HUD's Web Publication Procedures and Style Guide

Appendix B: Web Accessibility Guidelines

1. **You must provide a text equivalent for every non-text element.**

   What this means: You must create an "alt tag" for images, captioning for audio/video, and text descriptions of maps, charts, or graphs. Anything other than text, must have a description.

2. **Real-time, synchronized captioning must be provided for multimedia presentations (including video/audio/etc.).**

   What this means: Webcasts, audio files, and any multimedia presentation that plays on its own, must have synchronized text captioning.

3. **If you use color for navigation, to give text emphasis, or to convey meaning, you have to provide a text alternative.**

   What this means: If color is used for any reason other than appearance, you must describe what the color is trying to convey. For example if you use color to highlight text, you need to explain why the text is highlighted and what the color means. If you use color to convey meaning (for example, different colors represent different homeless rates on a map), then you must you must provide an explanation (for example, the northwest quadrant of the city map has higher homeless rates than the southeast quadrant).

4. **If you use style sheets, be sure that the page will still be usable if someone has a browser that doesn't support style sheets.**

   What this means: Test your page in a browser with style sheets disabled to ensure that the page can be read and navigated, before you post to production.

5. **Provide text links alternatives if you use server-side image maps.**

   What this means: If you must use server-side image maps (the server handles the coordinates rather than the browser), you must provide text alternatives.

6. **Use client-side image maps whenever possible**

   What this means: Client-side image maps rely on the browser to equate a portion of an image to a link. These types of image maps are more accessible to those with disabilities.

7. **Be careful how you use tables. Ensure the page makes sense to someone using adaptive technologies.**

   What this means: If you follow HUD's templates, you shouldn't have any problems. If you develop your own pages and use tables for design purposes, lay out the tables so that text can be read one column at a time, versus across rows.

8. **Pages must be usable when scripts are turned off or are not supported, or you must provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page.**

   What this means: First, a website visitor must be able to use your pages if they are using a browser that doesn't support scripting (such as JavaScript). Second, your scripts should be coded so that browsers don't display or read the scripts (e.g., comment out JavaScript coding).

9. **If you are going to require a plug-in you must provide a link to a compliant plug-in**

   What this means: If your pages contain links to audio, video, or anything else requiring a plug-in, you must also provide a link to an ADA compliant plug-in. If there isn't an accessible/compliant plug-in, then you cannot use that format. This requirement applies to applications as well. If you post PDF files, you must post the information in a text version as well.

10. **Electronic forms shall be accessible to people using adaptive/assistive technologies.**

    What this means: If you use PDF files for your forms, you need to comply with (9) above. If you have online forms, they must be usable for someone using an assistive browser, such as JAWS for Windows.

11. **Users of assistive technology should be given the option to skip repetitive navigation links.**

    What this means: We will handle this with the templates, but – essentially - if you have the same navigation on all of your pages, you should provide an option that allows someone to skip the repetition.

12. **If a timed response is required, the website visitor must be notified when a process is about to time-out and be given an opportunity to ask for more time.**

    What this means: If you have an application or form that requires an answer or submission within a specific period of time (for example, 5 minutes) before the process "times out," you must give the user the opportunity to ask for more time.

You can find more information about making your webpages compliant with Section 508 accessibility requirements at: **http://www.section508.gov/**