



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

Expanding Access through Digital Accessibility in Minnesota's State Courts

Attorney General's Office CLE

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Suzanne Mateffy | Communications Analyst, State Court Administrator's Office

Meridith Socha | Staff Attorney, State Court Administrator's Office

1. Digital accessibility and why it matters
2. Digital accessibility under the ADA
3. Digital accessibility in Minnesota's State Courts
4. What you can start doing today



Digital Accessibility and Why It Matters

What is Digital Accessibility?

- Digital accessibility ensures that websites, documents, and tools are usable by all individuals equally, including those with disabilities.
- Examples of making documents digitally accessible:
 - Formatting documents so they can be navigated with assistive technology.
 - Using columns rather than tables to align text on the right and left.
 - Allotting space for a signature rather than drawing a line on the document.



Macular Degeneration

- The macula is near the center of the retina at the back of the eye
- It may thin out or leak fluid over time
- Result is a blurred or dead spot in the field of vision



What information would someone living with this miss ?

2. [REDACTED] was served with Notice of Seizure and Intent to Forfeit Property (2006 Dodge [REDACTED] on June 14, 2025, while in custody at the Wright County Jail.

3. [REDACTED] was served with the civil forfeiture Complaint in this matter on June 16, 2025, while in custody at the Wright County Jail.

4. [REDACTED] has appeared in these proceedings.

5. [REDACTED] has failed to appear in court.

6. [REDACTED] has failed to appear in court, and the defendant property.

7. [REDACTED] has failed to appear in court, and the Motor Vehicle on September 1, 2025.

Therefore, the Court finds the following:

1. [REDACTED] has failed to appear in court, and the property subject to civil forfeiture.

2. The statutory criteria for seizure of the property have been satisfied.

3. Plaintiff is entitled to judgement by default due to Defendant's declining to appear.

Now, therefore, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law, the Court makes its

ORDER AND JUDGEMENT

Glaucoma

- Caused by increase in internal eye pressure that damages the optic nerve
- Makes text difficult to read, some say it's like looking through a straw



What information would someone living with this miss?

Diabetic Retinopathy

Potential effect of long-term diabetes is leaking retinal blood vessels, which can cause dark patches in the field of vision where the leaks occur, making it difficult to read text.



What information would someone living with this miss?

2. [REDACTED] was served with Notice of Seizure and Intent to Forfeit Property (20 [REDACTED]) on June 14, 2025, while in custody at the Wright County Jail.

3. [REDACTED] was served with the civil forfeiture Complaint in this matter on June 16, 2025, while in custody at the Wright County Jail.

4. [REDACTED] has not filed an Answer in these proceedings. [REDACTED] was served with notice of this hearing. [REDACTED] is the registered property owner of [REDACTED] property.

7. [REDACTED] was convicted of fleeing a Peace Officer in a Motor Vehicle on September 11, 2025 (District Court File 86- [REDACTED]).

Therefore, based upon the above Findings of Fact, the Court makes the following:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. [REDACTED] has been convicted of a qualifying offense making this property subject to civil forfeiture,

2. The statutory criteria for forfeiture of this property have been satisfied.

3. Plaintiff is entitled to judgement by default due to Defendant's declining to appear.

Therefore, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law, the Court enters its

ORDER AND JUDGEMENT

Cataracts

Cataracts cause a blurred or hazy effect, especially in bright light.

Text may be difficult to distinguish from the background.



What information would someone living with this miss?

2. John Q Public was served with Notice of Seizure and Intent to Forfeit Property (2006 Dodge on June 14, 2025, while in custody at the Wright County Jail.

3. John Q Public was served with the civil forfeiture Complaint in this matter on June 16, 2025, while in custody at the Wright County Jail.

4. John Q Public has not filed an Answer in these proceedings.

5. John Q Public was served with notice of this hearing.

6. John Q Public is the registered property owner of the defendant property.

7. John Q Public was convicted of Fleeing a Peace Officer in a Motor Vehicle on September 11, 2025 (District Court File 86.

