



Web Content Creator Policy

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all website content complies with Section 508 and current WCAG AA accessibility standards while maintaining our established brand identity.

Adherence to these standards mitigates legal risk, broadens audience accessibility, and ensures a consistent, high-quality user experience.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all content creators, editors, designers, contributors, developers, and third-party contractors producing content for our website.



3.0 Definitions

3.1 Accessibility

The practice of designing and producing digital content so that it can be perceived, understood, navigated, and interacted with by all users, including individuals with disabilities.

3.2 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all public services, programs, and activities provided by state and local governments. It requires equal access to information and services, including digital content. Compliance is typically demonstrated through alignment with Section 504 requirements and recognized technical accessibility standards such as Section 508 and current WCAG guidelines.

3.3 Branding

The visual, verbal, and experiential elements that represent the County's identity, including logos, colors, typography, imagery, messaging, and tone. Consistent branding ensures recognition, professionalism, and alignment with organizational standards across all web content.

3.4 Content Creator

Any individual responsible for editing, developing, publishing, or maintaining web content, including employees, contractors, or third-party vendors.

3.5 Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794), is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. It requires state and local governments to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to services, programs, and information, including digital content.



3.6 Section 508

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794d), requires federal agencies to ensure that electronic and information technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Although Section 508 applies directly to federal agencies, its technical standards are widely adopted by state and local governments as the benchmark for digital accessibility and to support implementation of Section 504 requirements.

3.7 WCAG Level AA

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA are internationally recognized technical standards for digital accessibility. These standards define requirements for making web content accessible and are incorporated into Section 508 as the basis for accessibility compliance.

3.8 Web Content

Any digital material created or published on the County's website, including, but not limited to, text, images, documents, multimedia, and third-party embedded content.

4.0 Accessibility Requirements

All website content must comply with Section 508, Section 504, and current WCAG Level AA accessibility standards at the time of publication. This applies to all content, including, but not limited to, webpages, documents, multimedia, and third-party embedded elements.

Content creators are responsible for ensuring their materials meet all applicable accessibility requirements as outlined in the Web Style Guide. Compliance with these standards is mandatory.

Adhering to these standards ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal access to and can effectively use website content. Section 504 defines the requirement for equal access, while Section 508 and WCAG specify the technical standards to achieve it. Following these requirements also helps reduce organizational risk.

For detailed accessibility requirements and implementation guidance, refer to the Web Style Guide.



4.1 Content Readability

Website content must be written for a broad audience, including users of all educational backgrounds, not just industry experts. Content creators are expected to avoid unnecessary jargon, define technical terms, and use plain language to ensure that information is clear, accessible, and understandable to all visitors.

4.2 Content Formatting

All website content must follow approved formatting standards as outlined in the Web Style Guide. This includes proper use of headings, paragraphs, lists, links, and other structural elements to ensure clarity, accessibility, and a consistent appearance across the site.

Tables are generally not permitted for standard content purposes and may only be used to present structured data that, according to site standards, cannot be effectively conveyed through text or lists. Most structured data can be handled automatically using list automations, eliminating the need for manual table creation. Use of tables requires prior code review for functionality by I.T. and an ADA compliance review by the Public Information Office.

Content creators are responsible for following these formatting standards when creating or updating content.

4.3 Headers and Section Headings

Headers must be used appropriately and in logical order. Proper use of headings allows screen readers and other assistive technologies to navigate content efficiently. Headers provide structure, context, and cues for all users, improving comprehension and overall accessibility of the page.

Heading hierarchy should follow the site structure: the site title uses H1. All content sections begin at H2 with subsequent subsections using H3–H6 as needed. This order ensures clear and consistent navigation for all users.

4.4 Links

All links must follow approved formatting standards to ensure accessibility, clarity, and



usability. Link text must be descriptive and meaningful—avoid using raw URLs, “click here,” or vague phrases. Hyperlink text should clearly indicate the destination or purpose of the link.

Links to documents or external websites must open in a new window. Internal links should open in the same window unless otherwise specified in the Web Style Guide.

Content creators are responsible for linking only to reputable, valid websites and for periodically reviewing links to ensure they remain accurate, up to date, and functional. If a content creator discovers that a linked site is malicious, harmful, or used for phishing, they must correct the link immediately and notify the Public Information Office and I.T. to implement changes and review security immediately.

All link formatting must comply with ADA requirements and the guidance provided in the Web Style Guide.

4.5 Documents

All documents uploaded to the website must be in PDF format and meet current WCAG Level AA accessibility standards. Other file formats may not be uploaded. Accommodation may be provided through I.T. if there is a documented legal or technical reason for using a specific file type.

PDF is required because it ensures accessibility, preserves formatting, provides equitable access to all users, and can be opened directly in browsers without requiring additional software. Other file types may not reliably support screen readers, be accessible to all users, or maintain consistent structure.

