

Public Legal Information Best Practices v 1.3

Last updated June 9, 2020 | Designed for British Columbia, Canada

These best practices can help you produce public legal information your audience needs, understands, and puts to use.

Introduction

Information is essential for people to access justice. To resolve a dispute, to assert their rights, to avoid legal problems, to be an engaged citizen — people need information.

With the internet, information is more accessible than ever. But too much information presents its own challenges. Research shows that when faced with more information, people find it *harder* to decide what information is relevant ([Metzger and Flanagin, 2013](#)).

To cope with information overload, people take *shortcuts*. They will attempt to lessen their cognitive load by ignoring some information and looking for signals of credibility and relevance. These signals help people make decisions quickly and with less effort than more complex methods.

A group of British Columbia organizations that produce public legal information teamed up to learn more about this phenomena. We set out to identify the signals and shortcuts people use when looking for legal information. We dug into the research on how people find information. We compared notes on our own practices. We did testing with people directly.

We learned a number of things. We learned, for example, that people put great value in knowing the *source* of information. We learned they look for signals that legal information has been reviewed by an *expert*. We learned they look for signs the information is *current*.

Cue the Public Legal Information Best Practices

We took this learning and distilled it into a set of public legal information best practices. Using these practices can help make your legal information stand out and more likely to be used. They can help your information be understood and truly impactful for your audience.

The best practices are organized in two parts:

- **High-Impact Best Practices.** The eight most impactful ways to help people trust your information, understand it, and put it to use.
- **Additional Best Practices.** Ways to further strengthen your legal information, making it easier to find, more understandable, and easier to use.

These best practices are designed to help you develop new resources. You can also use them to improve your existing resources. We encourage you to introduce these practices in

a measured and efficient way. For example, you can incorporate them when updating a resource to reflect changes in the law.

About the Authors

These best practices have been developed by a committee of British Columbia organizations that produce and support public legal information. On the committee are representatives from Courthouse Libraries BC, the Justice Education Society of BC, the Law Foundation of BC, Legal Aid BC, and People's Law School.

The best practices are hosted on a website, betterlegalinfo.ca, operated by People's Law School. The committee welcomes feedback on the best practices. Please contact us at info@peopleslawschool.ca.

Public Legal Information Best Practices: A Checklist

Name of resource: _____

Organization producing resource: _____

Reviewer: _____ Date of review: _____

Item	Yes	Getting there	No
High-Impact Best Practices			
1. Say who made the information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Say where the information applies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Review the information for legal accuracy — and say you’ve done so	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Include the date of the last legal review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Say who or what the information is for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Make the information understandable for the intended audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Make the design clean, engaging, and easy to use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Refer to free or low-cost legal help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Best Practices			
<i>Strengthen your process</i>			
9. Address an unmet need — and avoid duplication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Establish success measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Test with your audience — and include them in the development process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Edit your language for clarity and simplicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Review the information periodically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Make your information more inclusive and easier to find</i>			
14. Consider how the information makes your audience feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Make the information accessible to people of varying abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Make the information easy to find	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Best Practices

These best practices aim to help you produce legal information your audience trusts, understands, and puts to use.

Part I: High-Impact Best Practices

In producing legal information for the public, these eight practices have the biggest impact on helping people trust your information, understand it, and put it to use.

Best practice	1. Say who made the information
Why this is important	When your audience knows a piece of information is from a reliable source, they're more likely to trust it.
Tips	<p>→ Say the name of your organization</p> <p>Research shows that source information is crucial to credibility. Even with digital information, where source can get murky due to how easily information can be shared, source plays a critical role in credibility judgments (Sundar, 2008).</p> <p>→ Explain (briefly) why you're trustworthy</p> <p>Tell people enough about your organization to gain their confidence. For example, you might mention that you're a non-profit, describe the legal expertise of your staff, or explain the purpose of your organization's work.</p> <p>→ Include contact info</p> <p>Include contact information so people can follow up with questions, suggest improvements, or request alternate formats.</p> <p>+ Plus, for online information, make sure the source or author information prints out.</p>
Examples	<p><i>"Your Gladue Rights is published by the Legal Aid BC, a non-profit organization that provides legal aid to British Columbians. Feedback on this publication? Contact us at publications@lss.bc.ca."</i></p> <p><i>"The Tenant Survival Guide is produced by the Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre, a non-profit organization that promotes the legal protection of</i></p>

tenants across British Columbia. Our TRAC Tenant Information Line is 1-800-655-1185.”

