

Kickstarting accessibility with design systems

1/ Welcome



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**18F is a user-centered civic consultancy
for the U.S. government,
inside the U.S. government.**

We're federal employees.

2/ Design Systems

A design system is...



A series of reusable components



A way to create shared understanding between designers, developers, and content creators



A tool to help teams make the most of limited design support



A way to document decisions

A design system is *not*...



A replacement for UX
research and design



One person's opinions



A set of static laws



Branding

Design systems
help you focus
on solving for
your users' needs.

Legos, not clay

Design systems promote
“consistency over conformity”
(Aviva Oskow, 18F).



Public domain photo by Efraimstochter



Consistency over conformity

Not just components!

 An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#)

 U.S. Web Design System (USWDS)



[Read website standards](#)

[Download v2.7.0](#)



How to use USWDS

[Design principles](#)

Components

Design tokens

Utilities

Page templates

About

Design principles

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Design principles

USWDS Design Principles support and reflect the important guidance codified in the [21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act](#). These design principles are intended to help teams across government align on important common goals and better use the design system — to be an evaluative lens for design and implementation decisions. Regardless of how you build, any USWDS project should support these principles.

Start with real user needs

Real user needs should inform product decisions. Whether our audience includes members of the public or government employees, decision-makers

**Do I need a design
system?
(probably)**

Design systems create common ground

- A common system for design and code
- Shared methodologies for user centered design
- Shared design principles
- Documentation of how we've done it and guides for doing it again



Apply for Housing

APPLY

order
transcripts

QUICK LINKS



READ MORE >

Learn More »

VIEW PHOTOS

Information For Students

VIEW THE REPLAY

Make a gift

APPLY NOW

Examples

Carnegie Mellon Engineering design patterns

— Carnegie Mellon + Engineering

Focusing on innovative, interdisciplinary, and global education and research,

the College of Engineering is well-known for working on problems of both scientific and practical importance. Our acclaimed faculty focus on transformative results that will drive the intellectual and economic vitality of our community, nation and world. Our “maker” culture is ingrained in all that we do, leading to novel approaches and unprecedented results.

Meet faculty



Contact us



Partnerships



News

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Order From Chaos: Making Sense of Network Traffic

Yang Cai and Sebastian Peryt of CyLab's Visual Intelligence Studio have created a new tool for visualizing network data - a key component to

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Privacy, Personalization, & Peace

International policy experts discussed digital governance and security at the inaugural Carnegie Colloquium, cohosted by Carnegie Mellon and the

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES: Get the [most up-to-date information](#) on Carnegie Mellon's response to the coronavirus. Get updates from CMU-Africa [here](#).



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[Faculty & Staff](#) 

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World-class education for impact

Block A8



FEATURED PROGRAM

Electrical & Computer Engineering

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Integer a sem vitae ligula aliquam dictum. Morbi ex diam, gravida in mi eget, aliquam pharetra purus. Cras in urna ligula. →

Block B1





GLOBAL

ARTICLE

ARTICLE HEADERS

General Header

Event Header

Insiders Header

Partners Header

Article Department Header

View All

PAGE CONTENT

General Content

Topic Article

View All

BLOCKS MICRO

BLOCKS MICRO NEW

BLOCKS SPECIFIC

BLOCKS GENERAL

SECTIONS

COMPLEX

SOCIAL

PLAYGROUND

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Electrical & Computer Engineering

Partners**Events**

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Education & Outreach

Portal for Students & Staff



1

The U.S. Web Design System

<https://designsystem.digital.gov/>

How to use USWDS

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About

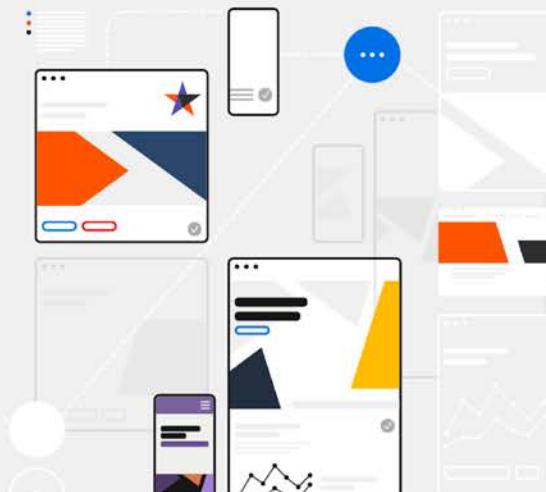
New to USWDS? [Learn how to adopt and adapt the design system incrementally.](#)

A design system for the federal government.

