

How to produce an accessible document (flyer, email, newsletters, handouts, etc.).

Background: Accessible printed documents and communications are defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 508 (United States) and under the Accessible Canada Regulations (Canada). Currently, AA literature is produced in a variety of formats, many of which are not readable by AA members. Production of documents (such as pamphlets, checklists, literature, and even emails) in an accessible format assists AA members who have low vision, use screen readers, have reading disabilities and intellectual processing disabilities. These members' ability to read is greatly affected by how documents and visual aids are prepared and written.

For example, it is estimated that as much as 20% of the population is unable to read a document printed in a Serif font such as Times New Roman. Many AA documents and most literature (including the Big Book and 12&12) are printed in a Serif font, making it difficult for many alcoholics to read them smoothly or at all. Adopting a uniform appearance, color and printing standard for all printed AA documents as they are reprinted, revised or developed for AA members provides a simple method to make the message of AA available to more alcoholics.

Producing an accessible document (flyer, email, newsletters, handouts, slides, etc.):

1. **Software.** Use software that includes an "Accessibility Checker" to produce the document. All Microsoft products (e.g. Microsoft Word, Outlook, Publisher, PowerPoint) and most Adobe products can easily check the document for readability using their built-in checker.
2. **Format of the final document.** Your *finished* document should remain in its original editable format (like Microsoft Word or Publisher) or be saved in a PDF format. Do not use JPG or TIF formats.
 - a. **Flyers.** Using bright colors and novelty fonts for flyers helps attract attention but may affect their accessibility. Produce flyers as two-sided or two pagers with the second page in an accessible format and the first in the graphics you choose.
3. **Tips for Accessibility:**
 - a. Use a white or light-colored background for written materials like emails, slides, documents and flyers particularly those that will be printed. For electronic documents, ensure that they are compatible with "dark mode" or High Contrast for members using a screen reader. Provide the original document at the start of the presentation to assist those who prefer high contrast or magnification.
 - b. **Always** select a "Sans Serif" (without tails) Font like **Aptos, Calibri** or **Arial**. Avoid "Serif" fonts like **Times New Roman** and *novelty fonts* (novelty fonts).
 - c. Avoid use of shading on letters and images.
 - d. When producing printed materials, use an 11-point font or larger.
4. **Check for Accessibility.** Before finalizing your document (or saving it as a PDF), check it for Accessibility. The checker will "point out" fonts, colors and shading that affect the readability of the document AND suggest better options.
 - a. **Microsoft Accessibility Checker** <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f>
 - b. **Adobe Accessibility Checker** <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html>
 - c. **Google Docs Accessibility Checker.** https://workspace.google.com/marketplace/app/accessibility_checker_for_docs/452529936240

If you need help with your flyer or document, contact the Area 19 Accessibilities Committee at accessibilities@chicagoaa.org. We're here to help. Let's keep AA accessible for all!