracks that describe key visual elements—like scene changes, facial expressions, or on-screen text—for people who are blind or have low vision. They're especially useful when visuals are essential to understanding the content.

- **Caption all videos:** Use closed captions when possible so users can turn them on or off. Edit auto-generated captions for accuracy.
- **Provide transcripts for audio and video content:** Transcripts help users who cannot view video or who prefer reading.
- **Ensure captions and subtitles have adequate contrast:** Especially with the background and are synchronized with the audio.

Hashtags and Emojis

- **Use CamelCase in multi-word hashtags:** (such as, #AccessibleSaanich) so screen readers can pronounce each word. Put hashtags at the end of your post and limit the number you use.
- **Avoid special characters, stylized fonts or unicode characters:** These cannot easily be interpreted by screen readers
- **Use emojis sparingly:** If you include emojis, place them at the end of the post and separate them by spaces so screen readers articulate each one. Do not use emojis to replace words.

Colour Contrast and Visual Design

- **Ensure sufficient colour contrast between text and background:**
The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) recommend a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for large text.
- **Do not convey meaning by colour alone:** When presenting data, use patterns, labels or textures in addition to colour.
- **Avoid flashing or strobing content that may trigger seizures:** If you must include a flashing effect, provide a clear warning and limit the frequency to under three flashes per second.
- **Ensure that overlay text on images or videos remains legible:**
Particularly against the background by adding a semi-transparent colour block or drop shadow.

Links and Formatting

- **Use descriptive link text** instead of generic phrases like “click here.” Describe where the link will take the user.
- **Avoid posting long URLs in the main text.** Consider using a short, descriptive link or link shortener that preserves context.
- **Use built-in heading styles instead of manually bolding or changing fonts.** This helps assistive technology identify the document structure.
- **Left-align text for easier readability** and avoid fully justified text, which can create uneven spacing.
- **Avoid using all capital letters (ALL CAPS)** for extended text, as screen readers may interpret them as acronyms and reading comprehension is reduced.

Sensory Considerations

- **Provide content warnings** for sensitive material such as flashing lights, violence or traumatic events so users can choose whether to engage.
- **Avoid auto-playing audio or video.** Allow users to control playback.

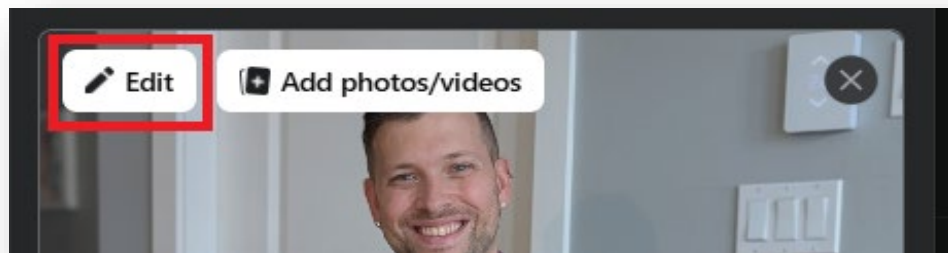
- **Consider multiple modalities.** Whenever possible, offer information in more than one format (visual, auditory and written) so users can access content in the way that best suits them.

Platform-Specific Guidelines

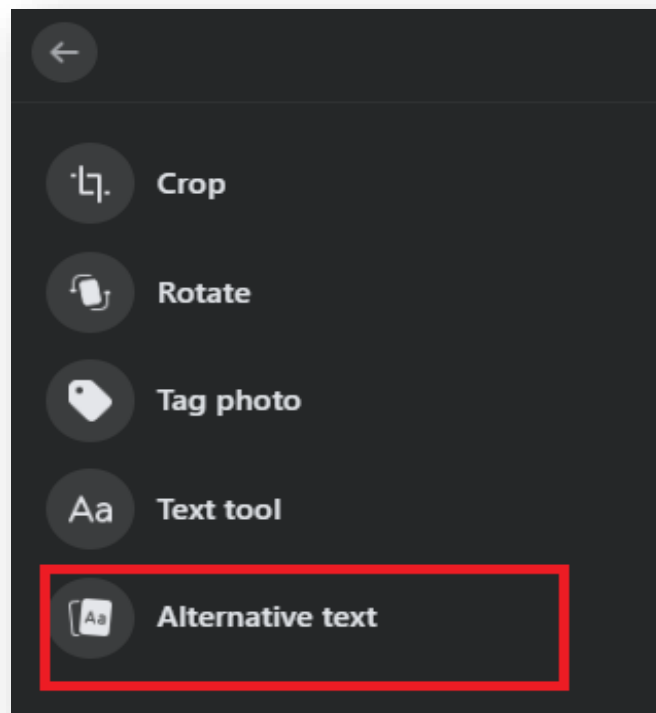
The following sections provide platform-specific recommendations for accessible social media content. While the general best practices apply to all platforms, certain features and processes differ across platforms. Use the guidelines below when creating content for each platform.

