



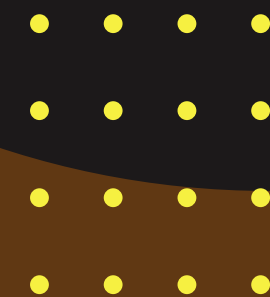
FRONTLINE FARMING'S

MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

www.frontlinefarming.org



Image ID: Four hands work together to build a bamboo tripod in a farm bed.



ACCESSIBLE IDENTIFICATION

Visual Media is an integral part of our society - always has been. Today, people all around the world use social media apps for business, sharing of information and knowledge, social justice work, connecting with friends and family, and the options are still growing. Although platforms such as Instagram and Facebook allow individuals far and wide to share content and engage in meaningful communication, their design is inaccessible for a variety of users. Individuals with various difficulties and impairments such as visual, cognitive and comprehension, and hearing difficulties as well as English Language Learners engagement with social media content is limited. However, integrating accessible IDs and alt-text bridges the accessibility gap and creates space for more equitable engagement.

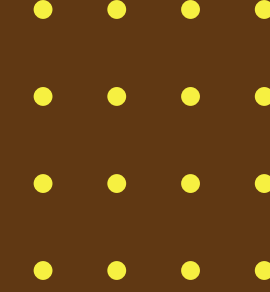
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What are Accessible Identifications? (And what is Alt Text)

Accessible IDs are text descriptions of images used to effectively iterate the information a user would receive when looking at the image through text.

Image descriptions for digital content are presented in one of two forms: alt-text and Long Description (“Guide to Image Descriptions,” n.d.). For accessible IDs it’s typically more appropriate to use alt-text.

Alt-text, or alternative text, offers a textual description of images. Alt-text is usually rather short and only meant to give a brief description of what is being visually presented.



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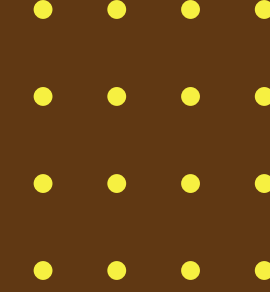
Why are Accessible IDs important for equity?

They create a virtual space where all are welcomed.

In Colorado more than 10% of the population have impairments related to hearing, vision, or cognition. Accessible IDs help people who use assistive technologies (like screen readers or large font sizes) to glean what the image is conveying. It also helps people with limited English proficiency to expand their vocabulary for describing what they see. We believe everyone has a right to engage with publicly shared information and ID's are the bridge that make that possible.

Accessible design benefits everyone.

By providing simple descriptions of visual content we not targeting specific individuals - we're engaging everyone. ID's allow for identification and description of subject matter, such as plants and farm tools. This educates everyone who is not an expert on the topic. Furthermore, Accessible IDs help to improve SEO (search engine optimization), meaning content is easier to discover because it can be indexed by search engines. It can also help sighted users if an internet browser fails to load the image.



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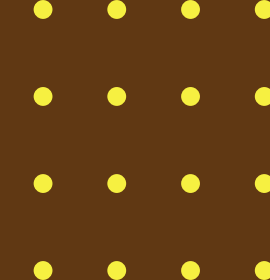
Why are Accessible IDs important to FrontLine Farming?

They're important for telling our story.

Storytelling is a powerful tool in decolonizing methodologies. We take pride in being a farm led and operated by BIPOC and womxn. By providing clear identification of our diversity we're able to share our story and our message in a meaningful way. When we tell our story, be it through pictures or words, we're highlighting people and narratives that are often overlooked. Accessible IDs and alt-text give us the opportunity to reiterate our visual stories for all people engaging with our media.

They teach and empower.

Part of our mission is to spread farm-related knowledge and information, and to increase access for womxn and people of color within our food system. Accessible IDs create new access points to this knowledge. They allow us to tell, and therefore educate, the consumers of our media what we feel is important to communicate about ourselves and our stories. By providing image IDs we're identifying knowledge that might otherwise be looked over or ignored.



STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

One of the first considerations we make when writing IDs for FrontLine Farming's media is the accessibility of the text itself. A few steps to achieving this are:



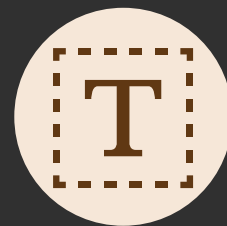
KEEP IT BRIEF.

Accessible IDs should be short and to the point. A good rule is to keep the description under 125 characters or between 40 and 50 words.



USE PLAIN TEXT.

Use simple and concise language when writing IDs to ensure everyone, including those with a difficulty or impairment and those with limited English proficiency can understand them.



