# Finding Help - WCAG 2.2 Success criterion

## Full Title:

Findable help

## Priority Level (A/AA/AAA)

A

Rationale: without this type of help, some users are unable to use the site.

## Draft SC Text

For single page apps or any set of web pages with blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages, if one of the following is available, then at least one of the following is included or linked in a consistent location:

- Human contact details
- Human contact mechanism
- Self-help option
- A fully automated mechanism.

### Definitions

**Single page apps**:  After the first page load, all subsequent page and content changes are handled internally by the application.

### Intent

The intent of this proposed Success Criteria is to ensure users can find help for completing tasks on a website. This is distinct from interface-level help such as contextual help, features like spell checkers, and instructional text in a form.

Locating the help mechanism in a consistent location across pages makes it easier for users to find it.  For example, when a mechanism or link is located in the header of a web page, it will be presented in the header of all pages within the set of webpages.

The location in a smaller viewport may be different than in a larger viewport but the mechanism or link will remain in the same location throughout the size.  The location should remain consistent both visually and programmatically.

While it would be best for all sites to offer this type of help, the requirement is for single page apps, or any set of web pages with blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages, and is actively supported.

When having problems completing a task on a website, people with some types of disabilities may not be able to work through the issue without further help.  Issues could include difficulty:
- completing a form, or
- finding a document or page which provides information required to complete a task.

Without help, some users may abandon the task. They may also fail to correctly complete a task, or they may require getting help from people who do not necessarily keep private information secure.

Self help methods beyond the site, such as using internet search to find the contact information for an organization, can be too difficult. Further, the user's disability may make it more difficult to find the help available (such as a "contact us" link, phone number, or support page) if the information is not present within a few interactions (e.g. displayed in the header, or via a menu). In addition, for some users with disabilities, struggling to complete a task on a site may cause additional cognitive challenges when searching for help within the site.

When a user is quickly able to find help, they are able to complete the task even if they encounter challenges.

At least one of the following mechanisms to get help should be included:
- **Human contact details** such as a phone number, email address, hours of operation;
- **Human contact mechanism** such as a messaging system, chat client, contact form, social media channel;
- **Self-help option** such as an up-to-date Frequently Asked Questions, How Do I page, Support page;  or
- **A fully automated chatbot**.

The human contact details should enable the user to connect with the  organization or the part of the organization responsible for the content. For example, an online jobs / recruitment portal should provide a contact method for the team that supports the recruitment portal and not a catch-all for the entire company. Each layer of contact added prolongs the time before the user will receive help.

The human contact mechanism enables a person to express what they are looking for using their own words. For some with cognitive disabilities, this may be the best way for them to find an answer to their problem.

For pages for which no human support is available, a self-help option should say that no human support is available.  Self-help options should go beyond allowing the user to search within the site. Contextual help is still recommended (See SC 3.3.5 for more information) but a self-help option should provide a single location that makes it easier for people with cognitive disabilities to understand what help is available without having to hunt for it. While some people may easily be able to identify that no support would be available for a particular type of website, this may not be apparent to some users with disabilities.

If a chatbot is provided, it should meet other WCAG success criteria for your conformance level. Chatbots which work more effectively for everyone, and particularly for people with cognitive disabilities should:
- recognize misspelled words,
- provide human contact details if the chatbot is unable to provide a satisfactory response after 3 attempts, and
- be dismissed with a single interaction, and recalled using a link or button.

It is not the intent of this Success Criteria to require authors to provide help information on PDFs or other static documents that may be available for viewing/download from the web pages. It is also not the intent to require contact information if:
- A website is not supported,
- Content is archived, or
- When finding help would invalidate the activity such as in a testing situation.

It is also not the intent of this Success Criteria to require a human be available at all times. If the human contact is not available during certain hours or certain days, information should be provided so the user can tell when it will be available.