We make it easier to build accessible, mobile-friendly government websites for the American public.

[Learn about USWDS 2](#)

[Migrate to v2.7.0](#)



Components

[Browse all USWDS](#)



Design tokens

[Learn how to get started using](#)



Utilities

[Adapt your designs and deliver](#)



Page templates

[Use our basic page templates](#)

 United States Department of Justice

Contact the Department of Justice to report a civil rights violation

7-step process: Contact, Primary concern, Location, Personal characteristics, Date, Personal description, Review

If you believe you or someone else has experienced a civil rights violation, please tell us what happened.

Contact
You are not required to provide your name or contact information. If you want to remain anonymous, leave this section blank. If you choose to

Official website of the United States Kimberley Process Authority [Know what you know](#)

 USKPA.org

Become A Licensee About Us

The United States Kimberley Process Authority

Authorized by the U.S. government to provide US Kimberley Process certificates to licensed entities for use in exporting rough diamonds from the U.S.

[Login](#)

About Us

The United States Kimberley Process Authority (USKPA) is a not-for-profit trade association in the United States formed for the purpose of administering and controlling the usage of U.S. Kimberley Process certificates for the export of rough diamonds from the U.S.

The USKPA is governed by a Board of Directors and is located in New York City.

*Department of Justice Civil Rights Complaint Portal (top)
Department of Commerce (bottom)*

 U.S. Department of Commerce

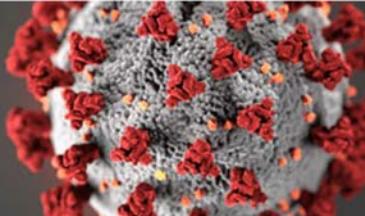
Bureaus and offices [Contact us](#)

Search [Search](#)

ABOUT [▼](#) ISSUES [▼](#) NEWS [▼](#) DATA AND REPORTS [▼](#) WORK WITH US [▼](#)

Coronavirus Disease

Coronavirus: Resources, Updates, and What You Should Know



News

MAY 15, 2020 [Tweets by @SecretaryRoss](#)

Commerce Addresses Huawei's Efforts to Undermine Entity List, Restricts Products Designed and Produced with U.S. Technologies

MAY 15, 2020 [Department of Commerce Issues Expected Final 90-Day Extension of Temporary General License Authorizations](#)

*United States Kimberley Process Authority (top)
FBI Crime Data Explorer (bottom)*

Official website of the United States government [Know what you know](#)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Crime Data Explorer

Home [Explorer](#) [Documents & Downloads](#) [About](#)

Location
United States [▼](#)

Time period
2008 [▼](#) to 2018 [▼](#)

Data Collections

Crime Data Collections [Crime](#) [Expanded Homicide Data](#) [Expanded Property Crime Data](#) [Arrest](#) [Preliminary Semimonthly Uniform Crime Report](#)

Law Enforcement Collections [Police Employment](#) [LEOCA Monthly Report](#)

United States

Crime data for the nation are derived from summary (SRS) [▼](#) and incident (NIBRS) [▼](#) reports voluntarily submitted to the FBI.

In 2018, the FBI estimated [▼](#) crime statistics for the nation are based on data received from **16,609** of **18,815** law enforcement agencies in the country that year.

Resources

[About the data](#) [CDE General FAQ](#) [Download participation and population data](#) [FBI UCR Program](#)

The UCR Program provided updated data for 2018 on September 30, 2019.

[Back to Top](#)

3/ A11y Considerations

**Accessibility is like a
blueberry muffin—you
can't push the berries
in there afterward.**

- @cordeliadillon



Bake in all the accessibility (and other) goodness from the start

1

Design:

Accessibility, branding, and usability contained within common, reusable patterns.

2

Code:

Modular, accessible code that has best practices included out of the box.