Therefore, based upon the above Findings of Fact, the Court makes the following:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. John Q Public has been convicted of a qualifying offense making this property subject to civil forfeiture,

2. The statutory criteria for forfeiture of this property have been satisfied.

3. Plaintiff is entitled to judgement by default due to Defendant's declining to appear.

Now, therefore, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law, the Court makes its

ORDER AND JUDGEMENT

Assistive Technology: Leveling the Digital Playing Field

- Products and tools that help people with disabilities work around barriers when using our digital content
- Examples:
 - Screen readers
 - Braille displays
 - Eye tracking tablets
 - Alternative input devices
- Documents set up for digital accessibility allow everyone, *including* those using assistive tech, to do business with the justice system more easily



[Source: Closing the Gap](#)



Digital Accessibility Under the ADA

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law passed in 1990 for people with disabilities
 - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
 - Guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to enjoy employment opportunities, purchase goods and services, and participate in state and local government programs
 - Requires employers, places of public accommodation, and public entities to facilitate effective communication

Fundamentally, digital accessibility is about facilitating effective communication

The Need for the ADA

- 55 million Americans have physical or mental disabilities
- In Minnesota, about 12% of the population have at least one disability



Sources: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/title-ii-primer/#who-is-protected-by-the-ada>; <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>;
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>; <https://www.mncompass.org/topics/demographics/disability>

Disability Rights Did Not Come Without a Fight



March 12, 1990 “Capitol Crawl”

ADA Provides Framework to Remove Access Barriers

“I now lift my pen to sign this Americans with Disabilities Act and say: Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down. God bless you all.”

[\(Remarks by President George H.W. Bush at the ADA Signing Ceremony on July 26, 1990\)](#)



ADA Applies Equally to Physical & Digital Spaces

Physical

- ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Allow people with disabilities equal **access** and **use** of buildings, spaces & services

Examples: Ramps, push buttons for doors, curb cuts

Digital

- WCAG Standards
- Allow people with disabilities equal **access** and **use** of websites, mobile applications & services

Examples: Navigable via keyboard, color contrast, alternative text, avoid excess white space

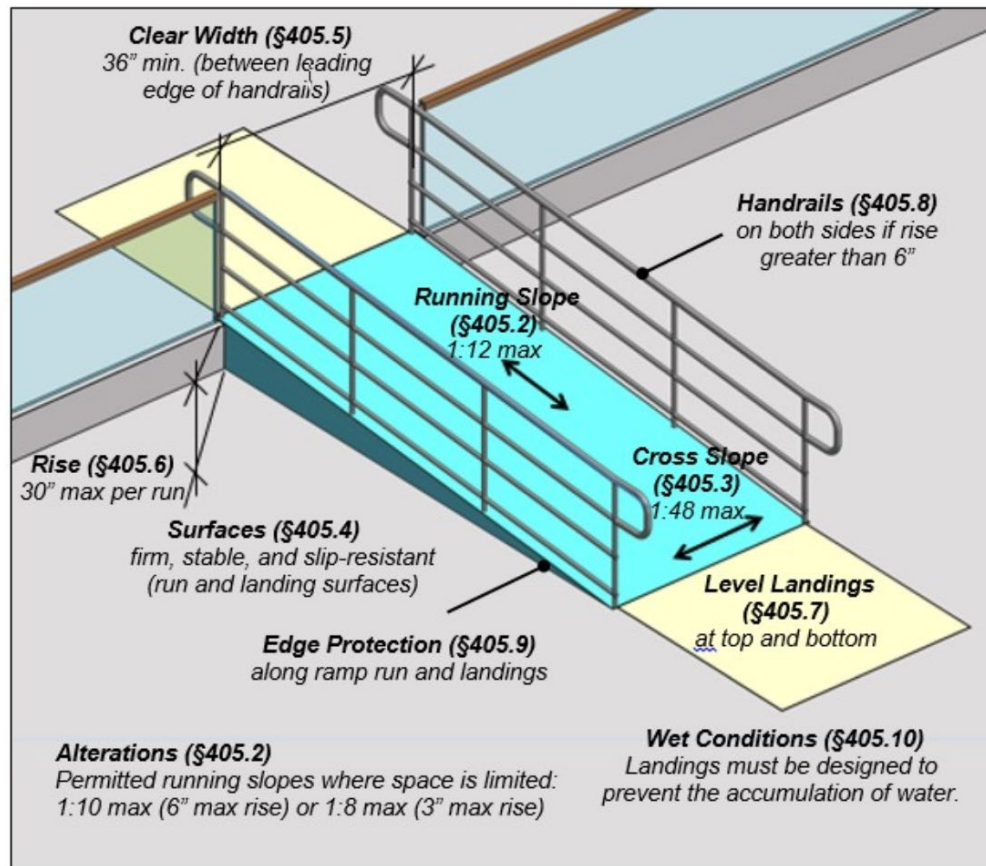
“New” Digital Accessibility Regulations Set The Standards for Public Digital Spaces