## Benefits

- This Success Criterion helps people who may have difficulty locating help that is not part of the page they are using. Ensuring they can connect with help allows them to complete the task.
- When a user can easily find help for their specific questions, they are more successful completing tasks.
- Users that experience cognitive fatigue or cognitive shut down will be able to reserve their energy for the task, instead of using it to find support.
- Enabling users (especially those with cognitive disabilities) to find solutions while expressing their question using their own words increases their chances of success for completing a task.

## Examples

- **On-line job application -** Some of the application questions may be hard for new job seekers to understand even after reading the contextual help. For example, the form may request their identification number, but they may have several and not know which one to enter. Easily findable contact information will enable them to use phone or email so they can get an answer to their question.
- **Medical appointment scheduling form -** When the service a patient is trying to book is not easily findable within the interface, they may need human help. A built-in messaging option (chat client) enables them to quickly interact with a staff person that can help, without requiring them to manage a second interface.
- **Finding a specific policy or procedure -** An employee who needs to complete a work task may have difficulty locating the specific policy or procedure document on their employer's website. A How Do I page may include the information that enables them to independently complete this task.

## Techniques

### Sufficient Techniques

Situation A: If a web page has a navigation area following the banner region

- Providing a link within the navigation area that indicates it goes to help or contact information, and directs user to a page with human contact details.
- Providing a link within the navigation area that indicates it goes to help and directs user to a Frequently Asked Questions or How Do I page.

- A heading with text indicating help, support or contact before information that includes the contact information or links to pages with help, support, or contact information.

## Technique 1

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page goes to contact details for the organization. The contact details provide an email address and/or telephone number that connects the user with someone that can answer questions.

**Adding a link to each page that goes directly to the contact details page**

Applicability:

All technologies that contain links

This technique relates to Proposed Success Criterion Findable Help.

Description:

The objective of this technique is to provide a mechanism for finding contact details in a consistent location across pages to make it easier for users to find it. The interactive item in the Web page is a link to the contact details page. The programmatic and visual location is consistent on each page in the set of web pages, when viewed within the same size viewport. Activating the link brings users to a Web page with contact details such as a phone number and/or email address.

Examples

Example 1: A link at the top of the page

An on-line job application asks for many types of information from the user, such as their identification number, but they may have several and not know which one to enter. They may need more information from someone that can answer their question when the contextual help provided does not meet their needs. The (for example) sixth link that the user reaches when tabbing through the page is titled "Contact Us". This link is also visually in the same location on each page. Activating the link brings the user to the contact details page. The contact details page has an email address for a company representative or general information inbox which is then shared with appropriate personnel.

Example 2: A link in the footer region

A Web page's footer region contains links repeated on every page in a set of web pages. The visual and programmatic order are consistent when viewed in the same size display. The (example) third link in the footer region is labeled visually and programmatically "Contact Us." A user activates the link and is brought to the contact details page. The contact details page has an email address for a company representative or general information inbox which is then shared with appropriate personnel.

Resources

Resources are for information purposes only, no endorsement implied.

[Making Content Usable for People with Cognitive and Learning Disabilities](#)

Tests

Procedure

1. Determine if this is a single page app or a set of web pages, with blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages.
2. Determine if at least one of the following is included or linked in a consistent location:
   ○ human contact details
   ○ human contact mechanism
   ○ Self-help option
   ○ A fully automated chatbot
3. Without changing the viewport size, check that the identified help is present on all other web pages within that set of web pages.

The SC passes if 1, 2, and 3 are true.

Exception: archival unsupported content which is clearly labeled as such, or where finding help would invalidate the activity.

## Technique 2

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page goes to an email form. The form is:
- Simple form requiring minimal information.
- Instructions include: required fields, when to expect a response.
- If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person instead of completing the form, this is listed at the top of the form.

Technique 3

A "Frequently Asked Questions" or similarly named link on every page, which goes to more information. If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person, this is listed at the top of the Frequently Asked Questions page.

## Failures

On a web form that has content repeated on multiple pages, the user does not have access to contact information, and none is provided in the footer. They need to search to find a contact to answer their question, and this pulls attention from the task they were trying to complete.

Note: the following can be present but do not satisfy the success criteria:
- Tool-tips
- Contextual help such as an "i" that on hover or click reveals more information
- Instructions text included within a form page.

