Basic Section 508 Checklist
for Public Health Assessments, Health Consultations, and Letter Health Consultations Prepared in Microsoft Word

General Formatting

☐ Use the ATSDR document outline on the PHAGM resource page (under "Putting It All Together") as the initial formatting guide for your document.
☐ Use Microsoft Word's built-in styles and formatting for titles, headings, and body text.
☐ Designate only one H1 header per document.
☐ Ensure headers follow a logical order and do not skip multiple headers (e.g., from H2 to H4).
☐ Use standard Sans Serif fonts (Calibri 12 pt recommended).
☐ Ensure sufficient color contrast between text and background (minimum color contrast ratio of 4.5:1).
☐ Do not use color alone to emphasize text. Use additional elements such as size, shape, and location.
☐ Avoid the use of unnecessary symbols in the document.

Figures

☐ Number all figures.
☐ Avoid using color alone to convey meaning in figures.
☐ Ensure adequate color contrast between text and background colors in figures.
☐ Provide meaningful descriptive alternative text (alt text) for figures in a separate document*.

Tables

☐ Use Microsoft Word's built-in table feature; do not paste images of tables or create tables using spaces.
☐ Number all tables.
☐ Identify the header rows within each table.
   To identify the header row, highlight the first row of cells, go to the "Layout" tab in the navigation window, and click "Repeat Header Rows." You can also identify headers by highlighting the first row of cells, right clicking, and selecting "Table Properties." A pop-up window will appear. Navigate to the "Row" tab and check the box that says, "Repeat as header row at the top of each page."
☐ Avoid table headers with multiple rows.
☐ Use simple tables without merged or split cells, rows, and columns.
☐ Ensure every cell in the table contains text (use "NA" or "-" for blank cells).
☐ Provide alt text for all tables in a separate document that describe the table's content*.
☐ Do not insert tables as an image or screenshot.

Equations

☐ Use Microsoft Word's built-in equation feature to create equations.
☐ Number all equations.
☐ Provide alt text for equations in a separate document*.
☐ When possible, use the equations and alt text provided in the PHAST report.

Hyperlinks

☐ Format URLs with a color, typically blue, that contrasts with the background. Only hyperlinks should be underlined. You can do this easily in Word by using the hyperlink feature to add links to specific text.
☐ Use descriptive text for URLs that clearly indicates their destination, function, and purpose. For example, instead of saying "Click here", say "Download the list of resources."

Lists

☐ Use Microsoft Word's built-in list feature; avoid manually formatting lists with tabs and dashes.
☐ Avoid lists that contain more than three levels.

Filenames

☐ File names should be simple, short, and not contain numbers.

Document Properties

☐ The author field in the document properties should list the name of the agency, not an individual.

Run Microsoft Word's Accessibility Checker to identify and address accessibility errors

* Create a separate document listing all figures, tables, and equations in the public health document that require alt text. For objects with alt text of 120 characters or less, type the alt text directly into the original document and into the separate document listing the figures, tables, and equations.

For objects with alt text exceeding 120 characters, type "see addendum" in the separate document and provide the full alt text in an addendum to the original public health document. Where possible, limit alt text to 120 characters or less.