- In April 2024, the US Department of Justice issued a rule: [Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities](#)
 - Rule created new regulations, [28 CFR § 35.200 - 35.205](#), that implement Title II
 - Regulations establish [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 AA](#), or higher, as the technical standard required for all "web content (and mobile applications) that a public entity provides or makes available, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements", meaning:

If the public can see it or use it online and it is posted by a public entity, it must comply with WCAG 2.1, Level AA, or higher

Standards are Specific

Physical



Digital

Success Criterion 1.1.1 Non-text Content

(Level A)

[Understanding Non-text Content](#)
[How to Meet Non-text Content](#)

All [non-text content](#) that is presented to the user has a [text alternative](#) that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below.

Controls, Input

If non-text content is a control or accepts user input, then it has a [name](#) that describes its purpose. (Refer to [Success Criterion 4.1.2](#) for additional requirements for controls and content that accepts user input.)

Time-Based Media

If non-text content is time-based media, then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content. (Refer to [Guideline 1.2](#) for additional requirements for media.)

Test

If non-text content is a test or exercise that would be invalid if presented in [text](#), then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.

Sensory

If non-text content is primarily intended to create a [specific sensory experience](#), then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.

CAPTCHA

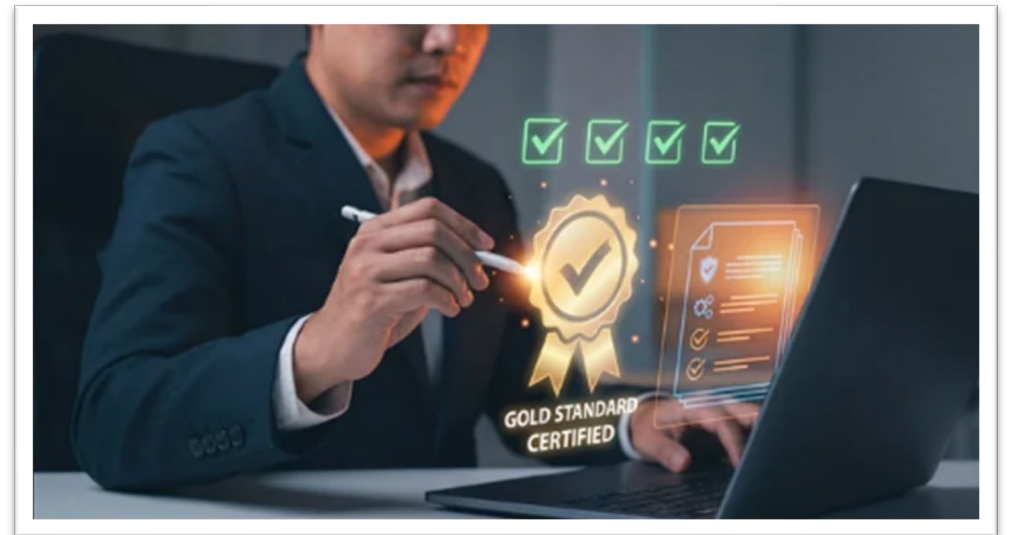
If the purpose of non-text content is to confirm that content is being accessed by a person rather than a computer, then text alternatives that identify and describe the purpose of the non-text content are provided, and alternative forms of CAPTCHA using output modes for different types of sensory perception are provided to accommodate different disabilities.

Decoration, Formatting, Invisible

If non-text content is [pure decoration](#), is used only for visual formatting, or is not presented to users, then it is implemented in a way that it can be ignored by [assistive technology](#).