3

Documentation:

Guidance on how/when to implement with accessibility & usability considerations noted.

4/ A11y in USWDS

Components

Accordion

Alert

Banner

Button

Button groups

Card

Footer

Form controls

Text input

Dropdown

Checkbox

Radio buttons

Date input

Validation

Range slider

Character count

Combo box

Form templates

COMPONENTS

Form controls

Form controls allow users to enter information into a page.

Note: If you are building a form with multiple controls, also consider the accessibility guidelines in the “Form Templates” section.

General accessibility guidance for forms

Customize accessibly. As you customize these templates, make sure they meet the accessibility guidelines in this introduction and as described for each control.

Don't control element order with CSS. Display form controls in the same order in HTML as they appear on screen. Don't use CSS to rearrange the form controls. Screen readers narrate forms in the order they appear in the HTML.

Align validation with inputs. Visually align validation messages with the input fields, so people using screen magnifiers can read them quickly.

Use proper markup. Group each set of thematically related controls in a fieldset element. Use the legend element to offer a label within each one. The fieldset and legend elements make it easier for screen reader users to navigate the form.

Use legends. Use a single legend for fieldset (this is required). One example of a common use of fieldset and legend is a question with radio button options for

Components

Accordion

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Text input

Text inputs allow users to enter any combination of letters, numbers, or symbols. Text input boxes can span single or multiple lines.

Text input label

Text input focused

Text input error
Helpful error message

Text input success

Text area label

Text input success

Text area label

Component code



Guidance



When to use the text input component

Unpredictable or freeform responses. If you can't reasonably predict a user's answer to a prompt and there might be wide variability in users' answers.

Input simplicity. When using another type of input will make answering more difficult. For example, birthdays and other known dates are easier to type in than they are to select from a calendar picker.

Pasted content. When users want to be able to paste in a response.

Text input label

Text input focused

Text input error

Helpful error message

Text input success

Text area label

Component code

```
1  <form class="usa-form">
2    <label class="usa-label" for="input-type-text">Text input label<
3    <input class="usa-input" id="input-type-text" name="input-type-t
4
5    <label class="usa-label" for="input-focus">Text input focused</l
6    <input class="usa-input usa-focus" id="input-focus" name="input-
7
8    <div class="usa-form-group usa-form-group--error">
9      <label class="usa-label usa-label--error" for="input-error">Te
10     <span class="usa-error-message" id="input-error-message" role=
11     <input class="usa-input usa-input--error" id="input-error" narr
12   </div>
13
14   <label class="usa-label" for="input-success">Text input success<
15   <input class="usa-input usa-input--success" id="input-success" n
16
17   <label class="usa-label" for="input-type-textarea">Text area lab
18   <textarea class="usa-textarea" id="input-type-textarea" name="in
19 </form>
```

Text input success

Text area label

Component code



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Pasted content. When users want to be able to paste in a response.

Accessibility

Customize accessibility. If you customize the text inputs, ensure they continue to meet the the [accessibility requirements that apply to all form controls](#).

Avoid placeholder text. Most browsers' default rendering of placeholder text does not provide a high enough contrast ratio.

Avoid splitting numbers. Avoid breaking numbers with distinct sections (such as phone numbers, Social Security Numbers, or credit card numbers) into separate input fields. For example, use one input for phone number, not three (one for area code, one for local code, and one for number). Each field needs to be labeled for a screen reader and the labels for fields broken into segments are often not meaningful.

Hey, there's a place
for accessibility
guidance!

Address form

Enter a standard U.S. mailing or shipping address

Mailing address

Street address 1

Street address 2 (optional)

City

State

- Select - 

ZIP

Component code

Guidance

When to use an address form

Guidance

When to use an address form

You need separate data elements. When you need to be able to parse out the specific parts of a mailing address.

When to consider something else

Nonstandard addresses. If you need to collect addresses that may not fit this format (for example, international addresses).

You don't need separate data elements. If you don't need to be able to parse out the individual pieces of an address, consider letting users type the entire address into one large text area.

Usability guidance

Don't call out required fields. Call out optional fields instead. Users can infer that non-optional fields are required.

Avoid dropdowns. If possible, let users type their state's abbreviation when they reach the state drop-down menu.

