Information & Access

A Handbook for Public Employees

Creating accessible publications for general audiences and alternative formats for people with disabilities

City of Seattle Greg Nickels, Mayor
Seattle Office for Civil Rights

All American
CHAMP

☐ **Design Aids:**

Spacing:
- – Space between each paragraph.
- – Documents divided into sections, separated by headings.
- – Generous with margin space.

Headings:
- – Clear and consistent style for headings and subheadings.

Highlighting:
- – Boxes to separate important information from other text.
- – Bullets for lists.
- – Boldfaced type to emphasize a word or phrase.

Graphics:
- – Graphics and illustrations close to the text they refer to.
- – Graphics and illustrations are clear.
- – Captions are easy to read.
- – Use charts sparingly.

☐ **Testing:**

Get comments from people who are likely to use the document.

Information & Access

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Seattle Office for Civil Rights.

For additional copies and information contact:

Seattle Office for Civil Rights

700 Third Avenue, Suite 250
Seattle, WA 98104-1849

(206) 684-4500

TTY (206) 684-4503
www.cityofseattle.net/civilrights

Other disability-related publications available from the Seattle Office for Civil Rights are:

- **We All Belong!**
  A Disability Etiquette Handbook
- **Discover Ability**
  – A Disability Resource Guide
  for Seattle Area Small Businesses
- **Service Animals**
  A Guide for Public Employees

This information will be provided in alternative formats to people with disabilities upon request.

Special thanks to the Washington State Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment. Selections from their publication, *Producing Materials in Alternative Formats* (1998), are used here with permission.

Additional information on Alternative Formats was graciously provided by Lighthouse International, Gallaudet University, the U.S. Department of Justice, the University of Oregon, Western Video Services, Inc., and the University of California - Santa Barbara.

Photographs of people with disabilities provided courtesy of New Horizon Resources, Inc., Poughkeepsie, NY.

Plain language

Plain language matches the needs of the reader with the needs of the writer, resulting in effective and efficient communication. It is effective because the reader can understand the message and efficient because the reader can understand the message the first time.

☐ **Analyze the reader and the purpose**

Audience – Who are they? Specific cultural groups? Professionals or lay people? Reader age range?

Purpose – Why write this document? Introduce something new? Trying to change people's behavior? A "how-to" text?

Message – What do you want to say? What does the reader want or need to know?

Use – How will information be used? Quick reference tool? Should reader do something? Should reader remember something?

☐ **Organize Ideas:**

What information must be included and what can be left out?

☐ **Appropriate Words:**

Use simple, everyday, familiar words.

Eliminate unnecessary words.

Avoid jargon, technical words and obscure acronyms.

☐ **Clear and Simple Sentences:**

Keep them short – 20 words average, one point per sentence.

Avoid ambiguous pronouns.

☐ **Clear and Effective Paragraphs:**

Write short paragraphs – one idea per paragraph.

Use lists appropriately.

The following are guidelines and are not legally required.
Use of these guidelines will enhance the general accessibility of your printed materials for all readers.

Font

- ☐ **Style**: limited use of ornate fonts
  (Good choices = Arial, Helvetica, New Century Schoolbook).
- ☐ **Size**: 12-pt. type or larger
  (Large print size: 14-pt. or larger upon request).
- ☐ **Non-standard type**: use bold, underlining or italics only for emphasis.
- ☐ **Leading**: sufficient spacing between lines of print so lines appear uncrowded.

Paragraph

- ☐ **Style**: block style (one line between paragraphs) or indented first line.
- ☐ **Line width**: single column not exceeding 6 inches; multiple columns at least 3 inches wide.
- ☐ **Justification/alignment**: left alignment or limited justification
  (Large print: left alignment only, no justification).
- ☐ **Hyphenation**: none or limited.

Paper and printing

- ☐ **Color contrast**: good contrast between print and background color; avoid dark or intense color paper (such as neon) or colors that are the same as or similar to ink color used.
- ☐ **Paper finish**: matte (dull, not shiny).
- ☐ **Background images**: none – use images that do not obscure text.
- ☐ **Double-sided copies**: one-sided copying recommended for large print, unless heavy-weight paper is used.