WCAG Standards are the Gold Standard

Abstract: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 covers a wide range of recommendations for making web content more accessible. **Following these guidelines will make content more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities**



Source: [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)

Regulations Also Establish Limited Exceptions for Applicability of Standards

- Recognizes limited exceptions:
 1. Archived web content
 2. Preexisting conventional electronic documents
 3. Content posted by a third party unless posting due to contractual, licensing, or other arrangement
 4. Individualized, password-protected conventional electronic documents
 5. Preexisting social media posts
- Compliance is required to extent it does not result in:
 - A fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity; or
 - An undue financial or administrative burden.

When is Digital Accessibility Required by the Rule?

- **Digital accessibility requirements pre-existed the Rule and are not stayed until compliance date**
- **Compliance date: April 26, 2027, or April 26, 2028**
 - Depending on total population served being greater than or less than 50,000).
- **Extended one year by [Rule](#) published April 20, 2026**
 - Previous compliance date: April 24, 2026, or April 26, 2027

[28 CFR Part 35 Subpart H -- Web and Mobile Accessibility](#)

§ 35.200 Requirements for web and mobile accessibility. (b) Requirements.

(1) Beginning April 26, 2027, a public entity, other than a special district government, with a total population of 50,000 or more shall ensure that the web content and mobile apps that the public entity provides or makes available, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, comply with Level A and Level AA success criteria and conformance requirements specified in WCAG 2.1, unless the public entity can demonstrate that compliance with this section would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens.

(2) Beginning April 26, 2028, a public entity with a total population of less than 50,000 or any public entity that is a special district government shall ensure that the web content and mobile apps that the public entity provides or makes available, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, comply with Level A and Level AA success criteria and conformance requirements specified in WCAG 2.1, unless the public entity can demonstrate that compliance with this section would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens.



Digital Accessibility in Minnesota's State Courts

Digital Accessibility in Minnesota State Courts

Judicial Council Policy 506.5 Digital Accessibility



Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy Policy 506.5 – Digital Accessibility

Policy Source: Minnesota Judicial Council
Category: Court Operations
Effective Date: April 24, 2026
Supersedes: None

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch that:

- A. Its services, programs, and activities are accessible to all members of the public, justice partners, and court employees, with and without disabilities.
- B. Its public websites, mobile applications, online documents, and other Internet-based content are digitally accessible consistent with the Digital Accessibility Standard to ensure equal access to justice.
- C. It complies with state and federal digital accessibility laws, including the applicable provisions of Title II of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the requirements of the federal regulations 28 C.F.R. 835.200-35.205.
- D. Uniform court practices shall be used to promote reliable and consistent application of digital accessibility technical standards and processes in furtherance of these policies.

II. Applicability

This policy applies to all district courts, appellate courts, and the State Court Administrator's Office. It applies to all employees and judicial officers of the Minnesota Judicial Branch (MJB).

- B. Its public websites, mobile applications, online documents, and other Internet-based content are digitally accessible consistent with the Digital Accessibility Standard to ensure equal access to justice.

Being updated to be digitally accessible

- [Forms and Instructions](#) on the public website
- [Help Topics](#) on the public website
- Case-related documents, like notices and orders





How Can ***You*** as a
Member of the
Bar and a Justice
Partner help
increase **access**
to justice?



By submitting
accessible filings!

What This Means to You: Accessible Filings

- There is currently **no court rule or court requirement** anything filed by parties or attorneys be digitally accessible
- Whether you as an attorney for a public entity have requirements under the regulations for your filings is a determination for your organization to make
- Any filing you make accessible helps court users and the public access justice
- That said, proposed orders are a priority
- MJB is considering a future requirement that eFiled proposed orders be digitally accessible



What This Means to You: Exhibits

Exhibits are exhibits and should **not** be altered!