Facebook

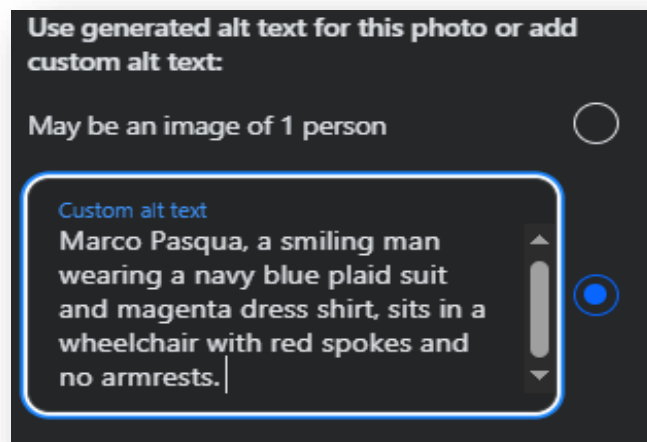
- **Add custom alternative text** to all photos by selecting "Edit Alt Text" when uploading images. Review Facebook's automatic alt text and override it if inaccurate, to do this:
 - Go to **Create Post** and upload your photo.
 - After the image loads, click the **Edit** button on the image preview.



- In the pop-up window, select **Alt Text** in the left panel.



- Click **Override generated alt text**, then enter your custom description.



- Click **Save**, then finish your post

- **Caption all videos.** Upload a caption file (such as, .srt) for recorded videos and use live captioning tools or third-party services for Facebook Live. Ensure captions are accurate and synchronized.
- **Describe complex images or charts** in the post body or a separate image description. Provide context so screen-reader users receive the same information. For example, if describing the following chart:

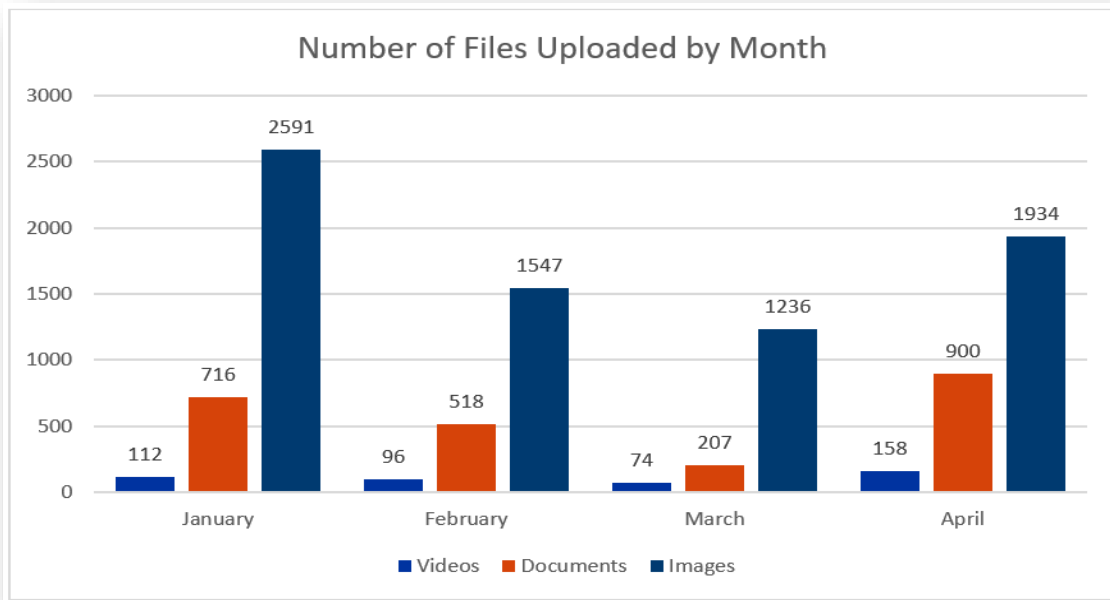


Image Description (Alt Text for Screen Readers):

A vertical bar chart titled "Number of Files Uploaded by Month." It shows the number of videos, documents, and images uploaded in January, February, March, and April.

