Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS)

Accessibility Center for Education, Consultation, and Support Services (ACCESS)

Email and Newsletter Accessibility Testing Checklist

Each level requires document creators to develop their accessibility skillset by adding more manual testing and validation. Each level includes and builds off of the items in the preceding levels (e.g., Level 2 encompasses the items in Levels 1 and 2, Level 4 encompasses the items in Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4).

- Level 1: Run automated tests and fix any errors found
- Level 2: Manual verification of visible content
- Level 3: Manual verification of document properties
- Level 4: Preparing to finalize

Email (Microsoft Outlook) and Newsletters (Constant Contact, GovDelivery, Mailchimp)

Level 1:

- ☐ Was the automated accessibility checker or accessibility assistant used?
- ☐ Were any errors found fixed?

Level 2:

- ☐ Is there only one Heading 1 present?
- ☐ Are all headings in order and nested properly?
- ☐ Are headings and email subjects clear and descriptive?
- ☐ Are the font choices clear, legible, and do they adhere to font size recommendations (12 pts minimum)?
- ☐ Are sans serif fonts used for the body text?
- ☐ Is all hyperlink text unique and descriptive?
- ☐ Is the use of color only to indicate meaning avoided?
- ☐ Do all images have meaningful alt text and graphics irrelevant to the content set as decorative?
- ☐ Do all tables have a header row and/or a header column?
- ☐ Are tables avoided for visual formatting of content?
- ☐ Does the email signature or email footer also follow accessibility best practices?

Level 3:

- ☐ Is plain language used, avoiding jargon, and spelling out abbreviations the first time they're used?
- ☐ Is directional and/or sensory language avoided (e.g., "the image to the right" or "the blue icon")?
- ☐ Is the content visible in high contrast mode and dark theme?
- ☐ Are images of text avoided?
- ☐ Are emojis or other non-standard symbols avoided for bulleted and numbered lists?
- ☐ Are all tables simple with no merged, split, or empty cells or multiple header rows?
- ☐ Does each table have a descriptive caption or associated title?
- ☐ Does the color contrast between text and background, link text and background, and graphics and background meet 4.5:1 for text and 3:1 for large text and images minimum contrast requirements?
- ☐ Are all interactive components actionable using just a keyboard? (tab to navigate, space/enter to activate and typing or using arrow keys to complete fields)
- ☐ Is keyboard focus visible with an outline around the element such as a link or button?
- ☐ Do focusable elements receive focus in a meaningful order left to right, top to bottom?

Level 4:

- ☐ Are text alternatives provided for complex charts and graphs?
- ☐ Are excessive carriage returns or line breaks avoided to create white space between paragraphs or sections?
- ☐ Are graphics clear and understandable in grayscale?
- ☐ Is language translation provided for critical information?

Document Change Control

Version No.	Revised by	Effective Date	Description of Changes
1.0	ACCESS Team	August 1, 2025	Initial document