U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Section 508 Checks for Websites and Applications
FHWA-HAD-21-007

These are some basic checks that developers can do while developing an application or software. Keep in mind these tips do not address every way to make websites and web-based applications Section 508 conformant. Start early and understand how choices affect 508.

1. Keyboard access.
   o All elements can be accessed with a keyboard. A user can tab through everything including on-hover pop-ups.
   o No elements trap keyboard accesses. A user can tab to and away from all elements.
   o If keystroke timing is critical to the action, there is an alternate method to complete the task not requiring timing.
   o Non-standard keystrokes are documented, readily available, and do not interfere with assistive technology or the native program keystrokes.
2. Reading order.
   o Tab order is in logical reading order.
3. Focus.
   o Visual focus is always provided on the correct element.
   o When a component receives focus, there is no unexpected change of context (e.g., opening in a new window, automatically submitting a form).
   o Navigation through the page is in logical order.
   o When hidden content is revealed, the focus is moved to that content immediately or in one keystroke (e.g., accordions, upload dialogs, drop down boxes).
   o The focus order returns to that element or the next logical element after exiting hidden content.
4. Repetitive Content.
   o Provide a link to skip repetitive navigation/links to go directly to the content.
   o Present navigational mechanisms consistently.
   o Components that perform the same function across a website are consistently labeled.
5. Non-text content.
   o Images have equivalent alt text, or use "" or 'null' if alt text is not applicable.
   o Alt text does not repeat surrounding content.
6. Text.
   o Text is rendered as text unless essential to a graphic (e.g., logo, flow chart).
7. Forms.
   o See Forms documentation.
8. Tables.
   o All tables are formatted correctly, no images of tables.
   o All column and row headers are identified using scope or headers/id.
   o Tables are not used for layout.
   o See Word and PDF documentation for more discussion on tables.

9. Structure.
    o Provide document structure/landmarks. Use semantically correct markup/styles.
    o Visual headings are tagged as headings. They are used in hierarchal order to give structure to the document, e.g., matches a table of contents.
    o All content is semantically correct (e.g., lists are proper lists, one paragraph is tagged/styles in a single paragraph).
    o Default language is set to the correct language.
    o Language of parts is set as needed on specific element.
    o Provide descriptive, unique page titles.
    o Avoid frames.
10. Color contrast.
    o Text on a background meets minimum color contrast, including images of significant text, (e.g., an infographic).
11. Use of Color.
    o Confirm color alone does not convey information.
    o **Text:** If changing the font color or the background for a reason (e.g., a color-coded table, the green text are updates, see the highlighted information), there needs to be another way to uniquely, visually convey this information. This includes links.
    o **Graphs/Charts**: If document has charts or graphs, ensure that each line or segment has a non-color visual indicator. For line graphs, this can be a unique marker, line style, or name of the line pointing to the line. For charts, this can be unique pattern on each segment or the name of each segment near the segment. Note: putting the values of a point on a line or a segment does not satisfy this criterion.
    o **Links**: Links and only links should be underlined. If not, ensure the links pass minimum contrast and have another visual indicator.
12. Adjustable Time.
    o Confirm any content with time limits can be turned off, adjusted, or extended.
    o Does not include real-time events (e.g., auction), when timing is essential (e.g., timed exam), or where time limited is greater than 20 hours.
13. Multiple ways.
    o At least two methods are available to locate content. This criterion does not apply to content such as a confirmation page, search results, content that is a step in the process, or a page that is not part of a larger website.
14. CSS.
    o Confirm any meaningful content inserted using the CSS (e.g., pseudo ::before and ::after) is available in another way.
    o Content retains logical order when CSS positioning is not used.
15. Resizing.
    o Text is resizable to 200% and readable.
16. Flashing.
    o No content that flashes, blinks strobes, etc.
17. Links.
    o Links do not open in new tabs or windows (web pages only).
    o Linked words are unique and descriptive of the link destination. Avoid using generic links such as 'click here'.
18. Dynamic Content.
    o Discussion on dynamic content is beyond the scope of this documentation.

19. Multimedia
   o See Multimedia documentation.