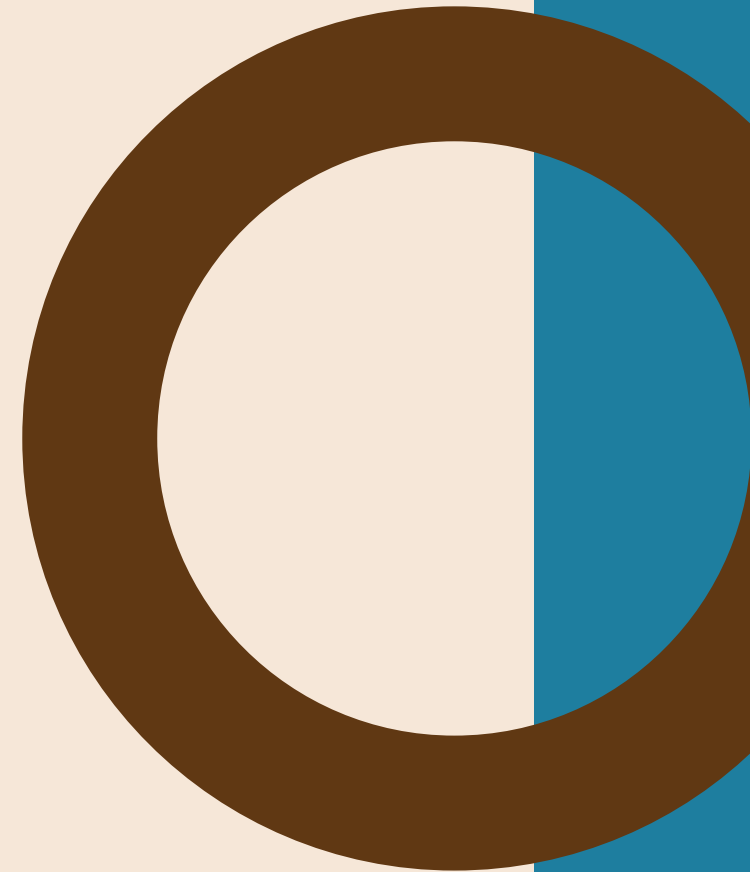
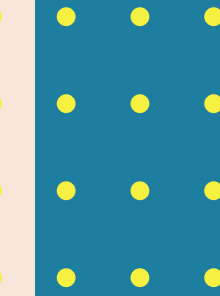
COPY IMAGE TEXT.

Reiterate text that is overlaid on an image - especially if the text does not appear elsewhere in the written content.

FOCUS. ACTION. CONTEXT.

When writing accessible IDs it's useful to think of the framework object-action-context. This formatting keeps the text succinct and to the point.

- The **focus** is the main object, person, or people of the picture.
- The **action** describes what is happening in the picture, which usually pertains to what the object is doing.
- The **context** describes the surrounding environment, or the information not given by the object and action that is important for understanding the content of the picture.

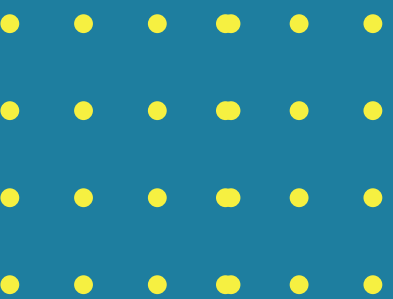


FOCUS.

The focus is the main object, person, or people of the picture. - as well as the story we are telling with the image. When writing about the focus of the visual, we take the following into consideration:

How many people are in the photo?

If there are one to two people in the photo consider being more descriptive with their identities and appearance - like clothing, hair, and skin tone - especially if it contributes to our narrative of addressing (under)representation. At FrontLine, representation of BIPOC and women in farming is central to our story and therefore we take steps to communicate this when the individual media or post incorporates this narrative. However, if more than two people are the focus of the image, we offer less detail to keep the description brief.



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Step-by-Step Instructions

FOCUS.

The focus is the main object, person, or people of the picture.
- as well as the story we are telling with the image. When writing about the focus of the visual, we take the following into consideration:

Only use identifications when known.

In order to respectfully identify people, FrontLine's practice is to ask for a person's preferred identifications and has implemented this practice with all staff through a survey. This includes but is not limited to gender, pronouns, race, ethnicity, and other self-defined identities. It is important to use the exact terms they use when describing themselves.

Ex. Do not use the term "African American" if the person identifies as "Black."

We have developed a list of words for skin tone identification for our staff to consider. We avoid using food as descriptors or terms like "light" or "dark" due to their connections with colorism and objectification of BIPOC bodies. All FrontLine Farming Staff are asked: If you are comfortable with skin tone descriptors, which ones? (includes but not limited to black skin, brown skin, tan skin, olive skin, pale skin).

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Step-by-Step Instructions

FOCUS.