The above neglect to satisfy one of the key issues for some individuals with disabilities: the consistent location of help information. Even if this information is duplicated by the methods that satisfy this success criteria, their consistent location is key to successful use of the information by some users with disabilities.

## Advisory Techniques

While it is assumed that the WCAG success criteria will be followed for the pages, forms, messaging systems, or chat clients that may be used to satisfy this criteria, it is advisable to consider the complexity of the contact system used. For example, if many questions need to be answered as part of a messaging system or phone system prior to getting access to a human, this may cause further challenges.

Location of the help will best meet the needs of users when they are in an expected location. While some locations can be consistent on every page in a set of web pages, they still can be difficult to find.

## WCAG2ICT

Does not apply.

## Key Terms

## set of web pages

collection of web pages that share a common purpose and that are created by the same author, group or organization

Examples include a publication which is split across multiple Web pages, where each page contains one chapter or other significant section of the work. The publication is logically a single contiguous unit, and contains navigation features that enable access to the full set of pages.

NOTE

Different language versions would be considered different sets of Web pages.

*note: definition, examples and note for set of web pages from "Understanding Success Criterion 3.2.3: Consistent Navigation."

○ Actively supported

Supported, maintained, and/or updated.

## Single Page Apps

After the first page load, all subsequent page and content changes are handled internally by the application.

***HISTORY***

## Plain English Summary

The intent of this success criteria is to ensure the user can find help beyond the support provided by the user interface alone.

When having problems completing a task on a website, people with some types of disabilities may not be able to work through the issue without help. Task abandonment, failure to correctly complete a task, or the requirement to get help from people who do not necessarily keep private information secure may be required when help is not available from the site or site support staff.   Self help methods beyond the site, such as using internet search to find contact information for an organization, can be too difficult to locate.

Further, their disability may make it more difficult to find the help available (such as a "contact us" link, phone number, or support page) if the information is not present within a few interactions (e.g., scrolling, complex navigation menu).

When a user is quickly able to find help, they are able to complete the task even if they encounter challenges.

When human help is available, the contact information or mechanism must be easy to find. This cannot require working through another multi-step format, or a complicated chat interface. This ease of use can be provided through methods such as providing:

- a telephone number,
- a built-in messaging option (i.e., chat client),
- an email form or address.

Help features, such as spell checkers and instructional text at the beginning of a form will not satisfy this requirement.

Human help is the recommended option but if a human is not available to help, other methods such as a Frequently Asked Questions page must be provided.  If the site is no longer supported, this information must be present.

The preference is for the help to be visually present and available to assistive technologies in the top third of the website or app, preferably easy to visually identify without going into another mechanism (e.g. submenu).

## Priority Level (A/AA/AAA)

A
Rationale: without this type of help, some users are unable to use the site.

[Understanding document](.).

# Principle / Guideline

Understandable (since other help SCs are here) - 3.2 Predictable
Second choice: Operable (from a cognitive standpoint, this can cause a barrier operating the site).

# Benefits

Users that experience cognitive fatigue or cognitive shut down will be able to reserve their energy for the task, instead of using it to find support.

Users who have difficulty tracking two processes simultaneously (i.e. a multi-step help format and a multi-step task) will better be able to complete the task.

# Test procedure

1. Determine if any of the following forms of help is present:
   - human contact details - e.g., phone number, email address
   - human contact mechanism - e.g., messaging system, chat client, contact form, social media channel
   - Self-help option
   - A fully automated chatbot
2. If the help is a fully automated chatbot, check that the chatbot can:
   - recognize misspelled words,
   - provide human contact details if the chatbot is unable to provide a satisfactory response after 3 attempts,
   - be dismissed with a single interaction, and recalled using a link or button.
3. Without changing the viewport size, check that the identified help is present on all other web pages within that set of web pages.

The SC passes if 1, 2, and 3 are true.

# Technique 1

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page goes to contact details for the organization. The contact details provide an email address and/or telephone number that connects the user

with someone that can answer questions. The contact us link is in the same visible location on every page.