- **January:** 112 videos, 716 documents, 2,591 images
- **February:** 96 videos, 518 documents, 1,547 images
- **March:** 74 videos, 207 documents, 1,236 images
- **April:** 158 videos, 900 documents, 1,934 images

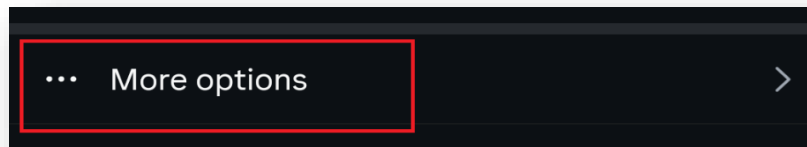
Images consistently had the highest uploads across all months, peaking in January. Documents followed, with a steady rise in April. Videos had the lowest upload counts in all months.

- **Use CamelCase for hashtags** and limit them to no more than a few per post. Place hashtags and @mentions at the end of the caption.

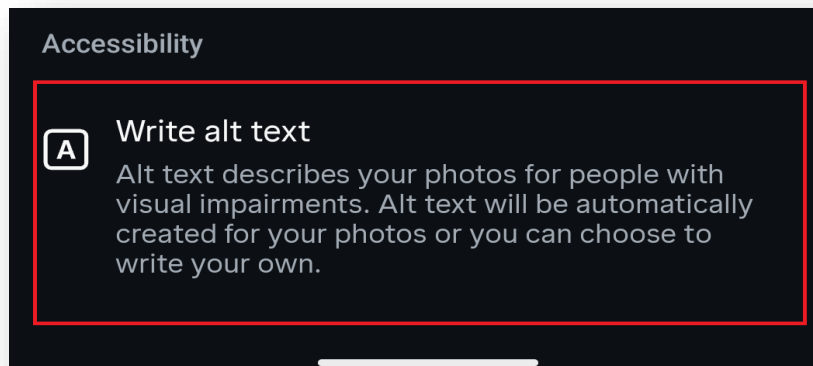
- **Avoid relying on reaction slides or memes without description.** If using screenshots of text, provide the text in the post body.

Instagram

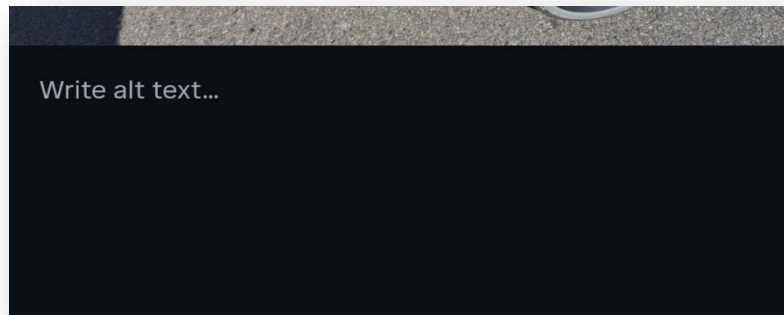
- **Add alt text to images** using the "Accessibility" or "Advanced Settings" field when creating or editing a post. Provide concise descriptions of what is important in the image. To do this:
 - Tap the **+ icon** to create a new post and select your image.
 - After applying filters and editing, tap **Next**.
 - Tap **More Options** at the bottom of the screen.



- Under **Accessibility**, tap Write alt text.



- Enter your custom alt text and tap **Done**.

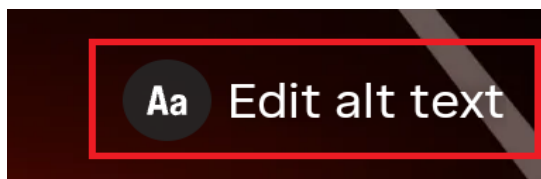
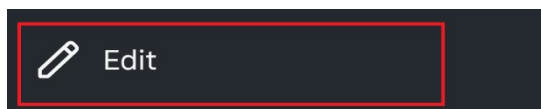


For existing posts:

- Go to the post and tap the **three dots (...)**.



- Tap **Edit**, then tap **Edit Alt Text** in the bottom-right corner of the image.