The focus is the main object, person, or people of the picture. - as well as the story we are telling with the image. When writing about the focus of the visual, we take the following into consideration:

Identify by name first and then pronouns.

When considering the genders of people in visual media, we identify individuals by name first and then pronouns. If the person's pronouns are unknown, we use "a person" as a descriptor rather than terms like "a woman".

Ex. "Sam stands and smiles at the camera. She is holding a large bunch of carrots in her arms."

Avoid flashy language.

Identify people objectively and avoid flashy language and descriptions.

Be consistent.

Be careful not to describe just one individual or identity within a post. Similarly, use the same language for all individuals unless using specific descriptors like skin tone or pronouns.

ACTION. CONTEXT.

The action pertains to what is happening in the photo and usually describes what the object is doing.

The context gives detail pertaining to the surrounding environment and provides the information not given by the object and action that is important for understanding the photo.

Be objective and direct.

The classic example of “looting” vs “surviving” shows why our choice of verbs and descriptors is important to consider intentionally. Use consistent language for describing actions across identities and consider the narrative communicated by the descriptors and verbs.

Follow FrontLine’s narrative.

Add more descriptive context when appropriate for FrontLine’s brand and narrative. This means we describe and name plants, farm techniques, and farm equipment when possible.

Ex. Instead of “stands in front of green crops,” write “stands in front of a row of trellised tomatoes”.



FORMATTING THE POST.

Accessible ID or alt-text should appear at the end of the post. Label each picture as “Image 1, 2, 3 etc.” and separate with a paragraph break.

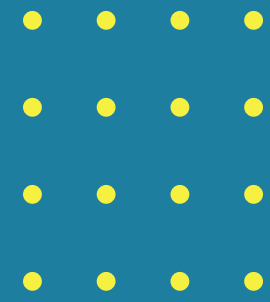
Never post an accessible ID without our statement “Learn more about FLF’s accessible ID practices by visiting our website (link in Bio).”

Ex. Image 1: focus-action-context.
Learn more about FLF’s accessible media practices by visiting our website (link in Bio).

Other Tips

- Videos should be captioned
- Capitalize the first letter of each word in a hashtag so screen readers can read it properly.
 - EX. #ImageDescriptions, #AltText, #FrontLineFarming
- Use periods in between acronym letters so screen readers can read them properly.
 - EX. U.S.A. otherwise the screen reader may read it as “usa.”
- Font size should be minimum 16 point and line height should be 1.4
- Don’t use emojis to spell words
 - Ex. **A P P L E**

EXAMPLE 1



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DESCRIPTION:

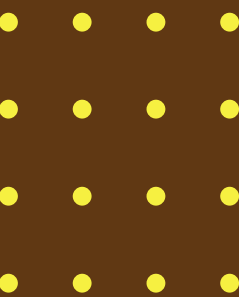
Oscar, a Chicano with tan skin, smiles at the camera, showing off a bunny tucked into the front pocket of his overalls. He is wearing a gray shirt, glasses and one earring.

Focus: Oscar, Chicano, tan skin (he/him)*

**Self-identified via staff survey.*

Action: smiles at the camera, showing off a bunny tucked into the front pocket of his overalls.

Context: He has tan skin, and is wearing a gray shirt, glasses and one earring.



EXAMPLE 2



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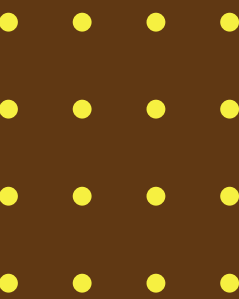
DESCRIPTION:

Four people kneel into an overgrown bed and weed.

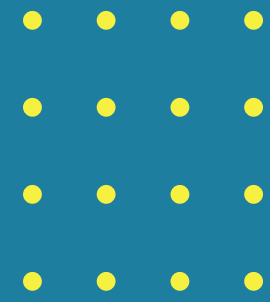
Focus: Four people

Action: Kneel in an overgrown bed

Context: They are weeding



EXAMPLE 3



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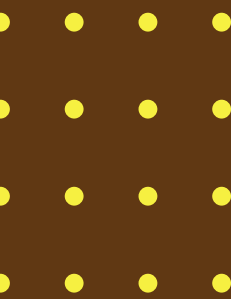
DESCRIPTION:

Bunches of garlic and bright multi-colored corn hang from the ceiling. Behind them is white wood paneling.

Object: Bunches of garlic and bright multi-colored corn

Action: hang from the ceiling

Context: white wood paneling in background



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by passionate FrontLine Farming staff. We are not experts in accessibility and are still on a learning journey in our own understandings.

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Image ID: A hand holds up a bunch of multi colored carrots against a white linen backdrop

FURTHER READING & REFERENCES



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