



MNGFOA and Digital Accessibility

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Session Topic and Goals

- Why digital accessibility matters, and how the new ADA rule creates urgency for all cities, their employees, and residents.
- Fundamentals of digital accessibility, along with how to determine if your current content is accessible.
- Where to obtain up-to-date information and training on digital accessibility relevant to your role.

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The Office of Accessibility

Why Accessibility Matters

Have you ever thought about how digital barriers affect us?

Ensuring that the information we receive is accessible benefits everyone. Here you will find information on how the State of Minnesota ensures our information is accessible. The accessibility tips and resources in this section will help make your content and your organization more accessible.



- 2009 – State legislature mandated an accessibility standard ([16E.03, subd. 9](#))
- 2010 – Standard effective September 1.
 - Section 508
 - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
- 2011 – State legislature appropriates funds for Office of Accessibility
- Feb 2012 – Chief Information Accessibility Officer hired
- July 2024 – MN Standard updated to include WCAG 2.1

The rest of the state

- Some cities and counties adopted standards on their own
- April 2024: US Department of Justice updated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II to incorporate WCAG 2.1
 - >49,999: Effective April ~~2026~~ 2027
 - <50,000: Effective April ~~2027~~ 2028



Let's talk about why we do this





What is a disability?

Is it *you*?

Or the jar?

What's “digital accessibility”?

- Accessibility is definable, measurable, and testable
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- WCAG's 4 Principles
 - Perceivable
 - Operable
 - Understandable
 - Robust



1. Perceivable

1.1 Text Alternatives

1.1.1 Non-text Content

1.2 Time-based Media

1.2.1 Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded)

1.2.2 Captions (Prerecorded)

1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded)

1.2.4 Captions (Live)

1.2.5 Audio Description (Prerecorded)

1.2.6 Sign Language (Prerecorded)

1.2.7 Extended Audio Description (Prerecorded)

1.2.8 Media Alternative (Prerecorded)

1.2.9 Audio-only (Live)

1.3 Adaptable

Principle 1 – Perceivable

Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in

Guideline 1.1 – Text Alternatives

Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language.

1.1.1 Non-text Content — Level A

All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below.

➤ [Show full description](#)

➤ [Show techniques and failures for 1.1.1](#)

Guideline 1.2 – Time-based Media

What happens when a:

- Website
 - Digital form
 - App
 - Digital document
- is not accessible?