- To preserve integrity of the court record
- To allow forensic examination
- Because details matter





What You Can Start Doing Today

Create Digitally Accessible Templates

State of Minnesota	District Court
County of: _____	Court File Number: _____
Judicial District: _____	Case Type: _____

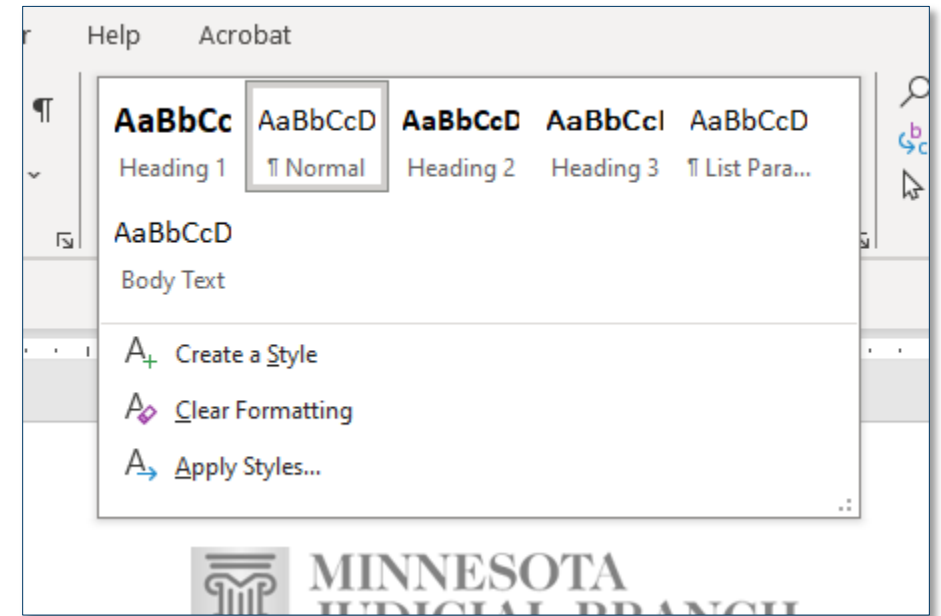
Plaintiff	
vs	

Defendant	
Heading 1	
Body Text	
Heading 2	
Body Text	
List Paragraphs	
1.	
I declare under penalty of perjury that everything I have stated in this document is true and correct. Minn. Stat. § 358.116.	
Date: _____	Signature: _____
County and state where signed: _____	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City, State, Zip: _____	
Phone: _____	
Email: _____	



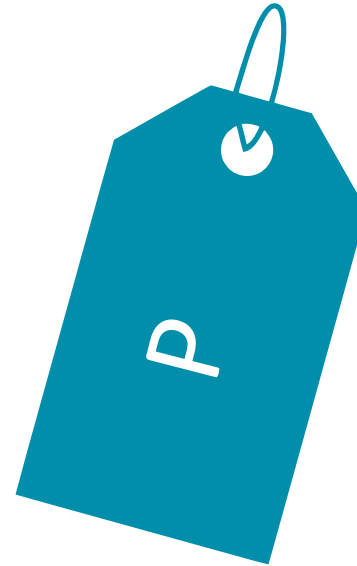
Use Word's Built-in Styles

- Assures assistive tech reads the content as you intend
- Allows users to jump from heading to heading as needed
- Makes documents' structure easy to understand
- Generates a table of contents with links
- But the big reasons are...



Assistive tech doesn't read screens.

It read **TAGS!**



Choose the Right Font Type and Size

- Use 11- or 12-point font size for readability
- Recommended fonts:
 - Times New Roman, Aptos, Tahoma, Calibri, Arial



Don't Use Extra Returns for Spacing

- Screen readers read each return as “blank” or “return”
- Creates confusion

Alternative approach:

