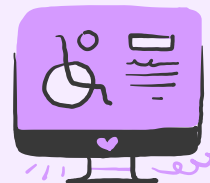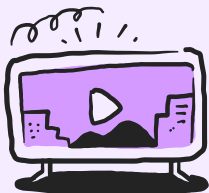# Web Accessibility
Checklist

For Local Government Websites

Introduction

Today, many local government leaders are grappling with how to boost inclusivity in the services provided to their communities. Accessible facilities and services are often top of mind, but it's easy to overlook another barrier that many people with disabilities face: the lack of digital accessibility.

Per the latest Department of Justice mandate, websites should follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which state that content should be perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust (POUR).

Use this checklist to complete an initial assessment of your agency's current digital accessibility posture.

Text Elements

There are many text elements to consider beyond font size and style. Digital accessibility includes other factors such as text placement on the page and table design.

Here are some text elements to review for digital accessibility:

☐ **Titles**

Each page should include a title that accurately describes its content.

☐ **Headings**

Relevant headings should be used on all content so the user can find specific information, such as hours, location, and phone number. Headings should also be placed in logical, descending order.

☐ **Font Color**

The contrast ratio must be 4.5:1 against the background.

☐ **Formatting**

Text formatting such as bold and/or italics should be used to differentiate information. For example, use italics instead of colored text only to identify selected dates on a list.

☐ **Table Design**

Tables should only be used to display data and not as a page layout. Tables must be populated with appropriate columns, headers, and cell information.

☐ **Digital Forms**

Applications, permits, and reservation forms in digital formats should meet web accessibility standards to ensure compatibility with assistive technology such as screen readers and keyboard navigation. Digital forms should be designed with inclusive features such as proper tagging, optimized text, and navigable structure. Avoid using lengthy paragraphs, vague labels, and CAPTCHA systems, if possible.

☐ **PDFs**

Metadata, color contrast, list formatting, and tag tables within your PDFs should be reviewed for compliance with web accessibility standards.
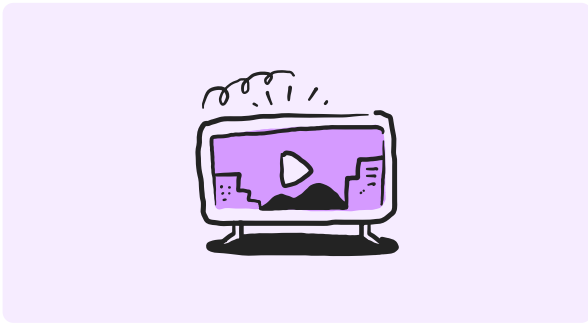
Multimedia Elements

Images, videos, and other multimedia components should also be accessible to all residents.

Navigational Elements

Proper navigation can help users of all abilities find the information they need more efficiently.

The following accessibility features can improve your multimedia components:

☐ **Alternative Text**
All visuals on your site should include appropriate alternative (alt) text. These visual elements include photos, illustrations, icons, banners, logos, and buttons.

☐ **Audio Descriptions**
Images and videos can be more accessible by adding audio descriptions for details such as the setting of the scene, actions being performed, or physical gestures.

☐ **Text Captions**
Videos with text captions provide an accessible experience to residents who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Here are a few navigational elements that help support digital accessibility:

☐ **Consistency**
Information should be located consistently throughout your site on each page. For example, the phone number and email address of your department should be placed in the same location on every page.

☐ **Skip Navigation**
This element belongs at the top of the page and enables users to bypass repetitive content like menus or headers.

☐ **Keyboard Accessibility**
Sites should be designed to support keyboard navigation. This allows the user to fully interact with the website, including buttons, links, and form fields, using only a keyboard for navigation.

Four Next Steps to Remediation

It's important to create a remediation plan if you discover elements that do not meet digital accessibility standards.

Here are some suggested next steps for remediation:

☐ **Identify Priorities**
Addressing a large volume of accessibility issues can be overwhelming, so start by focusing on your top priorities. These will typically be any issues that create barriers for assistive technology, such as poor table design or missing page titles.

☐ **Assign Duties and Responsibilities**
Make sure that remediation tasks are assigned to the appropriate teams and individuals. This helps create accountability and clarity in your remediation plan.

☐ **Create a Timeline**
Set clear guidelines on when remediation tasks should be completed and track progress with your stakeholders.

☐ **Plan for Ongoing Maintenance**
Digital accessibility is an ongoing effort, especially as new content is regularly added to your site. Develop a process for ongoing maintenance checks and remediation to ensure your site remains accessible.

Digital accessibility is an important first step towards fostering inclusivity in your community. When your site is designed to meet digital accessibility standards, this sends a clear message that all residents are valued—starting with their first interactions with your department.

Simplify Web Accessibility with CivicPlus

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