Color and Font Cheat Sheet

A small set of choices you can repeat on every page. Sources are the public WCAG 2.2 notes, not a private method.

A simple palette

Pick four roles and stop. Main color (from your logo or sign). Ink (near black or near white). Paper (the page background). Action (the color reserved for the main button).

Main:

Ink:

Paper:

Action:

Contrast you can check

WCAG 2.2 success criterion 1.4.3 asks for a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for normal text, and 3:1 for large text (18pt, or 14pt bold). Success criterion 1.4.11 asks for 3:1 for meaningful graphics and for the boundary of a button or a form field.

- [ ] Body text against the page is at least 4.5:1
- [ ] Large headings are at least 3:1 if they are the only thing carrying that text
- [ ] The button label is readable, and the button edge is visible if the fill is quiet
- [ ] You did not use color alone to mean required, error, or success

A free public checker: https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Type

One family for headings and one for body text is enough. One family in two weights is also enough. Body text at 16px or larger keeps phone browsers from zooming in on form fields. A line height around 1.5 is comfortable. WCAG 2.2 success criterion 1.4.8 (an enhanced goal, not the minimum) says a line of text should be no more than 80 characters.

- [ ] Body text is at least 16px
- [ ] Line height is about 1.5
- [ ] A line of body text stays under about 80 characters
- [ ] Headings are clearly larger than body text, and they stay in order
- [ ] Long sentences are not set in all capitals

System fonts are a fair starting point because the visitor already has them. If you want more choice, a free public library such as Google Fonts is enough. Use one or two files, not a stack of weights you never use.