- Use paragraph spacing tools in Word to control spacing

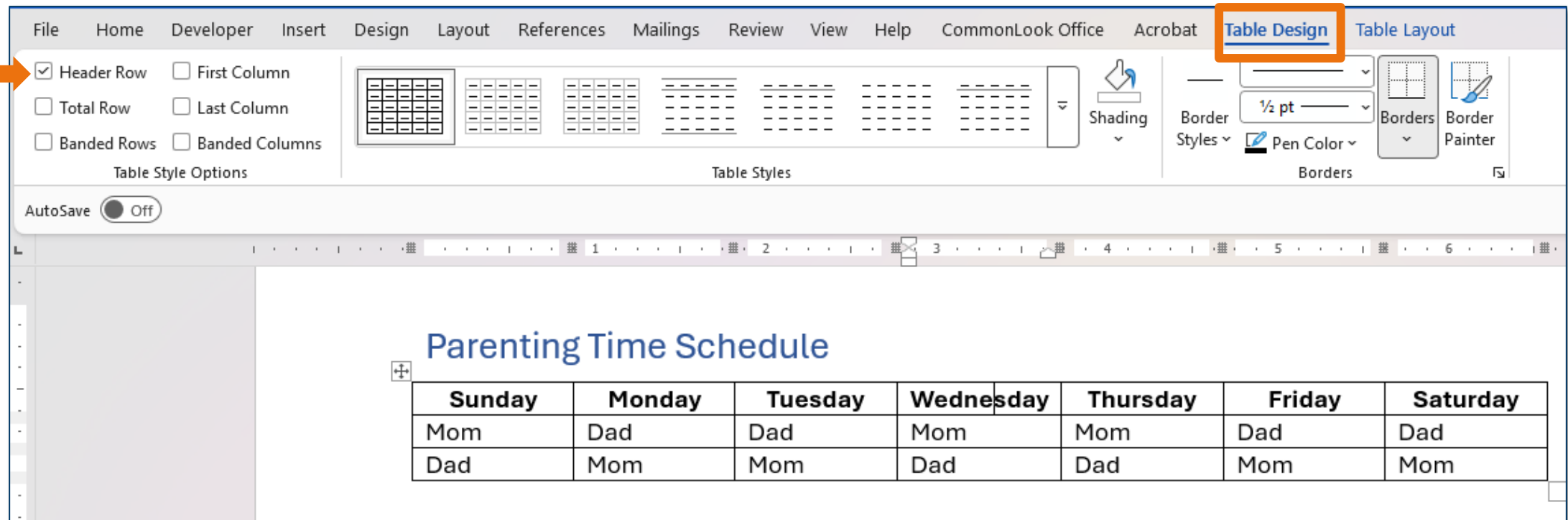


Avoid “Legalese” When Possible

- WCAG Success Criteria 3 requires readability, including plain language
- “Plain language benefits all users, including people with cognitive disabilities, low reading literacy, and people who are encountering an unknown topic or language.” ([Harvard | Digital Accessibility Services](#))

3.	Understandable
3.1	Readable
3.1.1	Language of Page
3.1.2	Language of Parts
3.1.3	Unusual Words
3.1.4	Abbreviations
3.1.5	Reading Level
3.1.6	Pronunciation
3.2	Predictable
3.2.1	On Focus
3.2.2	On Input
3.2.3	Consistent Navigation
3.2.4	Consistent Identification
3.2.5	Change on Request
3.3	Input Assistance
3.3.1	Error Identification
3.3.2	Labels or Instructions
3.3.3	Error Suggestion
3.3.4	Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, Data)
3.3.5	Help
3.3.6	Error Prevention (All)