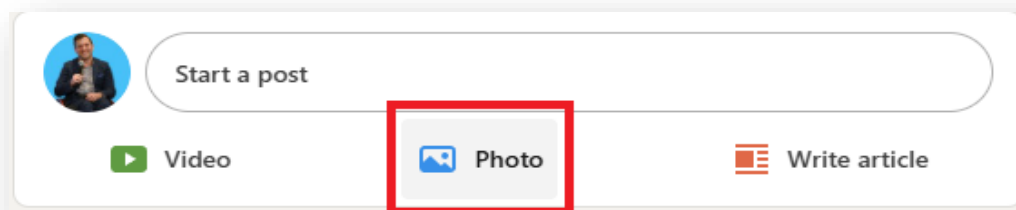


- Add or revise the alt text, then tap **Done**.
- **For Stories and Reels, add open captions or use caption stickers.**
Edit Instagram's automatic captions to correct mistakes and ensure readability; position captions away from overlaying important visuals.

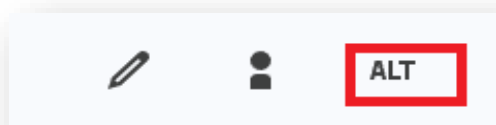
- **Ensure text overlays, stickers and polls have sufficient colour contrast with the background.** Avoid placing text over busy images; use solid backgrounds or high-contrast colours.
- **Use CamelCase hashtags and limit to a few relevant tags.** Place hashtags and @mentions after the main caption, separated by a line break.
- **Do not rely on images of text alone.** Include key information in the caption so that screen-reader users and translation tools can access it.

LinkedIn

- **Add alt text to images when sharing posts or articles.** LinkedIn allows you to enter a description when uploading an image; provide concise descriptions that convey key information. To do this:
 - Start a new post and click the **image icon where it says "Photo"**.



- Upload your image, then click the **alt button** on the image preview.



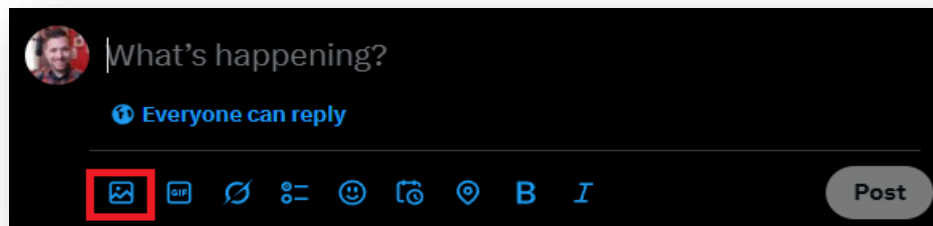
- Enter your description (up to 300 characters), then click **Save**.
- **Upload caption files (such as, .srt or. vtt) when posting videos.** Do not rely solely on auto-captions, and avoid uploading videos without

captions. You could also choose to embed the captions right in the video when exporting it. This ensures it can't be toggled on or off.

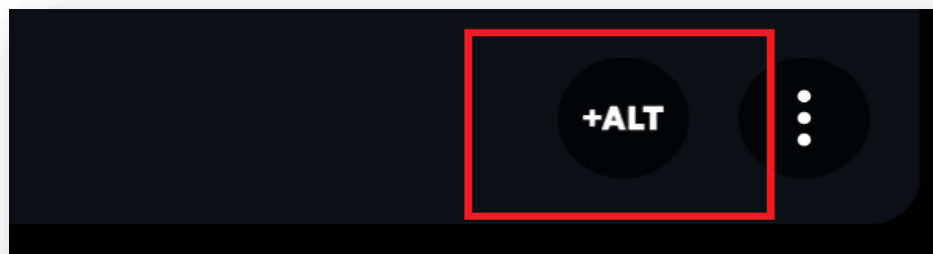
- **Avoid stylized or special unicode fonts in your headlines, names or posts.** Screen readers often mispronounce these characters or skip them altogether.
- **Write clear and concise text.** Break longer posts into short paragraphs and use lists or headings for structure. Use descriptive link text rather than "click here."
- **Use CamelCase hashtags sparingly.** Place hashtags and mentions at the end of your update rather than interspersed within the sentence.

X (Twitter)

- **Add alt text to all images and GIFs when posting.** Twitter supports up to 1,000 characters of alt text—describe the visual content clearly and concisely. To do this on a mobile device:
 - Start a new post and **upload an image**.



- Tap or click **+ALT** in the bottom right corner of the image.



- Enter your alt text (up to 1000 characters), then tap **Save**.