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Checklist for accessible printed materials

Access notices

(These notices are legally required and should be in sans serif font and 14-pt. or larger type)

Brochures, guides, or other publications about programs and services

- ☐ Publication states that disability accommodations are available upon request.
- ☐ Includes notice that alternate formats are available upon request.
- ☐ Notice has a contact name and telephone number (including TTY or Relay Service number).

Flyers and brochures without programs & services information

- ☐ Includes notice that alternate formats are available upon request.
- ☐ Notice has a contact name and telephone number (including TTY or Relay Service number).

Public meeting, hearing or event notices

- ☐ Flyer, invitation, or letter states that disability accommodations are available upon request.
- ☐ Notice says the meeting location is accessible.
- ☐ Notice has a contact name and telephone number (including TTY or Relay Service number).

Resources for City of Seattle employees

For questions about…

- **Alternative formats, access-related policies and proceedures, and other ADA related issues, contact your departmental ADA Title II Coordinator or:**

  Citywide ADA Title II Coordinator
  Seattle Office for Civil Rights
  (206) 684-4500 TTY (206) 684-4503

- **Technical help regarding the design of accessible publications, call:**

  Elliott Bronstein
  Seattle Office for Civil Rights
  (206) 684-4507

- **Information about communication-related Assistive Technology for people with disabilities, contact:**

  Washington Assistive Technology Alliance
  (206) 685-4181 TTY (206) 616-1396
  or toll-free V/TTY (800) 214-8731
  e-mail: uwat@u.washington.edu

- **Booking of sign language interpreters, access and reasonable accommodation issues concerning City of Seattle employees, contact your ADA *Title I* Coordinator, or:**

  Henri McClenney, Citywide ADA Title I Coordinator
  Department of Personnel, (206) 684-7930

Information and Access

Think about it. How many times during your work day do you communicate with the public? Five, ten, twenty times? And how do you do it? Probably by phone, fax, letter, e-mail, or through direct face-to-face interaction.

Every time you communicate with someone, you make a conscious or unconscious choice to do it in a way that seems effective and appropriate. Sometimes it's best to pick up the phone; other times it's important to put things in writing. It all depends on the context, how simple or complex the communication may be, how long it might take, and how important it is. But there is another important factor to consider – whether or not the communication medium you choose is accessible to people with disabilities.

What will this manual do for you?

- First, it will show you how to design and develop publications for general audiences that are more accessible to people with communication-related disabilities.

- Second, it will offer step-by-step instructions for making information available in alternative formats in order to meet individuals' needs.

As public employees, we must ensure that people with disabilities have full access to all of our programs and services. Yet, too often, individuals with disabilities report difficulty getting information about these services in formats that are accessible to them. Commonly used media such as brochures, forms, flyers, video tapes, and manuals (all designed to reach wide audiences) are simply not effective in reaching all people.

People with certain kinds of disabilities – including hearing loss, deafness, low vision, blindness, developmental disabilities, speech and language disorders, head injuries, and learning disabilities – may need special accommodations to address their particular communication needs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires government agencies to provide the "means for effective communication" for people with disabilities. To comply with the law, and to reach this diverse
segment of the public, we must follow a few basic steps for achieving communication access.

Designing More Usable Web Sites:
www.trace.wisc.edu/world/web/

The Trace Research & Development Center is a part of the College of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Trace Center is currently working on ways to make standard information technologies and telecommunications systems more accessible and usable by people with disabilities.

National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM), Web Access Project:
www.wgbh.pages/ncam/webaccess/index.html

NCAM's Web Access Symbol may be used by webmasters to denote their site contains accessibility features to accommodate the needs of disabled users.

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C): www.w3.org/

W3C was created in October 1994 to lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that promote its evolution and enure its interoperability. W3C has more than 400 member organizations from around the world and has earned international recognition for its contributions to the growth of the Web.

HTML Writer's Guild, Accessible Web Authoring Resources and Education (AWARE): http://aware.hwg.org

Section 508 Guidelines:
http://www.webaim.org/standards/508/checklist

Based on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the federal Access Board developed these guidelines. While they apply only to federal web sites at this time, they can be a useful tool to help ensure the accessibility of any web site.

Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities
6316 S. 19th Street
Tacoma, Washington 98466
(253) 565-9000; 665-5578 TTY

Father Palmer Memorial Braille Services, Inc.
North 1212 Howard Street
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 325-1442

Northwest Braille Services
PO Box 234
Ferndale, Washington 98248
(360) 384-6494

Video Captioning

American Production Services
2247 15th West
Seattle, WA 98119
(206) 282-1776

Western Video Services, Inc.
1331 120th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA
(425) 454-5253

Gallaudet University Caption Gallaudet
Merrill Learning Center LN30
800 Florida Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002-3695
(202) 651-5771 (V)
or 651-5115 (TTY)

Allied Vaughn Communications
208 Westlake North
Seattle, WA 98109
(206) 343-7480

Web accessibility

UW DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology):
www.washington.edu/doit/brochures/technology/universal.design.html
and www.washington.edu/doit/resources/web-design.html

DO-IT offers programs to promote the use of technology to maximize the independence, productivity and participation of people with disabilities.

How to make your publications more accessible

Virtually everything we publish can be produced in alternative formats easily and at relatively low cost. However, by striving to make our general publications and documents clear, readable, and engaging, we can increase their accessibility to many disabled readers and reduce the need to produce alternative formats on an individual basis later.

Here are ten things you can do to improve communication access when writing and designing for new publications. These guidelines apply to newsletters, pamphlets, handbooks, annual reports, job announcements, directories, notices of public meetings, event posters, flyers, and other printed material that is intended to reach the public:

1. Mention the availability of alternative formats

Prominently display the following notification in all publications:

> **This information will be provided in alternative formats to people with disabilities upon request.**

This statement should be printed in 14 point type or larger, so it is readable by individuals with low vision. Of course, this notification means you must be prepared to respond promptly to requests. See the next section to learn how to provide information in alternative formats.

2. State that your meeting space is accessible

If the material promotes an upcoming public event (and after you have booked a location that is physically accessible), include the following notification:

This location is barrier free. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact [print name, general number, and TTY, if available] **as soon as possible. Two weeks prior notice is required for booking of sign language interpreters.**[1]

The International Symbol of Access can be inserted easily into any Word or PageMaker document. If you do not already have this symbol on your own system, you can copy it from the home page of the Seattle Office fro Civil Rights at www.cityofseattle.net/civilrights. Simply click on the symbol with your alternate mouse button, copy it to your clipboard and drop it into your document.

[1] Public entities are required to arrange and pay for sign language interpreters (and other communication-related accommodations) if they are needed for effective communication. Making these arrangements can take time, so be sure to start early.

For more information , City of Seattle Employees should request a copy of the "Sign Language Interpreter Toolkit" from the Personnel Division.

Resources for production of alternative formats

Listing of the following agencies, organizations, and companies does not constitute endorsement by the City of Seattle, nor do omissions imply non-endorsement. If you know of useful resources missing from this list, please call our office to let us know. Contact Seattle Office for Civil Rights at 206-684-4500.

Audio taping services & equipment

Central WA University
State Audio Services
400 East 8th Avenue
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7431
(509) 963-2143
(509) 963-3323 TTY

Community Services for
the Blind and Partially Sighted
(Sells recording equipment)
9709 Third Ave. NE #100
Seattle, Washington 98115-2027
1-800-458-4888 or (206) 525-5556

Braille Services

Washington State School for
the Blind- Braille Access Center
2214 East 13th Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 696-6321, ext. 158 (V) or
(360) ext. 171 (TTY).

Tech Adapt
Bellingham, WA
360-306-1676
For more information:
www.techadapt.com
E-mail:
sales@techadapt.com

Video captioning

If your department produces and circulates videotapes, consider using various forms of captioning. Captioning displays text on the screen to aid individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

There are two basic forms of video captioning available. “Open captioning” is a permanent part of the video, like subtitles in a foreign film. “Closed captions” are not seen unless the video or broadcast signal is put through a decoder, which transmits the text onto the screen. Almost all television monitors sold since 1993 come equipped with these decoding devices. They can be switched on or off easily. Closed captioning is the recommended format because it offers the greatest flexibility for the user.