Tables are Fine When You Set them Up Correctly ^{1/2}

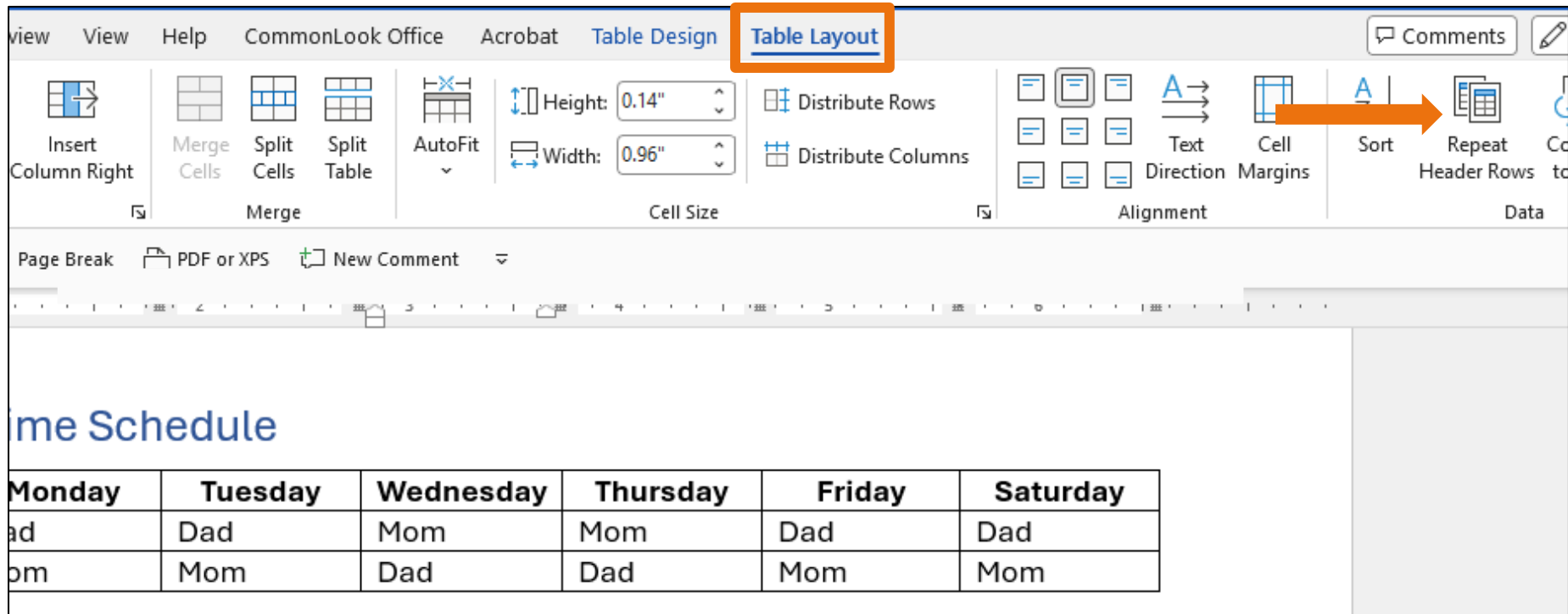


The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word interface with the **Table Design** ribbon selected. An orange arrow points to the **Table Style Options** group, where the **Header Row** checkbox is checked. The **Table Styles** group shows various table templates. The **Borders** group shows the border style set to **1/2 pt**. Below the ribbon, the **Parenting Time Schedule** table is displayed. The table has 7 columns representing days of the week and 3 rows representing parent assignments. The first row is the header row, and the subsequent rows show the schedule for Mom and Dad.

AutoSave ☐ Off

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mom	Dad	Dad	Mom	Mom	Dad	Dad
Dad	Mom	Mom	Dad	Dad	Mom	Mom

Tables are Fine When You Set them Up Correctly ^{2/2}



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word interface with the **Table Design** and **Table Layout** tabs. The **Table Layout** tab is highlighted with an orange box. An orange arrow points from the 'Repeat Header Rows' icon to the 'Repeat Header Rows' text.

Table Design Tab:

- Insert:** Insert Column Right, Merge Cells, Split Cells, Split Table, AutoFit.
- Cell Size:** Height: 0.14", Width: 0.96".
- Alignment:** Distribute Rows, Distribute Columns, Text Direction, Cell Margins.
- Data:** Sort, Repeat Header Rows.

Table Layout Tab:

- Page Break:** PDF or XPS, New Comment.

Table:

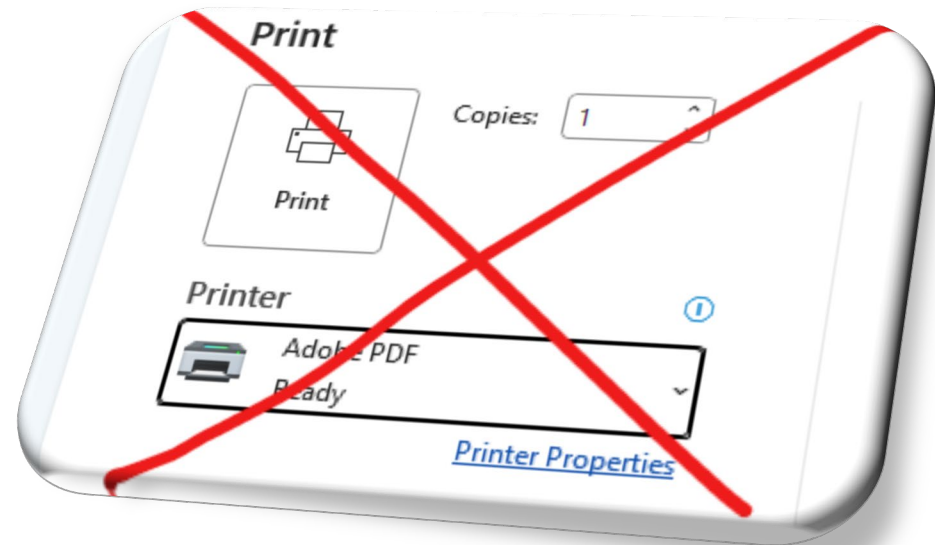
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dad	Dad	Mom	Mom	Dad	Dad
Mom	Mom	Dad	Dad	Mom	Mom