Content creators are responsible for ensuring documents are properly structured, include appropriate alternative text for images, and are accessible to screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Document accessibility standards, accessible templates, file naming conventions, and creation guidance can be found in the Web Style Guide.



4.6 Images

Images must meet accessibility requirements, including descriptive alternative text and proper labeling. No content may be conveyed solely through images; all information must also be available in text or another accessible format.

5.0 **Branding**

All content must comply with approved brand standards prior to publication. Content creators are responsible for ensuring that visual elements, written content, and overall presentation align with these standards, maintaining a consistent, professional, and recognizable brand identity.

5.1 Color

All content must use the approved color palette as specified in the Web Style Guide. Colors should maintain sufficient contrast for accessibility, support brand recognition, and be applied consistently across all web content.

5.2 Typography

Content creators must use the approved fonts, sizes, and weights specified in the Style Guide. Custom fonts, styles, or formatting outside of these approved presets must not be used.

5.3 Logos

Content creators must follow approved logo usage guidelines for placement, sizing, spacing, and context as specified in the Style Guide and outlined in the Logo Policy.

5.4 Images

All images must meet approved quality, licensing, and style standards, with proper copyright or licensing documentation.

Content creators should work with the Public Information Office or Web Team for sourcing guidance. Limited fair use rights for educational or illustrative purposes apply only when no suitable images can be obtained and do not apply to content published on publicly accessible websites.

Images from vendors or external sources must meet accessibility requirements, including



descriptive alternative text and proper labeling, as specified in the Style Guide.

Images must also meet established technical standards to support performance and visual consistency. Image dimensions must be no smaller than 500 pixels in width or height and must not exceed 1800 pixels in either dimension. File sizes should be optimized to prevent excessive load times, and low-quality, distorted, or pixelated images are not permitted.

Detailed image standards, licensing requirements, and sourcing guidance are provided in the Style Guide.

5.5 Infographics

If a content creator determines that an infographic is necessary, it must comply with approved style, branding, and accessibility standards, including alternative text, descriptive captions, and text equivalents for data.

Questions about infographic creation or requirements may be directed to the Public Information Office for guidance.

5.6 Icons

When an icon is necessary for content clarity or functionality, users must use approved icons whenever possible. Approved icons include:

- a. The font set integrated into the website.
- b. The Curated Assets Library, which contains appropriately formatted images.

If a required icon is not available, requests for new assets are expected to be submitted through the service ticket process. Only high-quality assets from approved vendors may be used.

All icons must comply with accessibility requirements and the site standards as specified in the Style Guide.

5.7 Templates

All website content must be created using the County's approved templates. Custom



templates will not be created or used.

Templates ensure consistency in design, layout, and accessibility across the website. They also support sitewide automations, maintain branding standards, ensure ADA compliance, and provide a consistent user experience. Modifying or bypassing templates can disrupt these automations and break site functionality.

Content creators are responsible for using templates correctly and following all guidance outlined in the Style Guide, including layout, formatting, accessibility features, and automation functionality.

5.8 Navigation and Structural Elements

Navigation elements must not be recreated within page content. Lists of links that duplicate existing navigation or attempt to create custom navigation structures are not allowed. Empty or placeholder pages, including those that contain only links, are not permitted.

Standard components and layouts must be used as designed. Custom contact blocks, navigation elements, or other structural features may not be created within page content.

5.9 Headings

Headings must follow a logical reading order and hierarchical structure to support accessibility and usability. They must serve a structural purpose and may not be replaced with bold, italic, or other stylized text used solely for visual styling or decorative formatting.

5.9.1 **Headers and Section Headings**

Heading hierarchy should follow the site structure: the site title uses H1. All content sections begin at H2 with subsequent subsections using H3–H6 as needed. This order ensures clear and consistent navigation for all users.

5.10 Forms

Content creators should use the website's integrated form system whenever possible instead of third-party form solutions. Embedding forms is not permitted.

Alternate in-house form solutions may be available if the integrated form system cannot



accommodate a specific request. If additional support is needed, submit a web service ticket for guidance.

Standards for forms, including accessibility, formatting, and creation procedures, are specified in the Web Style Guide.

5.11 Widgets

Content creators must use only approved widgets provided by the website platform. Widgets labeled "I.T. Use Only" are restricted and may not be used, as they support coded automations and system functionality that may not work correctly in standard content.

Custom widgets and third-party widget solutions may not be embedded or implemented. If a required feature is not available, a web service ticket must be submitted for review and potential implementation.

Widget standards, available options, and usage guidance are specified in the Web Style Guide.

5.12 Videos

Videos must not be embedded directly on website pages. Any required video content should be provided via approved links or hosted through sanctioned platforms that meet accessibility standards.