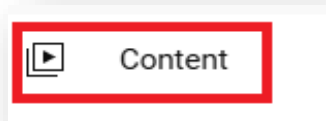
- **Provide captions for videos by using Twitter's Media Studio to upload caption files or by burning captions into the video before uploading.** Do not share videos without captions.
- **Use CamelCase hashtags and limit yourself to two or three relevant tags.** Place hashtags and @mentions at the end of your tweet to improve readability.

Note on Hashtags: While hashtags are still useful for reinforcing branding and organizing content (especially in live events or campaigns), their influence on discoverability has decreased across several platforms. X, for example, now limits hashtags in paid promotions to streamline content and reduce distractions. Consider using branded or thematic hashtags sparingly and always in CamelCase for screen reader clarity. Avoid over-relying on hashtags for reach, and focus on clarity and engagement in the core message itself.

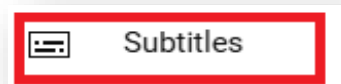
- **Avoid using special fonts or unicode characters.** They are inaccessible to screen readers and may be misinterpreted by assistive technology.
- **Use plain language and keep tweets concise.** If sharing a thread, number each tweet and use the same alt text conventions.
- **Limit the use of emoji.** When used, place them at the end of the tweet and do not overuse consecutive emoji, which can cause repeated screen-reader announcements.

YouTube

- **Provide accurate, synchronized captions for all videos.** Upload a caption file (such as, .srt or .vtt) or edit YouTube's auto-generated captions. Ensure proper punctuation and speaker identification. To do this on a computer:
 - Go to **YouTube Studio** (<https://studio.youtube.com/>).
 - Click **Content**, then **select the video**.



- In the left menu, click **Subtitles**.



- Choose your language and click **Add > Upload file > With timing** or **Without timing**, then select your caption file (.srt, .sbv, etc.).
- Alternatively, use the **Auto-sync** option by pasting your transcript and letting YouTube generate the timing.
- **Include a transcript of the video's spoken content in the description or a linked document.** Transcripts support users who prefer to read rather than watch or listen.
- **Write descriptive titles and descriptions that summarize the video content.** Include keywords and any content warnings (such as, flashing lights or sensitive topics).
- **Use high-contrast thumbnails with minimal text and strong visuals.** While YouTube does not support alt text for thumbnails, you can describe the thumbnail in the video description.
- **Provide audio descriptions for key visual information that is not conveyed through dialogue.** You can include audio description in the main video or create a separate described version.
- **Avoid auto playing videos on websites and embed players.** Provide clear controls for play/pause, volume and captions, and ensure they are keyboard accessible.

Tools and Accessibility Check

- **WebAIM Colour Contrast Checker** – [This tool](#) can test colour combinations for sufficient contrast. Use it when designing infographics or overlaying text on images.
- **Accessible hashtag generators** - These tools help convert hashtags to CamelCase automatically. This [generator by Hootsuite](#) is pretty nifty!
- **Captioning tools** – platforms like YouTube Studio, [Kapwing](#), [Descript](#) or [Adobe Express](#) can generate and edit captions. Always review auto-generated captions for accuracy.
- **Screen reader testing** – use free screen readers such as NVDA (Windows) or VoiceOver (iOS/Mac) to experience your content as a blind user might.
- **Accessibility checkers built into social platforms** – use Facebook’s alt-text editor, Instagram’s accessibility settings and LinkedIn’s alt text field to add descriptions.
- **Plain language tools** – readability checkers like [Hemingway](#) or [Grammarly](#) help simplify language and avoid jargon.

Resources

Plain Language and Overall Access

- [Government of BC. Plain Language Checklist](#)
- [Plain Language.gov](#)
- [Center for Plain Language. Five Steps to Plain Language](#)
- [Harvard University Digital Accessibility Team. "Social Media Accessibility Best Practices"](#)
- [Disability:IN. "Creating Accessible Social Media Content"](#)
- [Sprout Social. 10 guidelines to make social media posts more accessible](#)

- [Sprout Social. "Inclusive Language Guide for Social Media"](#)
- [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#)

Alt Text

- [Medium. The case for describing race in alternative text attributes by Tolu Adegbite](#)
- [Make Things Accessible. Alternative text: race, gender, and physical descriptions](#)
- [Tink. Thoughts on skin tone and text descriptions - Léonie Watson](#)

