Microsoft Excel

Follow these best practices
to help make documents accessible.

Give all sheet tabs unique names.

Sheet names should provide information about what is found on the worksheet, making it easier to navigate through a workbook. Remove blank sheets.

Enter important information in the first row and column.

Enter the title and important details, like agency name, in cell A1. This is the first data cell to provide structure and navigation for assistive technology. It's okay to merge cells to center the title.

Structure content for readability.

Hide blank rows and columns. Add structure by defining the title region (creating names for defined data ranges).

Avoid blank cells in data ranges.

When possible, mark any empty table data cell as "Cell intentionally left blank" or "No data."

Use alignment tools for layout and to create white space.

Don't use blank rows or columns for spacing. Manage the layout by resizing rows and columns, and use the alignment tools to move content (top, bottom, left, right) as needed.

Specify table headings.

Check Table Design > Table Style Options to ensure proper header row and column elements are marked. Use Table Design > Properties to add or edit the table's name. It should be descriptive.

Add alt text to images and objects.

Excel's alt text is not read by screen readers. Add informative and concise descriptions for important graphics or non-text elements directly in a cell near the image, not in the image's alt text section. Consider adding "Image description:" to the beginning of the alt text to identify the use of an image to screen reader users. Use the "Mark as decorative" checkbox as appropriate.

Include descriptions directly in data cells for any data visuals.

When displaying a chart or graph within Excel, its complete description should be provided directly in a data cell near the visual, not in the visual's alt text.

Name hyperlinks appropriately.

Links should contain meaningful text that describes the link's destination or subject. Do not use generic language, such as "click here." Note: Excel applies links to the entire cell, not just the link's text.

Use color carefully.

Color contrast must meet standards throughout the workbook. Normal text to background ratio is 4.5:1. Non-text elements and large text (a minimum of 14 pt bold or 18 pt) ratios are 3:1. Preview content in black and white or grayscale.

Fill in Document Properties.

When saving, enter the title (document name), subject (general keywords), and author (agency or division) in the document's properties.

Use the Accessibility Checker tool.

This built-in tool provides details on potential issues and give suggestions to correct them. You must perform manual checks in addition to the automated ones.

NORTH
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Be Legendary.

Thank you to the state of Minnesota
for providing this content.