



DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY BY WECO INTRODUCTION TO WCAG 2.1 AA

PART FIVE: ACCESSIBLE FORMS WeCo Accessibility Learning Takeaway

What are forms?

Forms consist of various types of fields (text boxes, dropdowns, radio buttons, etc.) that are designed to gather needed information from users. The information is then submitted in order to complete various actions, such as searching a website, submitting a job application, etc.

Basic rules of accessible forms

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 3.3.2 (Level A)	Providing a descriptive label near each form field ensures that users will know what input they need to provide. For more complex fields that require specific types of data (e.g., a certain date format, email address, etc.), instructions should be provided to explain this extra information to users. Any required fields must be clearly marked as such in order to avoid submission of an incomplete form.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Instructions or labels must specify data formats for form fields that are not one of the customary formats.
- When instructions are long and verbose, consider making them available only when the individual form field has focus.
- Use <fieldset> and <legend> elements in the HTML code to associate form fields with group names. See [Grouping form controls with FIELDSET and LEGEND example #2](#). This will allow assistive technology to convey group names to users.
- Identify all required form fields as such. This can be done by:
 - Having the text “required” associated with each required form label

- By identifying the required form fields at the beginning of the form with the text "Form fields with an * are required." and placing an * within the form field labels.
- Using color to identify when a field is required, along with one of the above methods. (Color alone can not be used to convey meaning.)
- Provide information for form elements requiring a specific format, value, or length (e.g., date format mm/dd/yyyy) within the element's label.

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 1.3.5 (Level AA)	The purpose of specific input fields must be communicated programmatically, such as via the autocomplete attribute in HTML. This will allow assistive technology and browsers to provide specific autofill information, allowing users to know the purpose of the text field/control.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Provide an appropriate autocomplete attribute for text fields that request information about the user, such as name, phone number, address, city, state, zip code, email address, etc. View [Section 7 of the WCAG 2.1 Recommendation](#) for a complete list of types of inputs.

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 3.2.2 (Level A)	When interacting with a form control, it must not result in a substantial change to the page (e.g., refreshing the page, spawning a pop-up window, an additional change of keyboard focus, submitting the form, or any other change that could confuse or disorient the user) unless the user is informed of the change ahead of time.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Ensure that user interaction with a form (e.g., making a selection, entering data, etc.) does not cause any automatic changes of context. These changes should not be made until the submit button is clicked/activated.

Navigating form errors

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 3.3.1 (Level A)	Providing clear descriptive error messages ensures that users are aware that an error has occurred and can determine what is wrong.

RECOMMENDATION:

- When an input error is automatically detected, ensure that the item that is in error is identified and the error is described to the user in text.
- Associate each error with the form field that triggered it, and automatically place focus in the problematic form field.
- Color can be used to help identify errors, along with the above methods. (Color alone can not be used to convey meaning.)

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 3.3.3 (Level AA)	For automatically detected input errors (e.g., missing required fields, incorrect data formats, etc.), suggestions should be provided to the user so they can easily correct the error(s).

RECOMMENDATION:

- If an input error is detected, provide suggestions for fixing the input in a timely and accessible manner (e.g., "Enter your e-mail address. e.g., email@example.com").

Eliminating barriers

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 3.3.4 (Level AA)	Web pages with forms involving legal commitments, financial transactions, and/or test submissions must allow users to reverse their submissions, correct input errors, or confirm that the information is correct before finalizing the submission. This will ensure that users with disabilities will not face any serious consequences as the result of a mistake that cannot be reversed.

RECOMMENDATION:

- For any forms involving a legally binding transaction, provide a means for the user to change, confirm, or reverse their entry before final submission.

SUCCESS CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
WCAG 1.1.1 (Level A)	CAPTCHAs are used to confirm that content is being accessed by a human and not a computer. However, nonvisual users may not be able to detect them and users living with cognitive disabilities may have difficulty perceiving the distorted combination of letters and numbers needed.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Provide an alternative form for CAPTCHAs or refrain from using CAPTCHAs.
 - Use a CAPTCHA that provides an audio option for the user to identify the security letters or images.
 - Substitute the CAPTCHA with a simple checkbox to indicate that the user is aware of the form, such as “I am not a robot” or “I am human.”
 - Provide access to a human customer service representative who can bypass the CAPTCHA.