Support both five- and nine-digit ZIP codes. Some addresses require a nine-digit ZIP code. If you would like to use an input mask, it should be "#####-####" so that the text is properly formatted, regardless of



No guesswork!

Embrace accessibility

Accessibility affects everybody, build it into every decision. Legal requirements are a critical, necessary starting point, but this is only the beginning. Accessibility is about real people who use our services — it's usability for people who interact with products differently. Everyone who works on government websites has a role to play in making federal resources accessible and inclusive. Design generously and celebrate accessibility requirements as a set of design constraints that help us create a better product for all users.

Key considerations

- Can users navigate your site using only the keyboard?
- Can users use a screen reader to access the page content?
- Can users quickly understand the main points of your content?
- Can users easily interpret content associated with graphic elements?
- Can users easily understand and complete key tasks?
- Are you testing your service with a broad range of users?
- Do you know your agency accessibility team?
- Is your site organized such that everyone can navigate it easily?
- Are you using accessibility testing tools?
- Did your accessibility testing tools provide accurate results?
- Are you providing content in [languages other than English](#), as appropriate for the audience?

Embrace accessibility

Accessibility affects everybody, build it into every decision

Requirements are a critical, necessary starting point, but the beginning. Accessibility is about real people who use our sites for people who interact with products differently. Everyone's government websites has a role to play in making federal products and inclusive. Design generously and celebrate accessibility. A set of design constraints that help us create a better product.

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GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

- [The Section 508 accessibility program](#) [section508.gov]
- [Accessibility for Teams guide](#) [accessibility.digital.gov]
- [Find your Section 508 Coordinator](#) [section508.gov]
- [Section 508 ICT Testing Baseline](#) [section508coordinators.github.com]
- [Learn about writing in plain language](#) [plainlanguage.gov]
- [Plain language resources](#) [plainlanguage.gov]
- [18F's accessibility guide](#) [accessibility.18f.gov]
- [Accessibility Requirements Tool \(ART\) for contracting](#) [section508.gov]
- [Understanding universal design](#) [section508.gov]

NON-GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

- [Web Accessibility Perspectives Videos](#) [w3.org]
- [Inclusive design principles](#) [inclusivedesignprinciples.org]
- [Accessibility fundamentals with Rob Dodson](#) [youtube.com]
- [Microsoft's inclusive design manual](#) [microsoft.com]
- [Inclusive components by Heydon Pickering](#) [inclusive-components.design]
- [Humane by design](#) [humanebydesign.com]

Practical actions

- **Humanize accessibility.** Seek out examples of the real life impact of accessible products and services. Try to make accessibility less abstract and more personal.
- **Use agency resources.** Reach out to [your agency's accessibility team](#) and build

Handy list of
resources

**Design systems are
documentation**

5/ Other Systems

Decanter

[Home](#)[About](#)[Why Decanter](#)[Use Decanter](#)[Contribute to Decanter](#)[Identity + Design
Elements](#)[Layouts](#)[Components](#)

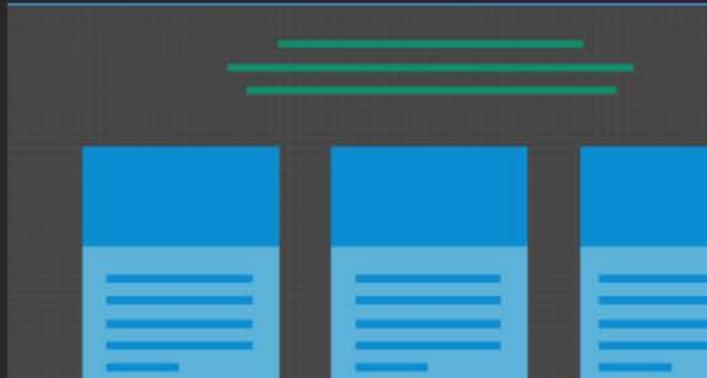
Welcome to the Decanter Style Guide and Pattern Library

Decanter is a web design and development system for Stanford University. It includes a responsive layout system and a browsable collection of design patterns that can be used in any Stanford project

[Use Decanter version 6.0](#)

Get started

Learn about how to use Decanter components with our onboarding guides, tailored to designers or developers.

