Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Accessible Publications Policy

December 2009

Policy: Any and all Vermont Network publications will be available in alternative formats upon request. Any publication not in an alternative format will clearly state “This publication is available in alternative formats upon request”.

Purpose: The Vermont Network is committed to maximizing accessibility to all publications for the purpose of ensuring that all individuals seeking information can access it.

Policy Guidelines

1. Definitions

Accessibility - Accessibility recognizes that disabilities are the result of the intersection of an individual’s abilities and the environment. Accessible practices seek to reduce an individual’s disability by creating the most appropriate environment possible. The American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) outlines the responsibility to provide accommodations that people with disabilities and Deaf people may require. However, accessibility occasionally goes beyond providing what is required by the ADA.

Alternative Format - Alternative formats of publications are publications that have been adapted from non-accessible formats to make them accessible to people with disabilities. Possible alternative formats include,
but are not limited to: large print, a computer file, Braille, an audio recording or an executive summary.

**Publication** – For the purposes of this policy, publications are documents intended to be distributed to the public and/or community partners.

**Reasonable Accommodation** – Reasonable accommodations are accommodations made after a request by a person with a disability. Not every request made is reasonable. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not cause undue hardship to the organization.

2. **Education and Training**
The Vermont Network will include education and training on accessible publications in its new employee orientation and will include procedures for ensuring that accessible publications are available in its Operations Manual. The Vermont Network will collaborate with the Vermont Center for Independent Living and other disabilities organizations to develop education and training modules and for on-going technical assistance.

3. **Employer Responsibilities**
The Vermont Network will seek resources and funding to fulfill reasonable accommodation requests beyond the scope of state and federal laws. The Vermont Network is committed to consulting with community partners on how to continue to make publications more accessible in the future.

4. **Employee Responsibilities**
Vermont Network employees are responsible for knowing and implementing the guidelines in this policy. For accommodation requests outside the scope of this policy, the Community Change Team will consult
with the Director to determine if the request for accommodation is reasonable and, if so, to then implement the policy.

5. Resources

Vermont Center for Independent Living

11 East State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
802-229-0501 (voice / TTY)
800-639-1522 (toll-free voice / TTY)
vcil@vcil.org

Green Mountain Self-Advocates

73 Main Street, Suite 401
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone: 802-229-2600
E-mail: gmsa@sover.net

Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)

Hard copy in Network Office Library

http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm
6. Implementing Accessible Publications Policy

6.1 - Responding to Requests

Alternative format documents will meet the need of the individual user requesting the accommodation. Vermont Network staff will rely on the person making the request as the expert.

Example: A person who is blind may ask for an accessible version of the annual report. The Vermont Network staff will work with the person to ascertain whether or not they require Braille or whether an audio recording or digital file would meet their needs.

6.2 - When to Create Alternative Formats

The Vermont Network staff will consider the audience when deciding which alternative format to use and for what documents. For some documents, alternative formats will be created in advance of requests from a person with a disability. These include documents which are broadly distributed and that are primarily text.

The following factors will be considered when determining whether a publication will be created in an alternative format in advance of a request for accommodation:
• The target audience for the publication; The number of people who are likely to use the alternative format; The usability of the alternative format;

• The relationship between the cost of producing the alternative format vs. the anticipated benefit of the alternative format

6.3 -Creating Accessible Documents

All documents can be made more accessible with attention to these features, even when it is not practical to include all of them.

6.3.1 -Body Text Typography

☐ Use sans serif fonts (a serif is an accent on a letter)
  o Arial and Verdana are preferred examples of sans serif fonts
  o For more fonts contact VCIL or online for a list
☐ Avoid stylized or ornamental fonts
☐ Use a minimum of size 12 font. Size 14 is preferable
☐ Use bolding rather than italics for emphasis
☐ Use a minimum of at least 1.5 line spacing
☐ Use left-margin justification, avoid centered text
☐ Use standard capitalization (not all uppercase)
☐ Distinguish headings from text through larger print, underlining, or other formatting

6.3.2 -Contrast

☐ Use high contrast between writing and paper colors. Light background with dark lettering is optimal
Avoid glossy paper that will have high glare

6.3.3 -Page Layout

- Include a table of contents for longer documents
- Use bulleted lists to break up dense information
- Only use tables when presenting data (i.e. do not use tables to organize page sections because it confuses screen readers)
- Ideal line length (number of characters on a line) is between 60 and 70
- Avoid splitting words over two lines
- If the paper is folded, avoid text on the fold

6.3.4 -Images

- If images are important to understanding the content, they should be described in a caption
- Avoid wrapping text around images
  - Close wrapping of non-rectangular images is especially difficult to read
  - When preparing a document for a screen reader do not have images in the same line as text
- Avoid watermarks

6.3.5 -Other

- When possible, write out numbers or include both numeral and written out forms (i.e. five (5))
- When creating forms, allow sufficient space for people who have difficulty writing to fill in details
7 -Alternative Formats:

Simple conversions of documents can improve accessibility. For example, a brochure can be converted to a large print document by printing it on multiple pages. Publications can be read onto an audio file and stored/distributed on a CD. This makes the information accessible to people with low or no vision, language processing disabilities, or cognitive disabilities.

7.1 -Large Print

- Font size should be between 16 and 22 point
- Photocopies from letter size to larger paper are acceptable for short runs, but printing over several pages is preferable

7.2 -Braille

- Allow 3 weeks for translation
- Most appropriate for longer runs, as cost per piece will decrease with larger quantities
- Braille documents should be shipped in rigid packaging to avoid bending
- Contact VCIL for recommendations on Braille transcription services

7.3 -Audio Recordings/CD

- Audio recordings are a less expensive option for many occasions, especially shorter runs
- Readers should follow a script

- Describe all diagrams and other images

- Use plain English (short, simple sentences) to make translations easier, and more understandable

- Read a document in the order you would normally read it

- Read each section as a separate recording

- See tip sheet located with the recorder for technical procedures

### 7.4 - Document on CD

- Provide documents on CDs to accommodate people using screen readers

- Documents should be saved in rich text formats

- Describe all images fully in text or removed

- Avoid trade-specific jargon

- Avoid tables, frames, and other layout tools which may decrease accessibility with screen readers

### 7.5 - Cognitively Accessible

- Use short, simple sentences

- Include more images and icons to aid comprehension (include captions or describe in text so that it is clear how images relate)

- Avoid abbreviations
☐ Use sentences that do not require semi colons, colons, hyphens, or large amounts of commas
☐ Use bullet points or text boxes to highlight important information
☐ Write and edit for an eighth grade reading level
☐ Create an accessible executive summary for long or texts produced in higher grade levels
☐ Consider creating an audio CD or videotape as an alternative format