Accessibility is a civil right

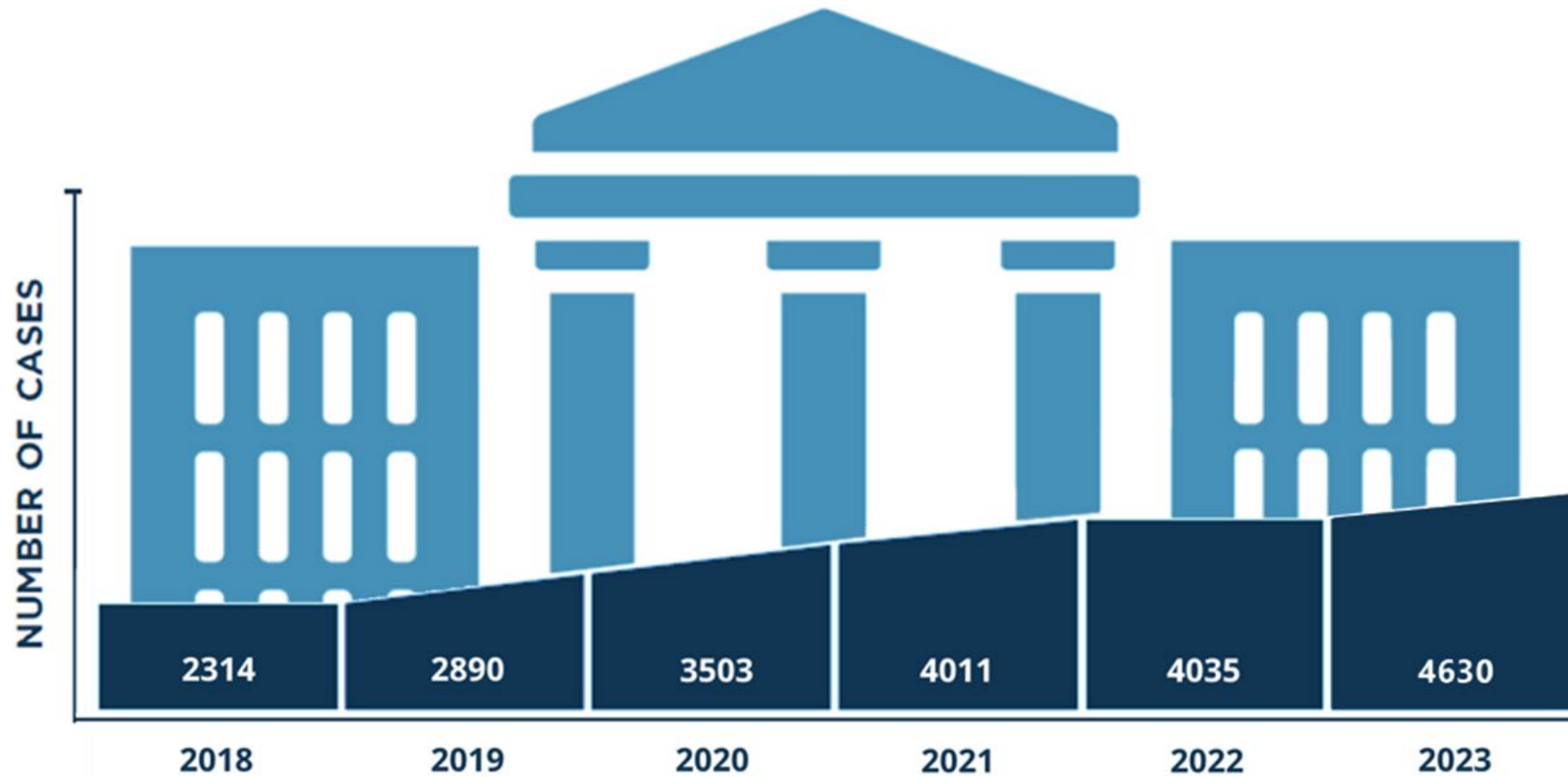
- The ADA requires that state and local governments have to provide individuals with disabilities with effective communication, reasonable modifications, and an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from their services, programs, and activities.
- Long before WCAG was added.
- States, counties, and municipalities have responded to resident and federal complaints for very basic accessibility practices. Cost thousands of employee hours in remediation efforts and training



Let's flip the script



A history of lawsuits



ADA's impact on government entities

All public digital content and online government services must comply with WCAG 2.1 Level AA.

- Includes services provided by vendors.
- Includes: social media, websites, virtual meetings, video streaming platforms, cell phone applications,
- Does not require a government entity to create a website if it does not already have one.



ADA.gov

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

What the Title II Rule Changed re the ADA

- The ADA always required digital accessibility under the “effective communication” clause.
- Previously, when cases went to court, the conversation included determining what defined “accessibility.”
- The upcoming Title II rule provides clarity for all sides.
- “Keep your foot on the gas.”



Other reasons to support accessibility?





First, do you have a policy?

- Defines how you measure “accessibility”
- Demonstrates support by leadership
- Provides actionable direction for processes and procedures
- Make public via an [accessibility statement](#)
- **Key takeaway:** Not a claim of full accessibility, but commitment to get there.



What does accessibility look like?