[View developer guide >](#)[View designer guide >](#)

Style Variants

.su-card--horizontal

Postcard with image on the side.



This is a super headline

Headline goes here

This is a horizontal card with image link enabled. This example has a button link as the call-to-action.

Button Label

Example Markup

```
<article class="su-card su-card--horizontal">
  <figure class="su-media su-media--image su-card__media">
    <a rel="nofollow noopener" tabindex="-1" href="https://stanford.edu">
      <div class="su-media__wrapper su-aspect-ratio">
        
      </div>
    </a>
  </figure>
  <section class="su-card__contents">
```



Search

What's New

Getting Started

Platforms

Design Guidelines

Accessibility

Component Blueprints

Utilities

Design Tokens

Icons

Downloads

Articles

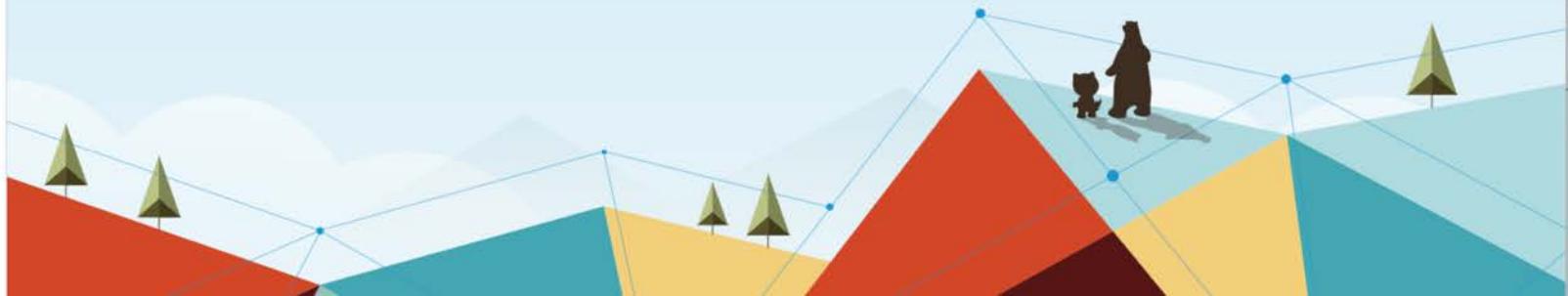
FAQ



Create the world's best enterprise app experiences.

[GET STARTED](#)

Current release: Spring '20 (SLDS 2.11.9) | [Archives](#)





Accessibility Patterns Overview

Accessibility can seem complicated, but you can make accessible web apps with semantic markup and 18 principle patterns. These patterns form the basis of the Lightning Design System Components and are a companion to the accessibility documentation available on each component page.

The Patterns

Accordion

Grid

Tabs

Alert Dialog

Listbox

Toggle Button

Alert/Status

Live Region

Toolbar

Combobox

Menu

Tooltip

Expandable Section

Modal Dialog

Tree View

Feed

Non-Modal Dialog

Treegrid

What are Accessibility Patterns?

Accessibility patterns are the principle patterns a lot of the Lightning Components are built on. These patterns originate from traditional software applications and have been adapted to web applications in the [W3C's ARIA specifications](#).

The ARIA specifications follow patterns from traditional software applications because most assistive technology and power users are familiar with their interactions, layout, and naming conventions. So, to make your web based software feel familiar to your users, you should follow these conventions.

What makes these patterns accessible are additional HTML attributes and consistent keyboard interactions on top of semantic HTML markup. The attributes ARIA requires convey the pattern's identity, operation, relationship to other elements, and state to assistive technologies. This way, users know what is going on, what to do next, and how to do it.