## Technique 2

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page in a consistent location goes to an email form. The form is:
- A simple form requiring minimal information.
- Instructions include: required fields, when to expect a response.
- If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person instead of completing the form, this is listed at the top of the form.

## Technique 3

A "Frequently Asked Questions" or similarly named link is on every page in a consistent location, which goes to more information. If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person, this is listed at the top of the Frequently Asked Questions page.
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Version created 3/1/2020

## Full Title:

Findable help

## Draft SC Text

For single page apps or any set of web pages with blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages, at least one of the following is included or linked in a consistent location:
- human contact details - e.g., phone number, email address
- human contact mechanism - e.g., messaging system, chat client, contact form, social media channel
- Self-help option - e.g., Frequently Asked Questions, How Do I page, support page
- A fully automated chatbot that can:
  - recognize misspelled words,
  - provide human contact details if the chatbot is unable to provide a satisfactory response after 3 attempts,
  - be dismissed with a single interaction, and recalled using a link or button.

Except for archival unsupported content which is clearly labeled as such, or where finding help would invalidate the activity.

Note: There is no requirement for a human to be available at all times, it is a requirement for the contact mechanism to be available.

## Definitions

Note: Actively supported definition: supported, maintained, and/or updated (suggestion: remove: by owner of the site).
Single page apps:  After the first page load, all subsequent page and content changes are handled internally by the application

# Plain English Summary

The intent of this success criteria is to ensure the user can find help beyond the support provided by the user interface alone.
When having problems completing a task on a website, people with some types of disabilities may not be able to work through the issue without help. Task abandonment, failure to correctly complete a task, or the requirement to get help from people who do not necessarily keep private information secure may be required when help is not available from the site or site support staff. Self help methods beyond the site, such as using internet search to find contact information for an organization, can be too difficult.
Further, their disability may make it more difficult to find the help available (such as a "contact us" link, phone number, or support page) if the information is not present within a few interactions (e.g., scrolling, complex navigation menu).
When a user is quickly able to find help, they are able to complete the task even if they encounter challenges.
When human help is available, the contact information or mechanism must be easy to find. This cannot require working through another multi-step format, or a complicated chat interface. This ease of use can be provided through methods such as providing:
- a telephone number,
- a built-in messaging option (i.e., chat client),
- an email form or address.

Help features, such as spell checkers and instructional text at the beginning of a form will not satisfy this requirement.
If a human is not available to help, other methods such as a Frequently Asked Questions page must be provided. If the site is no longer supported, this information must be present.

The preference is for the help to be visually present and available to assistive technologies in the top third of the website or app, preferably easy to visually identify without going into another mechanism (e.g. submenu).

## Priority Level (A/AA/AAA)

A
Rationale: without this type of help, some users are unable to use the site.

[Understanding document](#).

## Principle / Guideline

Understandable (since other help SCs are here) - 3.2 Predictable
Second choice: Operable (from a cognitive standpoint, this can cause a barrier operating the site).

## Benefits

Users that experience cognitive fatigue or cognitive shut down will be able to reserve their energy for the task, instead of using it to find support.
Users who have difficulty tracking two processes simultaneously (i.e. a multi-step help format and a multi-step task) will better be able to complete the task.

## Test procedure

For single page apps, or any set of web pages with blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages, and is actively supported, verify that at least one of the following is embedded or linked in a consistent location:
- human contact details - e.g., phone number, email address
- human contact mechanism - e.g., messaging system, chat client, contact form, social media channel
- Self-help option - e.g., Frequently Asked Questions, How Do I page, support page
- A fully automated chatbot that can:
  - recognize misspelled words,
  - provide human contact information if the chatbot is unable to provide a satisfactory response after 3 attempts,
  - be dismissed with a single interaction, and recalled using a link or button.
Note: the self-help option can be:

- A frequently asked questions page
- A community support forum
- A user guide or other support documentation

Note: the following may be present but do not satisfy the success criteria:

- Tool-tips
- Contextual help such as an "i" that on hover or click reveals more information
- Instruction text included within a form page.

