City of Oakland

Guidelines for
Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

ADA PROGRAMS DIVISION

The following guidelines are for PowerPoint presentations to achieve ADA effective communication for persons with a range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, visual impairment, and more.

Well-written, organized, readable text

- Font:

    o Use 36-point or greater for slide title fonts. Text fonts in the main body should be 24-point or greater.

    o It is also important to use fonts that are easier to read.

        ▪ San serif or slab serif fonts are cleaner looking because they have greater x-height and better proportions for readability.

        ▪ Use fonts with distinctly different shapes for letters and numbers to avoid confusion (e.g. the letters 'b/o/i/l' and the numbers '6/0/1/1' can be easily distinguished).

        ▪ Some examples of accessible fonts are as follows: Arial, **Arial Black**, Book Antiqua, Bookman Old Style, Calibri, Comic Sans MS, Franklin Gothic Book, **Georgia**, Gill Sans MT, Palatino Linotype, Tahoma, Times New Roman, Trebuchet MS, Verdana.

    o Use no more than two different fonts on a page.

- Type:

    o Use italics sparingly to avoid visual distraction. Use italics only for foreign words and publication titles.

    o Use underlining sparingly. If you do underline words, make sure there is enough of a gap beneath the words to prevent connecting with letters, which leads to blurring and other visual confusion.

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- Alignment and spacing:

    - In the U.S., left-aligned type is easiest for people read. Thus, flush left / rag right is preferred over right-aligned, centered, or justified text.

    - Left-aligned is also preferred over justified text because of the consistent letter and word spacing versus irregular spacing when text is justified.

- Page layout

    - Minimize visual clutter and maximize white space to make information easier to find.

        - Place no more than six lines of text per slide.

        - Avoid photos and graphics behind text.

        - Use a standard line length between 40 to 60 characters per line.

- Language:

    - Use a 6th grade level (e.g. persons who use American Sign Language may not be fluent in written or spoken English). Also, the Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires that government agencies use clear government communication that the public can understand and use.

Color contrast

- Ensure at least a 70% difference in color value between text or graphic in foreground and background tone.

- Pair complementary colors to achieve optimum contrast (e.g. opposites on the color wheel).

- Use a color contrast checker such as one provided by WebAIM.

Photos / Graphics / Illustrations

- Select images with a wide range of gray scale variation (e.g. avoid monochromatic photographs).

- Use line drawings and floor plans with only necessary detail rather than complex drawings and plans with a great deal of information.

- For captions, use a minimum 20-point font size with large x-height, and place it adjacent to the image.

- For digital accessibility, remember to use alternative text so screen reader software, such as JAWS, will be able to read the image for a person who has low vision or is blind.

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- For charts, diagrams, or other depictions of data:

    o Provide a short description adjacent to it using minimum 20-point font size.

    o Be mindful of grayscale vis-a-vis color when printing.

    o Infographic should be paired with a description/caption so that it can be read with a screen reader software.

Printing

- If the PowerPoint presentation has a dark background and/or charts, graphs, and images, then it is highly recommended to print in color. If printed in black and white, then make sure the print copy is legible to better compare information on charts, graphs, and images.

- Choose printing materials that minimize glare, such as paper with matte or uncoated finish, rather than glossy stock. Glare can also be reduced by selecting a warm white over a bright white paper stock.

References:

- https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/review-the-oakland-style-guide

- https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25

- https://templates.office.com/en-us/accessible-powerpoint-template-sampler-tm16401472

- https://templates.office.com/en-us/accessibility-guide-tm16401486

- https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

- https://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/

- http://accessibility.psu.edu/images/charts/

Questions?

- Contact ADA Programs Division at adaprograms@oaklandca.gov or (510) 238-5219.