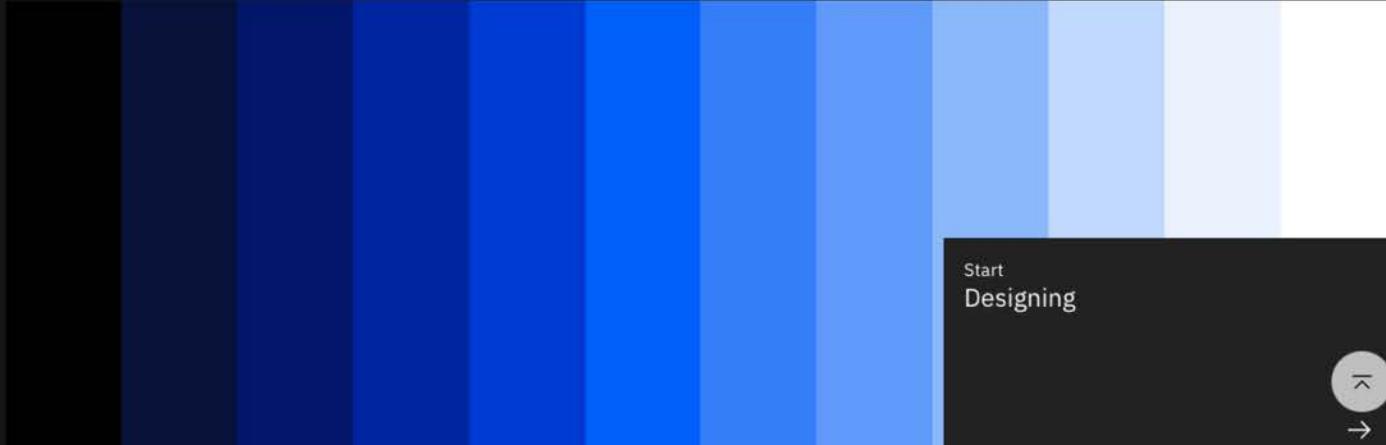
- Get started
- Tutorial
- Guidelines
- Components
- Patterns
- Data visualization
- Resources
- How to contribute
- Updates
- Help
- Community

Carbon Design System

Carbon is IBM's **open-source** design system for products and experiences. With the IBM Design Language as its foundation, the system consists of working code, design tools and resources, human interface guidelines, and a vibrant community of contributors.

Design kit

[GitHub](#)



- Get started
- Tutorial
- Guidelines
- Components
- Patterns

- Overview
- Common actions
- Dialogs
- Disabled states
- Empty states
- Filtering

Forms

- Global header
- Loading
- Login
- Notifications
- Overflow content
- Search

Data visualization

Resources

How to contribute

Updates

Help

Community

Forms

A form is a group of related input controls that allows users to provide data or configure options. Forms can be simple or complex, and may be presented as dedicated pages, side panels, or dialogs depending on the use case and the situation.

- ↳ Overview
- ↳ Accessibility
- ↳ Building a form
- ↳ Related
- ↳ Behavior
- ↳ References
- ↳ Designing a form
- ↳ Feedback
- ↳ Variants

Overview

When to use

Forms are incredibly common in user interfaces and their design and usage continues to evolve

6/ Extending Design Systems

**Focusing your work
on what matters**

Case study:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Design System

[Get Coverage](#)[Keep or Update Your Plan](#)[See Topics](#) ▾[Get Answers](#)**SEARCH**

Life changes? See if you qualify for coverage.

You can enroll in or change plans if you have certain life changes, or qualify for Medicaid or CHIP.

[SEE IF I CAN ENROLL](#)[SEE IF I CAN CHANGE](#)

Looking for coverage for a small business? [Learn more](#)

MARKETPLACE COVERAGE AND CORONAVIRUS

[LEARN MORE](#)[1095 & TAX INFO](#)[GET 2019 EXEMPTIONS](#)[SUBMIT DOCUMENTS](#)[FIND LOCAL HELP](#)

Introduction

Getting started



Guidelines



Layout



Style



Utilities



Components



Patterns



Overview

Documentation page

Review

[Step List](#)

Third party external link

Step List

[Jump to guidance](#)

A step list represents a user's progression through an application or multi-page form. It serves as a table of contents and a way to quickly see where they are and what they should be working on next.

xs
Width: 360

sm
Width: 544

md
Width: 768

lg
Width: 1024

xl
Width: 1280

1 Choose a tax year

✓ Completed
[Edit](#)

2 Enter household details

[Resume](#)

Answer questions about who in your household qualifies for a premium tax credit and information on each person.

