Behavioral Health Equity
ADA Compliance Officer

Here is a streamlined, step-by-step workflow checklist to keep your web content and PDF documents fully ADA compliant (WCAG 2.1 AA standards).

1. Webpage Content Checklist

- **Semantic Structure:**
  - Use proper, sequential heading tags (H1, H2, H3). Never skip levels for styling purposes.
  - Keep H1 unique to the page title or primary topic.
- **Text & Contrast:**
  - Ensure a minimum visual contrast ratio of **4.5:1** for normal text and **3:1** for large text (18pt+ or 14pt bold).
  - Never rely solely on color to convey information (e.g., add icons or text labels alongside color coding).
- **Images & Non-Text Elements:**
  - Add concise, descriptive alt text to informative images.
  - Set decorative background graphics or lines to alt="" or hide them from assistive technology.
- **Navigation & Links:**
  - Ensure all interactive links, buttons, and fields are reachable via the Tab key with a clearly visible focus ring.
  - Use descriptive link text (e.g., *"Read the Language Access Policy"*) rather than non-descriptive text like *"Click Here"* or raw URLs.

2. PDF Document Compliance Workflow

Creating an accessible PDF starts **at the source document level** (Microsoft Word, InDesign, Google Docs) before converting to PDF.

1. **Step 1: Prepare Source Files (Word / InDesign)**
   Fix accessibility before converting
   Apply Paragraph Styles: Use built-in Heading 1, Heading 2, and Body text styles rather than manually resizing text. Add Alt Text to Figures: Right-click graphics and add alt text directly in the source file. Simplify Tables: Design tables with clear, single Header Rows (Header Row checkbox enabled).

Avoid merged or split cells. Set Document Properties: Fill out the Document Title and set the primary document language (e.g., English or Spanish).

2. **Step 2: Export to Tagged PDF**
   Export without stripping accessibility data
   Use "Save As" / "Export": Select "Save as PDF" or "Export to Interactive PDF". Enable Tags: Confirm the box for "Document structure tags for accessibility" (or "Create Tagged PDF") is checked. Do Not "Print to PDF": Printing to PDF flattens the file, stripping away screen-reader tags, bookmarks, and structural metadata.

3. **Step 3: PDF Post-Processing & Verification**
   Quality control in Adobe Acrobat Pro
   Run Accessibility Check: In Adobe Acrobat Pro, open Tools Accessibility Full Check. Verify Reading Order: Open the Reading Order or Tags Panel to confirm content flows logically from top to bottom, left to right. Set Initial View: In File Properties Initial View, change "Show" from File Name to Document Title so screen readers announce the title upon opening. OCR Scanned Pages: If working with a scanned document, run Recognize Text (OCR) to transform flat images into searchable, readable text.

At-A-Glance: Web vs. PDF Compliance

Feature	Webpage Requirement	PDF Document Requirement
Structure Tagging	HTML tags (<header>, <h1>, <p>)	PDF Tags Tree (<H1>, <P>, <Table>)
Reading Sequence	DOM order in HTML source	Logical tag tree in Acrobat
Document Identification	Page <title> tag	File Properties Document Title
Form Controls	<label> tags linked to input fields	Form Field Tooltips & Tab Order
Language Setting	<html lang="en"> attribute	Document Properties Reading Options Language

Best Practice: Remediating a PDF in Adobe Acrobat takes significantly more effort than fixing the source file. Always make structural and alt-text corrections in Microsoft Word or InDesign before exporting.

Table 3: Examples of adequate and insufficient color contrast ratios

Good Color Contrast	Insufficient Color Contrast
White text on black background	Dark gray text on black background
Dark green text on yellow background	Orange text on yellow background
Light blue text on blue background	Red text on blue background
white text on red background	Dark green text on red background

Test 13: Does the color contrast ratio of **Foreground** (text) and **Background** ratio meet the minimum contrast ratio (4.5:1)? If not, the document fails this test.

How to author for accessibility

People who are colorblind or have low vision will have comparable access if there is sufficient contrast between the text and the background. The contrast standards are:

Table 2: Contrast ratios for types and sizes of text

Type or Size of Text	Contrast Ratio
Standard text (12 pt regular)	4.5:1
Large Text (14 pt bold or 18 pt regular)	3:1
Text or images of text that are part of an inactive user interface component, that are pure decoration, that are not visible to anyone, or that are part of a picture that contains significant other visual content	Excluded from requirement

Create content with text or images of text that use color or shading with sufficient color contrast. If the contrast ratio fails, then adjust the foreground or background color until it passes.