Basic guidelines for all content

- Content structure
 - Properties/Title
 - Headings & Styles (tags)
- Navigation: consistent, predictable, multimodal
- Images and non-text elements (machine-readable content)
- Color contrast
- Meaningful links
- Forms



Let's take a look



ANDI

structures

26 headings22 lists6 landmarks0 live regions | reading ordermore details

⏮

⏭

Element: <h1>

Accessibility Components: 1

innerText: The Office of Accessibility

ANDI Output:

👤

The Office of Accessibility heading level 1

Headings: 26

hide headings list

Headings List (ordered by occurrence):

<h1>The...</h1>

<h2>Why Accessibility Matters...</h2>

<h2>Accessibility Resources...</h2>

<h3>Training...</h3>

<h3>Documents...</h3>

<h3>Maps...</h3>

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A photograph of a person from the side, wearing a large black headset with a microphone. They are looking down at a laptop keyboard. A dark blue banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image with the text "The Office of Accessibility" in white. The banner has a pink dashed border.

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The Office of Accessibility

Why Accessibility Matters

Have you ever thought about how digital barriers affect us? Ensuring that the information we receive is accessible benefits everyone. Here you will find information on how the State of Minnesota ensures our information is accessible. The accessibility tips and resources in this section will help make your content and your organization more accessible.

Minnesota IT Services' Office of Accessibility oversees the implementation of accessibility standards for Minnesota's executive branch to provide resources that ensure applications, websites, and documents are accessible for everyone.

We created a captioned video sharing why accessibility matters. An [audio described version is available here](#).

Accessibility Resources

Training

Create accessible content and learn how people with disabilities use digital technology.

Documents

Learn how you can make your electronic documents accessible to everyone.

Maps

Learn how to create accessible maps, through the use of font, color, symbols, and more.

Meetings

Learn how to make your meetings and presentations accessible for everyone.

Multimedia

Learn how to create

Social Media

Learn how to reach a

Web & Apps

Learn the best practices

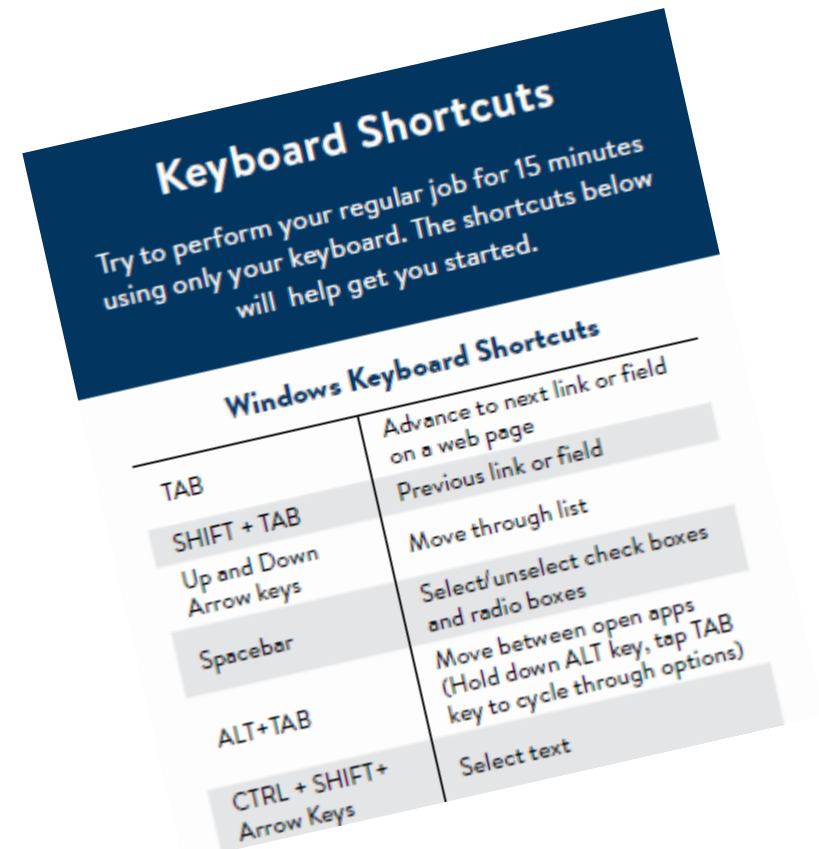
More on keyboard navigation

Common keyboard commands

- TAB and Shift+TAB
- Alt+TAB
- Spacebar and Enter keys to activate
- CTRL+W to close