Don't "Print to PDF" to Convert Word to PDF

- Print to PDF flattens document, removing all tags
- Not necessary to create a secure PDF

Alternative approach:

- Anything else!



The Case for Digital Accessibility



[The Case for Digital Accessibility](#)



MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

Thank You!

Meridith Socha

Meridith.Socha@courts.state.mn.us

Suzanne Mateffy

Suzanne.Mateffy@courts.state.mn.us

Helpful Resources

MNIT Office of Accessibility

- [Accessible Word Document Training modules](#)
- [Accessible PDF training modules](#)
- [Digital Accessibility Quick Cards](#)
- [Accessibility Implementation Toolkit](#)



Example: Accessible & Non-Accessible Document

Before



STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF [REDACTED]

DISTRICT COURT
Seventh JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Case Type: 44 Support

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER ESTABLISHING CHILD SUPPORT

[REDACTED] County on behalf of:
Hamilton County Child Support, State of
Indiana and
Dustin [REDACTED]
Petitioner(s)

Court File No(s) .: [REDACTED]-FA-26-[REDACTED]

and

IV-D Case No. [REDACTED]

Trina [REDACTED]
Respondent(s)

* The Child Support Guidelines Worksheet is attached hereto and
incorporated herein by reference.

Based upon the records and files herein, the court makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- The name(s), address(es), and date(s) of birth is/are as follows:
 - * Trina [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - * Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
 - * Dustin [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - * Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
- The Social Security Numbers incorporated herein are listed on the Confidential Information Form on file with the court.
- This is an action for establishment of Child Support under Minnesota Statutes, section 518A.82.
- The State of Minnesota has personal jurisdiction over the following and the Summons, Complaint and Motion were properly served as follows:
 - * Trina [REDACTED] was personally served in Minnesota with the Pleadings in this action.

Doc ID: 095095080000001423

1

F000300024

After



STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF [REDACTED]

DISTRICT COURT
TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
CASE TYPE: SUPPORT

County of [REDACTED] and
Erika [REDACTED],
Petitioners,
and

Kyle [REDACTED],
Respondent.

Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order Establishing Child Support

Court File [REDACTED]-FA-26-[REDACTED]
IV-D Case C [REDACTED]

This case was heard remotely by [REDACTED], Child Support Magistrate, at [REDACTED] County on April 28, 2026 based on the county's summons, complaint and motion to establish child support. The record closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

Summary

Beginning May 1, 2026, Kyle [REDACTED] must pay ongoing basic support of \$275 per month. Child care support is reserved. Kyle [REDACTED] must pay \$80 per month toward Medical Assistance for the joint child in any month he is not providing private dependent coverage. Kyle [REDACTED] is responsible for 65% and Erika [REDACTED] is responsible for 35% of any unreimbursed health-related expenses for the joint child. The tax dependent allocation is reserved, for future determination.

Appearances

Erika [REDACTED] was present and was not represented by counsel.
Kyle [REDACTED] was present and was not represented by counsel.
[REDACTED], Assistant County Attorney, appeared on behalf of [REDACTED]
County. [REDACTED], Child Support Officer, was also present.

The Child Support Magistrate, after reviewing the court file and hearing the testimony of the parties presented, and being fully advised, makes the following:

Statement of the Issue

The issue in this case is what amount Kyle [REDACTED] should pay in ongoing child support and past support, if any, under Minn. Stat. Chapter 518A.

Findings of Fact

- Erika [REDACTED]'s date of birth is [REDACTED] and their mailing address is [REDACTED].

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