ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Stanford University Online Accessibility Policy

Policy

Stanford University will make Stanford Websites and web-based applications accessible to its students, faculty, staff and participants in the University's programs and activities who have disabilities. All personnel who are involved in the procurement, preparation and maintenance of University Websites and web-based applications should adopt this goal, with the assistance of campus resources dedicated to supporting web accessibility. Stanford Websites and web-based applications must either conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA (http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/) or their content and functionality be made available to Users on request (such as by a student request to the Office of Accessible Education) in an equally effective and accessible alternative manner.

Applicability

Stanford's online accessibility policy applies to all Stanford academic and administrative units that create and maintain web sites and web-based applications used in the programs and activities of the University. See the Stanford University Online Accessibility Policy (http://ucomm.stanford.edu/policies/accessibility-policy/) web site for the full policy.

Definitions

Stanford Website

Any website or web-based application within the Stanford University (stanford.edu) domain used in the programs or activities of the University.

Users

Stanford Website users are defined as current Stanford students and applicants for admission, Stanford staff and faculty, and participants in the University's programs and activities.

Accessible

Refers to the concept that people with disabilities are able to independently and timely access and use a product or system, including with the benefit of assistive technologies. Assistive technologies include adaptive hardware and/or software and other devices that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Stanford Online Accessibility Program ("SOAP") Office

The SOAP Office (http://soap.stanford.edu) provides resources and services for Stanford web designers, developers and content creators to assist them in producing accessible materials. Services include Website accessibility testing and guidance regarding universal design and web standards compliance. The SOAP Office is also the campus resource designated to facilitate online accessibility for Users. To report and seek assistance on web accessibility issues, Users may contact the SOAP Office by email at web-accessibility@stanford.edu or submit a HelpSU ticket through the SOAP Office website.

Office of Accessible Education ("OAE")

The Office of Accessible Education (http://oae.stanford.edu) is the campus office designated to work with Stanford students with disabilities. OAE provides support services, accommodations, and programs to remove barriers to full participation of students with disabilities in the programs or activities of the University.

Diversity and Access Office ("D&A")

The Diversity and Access Office (http://diversityandaccess.stanford.edu) oversees compliance with state and federal anti-discrimination laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. D&A provides disability-related access information, and assists faculty, staff and other non-student participants in University programs and activities with disabilities who may need accommodations and/or auxiliary aids to obtain equal access to Stanford facilities, programs and activities. D&A also oversees the ADA/Section 504 Grievance Procedure for students who believe they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination based on a disability or denied access to services or accommodations which the ADA and/or Section 504 require Stanford to provide. Read more about the ADA/Section 504 Grievance Procedure (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/nonacademicregulations/online-accessibility-policy/nonacademicregulations/ada/).

Accessibility Standard

Stanford University has adopted the Worldwide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/) version 2.0, Level AA Conformance (WCAG 2.0 Level AA) as its goal for accessible Stanford Websites. The guidelines and success criteria of WCAG 2.0 Level AA are organized around the following four principles which lay the foundation for users with disabilities to access and use web content. For a Stanford Website to be accessible under these principles, its content must be:

1. Perceivable – Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
2. Operable – User interface components and navigation must be operable.
3. Understandable – Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.
4. Robust – Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

Implementation Guidelines

1. All personnel responsible for existing Stanford Websites must use good faith efforts, subject to the requirements and exceptions of the applicable laws, to bring those Websites into conformance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
2. New Stanford Website development and purchases, including development and purchases for major revisions and updates of existing Stanford Websites, should conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
3. Vendors seeking to develop or provide Websites or web-based applications for Stanford are to demonstrate that their products satisfy WCAG 2.0 Level AA Success Criteria, unless undue burden or fundamental alteration can be demonstrated (see below). Preferred standards for demonstrating satisfaction of WCAG 2.0 Level AA Success Criteria, and accessibility language for Stanford Website vendor contracts, as well as for other types of Electronic Information Technology vendor contracts, may be obtained from University Procurement (Purchasing and Payment Services) (http://web.stanford.edu/group/fms/fingate/contact/#procure) or from the SOAP Office (https://soap.stanford.edu).
4. Each Stanford Website should contain "Accessibility" contact information for the site's webmaster and/or the SOAP Office. The contact information may take a variety of forms, such as an email address, a link to a HelpSU page, or a contact form on the site. The recommended location for this information is the Website's "Contact" or "About Us" page.
5. The SOAP Office will continue to test Stanford Websites for accessibility and report accessibility issues to the webmaster for that website.
6. OAE will continue to seek input from Stanford students regarding accessibility issues.

7. Conformance to WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines may be an undue burden due to the nature of the content, the purpose of the resource, the lack of accessible solutions, or an unreasonably high administrative or financial cost necessary to make the resource meet that goal. However, these difficulties do not relieve University programs or activities from meeting applicable legal obligations to provide reasonable accommodations to Users in regard to access to the content and services provided on Stanford Websites. Managers of University programs and activities must be prepared to provide content and/or services in a suitable alternative format (e.g., electronic text file or audio description) or manner upon request (such as by a student to the OAE).

Implementation Assistance

Guidelines and best practices are available from the SOAP Office (http://soap.stanford.edu). In addition, on-campus assistance is available for designing and implementing websites that meet accessibility guidelines and for evaluating the accessibility of existing sites and those under development. If such assistance is needed, visit the SOAP web site (http://soap.stanford.edu) or email the SOAP Office at web-accessibility@stanford.edu.

Responding to Accessibility Issues

Recognizing the ongoing evolution of current web content and technologies, the designated webmaster for a particular site, upon being made aware of an accessibility issue on that site, should proceed as follows:

- Acknowledge receipt of the issue in writing (via email) to the User raising the issue, with a copy to the SOAP Office.
- Open an accessibility case for recording the issue and resulting action taken.
- Verify that the issue is an authentic accessibility issue.
- Treat all issues as important. Address any time-sensitive need of the User promptly (generally within a period of no greater than two business days), unless technology or work involved requires more effort, in which case the User will be promptly notified in writing of expected delivery.

Upon receiving a report of an accessibility issue, the SOAP Office shall notify the site's webmaster, as well as OAE (for reports from students) or D&A (for reports from non-students.) If the SOAP Office, in consultation with the site's webmaster, determines that the information or service provided on the Stanford Website cannot be made accessible, or that doing so would constitute an undue burden or fundamental alteration, OAE or D&A will engage in an interactive process with the User about alternative methods for providing the information or service and will provide an equally effective alternative format or service. In the event that an alternative format or service cannot be provided or the user is not satisfied with the results, he or she may contact the ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer at D&A by telephone at (650) 723-0755 or by email at equalopportunity@stanford.edu for assistance in resolving the issue.

For questions about the policy, please contact the SOAP Office (https://soap.stanford.edu/about/contact/).