

# Accessibility Standard for the Digital Public Services Policy

Last review: Jan 2024  
Next review: Jan 2025

Digital Citizen Experience, Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement

*This document outlines the Accessibility Standard as a component of the Digital Public Services Policy. These standards inform Government of Saskatchewan service design for public-facing digital services.*

## Background

The Government of Saskatchewan (GoS), Digital Citizen Experience branch is committed to ensuring that all GoS digital channels are equally accessible and inclusive to the public.

Accessibility is not about disability. It's about universality and creating content that can be used by as many people as possible regardless of abilities, devices, environments, locations of access (e.g. library, home, or band office) or quality of access (i.e. internet speed).

Accessibility within digital services must accommodate people with visual, auditory, motor or cognitive disabilities.

## Standard Framework

The standard the Government of Saskatchewan requires for developed applications and digital services is the *World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA* ([W3C WCAG 2.0 AA](#)) or higher, following the WCAG core principles: Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust.

Accessibility will soon be required by law, but it is also good design. Creating fully accessible digital services improves the experience for everyone and acts as a catalyst for shifting the public from more costly channels, like phone or walk-ins, to the less costly digital channel.

## Core Principles

The standard we strive for is the *World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA* ([W3C WCAG 2.0 AA](#)) or higher. In addition to WCAG, ensure the service follows these core principles:

### Perceivable

- Font adaptable based on needs.
- Make it easier for users to see and hear content (text has sufficient colour contrast, all text has a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 with the background, all relevant images use an *img* tag and have alt attributes).
- Provide alternatives for time-based media (multimedia is tagged and has appropriate captioning, audio description, transcript for video, speed options).

### Operable

- Keyboard functionality (all interactions can be accessed with a keyboard and free of traps).
- Enough time to read content (site doesn't timeout unexpectedly, verify that the user can request more time).
- Flashing on video and web pages does not induce seizures.
- Navigation helps users find content/location (tab order is logical, proper HTML 5 tags/mark-up is used, headers and navigation nested properly and in a logical way).

### Understandable

- Text is readable and understandable (links are unique and contextual and can be understood when standing alone, i.e. don't use "Click here", page titles are descriptive, tables are coded properly and have proper headers and column attributes).

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- Appearance and operation of pages predictable (all form inputs have explicit labels, language for sections on the page that differ from the site language are set).
- Help users avoid making mistakes (hint text is used where process seems complicated, form instructions are associated with inputs, focus is always visible when moving through the page with the keyboard).
- Ensure clear error messages are available on each field.

## Robust

- Maximize compatibility with current and future assistive technologies.
- Ensure compatibility with all browsers, screen reader functions.

## Add alt text

Alternative text (Alt text) describes an image for people who are visually impaired and/or using assistive technologies. Alt text **must be used on every digital image**. Good alt text provides semantic meaning and a description of an image that helps search engines find results for images and graphics.

## Compliance Review

Digital Citizen Experience will periodically reviewed websites and services for compliance of this standard before launch and after major enhancements.