“[This website](#) is from People's Law School, a non-profit society in British Columbia. We provide free education and information to help people effectively deal with the legal problems of daily life. Contact us at info@peopleslawschool.ca.”

Best practice	2. Say where the information applies
Why this is important	Saying which location (or “jurisdiction”) the information applies to helps people decide if the information is relevant to them.
Tips	<p>→ Say the location where the information applies</p> <p>Say the information applies in British Columbia. When the information is online, it’s a good practice to also include “Canada”, as Canadian provinces may not be recognized by people in other parts of the world.</p> <p>If the jurisdiction is in the name of your resource (for example, “Family Law in British Columbia”), you don’t need to say it separately. If the jurisdiction is included in your organization’s name or logo, you <i>should</i> still say the jurisdiction separately. Some people may not see the organization name or logo; even those who do may be uncertain if the jurisdiction follows from the name.</p> <p>→ Make the jurisdiction easy to see</p> <p>Put the jurisdiction where it’s easy to see — for example, at the top of each web page, on the front cover of a print publication, or in the opening titles of a video.</p> <p>+ Plus, for online information, put the jurisdiction on each web page of legal information. Many visitors go directly to a specific page rather than through a site’s homepage or an introduction page. Make sure the jurisdiction information prints out.</p>
Example	<i>“This information applies to British Columbia, Canada.”</i>

Best practice	3. Review the information for legal accuracy — and say you’ve done so
Why this is important	Knowing that information has been reviewed by a qualified expert makes people more confident it’s accurate and reliable.
Tips	<p>→ Have the information legally reviewed Have any legal information reviewed by a qualified lawyer — one who has practical, on-the-ground experience in that area of law. In some circumstances, the legal review can be done by a community legal worker or other legal professional where they are a recognized subject matter expert who combines legal knowledge with extensive practical experience.</p> <p>→ Say you’ve done a legal review Tell people the information has been reviewed for legal accuracy.</p> <p>→ Provide information about the reviewer’s expertise Displaying the reviewer’s name and credentials (for example, their affiliation or a short bio) can significantly boost confidence in the reliability of the information.</p>
Examples	<p><i>“Reviewed for legal accuracy by [name of reviewer], [affiliation of reviewer].”</i></p> <p><i>“Reviewed for legal accuracy by [name of reviewer].”</i></p> <p><i>“Reviewed for legal accuracy.”</i></p>

Best practice	4. Include the date of the last legal review
Why this is important	Knowing when information was last reviewed by a qualified expert helps people assess if it's up-to-date and reliable.
Tips	<p>→ Include the legal review date</p> <p>For any legal information, include the date of the last review of the information for legal accuracy.</p> <p>Update the last reviewed date even when a legal review doesn't change the content.</p> <p>→ Make the review date easy to see</p> <p>Put the legal review date where it's easy to see — for example, at the top of each web page, on the front cover of a print publication, or in the opening titles of a video.</p> <p>→ Explain the importance of the date</p> <p>It's a good practice to include a note saying the law can change and your information is accurate as of the date it was last reviewed. You might also say that even where there has been a long period since the last reviewed date, the information may still be current. Some areas of law remain unchanged for years.</p> <p>+ Plus, for online information, put the last reviewed date on each web page with legal information. Many visitors go directly to a specific page rather than through a site's homepage or an introduction page. Make sure the last reviewed date prints out.</p>
Examples	<p><i>"Reviewed for legal accuracy: [month, year]. (Why this date is important.)"</i></p> <p>With online information, if you update parts of the information without conducting a full review of the material, you could tell people this. It will help them assess the currency of the information. For example:</p> <p><i>"Updated regularly; last formal review for legal accuracy in [month, year]."</i></p>