Some, not all, video production companies do captioning. Several are listed in the Resource Section. If you order this service, you will need to provide a master copy of the video and, if possible, a script of the dialogue and narration.

3. Display Your TTY Number

If you have a TTY line to serve individuals with speech or hearing disabilities, list this number preceded by **“TTY”** wherever your general phone number appears. If a single line handles both voice and TTY calls, include **“V/TTY”** before the number.

4. Strive for High Contrast

Do not assume that all readers have perfect eyesight. A substantial percentage of the population 50 years of age and older has moderate to severe difficulty in reading. When choosing colors for paper, text, and screened backgrounds, it is best to use combinations that will provide the maximum amount of contrast. While black ink and light (preferably cream colored) paper provide excellent contrast with reduced glare, you may decide to use non-black ink or colored paper for stylistic reasons. If so, avoid using two shades of the same color or colors with similar degrees of lightness together. This makes reading nearly impossible for many elderly people and others with low vision. Also, if a background image is used behind text, make sure it does not clutter the page or reduce legibility.

5. Choose the Right Font

Always consider the readability of your font. There are many typefaces, and some are more legible than others. You should limit the use of highly ornate and decorative fonts, and never use them for bodies of text. Organizations for people with low vision specifically recommend typefaces similar to “New Century Schoolbook” or fonts from the “Times” family. Helvetica and Arial typefaces are also considered easy to read and are commonly used. Arial is the typeface used throughout this document.

Here are some examples of highly ornate fonts:

Brush Script

ALGERIAN

Floraline

Colonna

Nuptial Script

6. Limit the Use of Non-Standard Type Styles

Avoid “modifying” your type face as much as possible. Text in all uppercase letters is very difficult to read. Bold, underlined and italic type should be used sparingly and should not be used in long passages. Remember, most of us read by discerning the pattern of words or phrases, not by reading each letter. The overuse of modified type disrupts our ability to process these patterns efficiently.

7. Don’t Crowd Your Type

Make sure that there is plenty of “leading,” or space between lines. If you are working in MS Word, the standard “single line spacing” is fine for most documents. If you are using a publishing program such as PageMaker, ensure that the leading is at least 20% greater than the font size. For example, 12 point type should have a minimum leading of 14.5.

8. Choose a Readable Type Size

Fonts should be large enough for easy reading by a person with average vision. For general publications, letters, and other documents, 12 point type is the minimum, unless there is a compelling reason to go smaller. Though many books and newspapers are printed in 11 or even ten point type, this is *not* recommended for City publications. A word of caution: sticking with 12 point type is no guarantee of readability. Some fonts appear smaller or larger than others, even though they may technically have the same point size. Note the difference between these fonts:

This is 12 point Arial.

This is 12 point Times Roman.

The best thing to do is compare various fonts and select one that appears large enough and clearly legible.

All staff who have direct contact with the public should be ready to offer individualized assistance when it is needed or requested. Be aware that this kind of assistance often requires staff to spend more time serving people with disabilities than might be spent serving non-disabled persons. For example, a person who has difficulty communicating because of a speech disability may be understood if the individual dealing with him/her merely listens carefully and takes a little extra time. This additional staff time should be considered a reasonable accommodation.

Accessible Internet web sites

All department web sites should be accessible. Many people with communication-related disabilities use the Internet as a primary means of obtaining public information. The City has specific protocols for accessible web content and design. The guidelines are intended for all web content developers (page authors and site designers) and for developers of authoring tools. Though the primary goal of these guidelines is to promote accessibility, following them will make our web content more available to all users. The following resources can be used to scan your web pages for accessibility:

Access Adobe: http://access.adobe.com/

Bobby: http://www.cast.org/Bobby

PIAT Web Page Accessibility Evaluation Assistant (WAVE): http://www.temple.edu/inst_disabilities/piat/wave/

TIDY: http://www.w3.org/People/Raggett/tidy/

Text Only Maker (TOM): http://lunch.ncsa.uiuc.edu/tom/tom.html

Computer disk and e-mail

Advances in technology are opening new doors for people with disabilities, increasing access at a rapid rate. People with many kinds of disabilities use computers in combination with speech synthesizers, Braille keyboards, large print displays and other assistive devices. By providing written or graphical information in electronic form, you enable users to adapt it using equipment and software specially designed to meet their needs.