[Quick cards including shortcut keys](#)

WebAIM's [Keyboard Testing Guide](#)



Two types of contrast issues:

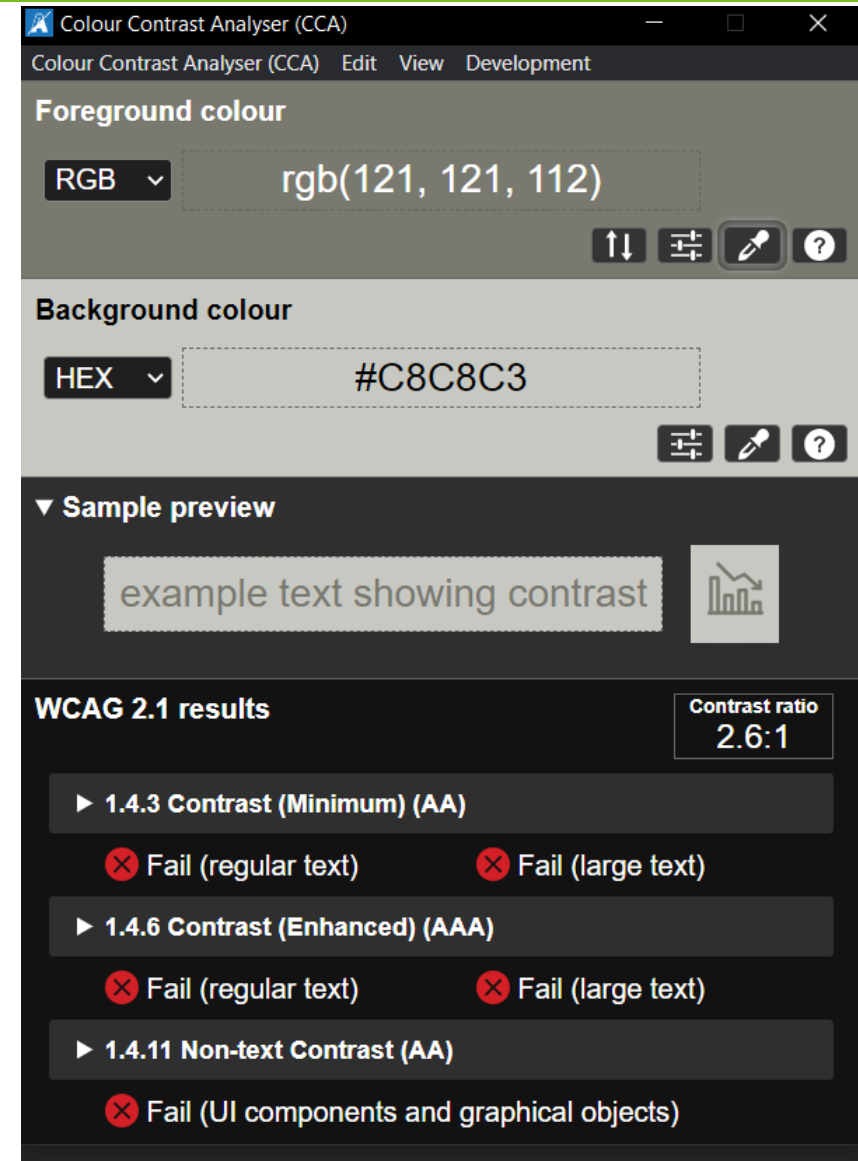
- Text on background
- Non-text contrast

- This is gray text
- The background is also gray.
- It can look COOL.
- It can also present challenges to some readers.

Colour Contrast Analyser

- Text contrast (1.4.3): 4.5:1
- Non-text contrast (1.4.11): 3:1

[Download the Analyser.](#)



Resize text (browser zoom)

- 200% minimum ([1.4.4](#))
- No overlapping text
- Full navigation capabilities
- Same/equivalent functionality



Alternative (Alt) Text

- Provide a succinct summary of why the image is there.
- Examples:
 - MN Government Finance Officers Association logo
 - Clarissa Hadler
 - Clarissa Hadler presents an award at the MNGFOA conference.