5.13 Responsivity

All county-approved templates are fully responsive and designed to display correctly on all screen sizes and devices. Content creators must not modify templates or add custom elements in a way that breaks responsive behavior. Any content, images, or components added must maintain proper layout, readability, and functionality across desktops, tablets, and mobile devices.

6.0 Style Guide

All website content must follow the approved Web Style Guide to ensure consistency, accessibility, professionalism, and a high-quality user experience. The Style Guide provides



standards, procedures, and resources—including training and how-to materials—to help content creators produce compliant and effective web content. Content creators are responsible for applying these standards in all content they create or update.

7.0 Automated Systems

Content published on the website may be used by automated systems, including but not limited to chatbots, modules, widgets, content feeds, and directories.

7.1 Chatbots, Language Models, and Artificial Intelligence

These systems crawl live site content to provide responses to the public. All content must be accurate, accessible, and current to ensure correct and compliant answers.

7.2 Modules, Widgets, Lists, and Similar Components

These rely on sitewide content for functionality and display. All information feeding these components must meet content, accessibility, and branding standards.

7.3 Content Feeds

Includes news, announcements, notices, events, and similar types of content. These must be used only for their intended purpose and maintained for accuracy and timeliness.

7.4 Directories and Structural Content

Includes contact lists, services, departments, site hierarchy, and navigation elements.

Accuracy and proper structure are required for both user accessibility and automated system functionality. Users must not attempt to modify, tamper with, or override directory content.

Any changes must be requested via service ticket.

Content creators are responsible for maintaining their respective content to support these systems. Outdated, incomplete, or noncompliant information can negatively affect the reliability, accessibility, and performance of automated tools and public-facing components.

8.0 Content Maintenance

Content creators and their respective departments are responsible for routinely reviewing and updating their pages to ensure information is timely, useful, and aligned with web standards.



Content maintenance is a proactive responsibility and should not rely on external notification or review.

8.1 Freshness

All website content must remain current and accurate. Outdated, obsolete, or inaccurate content must be corrected or removed promptly.

8.2 Relevance

Content must be appropriate in scope and purpose. Pages must contain only information relevant to their intended topic and audience. Duplicate or overlapping content across multiple pages is not permitted, as it creates confusion and reduces usability.

8.3 Compliance and Validation

All content must be reviewed for compliance with accessibility, branding, and formatting standards before publication. Content creators are responsible for verifying compliance using the approved validation tools specified in the Web Style Guide.

Content must maintain a passing score on the designated compliance tool for accessibility, quality, and freshness. Content that does not meet the passing criteria must be corrected before submission for publication.

8.4 New Page Requests

Requests for new pages must include complete, relevant, and non-duplicative content at the time of submission. Content must be permanent in nature and not temporary or short-term. Page requests that do not meet these requirements will not be created, and the service ticket will be closed.

Temporary or short-term information does not justify creating a new page. This type of content must be placed on an existing relevant page for its temporary duration or published using approved content types such as news, events, announcements, or notices.

8.5 List Content Management

All list content must include only items belonging to the content editor's designated



department. Duplicate items are not allowed, and content from other departments must not be added to or published in the list, nor may editors publish information on behalf of departments whose content they do not maintain.

8.6 Content Removal and Archiving

Pages or content that are outdated, obsolete, or no longer relevant must be removed promptly. Departments are responsible for any archival requirements upon removal. Only content that continues to serve a clear purpose for the audience should remain live.

Temporary or short-term information must be managed using approved content types such as news, events, announcements, or notices.

8.7 Workflow and Content Approval

All content must follow the established approval process before publication. This workflow ensures quality control, technical functionality, accessibility and compliance verification, and proper oversight.

8.8 Content Approval Process

All content must follow the steps below:

- a. The content creator develops content in accordance with all policy and Web Style Guide requirements.
- b. If a new page is required, a service ticket must be submitted with complete, relevant, non-duplicative, and non-temporary content. Requests for empty, placeholder, or incomplete pages will not be fulfilled.
- c. Content creator enters the content and verifies compliance using approved validation and accessibility tools.
- d. Content creator submits the content for review.
- e. The Public Information Office reviews the content. (Review time may range from 24 hours to 7 business days depending on request volume. Content updates should be planned accordingly.)
- f. If content is rejected, the content creator must make applicable corrections before



resubmitting.

- g. Content is published only after final review confirms all requirements are met.

8.9 Emergency Updates and Approvals

For urgent updates that affect critical operations or are required by law, content may be updated immediately, and users must provide as much advance notice as possible. These changes must come in as a service ticket with an email and/or phone call to the public information office and/or I.T. following promptly. "Emergency" status does not apply to routine updates, preference-based changes, or general corrections.

8.10 Content Creator/Editor Access

To maintain a functional environment and ensure clean code and content, editing access is limited to a maximum of four (4) users per site. No exceptions will be made to this limit for page content. Minimal exceptions may be granted for lists where required by law, regulation, or official procedural requirements.