Be prepared to provide your documents and published materials via computer disk or e-mail as an accommodation. The proper format can vary depending upon the computer system and the software involved. It is generally a safe bet to send documents in ASCII format (a text only document), however, the user may want graphical information as well. Ask the requester whether an IBM compatible or Macintosh disk is appropriate.

Personal assistance and oral communication

In some instances, it may be necessary to provide personal assistance to individuals who have difficulty accessing written material or communicating in written form. For example, a blind person may request that a brief document be read aloud, either in person or over the phone. A person with a developmental disability may need help understanding and completing a complex form or application process. A person who is Deaf or hard of hearing may need to exchange notes with staff to clarify simple information. The degree of service provided to ensure effective communication will vary in accordance with the length and complexity of the communication involved.

9. Write Simply

Always use the clearest, simplest English possible. All readers benefit when information is presented in a straightforward manner. For people with language processing disabilities, developmental disabilities, or learning disabilities, simple language is the key to communication access. For specific guidance, request a copy of "The Writing Toolkit: The Basics of Clear Writing," prepared by Joanne Anton of the City of Seattle Performance Resources Group. Call 206-684-7931 for a copy.

10. Be Creative and Have Fun

Remember, accessible publications do not need to be boring! People with disabilities enjoy interesting writing and imaginative design as much as anyone else. The key is not to let your creativity get in the way of effective communication. Follow the suggestions described above, and let your imagination run wild!

Providing alternative formats upon request

The ADA is about equal access and equal opportunity. This is often understood to mean the removal of physical or architectural barriers. It also refers to equal access to information. Most of us automatically think of printed materials as the main vehicle for getting information to the public. Yet many people with disabilities utilize other forms of communication. These other forms of communication are known as "alternative formats." Examples include Braille documents, audio tapes, large print publications, computer disks, and more.

Alternative formats are a means of providing accessibility for all people. By providing information in alternative formats, we expand our client/customer base, diversify participation in our programs, increase citizen satisfaction, and tangibly demonstrate our commitment to inclusiveness and diversity. We also comply with the law!

Before discussing specific kinds of alternative formats and how to produce them, here are nine important points to keep in mind:

1. **Publicize alternative formats**
   As described in the previous section, mention the availability of alternative formats in all standard print publications. Though many people with vision disabilities cannot read such statements, friends and families can, and often do, act as "information brokers."

2. **Wait for a specific request**
   Generally, it is not necessary to put your materials into an alternative format until a person with a disability makes a request.

Braille Materials

Braille is the most commonly recognized communication method for blind and partially sighted people, though the percentage of these individuals fluent in Braille is relatively small. For those who use it, however, Braille is a vital means of communication. Almost anything can be Brailled, including forms, personal correspondence, maps, and a variety of published materials. The Braille system makes it possible for blind people to take notes, write letters, read books and popular magazines, compute mathematical equations, and even read and write music.

If you receive a request to transcribe documents into Braille, be aware there are three distinct grades to choose from. "Grade 1 Braille" is the most basic form, with dots strictly representing the letters of the alphabet, numbers, and punctuation. "Grade 2 Braille" is a shorthand version for more experienced Braille readers, utilizing a series of contractions. This is the most commonly used form of the Braille system. "Grade 3 Braille" makes use of even more contractions, but is rarely used by anyone. When you receive a request for a Braille document, find out whether the person needs Grade 1 or Grade 2.

For a list of organizations that produce Braille documents, see the Resource Section. The amount of production time needed can vary depending on the workload of the organization, the amount of material being transcribed, and the format. Complex materials containing graphs, pictures or drawings, should be Brailled by a certified Braillist who has been trained to transcribe the graphics and pictures to a descriptive format.

Braille documents with more than 15 pages should be bound for easy reference. Binding the Braille document is especially important when it will be used as a reference, needed for long term use.