## Technique 1

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page goes to contact details for the organization. The contact details provide an email address and/or telephone number that connects the user with someone that can answer questions. The contact us link is in the same visible location on every page.

## Technique 2

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page in a consistent location goes to an email form. The form is:

- Simple form requiring minimal information.
- Instructions include: required fields, when to expect a response.
- If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person instead of completing the form, this is listed at the top of the form.

## Technique 3

A "Frequently Asked Questions" or similarly named link on every page in a consistent location, which goes to more information. If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person, this is listed at the top of the Frequently Asked Questions page
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Version created 1/1/20

## Full Title:

Make it easy for the user to find help.

# Draft SC Text

On every page that has blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages, and is actively supported, at least one of the following is provided in a consistent location:
- Human contact details or a link to get human contact details
- Human contact mechanism - e.g., messaging system/chat client, contact form
- Self-help option - link to Frequently Asked Questions/How Do I page, link to support page or help content
- A fully automated chatbot that can both:
    - recognize misspelled words,
    - provide human contact information if the chatbot is unable to provide a satisfactory response after 3 attempts.

Alternate version:
On every page that has blocks of content that are repeated on multiple web pages, and is actively supported, a mechanism is available that provides help in a different format than is already on the page.
(Options for help - defining the mechanisms, could then go into techniques.)

# Plain English Summary

The intent of this success criteria is to provide help beyond the support provided by the user interface alone.
When having problems completing a task on a website, people with some types of disabilities may not be able to work through the issue without help. Task abandonment, failure to correctly complete a task, or the requirement to get help from people who do not necessarily keep private information secure may be required when help is not available from the site or site support staff. Self help methods beyond the site, such as using internet search to find contact information for an organization, can be too difficult.
Further, their disability may make it more difficult to find the help available (such as a "contact us" link, phone number, or support page) if the information is not present within a few interactions (e.g., scrolling, complex navigation menu).
When a user is quickly able to find help, they are able to complete the task even if they encounter challenges.
When human help is available, the contact information or mechanism must be easy to find. This cannot require working through another multi-step format, or a complicated chat interface. This ease of use can be provided through methods such as providing:
- a telephone number,
- a built-in messaging option (i.e., chat client),

- an email form or address.

Help features, such as spell checkers and instructional text at the beginning of a form will not satisfy this requirement.

If a human is not available to help, other methods such as a Frequently Asked Questions page must be provided. If the site is no longer supported, this information must be present.

The preference is for the help to be visually present and available to assistive technologies in the top third of the website or app, preferably easy to visually identify without going into another mechanism (e.g. submenu).

## Priority Level (A/AA/AAA)

A

Rationale: without this type of help, some users are unable to use the site.

[Understanding document](#).

## Principle / Guideline

Understandable (since other help SCs are here) - 3.2 Predictable
Second choice: Operable (from a cognitive standpoint, this can cause a barrier operating the site).

## Benefits

By providing easy access to a human assistant, users unable to understand an interaction can independently complete the task. Users who have difficulty tracking two processes simultaneously (i.e. a multi-step help format and a multi-step task) will better be able to complete the task. Users that experience cognitive fatigue or cognitive shut down will be able to reserve their energy for the task, instead of using it to find support.

## Test procedure

On every page verify that there is at least one of the following:
- Human contact details or a link to human contact details
- Human contact mechanism - e.g., messaging system/chat client, contact form
- Self-help option - Frequently Asked Questions/How Do I page, support page or help content
- A fully automated chatbot that can both:
  - recognize misspelled words,

- ○ provide human contact information if the chatbot is unable to provide a satisfactory response after 3 attempts.

Note: the self-help option can be:
- A frequently asked questions page
- A community support forum
- A user guide or other support documentation

Note: the following may be present but do not satisfy the success criteria:
- Tool-tips
- Contextual help such as an "i" that on hover or click reveals more information
- Instruction text included within a form page.

# Technique 1

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page goes to contact details for the organization. The contact details provide an email address and/or telephone number that connects the user with someone that can answer questions.