Best practice	5. Say who or what the information is for
Why this is important	People are more likely to engage with information — and trust it — if they see it is meant for them.
Tips	<p>→ Identify the audience</p> <p>Identify your target audience. It might be a demographic, such as older adults. It might be individuals in a specific situation, such as workers in a certain sector or people going to court. The narrower your scope, the more effective your information will be. (See best practice #6 for tips on developing your information with your target audience in mind.)</p> <p>→ Identify the purpose of the information</p> <p>Ask yourself: what are you trying to achieve with the information? Are you trying to inform people, to empower people to take action, to encourage people to become engaged citizens? What do you want your audience to be able to do as a result of your information? To do this, what do they need to know, and what skills do they need?</p> <p>→ State your audience or purpose</p> <p>Put your audience or purpose front-and-centre. For example, you might state them in the title, subtitle, or opening description.</p>
Examples	<p><i>“Welcome to A Teen Guide to Parental Separation and Divorce. If your parents have recently separated or divorced (or you think they may be about to), or you have a friend in that situation, this site is for you.”</i> – “Families Change”, from Justice Education Society</p> <p><i>“Information for people in relationships who need protection from violence or the threat of violence.”</i> – For Your Protection, from Legal Aid BC</p> <p><i>“Disability Alliance BC has prepared this Help Sheet to help you complete the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction’s designation application form for the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit.”</i> – “The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Application Help Sheet”, from Disability Alliance BC</p>

Best practice	6. Make the information understandable for the intended audience
Why this is important	Information that's understandable is more likely to be used by your audience and have the impact you seek.
Tips	<p>→ Focus on your audience In developing your information, focus on your target audience and what you want them to be able to do. Establish what issues they face, their existing knowledge, the skills they have, and the barriers they face.</p> <p>→ Take a user perspective Deal with issues from the perspective of your audience. For example, let's say your information explains a worker's options if they haven't been paid. Describe the steps the worker can take in the order they are likely to encounter them — not (for example) in the order the steps appear in employment standards legislation.</p> <p>→ Decide on the reading level you're targeting Decide what reading level you're targeting with your information. To do that, consider the reading ability of your audience and their familiarity with the subject. Most people prefer to read several grades below their level of education. It just takes less energy.</p> <p>→ Use plain language techniques Use an active voice, short sentences, common words, and other plain language techniques. For tips, see best practice #12 on editing your language for clarity and simplicity.</p> <p>→ Measure the readability of your text Measure the reading level of your text. A number of "readability measures" can be used. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is the most widely-used measure and can be found using an online readability checker or in Microsoft Word's readability statistics. Many organizations targeting a broad public audience, such as the Canadian Public Health Association and many mainstream newspapers, aim for around a grade 8 reading level. For audiences with low literacy or whose first language is not English, consider aiming even lower for print information, and still lower for online information.</p> <p>→ Be mindful of the many factors that affect comprehension A high reading level can indicate a problem with your text, but a low</p>

	<p>reading level doesn't necessarily mean it is understandable. Many factors that readability formulas can't measure have a big impact on making your information understandable. These factors include how the information is organized, the tone and "voice" used, the use of graphics, and the use of white space. See best practice #7 on making the design clean, engaging, and easy to use.</p> <p>→ Test your information with your audience</p> <p>To help make your information understandable, test it with your audience. Testing doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Showing your information to five people can reveal most issues with your information. For tips, see best practice #11 on testing with your audience.</p>
Dig deeper	<p>Measure the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level of your information with ReadablePro or WriteClearly.</p> <p>Writing for the Web Guides: British Columbia government guidelines and resources for plain language writing and developing audience-focused content.</p> <p>Clear Language and Design (CLAD): Tips for measuring and improving the readability of your information.</p>

Best practice	7. Make the design clean, engaging, and easy to use
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<p>Why this is important</p>	<p>Good design makes information more likely to be used and easier to understand. It also increases people’s confidence the information is reliable.</p>
<p>Tips</p>	<p>→ Focus on your audience</p> <p>Visually engaging design can draw people in and keep their attention. But audiences vary. Tailor your design to what your audience considers engaging and easy to use.</p> <p>→ Use white space (that is, blank space)</p> <p>“White space” — that is, blank space — on a page or screen is easy on the eyes. Literacy experts recommend a ratio of 50/50 for white space and text.</p> <p>→ Put important information first</p> <p>Lead with the most important information. Start with your conclusion, and work backwards.</p> <p>→ Use lots of headings</p> <p>Headings make it easier for people to find what they need. Headings also break up the text, making it easier to understand.</p> <p>→ Make information easy to scan</p> <p>Particularly with online information, most people scan. Use techniques that make scanning easier, such as bolding key terms, using bulleted lists, and putting key points in highlighted boxes.</p> <p>→ Use images or other visuals</p> <p>Photos and illustrations make your information more visually appealing, and you can use them to highlight important points. Graphic symbols such as check marks (✓ ✗) or thumbs up and down symbols (👍 👎) can help people find and understand information. Flowcharts and decision trees can show how a process works or the steps needed to deal with a problem.</p> <p>→ Test your design with your audience</p> <p>Test your design with your audience to help make sure it’s engaging and easy to use. Testing doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Showing your information to five people can reveal most issues with your design. For tips, see best practice #11 on testing with your audience.</p>