Here is a list of announcements with examples that should be included in every recording:

Announcements	Example of what to say
Read the title and author, reference or source, and the publication date.	*"Housing Discrimination and Your Civil Rights*, by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights," published in 2002.
State the name of the reader after the introduction.	"Read by (your name)."
Provide other important information about the material.	"This booklet is 24 pages in length and is divided into five sections."
Announce your place in the text when changing from one side of the tape to the other.	"This is the end of Section 3 on page 15 of (title) by (author). Play Side 2 for a continuation of this document."
Announce your place in the text when continuing reading on the flip side of a tape.	"Section 4 of (title) by (author), continuing the reading of page 15."
Clearly state when you are ending a recording.	"This is the end of the recording of (title) by (author)."
Utilize "reader's notes" when appropriate. (These are comments from a reader to a listener which clarify an aspect of the material which is not printed in the text.)	"Reader's note: A description of the tables shown on this page will be given at the end of the document. End of note. Return to text."

3. **Anticipate future need**
   If your department receives a request for an alternative format such as Braille or audio cassette, it may be cost effective to purchase extra copies in order to satisfy future requests. Some departments receive many alternative format requests. For these, it may be wise to create multiple copies in advance.

4. **Respond quickly**
   Always provide alternative formatted materials as soon as possible after you get a request. People with disabilities have a reasonable expectation, and the legal right to receive informational materials without undue delay.

5. **Don't charge special fees**
   Departments may not set a fee for alternative formatted materials that is greater than the amount charged to those who receive the same material in a standard format. For example, if you sell event programs for $2, you may not charge more than $2 for an audio version of the program, even if it cost more than that to produce.

6. **Consult with the requester**
   The decision about what alternative format to use in a particular case is one which must be made in consultation with the individual who makes the request.

7. **Honor the request if possible**
   Whenever possible, provide materials in the format preferred by the requester. Individuals with disabilities typically are very knowledgeable about what works for them. Generally, government entities must honor an individual's preferred means of communication, unless it can demonstrate that other equally effective means are available. This does not mean, however, that we are obligated to provide the "top of the line" or most expensive accommodation available – only one that offers

equally effective communication. City of Seattle employees who have questions about a requested alternative format which seems unreasonable or unnecessary, should contact their department's ADA Title II Coordinator.

8. **Be Flexible**
   It is important to recognize that needs differ from individual to individual. An accommodation that works for one person may not work for another, even if they share the same type of disability.

9. **Don't Ask Unnecessary Questions**
   When it comes to public access issues such as alternative format requests, it is recommended that public employees *not* ask about a person's specific disability or require proof that an alternative format is needed as an accommodation. Unnecessary inquiries of this kind are in many cases prohibited under federal law.

- Experience has shown that the majority of people who are blind prefer fast rather than slow reading.

- Read only as long as you can without your voice weakening. Take breaks, and resume reading later, as needed.

- If the information you wish to convey is complex (e.g. with diagrams, graphics tables, flowcharts, etc.), it is advisable to use a professional service. See the Resource Section for a list of services.

- Be sure to use the "pause" button to stop recording when you have a cough or sneeze, when you turn a page, or when an interruption occurs. Release the pause control gently.

All information on the page must be included in the recording. This includes footnotes, quotations, and descriptions of underlined, bold, and italic type. If a phrase is in quotations, say "quote" and "end quote" in the appropriate place. Likewise, for passages in parentheses, say "paren" and "end paren." For italicized words, say "italics" and "end italics" as needed.

Duplicating and distribution of recorded tapes

Many companies and agencies have high speed duplicating machines to reproduce tapes from a master. Tape duplication services are listed in most telephone directories.

Prior to mailing, check the tape to make sure the information copied is correct. Always mail cassette tapes in padded envelopes. A Braille label should accompany the tape for easy identification by people who read Braille. (See the Resources Section for places to purchase Braille labels or label makers.)

organizations which sell this equipment. See the Resource Section.

- Tape recorders should be plugged in while recording. Batteries weaken with use and can affect the volume and speed of the recording.

- Use ordinary 15, 30, 60 or 90 minute cassette tapes for recording purposes.

- Sound quality is important. The reader should select a quiet location to tape which is free from background noise and telephones.