Captions, Subtitles and Transcriptions

- [W3C - Making Audio and Video Media Accessible](#)
- [W3C - Transcript Formatting Guidelines \(writing clean, accessible transcripts\)](#)
- [W3C - Transcribing Audio to Text \(tools and tips for generating transcripts\)](#)
- [W3C - Resource on Captions/Subtitles](#)
- [WebAIM. Captions, Transcripts, and Audio Descriptions](#)
- [DCMP.org. Described and Captioned Media Program](#)
- [BBC. Subtitle guidelines](#)

Accessible Social Media Checklist

This checklist summarizes best practices for creating accessible social media content across platforms. Use this as a quick reference before posting to ensure your content is inclusive for all users. Feel free to use this checklist as you are creating new posts on social media and ensure that each of the best practices has been followed for the platform you are posting on.

General Accessibility Guidelines

Category	Guidelines
Alternative Text (Alt Text)	Always add accurate and concise alt text for images.
Video Captions	Include open or closed captions on all videos. You could also choose to embed the captions right in the video when exporting it. This ensures it can't be toggled on or off.
Plain Language	Use clear, simple language and avoid jargon.
Emoji Use	Limit emoji use and place them at the end of posts.
CamelCase Hashtags	Capitalize the first letter of each word in hashtags.
Colour Contrast	Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background.
Animated Content	Avoid flashing content; limit animation to under 3 flashes per second.

Facebook

Category	Best Practice
Alternative Text	Click on the image > Edit Alt Text > Enter custom description.
Video Captions	Upload SRT file or use Facebook's automatic caption tool.
Emoji & Hashtags	Use sparingly; place emojis at end and hashtags in CamelCase.

Instagram

Category	Best Practice
Alternative Text	Before posting > Advanced Settings > Write Alt Text.
Video Captions	Use external caption tools or reels editor to add text overlays.
Hashtags	CamelCase and avoid hashtag overload. Place after main post content.

LinkedIn

Category	Best Practice
Alternative Text	Click the image > Alt Text > Add a clear description.
Video Captions	Upload SRT files or include text overlays in the video.
Post Formatting	Use bullet points and line breaks to improve readability.

X (formerly Twitter)

Category	Best Practice
Alternative Text	Click the image > Add description > Write alt text.
Video Captions	Upload videos with open captions or add text overlays.
Hashtags	Limit to 1–2 per post; remember paid posts or boosted posts will not be promoted if hashtags are used (circa June 2025) use CamelCase.

YouTube

Category	Best Practice
Captions	Upload a caption file (SRT) or enable auto-captions and edit for accuracy.
Alt Text Equivalent	Use the video description to summarize visual content.
Thumbnails	Ensure thumbnails have high contrast and no text-only images.

Testing Your Social Media Content for Accessibility

Before publishing your content, consider the following checks to improve accessibility:

- Use platform-specific accessibility checkers when available (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn settings).
- Use [color contrast checker tools](#) to ensure visibility.
- Have someone else review the post with a screen reader.
- Review how your post appears with captions enabled.
- Double-check hashtags, emojis, and formatting for readability.

ADEI Advisory Committee Action List (reviewed and updated at September 3, 2025 committee meeting)

#	Actions/Themes	Description	Questions to Consider & Proposed Actions	Priority
1	Youth Engagement	<p>Explore ways of involving young people in District affairs.</p> <p>Saanich has spots earmarked for youth reps on each of their advisory committees however these often go unfilled.</p> <p>Ways we can increase youth engagement include:</p> <p>Committee Recruitment – Explore how Saanich currently reaches out to schools, colleges, universities and other youth groups to recruit young people to serve on committees and explore ways of doing more engagement.</p> <p>Youth Rep – Some municipalities have a designated youth rep on Council.</p> <p>Youth Advisory Committee – The City of Victoria has a Youth Council, this could serve as a lower barrier way to engage with a number of young people who can provide input to Council on a wide range of issues.</p> <p>Course Credit – Work with UVic and other regional post-secondary institutions to arrange for course credit or something similar for students who join and participate in Saanich advisory committees.</p>	<p>Q: Should we be focusing on additional groups (young adults, etc.)</p> <p>Q: Does Saanich have a Youth Engagement Strategy?</p>	Medium
2	Youth Strategy	A mirror of the Older Adult Strategy, but focused on Youth.	Q: Should CC call on staff, through Council, to develop a youth strategy?	Medium
3	Family Doctors	<p>Explore ways for Saanich to encourage, incent and facilitate more family doctors within the municipality, and support existing doctors and medical professionals to help their practices flourish and serve as many Saanich residents as possible.</p> <p>Discussion should begin with an exploration of what type of direction does the CC want to give Council. We can make a broad recommendation, like requesting that Council direct staff to investigate and report back on measures the District can adopt to increase the number of family doctors in the community, or we could request that Council direct staff to explore specific measures, such as:</p> <p>Granting Permissive Tax Exemptions for Doctors Offices and Clinics.</p> <p>Use Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) to incent developers to build more clinic spaces in mixed use developments.</p> <p>Surveying existing Saanich properties to identify any that could serve as a clinic.</p> <p>Building/converting one or more properties into clinics, using a similar model adopted by Colwood.</p>	No CC action required at this time. Councillor Phelps Bondaroff has a citizens group (external) working on this initiative.	Low
4	Preventative Health Support	Explore ways the District can support preventative health.	Staff to ask the Parks and Recreation Department to make a presentation to the CC on programs related to preventative health including: program design/development, delivery, communications, evaluation and responsiveness.	Medium
5	Speaker: Chief Accessibility Officer	To brief the committee on the ongoing work being done in the country and the work of translating federal legislation to the municipal level.	Councillor Phelps Bondaroff to table this at future CC meeting. Rishi to reach out and connect with Angela/Committee	Low