Text input label

Text input focused

Text input error
Helpful error message

Text input success

Text area label



Single line field

Number field

Small size modifier

Medium size modifier

Multiline field

Helpful hint text

Error message example

Success field

Disabled field

Password field

Inverse field

Helpful hint text

Error message

Case study:

U.S Forest Service

An official website of the United States government | [USA.gov](#) | [Help](#)

United States Web Design System

Documentation Components Design Intent Utilities Page templates About

Page templates Landing page Documentation page

Page templates

Page templates

These templates for a landing page and a documentation page are built from USWDS components. Each of these pages is flexible; you can add or remove components or subcomponents to suit your needs. These templates are great starting point for prototyping or for trying USWDS to see if it's a good fit for your project.

Landing page

Provide someone's first impression of your agency or program.

Often, site users arrive at a landing page without much context, like a search result or a colleague's email. So a landing page needs to be clear, engaging, and contextualizing.



A tagline highlights your approach



Section heading

Describing who your page should help people understand your agency or project who you are, your goal or mission, and how you approach it. Use this section to encourage them to act. Describe why they should get in touch, and use an active verb on the button, like "Get in touch," "Learn more," and so on.

Call to action

Documentation

Primary link Primary link Primary link Primary link Primary link Agency Contact Contact

Name of Agency

Agency Contact Contact

Documentation page template

Component code

Usage

When to use the landing page template

Introducing a new program. If you are introducing a new program to the public through a marketing or publicity campaign, a landing page is a good place to point links at. It can build on the minimal copy of a campaign without overwhelming readers.

When to avoid

Internal pages. Don't use a landing page for standard internal page content. The same things that help people understand basics quickly can become distracting for people who are looking for more depth.

An official website of the United States government | [USA.gov](#) | [Help](#)

U.S. FOREST SERVICE Web Design Standards

View on GitHub

Page templates UI components

Page templates Landing page Documentation page

Page templates

These templates for a landing page and a documentation page are built from some of the components of the U.S. Forest Service Web Design Standards. Each of these pages is flexible; you can add or remove components or sub-components to suit your needs. These templates are great starting point for prototyping or for trying the Design System to see if they're a good fit for you.

Template 1: Landing page

A landing page is intended to provide someone's first impression of your agency or program. Often, they'll arrive from somewhere else without much context, like a search result or a colleague's email. So a landing page needs to be clear, engaging, and contextualizing.



A tagline highlights your approach.

Demo landing page template

Code

Documentation

When to use

- If you are introducing a new program to the public through a marketing or publicity campaign, a landing page is a good place to point links at. It can build on the minimal copy of a campaign without overwhelming readers.
- The landing page can be a good model for a homepage. But do some research first. What do you have to say? What do your users need to know? Figure these things out. It's important to know what you have to say about your organization before you settle on a homepage design.

When to avoid

- Don't use a landing page for standard internal page content. The same things that help people understand basics quickly can become distracting for people who are looking for more depth.
- Don't try to include forms or side navigation in a page like this. Those are visually complex components, and a landing page works best without too much complexity.

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U.S. FOREST SERVICE Web Design Standards

View on GitHub

Page templates UI components

Overview Typography Colors

Palette Text accessibility Accessibility Grids Buttons Labels Tables Alerts Accordions Form controls Form templates Search bar Side navigation

Colors

A flexible, yet distinctly US Forest Service palette designed to communicate warmth and trustworthiness while meeting the highest standards of 508 color contrast requirements.

Palette

This palette is designed to support a range of distinct visual styles that continue to feel connected. The intent of the palette is to convey a warm and open American spirit, with bright saturated tints of blue and red, grounded in sophisticated deeper shades of cool blues and grays. These colors – combined with clear hierarchy, good information design, and ample white space – should leave users feeling welcomed and in good hands.

This is a simple, minimalist color palette. Shades of blue dominate, providing a neutral backdrop on which brighter shades, clean type treatment, and bright white content areas "pop" on the page.

Primary colors

This palette's primary colors are blue, gray, and white. Blue is commonly associated with trust, confidence, and sincerity; it is also used to represent calmness and responsibility.