Reading and recording material

- The goal of the reader is to produce an accurate reproduction of the text. Read the material before taping to become familiar with the proper pronunciation of names and other words. Spell proper names aloud if they have unusual spellings, such as "Smyth." If you are unable to find the proper pronunciation of a word, pronounce it phonetically, then spell it. Be sure to use the same pronunciation throughout.

- When taping correspondence or documents of legal nature, do not correct apparent errors in written text. The material should be read exactly as it appears in print. The only exception is the obvious typographical error.

Producing common alternative formats

There are a variety of alternative format options that can be used to assist people with disabilities. This section will show you how to provide information in the most commonly requested alternative formats. The following list is not comprehensive, so be prepared to work with the individual to determine the best way to communicate effectively.

Large Print Documents

Research shows that 60 percent of all blind and partially sighted people regard themselves as print readers. These individuals can read print if it is of sufficient size and clarity. Large print materials are one of the most commonly requested forms of accommodation. Carefully follow these guidelines when producing materials in large print:

Production: Large print materials can easily be created with a word processor and laser printer simply by formatting documents in the manner described below. You can also make large print documents on a high quality copy machine. This is especially useful when clean originals are available. Do not distribute copies with black streaks, conspicuous marks, or faded lettering. It is best to make one-sided copies to avoid bleed-through. When copying, always place pages on the glass instead of using the document feeder. This way it is easy to eliminate white space, and allow for an enlarging percentage that conforms to the requested type size. To enlarge an 8-1/2" x 11" page, 11" x 17" paper is recommended.

Type size: Varies depending on the needs of the individual. Large print materials are most commonly available in 16 or 18 point type. Fourteen point type is considered the minimum for large print and is usually reserved for footers. Ask the user about the size of type required. Many people need 28 to 36 point type.

Type style: People with low vision often recommend New Century Schoolbook, Helvetica, Arial, or New Times Roman for large print documents. Do not use condensed, ornate or decorative fonts. Avoid use of uppercase letters, which are difficult to read, and minimize the use of bold, underlined, and italicized type.

Line spacing: If you are working in MS Word, the standard "single line spacing" is fine for most large print documents. If you are using a publishing program to create these materials, make sure the "leading" or line spacing is at least 20% greater than the font size. For example, 16 point type should have a minimum leading of 19 points.

Justification: It is best to use only left justification for large print materials. Full justification can cause words to be unevenly spaced, which makes documents difficult to read.

Paper and ink: When choosing colors for paper and ink, use combinations that provide the maximum amount of contrast. Black ink and light, cream colored paper are recommended because they provide excellent contrast with reduced glare. Black ink on pastel colored papers also is acceptable. Paper with a matte finish (non-glossy) is preferable to "shiny" or coated paper to prevent glare.

Other tips for large print: Avoid hyphenations, which break up words between lines and decrease legibility. Provide "navigational aids" for readers (e.g., tables of contents, clear headings, and titled illustrations in appropriate places). Feel free to use either block

style or indented paragraphs. Both are acceptable formats for large print documents.

Audio tapes

Tape is an extremely important medium for many people with vision disabilities, as well as those who have difficulty reading due to learning and/or developmental disabilities. Tapes can convey the same information that is published in pamphlets, newsletters, posters, handbooks, and signs. They are also useful for descriptive audio tours of zoos, museums, aquariums, and other public places.

Tapes may not be suitable for everyone, so plan to consult with the individual about what works best for him/her. A do-it-yourself approach to producing tapes is perfectly acceptable, and small high quality recorders and microphones are available at little cost. Please follow these tips when recording taped materials:

Setting up an in-house recording session

- When selecting a tape player/recorder, look for one with adjustable speed. Adjustable speed allows the user to speed up the recording while listening, if so desired.

- If you anticipate recording long or complex documents, such as handbooks or manuals, a recorder with tone indexing is recommended. Tone indexing allows a listener to move through a document quickly in order to access specific information. The reader/recorder simply presses the tone index button at key points in the text (for example, just before a section heading). This allows the listener to skip over or replay sections at will, in the same way sighted people browse through documents. Detailed information of tone indexing is generally provided by