Dig deeper	Community Legal Education Ontario, Better Legal Information Handbook: Practical Tips for Community Workers (2013): The section on “Designing and presenting the information” offers tips for clear and visually engaging design, in both print and online.
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Best practice	8. Refer to free or low-cost legal help
Why this is important	Many people may want one-on-one help with their problem. But they may not be able to afford private lawyers. Providing options for free assistance helps increase access to legal help.
Tips	<p>→ Include places where people can access justice</p> <p>Include contact information of places where people may be able to get free or low-cost legal help. Free options include legal clinics, pro bono programs, legal aid, or legal help lines. Make sure the referrals are to services your audience is likely to use and able to access.</p> <p>→ Verify the availability of the service</p> <p>Consider using the Clicklaw HelpMap link for referrals you make online. The Clicklaw information is updated by service providers directly, so it's timely and reliable. Plus, people can navigate elsewhere on Clicklaw to find other options for assistance.</p>
Examples	<p><i>"If you have limited means, contact Access Pro Bono for free legal advice at ... "</i></p> <p><i>"In the Lower Mainland and Victoria, you can get help from law students. Contact their clinics at ... "</i></p> <p><i>"For help making a complaint against a government body, contact the Ombudsperson office at ... "</i></p>

Part II: Additional Best Practices

Following these eight additional practices will further strengthen your legal information — making it easier to find, easier to understand, and more likely to be used.

Strengthen your process

Best practice	9. Address an unmet need — and avoid duplication
Why this is important	Making sure your intended audience needs the information — and that the information isn't already available — increases the likelihood it will be used and be effective.
Tips	<p>→ Identify the need</p> <p>Before you do anything else, pinpoint the need you're trying to address. Identify the legal issue, whom it affects, and how. Don't assume you have to do original research. Clicklaw includes research on legal needs in the "Reform & Research" section, under "Legal needs & innovative solutions".</p> <p>→ Assess what currently exists</p> <p>Search Clicklaw, a comprehensive collection of legal information produced by hundreds of organizations, to see if similar resources already exist. Clarify the gap you seek to fill. Is it the subject? The format? The reading level of the information? The audience you're trying to reach?</p> <p>→ Identify how you will meet the need</p> <p>To make information truly accessible, it needs to be tailored to the target audience. Clarify how your information can best reach your intended audience and be useful to them. Your choice of format or reading level or tone might be what distinguishes your information from what is currently available. Here are ways your information might be uniquely accessible to your intended audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ It addresses a subject not covered elsewhere.✓ It is aimed at an audience not addressed elsewhere — for example, it is aimed at helpers rather than people experiencing the issue directly.✓ It features a reading level not used elsewhere.✓ It features a level of depth not used elsewhere — for example, it