6	External-facing initiatives within Community Services Division	To facilitate understanding of external-facing initiatives within Community Services Division	Staff to ask Community Services Division to make a presentation to the CC.	Low
7	Flag and Recognition Policy	Review Saanich's flag and recognition policies.	Staff to speak with Communications and Legislative Services about current protocols and return to CC.	Low
8	Reproductive Justice	Providing condoms in Saanich rec centres.	Q: should the District provide free condoms at recreation centres? Councillor Phelps Bondaroff to discuss current practice with Recreation Senior Manager.	Low
9	Menstrual Equity	Explore opportunities to enhance Saanich's free menstrual product policy.	Q: Should Saanich provide reusable products at key rec facilities (menstrual cups and cloth pads)? Councillor Phelps Bondaroff to discuss current practice with Recreation Senior Manager.	Low
10	Accessibility and Active Transportation	How is Accessibility applied/incorporated within the District's Active Transportation Plan?	Review the existing accessibility measure's within the District's Active Transportation Plan including trails and roads, sidewalks. Engineering presented on this topic in March 2024. Invite Engineering to return and provide an update in 2026.	Medium
11	Scooters and Mobilty Devices in Bike Lanes - Pilot Update	The District is participating in a regional pilot exploring kick scooters in bike lanes. This pilot runs to April 2028.	Conduct a mid-way check in as data becomes available (anticipated 2028).	Low
12	Festival Review	Saanich leads and/or participates in a number of local festivals and events. Review how ADEI is being incorporated.	Q: What festivals are happening in the Summer and what is being done to support ADEI? Staff to invite Sara Faria from PRCS to a CC meeting in the Fall 2025.	Medium
13	Sensory-specific programming and facilities	Ensure that Saanich programs and facilities support those with different sensory needs.	Q: How are wayfinding, advertising and purchasing for/within existing facilities informed by sensory programming needs? Community Services (Loryn Anderson) presented on this topic to the CC in November 2024. Staff to invite Loryn and Santaël to a future meeting to provide an update on sensory art and swim	Medium
14	Mailing address support for the unhoused.	Those experiencing homelessness often struggle to maintain a fixed address. Some municipalities have helped to address this situation by creating free or low-cost postal boxes for those in need.	Q: Should Saanich offer free or low-cost postal boxes for those in need? This was discussed with the CC in May 2024 as part of the Cold Weather Protocol discussion. CC to hear a presentation from a member on June 4, 2025.	High

