TPC Chart styleguide:

Use this datavisualization styleguide to create a uniform look and feel to all of Tax Policy Center’s charts and graphs. This site contains guidelines that are in line with datavisualization best practices and proven design principals. It also eliminates the burden of design and color decisions when creating charts.

These guidelines are focused primarily for publishing charts to the web site. Minor sizing and typographic adjustments need to be made to insert charts into documents.

Chart typography

Taxpolicycenter.org is built using the fonts *Avenir* and *Calvert*. When possible, those fonts should also be used to create charts. If Avenir is not installed on your computer, a suitable replacement is Tahoma. If Calvert is not installed, Rockwell is a good replacement (Calvert is used very sparingly on the site and in charts). Good chart typography creates a hierarchy among elements and guides the reader through the visual.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Typeface | Size (web) | Size (print) | Case | Color | Notes |
| Figure number | Calvert (Rockwell) | 11 | 8 | ALL CAPS | #DD0806 or rgb(221, 8, 6) |  |
| Title | Avenir Medium (Tahoma) | 18 | 12 | Title Case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | The main point of the chart. Try to keep shorter than two lines and avoid qualifiers. |
| Subtitle | Avenir Medium (Tahoma) | 14 | 9.5 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Use this to add qualifiers or further clarification on the title. |
| X and Y axis titles | Avenir Medium Oblique (Tahoma Italic) | 12 | 8.5 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Always horizontal, above the top axis label Include units or multipliers in parenthesis (millions), ($2014) |
| X and Y axis labels | Avenir Medium (Tahoma) | 12 | 8.5 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Always horizontal, avoid units or multipliers. Those should be added to the axis title in parenthesis |
| Key labels | Avenir Medium (Tahoma) | 12 | 9.5 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Always horizontal. Avoid redundant key labels if possible. |
| Direct labels | Avenir Black (Tahoma Bold) | 12 | 9.5 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Use for line or column charts with three or fewer series. |
| Data point label | Avenir Medium (Tahoma) | 11 | 8.5 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Always horizontal. No units or multipliers. Only directly label columns if there are fewer than 10 total columns in the chart. |
| Source and Notes | Avenir Medium (Tahoma) | 11 | 8 | Sentence case | #000000 or rgb(0,0,0) | Bold the words “Source” and “Notes” as well as any statistical significance indicators. |

Chart Parts

The main content well on the TPC web site is 700px wide. That translates to approximately 9.75” wide in excel. Because Excel’s chart title and subtitle fields are limiting in terms of formatting, we’ll use a regular text box for all the text at the top of the graphic, as well as the source and notes text at the bottom. We’ll also include a TPC logo in the bottom corner of the figure so that when media members copy/paste our charts into their stories, TPCs brand is on them.

Steps to creating a chart that have the TPC logo on them:

1. Make video

Chart Colors

Difference between sequential, categorical, and diverging palettes

http://blog.visual.ly/subtleties-of-color-the-perfect-palette/

<http://blog.visual.ly/subtleties-of-color-different-types-of-data-require-different-color-schemes/>

Qualitative (or categorical) palettes are best when you want to distinguish discrete chunks of data that do not have an inherent ordering.

Sequential color mapping is appropriate when data range from relatively low or unintersting values to relatively high or interesting values. For sequential data, it’s better to use a palette that has a relatively subtle shift in hue accompanied by a large shift in brightness and saturation. This approach naturally draws the eye to the relatively important parts of the data.

Diverging palettes are used for data where both large low and high values are interesting. There is also usually a well-defined midpoint in the data. For instance, if you are plotting changes in temperature from some baseline timepoint, it is best to use a diverging colormap to show areas with relative decreases and areas with relative increases.

Chart examples

Distribution/column chart

Line chart

Area chart

Pie chart

Bar chart