Key takeaway: graphics, color, and good design are all part of accessibility.

- Streaming meeting options
 - Automated captions
 - Hire a caption writer
 - Especially if someone requested an accommodation
- Recordings
 - Clean up the streaming transcript and re-post
 - Hire a captioning service



- Free tools
 - WebAIM's WAVE
 - Deque's aXe
 - SSA's ANDI
 - Colour Contrast Analyser
- Keyboard
- End-users
 - Distinguish between usability and accessibility
 - Think about what you are asking them to do

You think your website isn't very accessible. What do you do?

Document Accessibility

- Same principles as web pages.
- Free [Accessible Word training](#) provides a great foundation for all accessibility.
- Use built-in checkers.



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Accessible Word Document Training

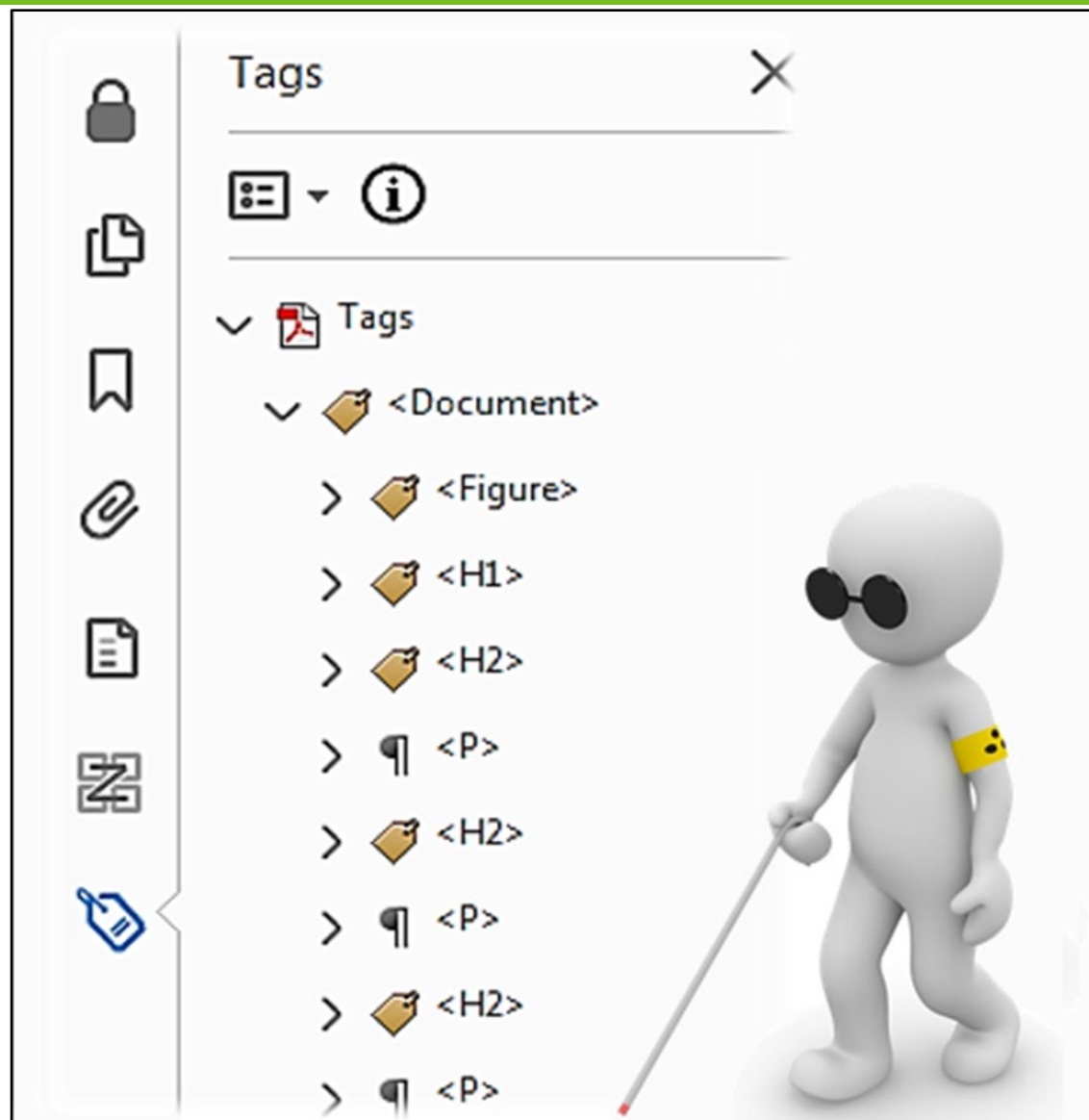
Newly updated!