	<p>is in-depth information, and only basic information is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ It features a tone or perspective not used elsewhere.✓ It is in a language not available elsewhere.✓ It is in a format your audience favours and not available elsewhere — print or video, for example.✓ It features design elements your audience favours and not used elsewhere — extensive use of visuals, for example. <p>→ Build on the work of others</p> <p>If information exists that closely but not exactly meets what you think your audience needs, consider approaching the organization that created it. For example, your audience may prefer information in a different format than what's currently available. You might ask the creators if they'll let you adapt their information for your audience.</p>
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Best practice	10. Establish success measures
Why this is important	Success measures tell you if your information is reaching your intended audience and if it's having the impact you seek.
Tips	<p>→ Identify key goals to measure</p> <p>Success measures indicate if your goals for a project or resource are being achieved. For example, if your goal is to help people get a government benefit, and your project is to produce online information, you can measure the number of people accessing the information and the extent to which it helped people take action.</p> <p>→ Measure reach</p> <p>For online information, to measure the reach of your information, you can track users and sessions using a free tool like Google Analytics. A common definition of a session is “a group of user interactions with your website that take place within a given time frame.”</p> <p>→ Measure impact</p> <p>Success measures revealing the impact of your information on your audience can be a powerful tool with your funders, board of directors, and community. For example, if your goal with the information is to increase the knowledge of your audience, you could ask users if the information increased their understanding of the issue.</p> <p>→ To get started with measurement, take small steps</p> <p>Success measures are ideally established at the start of your project. But if they haven't been, it's never too late to start measuring success. Start by identifying one or two goals you want to assess, and choose measurement activities you think you can realistically manage.</p>
Examples	<p><i>“The [noun] was easy to use.”</i> 1 strongly disagree / 2 disagree / 3 neither agree nor disagree / 4 agree / 5 strongly agree</p> <p><i>“The information increased my understanding of a legal issue.”</i> 1 strongly disagree / 2 disagree / 3 neither agree nor disagree / 4 agree / 5 strongly agree</p> <p><i>“The [noun] helped me identify a next step to take with a legal issue.”</i></p>

	<i>1 strongly disagree / 2 disagree / 3 neither agree nor disagree / 4 agree / 5 strongly agree</i>
Dig deeper	Community Legal Education Ontario, <i>Better Legal Information Handbook: Practical Tips for Community Workers</i> (2013): The section on “Evaluating your information” offers tips for planning and gathering success measures.

Best practice	11. Test with your audience — and include them in the development process
Why this is important	Testing with your audience can tell you if your information is understandable and easy to use. Involving audience members in the development process can also help you assess their needs, and encourages them to champion your information.
Tips	<p>→ Test your information with your audience</p> <p>How understandable is your information? How easy is it to use? How useful is it? To help you answer these questions, test your information with your audience. Testing will also help you learn if you have offended anyone with your information. For example, testing can reveal if the tone, the words, or the pictures inadvertently exclude people.</p> <p>→ Test in ways that are manageable</p> <p>User testing does not have to be expensive or complicated. It can be as simple as showing your information to a few members of your target audience. Testing with five people will tell you most of what you can learn by testing with larger numbers.</p> <p>→ Test in ways that work for you</p> <p>You can do individual testing, showing your information to someone and asking them questions. Or you can have them talk out loud as they try to complete tasks based on the information. Another approach is to bring members of your target audience together for a structured discussion. If you don't have a direct connection to the intended audience, you can connect with other groups, such as community-based agencies, that do have direct and regular contact with your intended audience.</p> <p>→ Test throughout the development process</p> <p>Let your audience test your information through all stages of development, not just at the end.</p> <p>→ Involve your audience in the development process in other ways</p> <p>You can also invite audience members to be advisors as you develop your information. Doing so can help you shape your information to more fully meet audience needs. And it can encourage them to</p>


	champion the information with others in your target audience.
Dig deeper	<p>Legal Aid BC, Reaching Your Readers: A Field Testing Guide for Community Groups (2007): Practical details on planning your own field testing of information.</p> <p>Community Legal Education Ontario, Better Legal Information Handbook: Practical Tips for Community Workers (2013): The section on “Testing the usability of your information” offers tips for planning and conducting usability testing.</p> <p>Usability.gov: An extensive collection of tools to make digital content easier to use and more useful. Includes best practices guides on running a usability test, conducting a focus group, and writing scenarios.</p>