# Technique 2

A "contact us" or similarly named link on every page goes to an email form. The form is:
- Simple form requiring minimal information.
- Instructions include: required fields, when to expect a response.
- If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person instead of completing the form, this is listed at the top of the form.

# Technique 3

A "Frequently Asked Questions" or similarly named link on every page, which goes to more information. If other options for getting help are available, for example to contact a person, this is listed at the top of the Frequently Asked Questions page.

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Note: text below this is versions previous to January 1, 2020.

# Full Title:

Make it easy for the user to find and get help.

## Draft SC text

On every page in a [set of web pages](#) at least one of the following is provided in a consistent location:

- human contact details - e.g., telephone number, email address
- human contact mechanism - e.g., messaging system/chat client, email form
- self-help option - Frequently Asked Questions/How Do I page, support page or help content.
- A fully automated chatbot does not meet the above requirements.
- New comment for this area: propose to address Andrew's comment re #4, propose changing bullet 1 to: "human contact details or link to human contact details…"

## Plain English Summary

The intent of this success criteria is to provide help beyond the support provided by the user interface alone.

When having problems completing a task on a website, people with some types of disabilities may not be able to work through the issue without help. Task abandonment, failure to correctly complete a task, or the requirement to get help from people who do not necessarily keep private information secure may be required when help is not available from the site or site support staff. Self help methods beyond the site, such as using internet search to find contact information for an organization, can be too difficult. Further, their disability may make it more difficult to find the help available (such as a "contact us" link, phone number, or support page) if the information is not present within a few interactions (e.g., scrolling, complex navigation menu).

When a user is quickly able to find help, they are able to complete the task even if they encounter challenges.

When human help is available, the contact information or mechanism must be easy to find. This cannot require working through another multi-step format, or a complicated chat interface. This ease of use can be provided through methods such as providing:

- a telephone number,
- a built-in messaging option (i.e., chat client),
- an email form or address.

Help features, such as spell checkers and instructional text at the beginning of a form will not satisfy this requirement.

If a human is not available to help, other methods such as a Frequently Asked Questions page must be provided. If the site is no longer supported, this information must be present.

The preference is for the help to be visually present and available to assistive technologies in the top third of the website or app, preferably easy to visually identify without going into another mechanism (e.g. submenu).

## Priority Level (A/AA/AAA)

A
Rationale: without this type of help, some users are unable to use the site. Very easy to implement.

[Understanding document](#).

## Principle / Guideline

Understandable (since other help SCs are here) - 3.2 Predictable
Second choice: Operable (from a cognitive standpoint, this can cause a barrier operating the site).

## Benefits

By providing easy access to a human assistant, users unable to understand an interaction can complete the task. Users who have difficulty tracking two processes simultaneously (i.e. a multi-step help format and a multi-step task) will better be able to complete the task. Users that experience cognitive fatigue or cognitive shut down will be able to reserve their energy for the task, instead of using it to find support.

## Test procedure

On every page verify that there is at least one of the following:
1. human contact details - e.g. telephone number, email address
2. human contact mechanism - e.g. messaging system/chat client, email form,
3. self-help option - Frequently Asked Questions/How Do I page, support page or help content.

The above does not include options like chat bots.
Note: the link to self-help content or support can be:

- A frequently asked questions page
- A support forum
- A manual or other support documentation
- A form to submit questions, or to have an issue addressed.

Note: the following do not satisfy the success criteria:

- Tool-tips
- Contextual help such as an "i" that on hover or click reveals more information
- Instructions that would already be included for completing form controls.

## Technique 1

Link on every page goes to feedback form. Form is:

- Simple - no more than x number of fields
- Instructions include: required fields, where goes form, when to expect a response.
- If other options are available, for example to contact a person instead of completing the form, this is listed at the top of the form.

## Example(s)

## Glossary definitions

## Discussion

AC: Almost a counter example, but what should an anonymous blogger do on a site like this?
https://thesecretbarrister.com/about/
JD: There is a frequently asked questions page, which technically could satisfy the SC. As suggested, it would be best if this could include information stating that this site is unsupported.