

## Basic Rules for Accessible Text

### Size (Bigger is better)

- The main body of text in a document is at least 12-point typeface. Bigger is better.
- 12-point type does not meet accessibility requirements for large print. Large-print publications are 16-point to 18-point typeface.
- Using a minimum size of 12-point typeface improves access for everyone, but a large-print version may still be necessary for people with very low vision.

### Capitalization (Only when necessary)

- Do not use all caps.
- Decorative initial capitals, especially within paragraphs, are confusing.
- Typefaces with large and small uppercase letters create unexpected footprints for words and make decoding text more difficult for people with vision limitations, dyslexia, and visual processing disorders.

### Font Choices (Plain and simple)

- For main text information use sans serif (best) or simple serif (next best) fonts. Verdana, Tahoma, Arial, and Helvetica are good choices.
- Use Palatino for public materials that need to conform to current GSUSA brand standards.
- Use italics sparingly. Use them regularly only for words in other languages and publication citations.
- Instead of italics, use other graphic options (like color, quotation marks, or another typeface) for quotations, captions, and exhibit titles.
- Do not use more than two different typefaces on a page.

### Layout (Clear and uncluttered)

- There should be minimal visual clutter and maximum white space.
- Organization of text on the page should be simple and straightforward.
- Margins should be left-aligned.
- Avoid centered text, especially for more than three lines of text.
- Avoid long paragraphs or big chunks of text. Break text into smaller chunks for clarity.

### Color and Clarity (Clean and simple)

- Use high color contrast of type to background.
- Some people with vision loss and other reading-related disabilities prefer light on dark; some prefer dark on light.
- When in doubt use blackest text on whitest background.
- The color contrast within drawings or other illustrations (the main foreground figures or information against background color or image) should be as high as type contrast.
- Do not layer type or illustrations over other designs, photographs, graphics, or text.
- Line drawings and floor plans should be clear and bold, with only necessary detail and captions in a minimum 10-point type.
- Use matte paper surfaces. Coated or laminated paper should be matte, not shiny.
- Use paper heavy enough that type or pictures do not show through from the opposite side.
- Use smooth paper, allowing type to be printed undistorted and unbroken.