#0071b2c	#20b493	#112e51	#2112121
Color-primary	Color-primary-dark	Color-primary-darkest	Color-base

#323a645	#6a6b6b5	#f1f1f1f
Color-gray-dark	Color-gray-light	Color-white

Secondary colors

These are accent colors to provide additional lightness and style to pages looking for a more modern feel. These colors should be used to highlight important features on a page, such as buttons, or for visual style elements, such as illustrations. They should be used sparingly and never draw the eye to more than one piece of information at a time.

#02bfc7	#04a999	#00b6d2	#9edaf1	#e1f3f8
Color-primary-dark	Color-primary-dark	Color-primary-light	Color-primary-alight	Color-primary-alight

IMPORTANT CAVEAT

**Don't start from
scratch
(unless you need to)**

(but really, don't)

This is the power of open source.

Design systems scale decisions

Make sure they're good decisions!

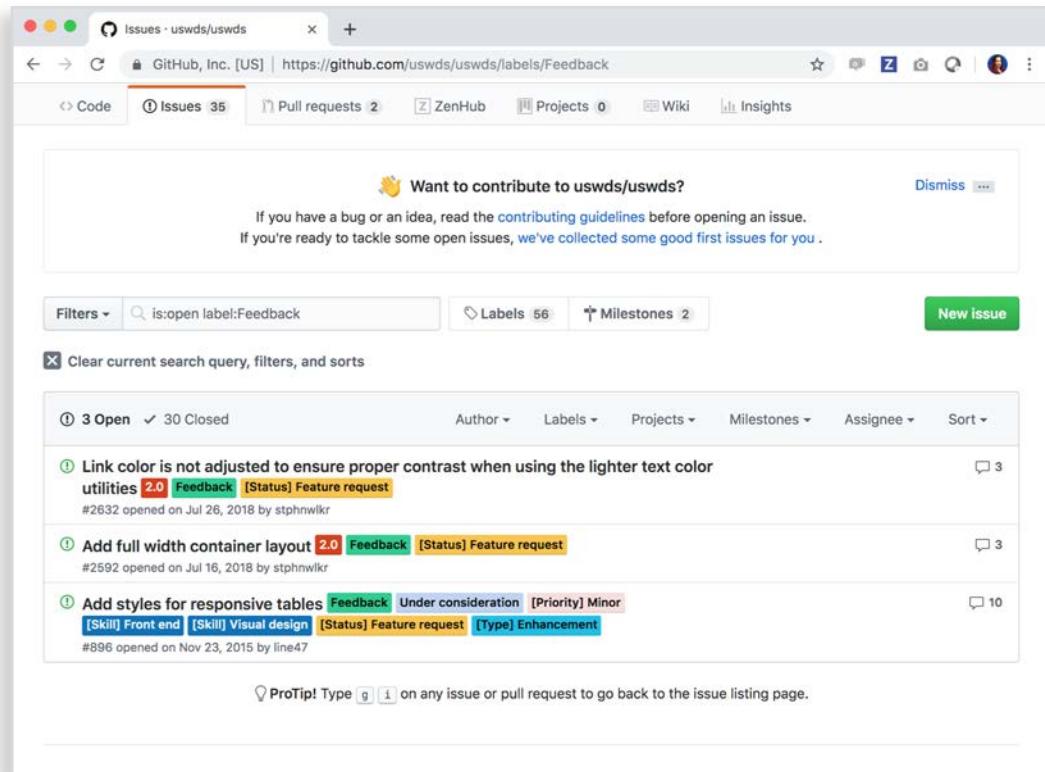
7/ Next Steps & Resources



Fork it

Open source enables collaboration

- Anyone can request a feature
- Anyone can create a suggested change and submit it for review
- Decision-making is documented
- We can learn from each other



A few open-source design systems

US Web Design System

Stanford's Decanter

IBM's Carbon Design System

Salesforce Lightning Design System

Helpful resources

[18F's Accessibility Guide](#) - Human-readable accessibility checklists and guidelines

[Accessibility for Teams](#) - Role-based accessibility guidance

[Microsoft Inclusive Design Manual](#) - Resources for designing inclusive experiences

[Plainlanguage.gov](#) - Guidelines for clear, accessible writing

Thanks!

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