15	Invisible Disabilities	Explore the ways in which the District is helping support people with invisible disabilities and investigate ways these measures can be improved. (Sunflower lanyards, wayfinding, websites)	Q: Should Saanich provide sunflower lanyards, and how can we improve wayfinding and support information? Councillor Phelps Bondaroff to conduct research and discuss idea with Community Services Senior Manager in July.	High	
16	Accessibility and Town Halls	Saanich is offering Town Hall meetings as part of its broader public engagement plan.	Explore the existing practices around town halls from an accessibility lens including factors such as sound, temperature, space and seating. Staff to request current protocols from Communications and Legislative Services and then return to CC at a future date (early 2026).	Low	
17	Accessibility Guidelines	Review of accessibility guidelines for meetings and events (virtual, in-person, indoor, outdoor); documents (word, pdf, ppt, etc.); and social media usage.	Guidelines are underdevelopment and will be presented to the CC in September by Staff.	Medium	October Meeting
18	Different Cognitive and Physical Abilities	Exploring ways of ensuring folks with diverse cognitive and physical abilities are represented, heard, and included with a specific focus on youth programming and facilities.	Q: What measures are being adopted to reduce barriers for people with complex needs at our recreation centres? What are we currently doing? What can we do better? - Staff to invite Recreation Division to present at a future CC in late 2025. - Laurie-Anne K	Medium	
19	Scent Free Policies at Saanich Facilities	Some people are adversely affected by fragrances. Today, many workplaces are adopting a scent-free environment policy.	Q: What policies and education does Saanich currently have? Are they adequate? Staff to invite Occupational Health & Safety and Recreation Divisions to present current practice to CC in Fall 25 or Winter 26.	High	November Meeting
20	Parking Policy	Ensure Saanich's parking bylaw review supports accessibility.	Staff will bring forward for the CC review and input when required. Ask Bylaw about what consultation is taking place - accessible?	Low	
21	Hiring a Social Planner	A social planner in a municipality analyzes community needs and develops policies, programs, and services to enhance social well-being and equity. They collaborate with government agencies, nonprofits, and residents to address issues such as housing, accessibility, public health, and social inclusion. Their work ensures that municipal planning considers the diverse needs of all citizens, promoting a more livable and inclusive community. Saanich does not currently employ a social planner, and as a result, the work of the social planner is falling to other staff. For example, Council recently asked staff to explore increasing the number of shelter beds in the District, and this work has fallen to staff to do in addition to their current workplans. Having a dedicated staff position would allow us to hire someone specialized in this field, with time allocated specifically to social planning.	CC to call on Council to support hiring a social planner for the District. Councillor Phelps Bondaroff working on this and will bring this back to the CC.	Medium	
22	District Equity Office	The District is in the early stages of developing an Equity Office.	Staff to connect with the Director of Corporate Services to determine the timing of a presentation for the CC.	Low	2026
23	Review Saanich's Commemoration and Celebration Calendar	Review the list of cultural events and recognitions to promote inclusion.	Q: How does the District determine which 'days' to celebrate/honor, including communications and displays? (internal and external).	Medium	
24	Accessibility in Parks	Explore accessibility in our parks. Recognizing that this also intersects with the work and Terms of Reference for the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee.	Liaise with Parks when issues arise.	Low	

25	Intergenerational Connectivity	Look for opportunities to foster and support intergenerational connectivity within the District through greater application of mixed-use spaces.	<p>Q: Can this be idea be incorporated into the Older Adult Strategy?</p> <p>Q: How can Saanich influence/incentivize the building of spaces in this manner?</p> <p>HOLD pending Staff review of Youth/Older Adult Strategy timelines.</p>	Low
26	CRD Trail Widening	<p>CRD is upgrading key sections of the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails to match growing demand.</p> <p>https://www.crd.ca/projects/current-projects-initiatives/regional-trestles-renewal-trails-widening-and-lighting-project</p>	<p>Get an update on CRD trail widening and how this may impact accessibility.</p> <p>Staff to investigate potential timing for an update at CC (note: this project is currently on hold pending BC Hydro cable replacement.</p>	Low
27	Conflict Resolution Resources for Neighbours	Conflicts can sometimes occur between neighbours and often if left unchecked, these can fester and worsen over time. Saanich could assemble some helpful resources for people to direct them to conflict resolution and mediation tools to help resolve conflicts and prevent them from escalating.	<p>This item is beyond the scope of the CC.</p> <p>Councillor Phelps Bondaroff to take this offline.</p>	Low
28	Expanding DEI Training to Community Associations etc.	The idea is to curate training for Community Groups/Associations to support ADEI more broadly.	<p>Q: Is there a list of Community Associations that Saanich funds?</p> <p>CC to ask for Council support (budget) to run several ADEI workshops annually.</p>	Medium
29	Transit	BC Transit <i>Victoria Future Plan + Engineering Active Transportation Plan</i> include elements related to bus stops and accessibility.	<p>Engineering (Troy) provided an overview of the Active Transportation Plan as it relates to bus stops specifically in 2024. An field trip was also conducted at a new stop on Gorge Road.</p> <p>Staff to request that Engineering provide an update at a future CC meeting.</p>	Medium

2026