Welcome to the State of Minnesota's free online course on how to create accessible documents. This introductory course focuses on Microsoft Word, but the accessibility principles you'll learn can be applied to any digital document creation tool, such as Google Docs.

If you are new to accessibility, we recommend you take the modules in numerical order. Otherwise, select any module topic you want to learn or revisit.

Most modules include a practice document for you to apply what you've learned and a summary guide for you to reference after you've completed the training. Additionally, a certificate of completion is available at the end of the course.

- To PDF or not to PDF?
- Create a content strategy.
- Get your team trained
- Software:
 - Adobe Acrobat Pro
 - CommonLook PDF



- Content you create
 - Content you request
 - Tools you use
- Examples:
 - Fillable forms
 - Reports that you post
 - Reports that you request
 - Training videos
 - Internal web apps/software

Case Study: Documents

You have a lot of old PDFs online. What do you do about them?

Implementing accessibility:

- Reduces risk
- Reduces costly rework
- Enables better, more effective tech

Accessibility Baked Right In



Illustration by Brian Parsons, UX Designer for Sony PlayStation.

<http://www.bpdesigns.net/> or <https://www.linkedin.com/in/brianjhparsons/>

Culture and Processes

- Incorporate accessibility from beginning
- Avoid re-work
- Set review and update cycles
- Be prepared for ADA update

Customer Experience

Customer experience refers to how Minnesota residents feel about interacting with state government services. It includes things like buying a fishing license or signing up for health care. We aim to create a positive experience by making different government services available. We aim to create a positive experience by reducing red tape, simplifying processes, and improving outcomes for residents. Investing in digital technology streamlines operations, reduces errors, and saves money by creating user-friendly digital platforms and services.

How to prepare

- Accessibility as a shared responsibility
- Web
 - Web forms
 - Structure, navigation and contrast
 - Captioned videos
- Documents
 - Everyone creates accessible documents
 - PDF workflow
- Videos
 - Develop workflow
 - Live with captioner as needed
 - Recording, with cleaned transcript



Laws and Guidelines

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

[Section 508](#)

W3C's [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#): Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)

[WCAG 2.1 Quick Reference](#)



Resources you can use

- [Office of Accessibility website](#)
- [WebAIM website](#)
- [Captioning and document remediation master contract](#)
- Tools
 - [WAVE](#)
 - [aXe](#)
 - [ANDI](#)
 - [Colour Contrast Analyser](#)

Federal resources you can use

- [Department of Justice Fact Sheet](#)
- [Small Entity Compliance Guide](#)
- Great Lakes ADA [Accessibility Online webinars](#) (free)

Quick Takeaways

- Accessibility is a means to better, more useful digital information
- There are simple things you can learn and apply today
- Start with a policy
 - Point to free training and resources
 - Set short-term goals, such as adding alt text to images
- Leadership buy-in is key
- Build an inclusive culture – it's everyone's responsibility

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Or: text to # 468311: MNIT A11y

(You will receive our welcome message back.)

- Tips on digital accessibility
- Announcement of new resources
- Stories about current projects (all types)
- Upcoming events and trainings



Thank You!

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