



Records Management Guidance

Accessibility Best Practices

King County is committed to ensuring equal access to its programs and services, which access also helps to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The way we create and manage our records is an important part of any discussion about accessibility. Well-managed records are accessible by as many people as possible; both the public we serve as well as our colleagues and fellow employees. In addition to complying with ADA regulations, attention to the accessibility of our records is good practice and helps to promote equity and transparency.

While not every need can be anticipated nor every barrier avoided, there are many ways that we can increase accessibility overall.

Creating New Records

- Use **strong/good contrast**
- Use a **simple layout** and a **logical flow** to the content
- Use **plain language** as much as possible
- **Avoid** using **technical jargon**
- **Avoid** using **different color** text (remember, many people are color blind)
- **Avoid** using **snippets or images** of text, without including a caption or alt-text
- In general, avoid using Times New Roman font (it is not good for OCR technology or screen readers); **Arial is preferred** font for ADA compliance and the King County style manual
- In Word, **use the Headings Styles**, rather than just increasing the font size or boldness. Also, using the other Styles can help to convey a point. For example, if you use the Emphasis Style, it will convey emphasis to a screen reader, whereas just using Italics would not.
- In Word, **use Page spacing** and Paragraph settings rather than full returns, soft returns, tabs, typed spaces, etc.
- In Word and online, **use built in lists** (either bulleted or numbered) rather than creating your own
- In Word, **avoiding adding tables** to documents; but if you do make them as simple as possible or breakup complicated tables into multiple tables
- When you create a PDF from Word, make sure you **“Save As PDF”** and do NOT **“Print to PDF”**
- Pay attention to the **accuracy** of the metadata (**details/properties**) of each document, which can affect how they are searched and accessed
- Consider using the **“Check Accessibility”** feature on the **Review tab** of **Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint**, and other **Microsoft tools**.
- Add transcripts for any audio information (videos, sound recordings).



King County Records Management Program
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Scanning or Digitizing Records

- Ensure **the DPI is set between 300-400** (recommendation of 600 DPI for “highly formatted” or “complex” documents, with combination of text and images or other visuals)
- Use built-in **OCR capabilities** (ensures searchability)
- Avoid **combining pages** (i.e. even if two letter sized papers will fit on the scanning bed, scan them as separate pages)

Storing/Maintaining Records

- Where possible, use supported enterprise-wide tools, such as **Outlook, OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams, and Content Manager**.
- Avoid proprietary software and formats.

Providing Access to Records

- If you have videos or audio files (or even some photos), **include captions or script**
- Consider having other **language options** available
- Provide **context alerts** for likely **sensitive** or **upsetting** materials

Resources

King County has access to many vendors and tools that can aid with records accessibility, including but not limited to: ASL sign language interpretation, language interpretation, video captioning tools, braille services, and various others.

Reach out to your manager, supervisor, HR representative, or ESJ change team member for more information.

Note that the Records Management Program staff are **not** experts about accessibility or ADA requirements but can be resources about general records-related issues.



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