Each department is responsible for all content published on its respective website pages, including ensuring accuracy, timeliness, compliance with this policy, and regular updates as needed.

8.11 Training

All content creators must complete required training before being granted access to create, edit, or maintain website content. Ongoing training may also be required to ensure compliance with current standards, procedures, and legal requirements.

Required training includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Use of the Content Management System (CMS)
- b. Creating web content, including drafting, formatting, accessibility, and compliance requirements
- c. Maintaining web content, including routine review, updates, removal of outdated information, and ongoing compliance



- d. Accessibility requirements in accordance with Section 504, Section 508, and current WCAG AA standards
- e. Website compliance and validation tools
- f. Standard procedures, including service ticket submission, publishing workflow, and content approval processes
- g. Web governance best practices, including content scope, approved components, templates, and formatting standards

Content creators are responsible for applying all training and guidance when managing their department's web content. Failure to follow required training, procedures, or standards may result in mandatory retraining. Excessive or repeated disregard for policy may result in removal of website editor permissions.

Additional training may be required when policies, technology, or accessibility standards change. Refresher training may also be required when necessary to maintain access.

Training materials, schedules, and resources are provided and maintained by the I.T. department and can be found in the Web Style Guide or through designated training channels.

8.12 Service Ticket Submission

Service tickets must include complete and accurate information to the best of the user's ability. At a minimum, each ticket must contain a direct link to the page or content in question, along with clear and concise instructions describing the request or issue. All submissions should demonstrate professional communication and courtesy to support timely resolution and effective collaboration.

9.0 Remediation

Upon notification of a compliance failure, content creators must address the affected content promptly.

Content must be corrected according to the following timelines:



- Minor violations: Correction required within 5 business days of notification
- Major violations: Correction required within 2 business days of notification
- Critical violations: Immediate correction required (same business day)

10.0 Accountability and Enforcement

Compliance is actively monitored and documented using multiple sources to verify that established standards are consistently met.

Policy violations are addressed through a structured, progressive, and educational process. Initial concerns are managed through guidance, clarification, and training to support corrective action. Repeated or significant noncompliance may result in additional corrective measures, including the suspension or removal of editing privileges, as appropriate. All incidents are recorded in the ticketing system.

10.1 Progressive Response System for Policy Compliance

The organization applies a progressive, education-focused framework to ensure compliance, address deficiencies, and support continuous improvement. Each response tier outlines specific corrective actions, including feedback, training, or formal warnings, along with defined timelines for completion. The tier assigned reflects the severity and repetition of the issue, with repeated offenses within a 90-day period automatically escalated to the next level to ensure timely remediation.

TIER 1

Educational

- Content returned with detailed feedback
- Focus on style guide review
- Follow appropriate remediation steps

TIER 2

Corrective

- Formal written warning issued
- Focus on style guide review and training resources



TIER 3

Major

- Comprehensive retraining will be provided
- Suspension from content creation until training is completed
- Sign policy acknowledgement form

TIER 4

Critical - continued non-compliance

- Removal from content creation role
- Reassignment to non-content role
- Extended retraining program
- Final action after all interventions

10.2 Violation Severity Matrix

Not all violations are equal. Violations are categorized by severity to determine appropriate response.

10.2.1 Critical Violations

Response: Immediate escalation to Tier 2 or higher.

Critical violations require prompt remediation to prevent further noncompliance.

Examples include compliance scores falling below established thresholds, ignoring accessibility requirements, falsifying compliance reports, bypassing publishing without required approvals, repeated pattern violations, and persistent missing or inappropriate alt text on critical images. Each violation carries associated risks—such as legal, ADA, ethical, or process risks—and requires immediate corrective action.

10.2.2 Moderate Violations

Response: Tier assigned based on the level of offense.

Moderate violations include inconsistent adherence to the style guide, which may cause brand dilution; minor responsive design issues affecting user experience or accessibility; and occasional missed compliance checks, representing process gaps. These violations should be addressed promptly with appropriate corrective action to maintain standards and prevent escalation.



10.2.3 Minor Violations

Response: Warning and Tier 1 escalation.

Minor violations include, but are not limited to: first-time style inconsistencies with minimal impact, small formatting errors identified during review that are easily corrected, and good-faith errors that reflect a learning curve. These issues should be addressed promptly through feedback and corrective guidance to support compliance and prevent recurrence.

11.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated as standards, technology, and legal requirements evolve. Content creators are responsible for remaining informed of current county policies and guidance. Departments will be notified of significant or substantive changes that materially impact processes, compliance requirements, or user responsibilities.

11.1 Questions or Need Help?

For questions or assistance, contact the Service Desk at chhelpdesk@co.collin.tx.us or extension 4540.

For policy clarifications or situations not addressed in this document, submit a web service ticket.