Best practice	12. Edit your language for clarity and simplicity							
Why this is important	Clearly communicated ideas are easier to understand and more likely to be used.							
Tips	<p>→ Have the information reviewed for plain language Doing so will help you communicate in language people understand.</p> <p>→ Set a helpful tone Use a conversational tone. Avoid using a legal or bureaucratic tone.</p> <p>→ Speak directly to your audience Use “you” and “we.” They make the information more personal and draw in your audience.</p> <p>→ Keep it short Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Aim for an average sentence length of 15 words. Aim for one idea per paragraph.</p> <p>→ Keep it to the point Include only information that helps people do what you want them to be able to do. Leave out details that don’t help or may distract.</p> <p>→ Pick the right words Use verbs rather than the noun or adjective forms — for example, “manage” rather than “management of.” Use words the audience knows. Define difficult but necessary words (words people need to know to navigate their situation).</p>							
Examples	<table border="1" data-bbox="440 1465 1419 1948"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="440 1465 781 1539">Tip</th> <th data-bbox="781 1465 1419 1539">Example</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="440 1539 781 1703">Use verbs</td> <td data-bbox="781 1539 1419 1703"> <p>✓ “educate”</p> <p>✗ “education of”</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="440 1703 781 1948">Prefer the active voice</td> <td data-bbox="781 1703 1419 1948"> <p>✓ “You can cancel a door-to-door contract within 10 days.”</p> <p>✗ “A door-to-door contract can be cancelled by the consumer within 10 days.”</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Tip	Example	Use verbs	<p>✓ “educate”</p> <p>✗ “education of”</p>	Prefer the active voice	<p>✓ “You can cancel a door-to-door contract within 10 days.”</p> <p>✗ “A door-to-door contract can be cancelled by the consumer within 10 days.”</p>
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Use verbs	<p>✓ “educate”</p> <p>✗ “education of”</p>							
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	<p>Pick words the audience knows</p> <p>Define difficult but necessary words</p> <p>✓ “after this”</p> <p>✗ “hereinafter”</p> <p>The term tenancy means your legal right to live in your place.</p>
<p>Dig deeper</p>	<p>Community Legal Education Ontario, Better Legal Information Handbook: Practical Tips for Community Workers (2013): The section on “Choosing the right language” offers tips for communicating in plain language.</p> <p>Writing for the Web Guides: British Columbia government guidelines and resources for plain language writing and developing audience-focused content.</p> <p>Canada.ca Content Style Guide: From the government of Canada, includes tips on using plain language.</p> <p>PLAIN, Plain Language Association International: Resources and education on communicating in plain language.</p> <p>Center for Plain Language: Tools include a plain language checklist and before-and-after examples of plain language writing.</p>

Best practice	13. Review the information periodically
Why this is important	Out-of-date legal information can steer people wrong and actually make their problems worse. It also reflects poorly on your organization.
Tips	<p>→ Establish a review process</p> <p>Develop a process to keep your information updated. This could mean reviewing the information regularly — for example, once every two or four years. How often you want to revisit your information will depend on how quickly you expect the information to change and the resources available to you. Another approach involves putting someone in charge of monitoring developments in that area of law and updating the information as needed.</p> <p>→ Discard out-of-date information</p> <p>Create a regular “weeding” routine. Review a percentage of your resources every year for currency. Discard resources that are significantly out of date.</p> <p>→ Redirect online users to updated information</p> <p>If your information is online in PDF format, whenever you upload a new PDF be sure to take down the old one. If you don’t, search engines such as Google will continue to index the old PDF and link users to that. Ideally, add a “redirect” so that users who click on a link to the old PDF are automatically bumped to the new PDF.</p>

Make your information more inclusive and easier to find

<p>Best practice</p>	<p>14. Consider how the information makes your audience feel</p>
<p>Why this is important</p>	<p>If your information turns people off, it won't be used or have the desired impact.</p>
<p>Tips</p>	<p>→ Be empathetic</p> <p>Think about how the information makes a person feel. Consider the emotional state of your audience — they may be stressed, scared or feeling powerless. You can adapt the tone, words or images to help make people feel more comfortable.</p> <p>→ Consider the diversity of your audience</p> <p>Your information could be clear and accurate, but if the words or pictures inadvertently exclude people, the information will not be as widely used.</p> <p>→ Use techniques that support empathy</p> <p>You might use case studies or storytelling. When people see familiar situations or imagery, they are drawn to engage with information. Sharing lived experience creates a connection and helps people learn.</p>
<p>Example</p>	<div data-bbox="448 1304 1417 1766" style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px;">  <p><i>"This past Thanksgiving, my employer gave me the day off but didn't pay me for it. I was told only full-time workers get paid for stat holidays — I was working part-time. Then I found out part-timers who work at least 15 days in the month before the holiday are entitled to stat holiday pay. I told my employer. They agreed to pay me for Thanksgiving."</i></p> <p>– Omar, Vancouver</p> </div>

