Color Choice for Public Materials

Making content accessible is an essential part of the City of San Diego's communications plan. We aim to create attractive and legible materials to engage our residents equitably.

Color accessibility

Color accessibility is the practice of ensuring that your color choices are readable, understandable, and inclusive for all users, especially those with visual impairments or color vision deficiencies. Some of the common issues that affect color accessibility are contrast, legibility, differentiation, and color blindness.

Some best practices to improve color accessibility are:
- Using sufficient contrast between text and background
- Avoiding using color alone to convey information
- Providing alternative text or labels for images and icons
- Testing your colors with tools like contrast checkers and color blindness simulators
- Color is **NOT** the only means of communicating information. Use alternative options symbol, patterns, text identifiers if readability is compromised.

Color Types

Select the appropriate color type for your needs. The three main versions are:

CMYK: CMYK is a method used in printing to create colors by mixing four basic ink colors: Cyan (blue), Magenta (red), Yellow, and Black. By combining these four colors in different ways, almost any color you see on printed materials can be made.

RGB: RGB is the color system used by digital screens, like those on computers, TVs, and phones. It creates colors by mixing three types of light: Red, Green, and Blue. RGB is ideal for anything you see on a screen, such as websites, digital magazines, and wallpapers.

Hex: HEX, or hexadecimal, is a way to describe colors for websites using a special code. This code uses numbers 0-9 and letters A-F to create different colors that appear on web pages.

Color Contrast

Provide High Color Contrast between background and foreground. If you have any concern of legibility, use this resource: webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker. The following page has a color contrast chart of our primary color palette.

Accessible Color Combinations

Background	White Text #FFFFF	Beige Text #DAD7CB	Charcoal #37424A	Yellow #FCD900	Orange #FF9E17	Teal Text #00C7B2	Light Blue #0098DB	Dark Blue #04559F
Dark Blue Background #04559F	Aa	Aa		Aa	Aa	AA		
Light Blue Background #0098DB	Aa		AA					
Teal Background #00C7B2	Aa							AA
Orange Background #FF9E17	Aa		Aa					AA
Yellow Background #FCD900			Aa					Aa
Charcoal Background #37424A	Aa	Aa		Aa	Aa	Aa	AA	
Beige Background #DAD7CB			Aa					Aa
White Background #FFFFFF			Aa		Aa	Aa	Aa	Aa

Aa - Color contrast approved for body copy, large text and graphic. | **AA** - Color contrast approved for large text and graphics ONLY.