Best practice	15. Make the information accessible to people of varying abilities
Why this is important	All people deserve equal access to legal information. Adding accessibility features can improve usability for everyone, including people with disabilities, older people, and people who don't speak English as a first language.
Tips	<p>→ To get started with accessibility, take small steps</p> <p>Making information more accessible can feel intimidating. There are dozens of accessibility guidelines. Many of them sound highly technical. But even applying <i>some</i> of the guidelines makes your information more accessible. See below for some examples that are easy to do for online information.</p> <p>→ Then take a few more small steps</p> <p>If your information is online, apply the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). These guidelines make online information more accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, and learning disabilities. Applying even some of these guidelines helps realize the potential of the internet to remove barriers to communication many people face in the physical world.</p>
Examples	<p>Here are examples of how applying the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines makes your web content more accessible.</p> <p>Guideline 1.1: Provide text alternatives for any non-text content</p> <p>✓ <code></code></p> <p>Including text alternatives for images and other non-text content allows assistive technology such as screen readers for the visually impaired to read out the explanatory text. This enables all users to understand the images. (Providing text alternatives is important for substantive images, but not needed for images that are merely decorative.)</p> <p>Guideline 1.2.2: For video or audio clips, provide captions</p> <p>✓ On a video clip, the speaker's words appear as captions as</p>

	<p>they're spoken.</p> <p>Providing captions enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing to watch synchronized media presentations.</p> <p>Guideline 2.4.4: Use link text that identifies the purpose of the link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ See examples of the link purpose guideline. ✗ Click here to see examples of the link purpose guideline. <p>Descriptive link text helps all users, including those using assistive technology, to understand the purpose of a link so they can decide whether to click on it.</p>
Dig deeper	<p>Usability.gov: Their "Accessibility Basics" highlights key best practices for accessible content.</p> <p>WC3 Web Accessibility Initiative, Understanding WCAG 2.1: A guide to understanding and implementing the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (2019).</p>

Best practice	16. Make the information easy to find
Why this is important	Your information needs to be promoted and distributed if it's to reliably reach your audience.
Tips	<p>→ Get the word out through your staff Make sure everyone in your organization knows what you're producing, and where they can send people who ask about it.</p> <p>→ Put information in the path of users Research shows people are more likely to act on information if it's put in their path (that is, when they don't have to hunt for it). Doctor's offices, hospitals, health care providers, settlement agencies, libraries, police services, schools, shelters, and government offices are great contact points for new users.</p> <p>→ Add resources to Clicklaw Add new resources to Clicklaw. This step will help British Columbians find your new resources. It also increases how well your information performs in search engines. (Search engines promote sites partly based on the number of external links to a resource).</p> <p>→ For online information, spend time on search engine optimization The internet is now a go-to tool for all kinds of information, including legal information. There are steps you can take to help people find the material you've put online. Roughly two-thirds of internet traffic flows through searches on search engines like Google and Bing. Boosting your site's standings in these searches is called search engine optimization (SEO).</p> <p>→ To get started with SEO, take small steps Here are five key ways to improve your site's SEO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make your site easy to navigate. This will help people quickly find the information they want. And it will help search engines understand what content you think is important. ✓ Create unique, accurate page titles. Search engines display the first 65-75 characters of a page's title tag in the search results. The title tag should be an accurate, concise description of a page's content.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use heading tags appropriately. Use heading tags to emphasize important text and to convey hierarchy on a page, from H1, the most important, to H6, the least important. ✓ Have other sites link to your content. Links to your content from other websites are seen by search engines as a vote of confidence. ✓ Optimize your site for mobile use. Search engines emphasize mobile optimization. Google, for example, prefers “responsive” design. This means you need to create your site so that it adapts or “responds” to the user’s device.
Dig deeper	<p>Search Engine Land: This digital marketing site provides a helpful guide, What is SEO?, that explains search engine optimization and how to improve the SEO of your information.</p> <p>Google: Its Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Starter Guide highlights practices to help your information perform better in Google search results.</p> <p>Moz: This marketing software company's Beginner's Guide to SEO covers the steps to make your website search-engine friendly.</p>