



ADA & PUBLIC WEBSITE COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

GEORGIA GMIS 2026 FALL CONFERENCE
DULUTH, GA

Georgia Technology Authority (GTA)

Provides IT and cybersecurity leadership and services to help state and local government entities serve Georgians.



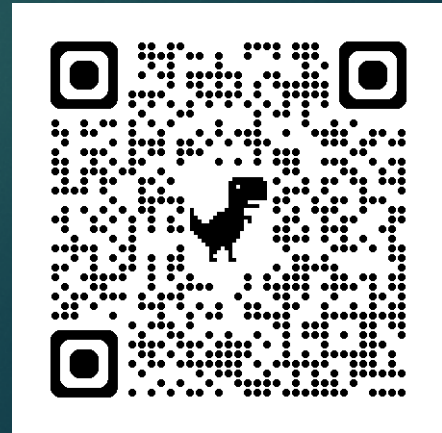
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With this session, our goal is to help you:

- ▶ Understand the federal accessibility requirements.
- ▶ Recognize common website accessibility issues.
- ▶ Learn how to develop a roadmap for improving website accessibility.



Why We're Talking About Accessibility Today

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1. Federal deadline: Begins April 26, 2027
 2. Everyone must be able to access, understand, and use digital government information and services, including people with disabilities.
 3. Accessibility is an organizational responsibility that needs IT leadership support.

Understanding Digital Accessibility

Residents must be able to:

- ▶ **Perceive information:** Read, hear, or otherwise access the information presented.
- ▶ **Navigate and interact:** Move through a website and use its features, including with assistive technology.
- ▶ **Understand information:** Follow instructions, understand content, and correct mistakes.
- ▶ **Complete tasks independently:** Submit applications, make payments, and access services autonomously.

Can you spot the barrier?

Three everyday examples from government websites and documents

1 COLOR CONTRAST

Important deadline

Hard to read

Important deadline

Readable contrast

2 FORM ERRORS

Email address

What went wrong?

Email address (required)

Enter your email address.

3 SCANNED PDFS

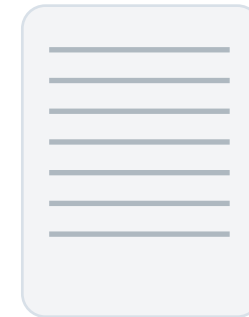


Image only

No readable text layer

H1

Text

Structured,
selectable text



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LOOK BEYOND THE AESTHETICS: Can someone read, understand, navigate, and complete the task?



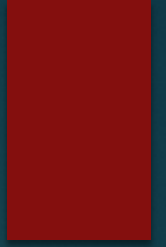
	Permanent	Temporary	Situational
Touch	 One arm	 Arm injury	 New parent
See	 Blind	 Cataract	 Distracted driver
Hear	 Deaf	 Ear infection	 Bartender
Speak	 Non-verbal	 Laryngitis	 Heavy accent



Interaction	Examples
Visually	Reading text, viewing images, recognizing icons, watching videos
Audibly	Listening to screen readers, text-to-speech, audio descriptions, or spoken instructions
By touch	Using a touchscreen, physical controls, or a refreshable Braille display
With a keyboard	Navigating with Tab, Enter, arrow keys, and keyboard shortcuts instead of a mouse
With a mouse or printer	Clicking, hovering, dragging, or using a trackball or alternative pointing device
By voice	Dictating text or using speech recognition to operate applications
With assistive technology	Using screen readers, screen magnifiers, switch controls, eye-tracking systems, or other adaptive tools
With cognitive supports	Using simplified layouts, reading assistance, predictable navigation, or additional time to complete tasks



Accessibility isn't about predicting every person's limitations. It's about designing digital services that don't assume everyone interacts with technology in the same way.



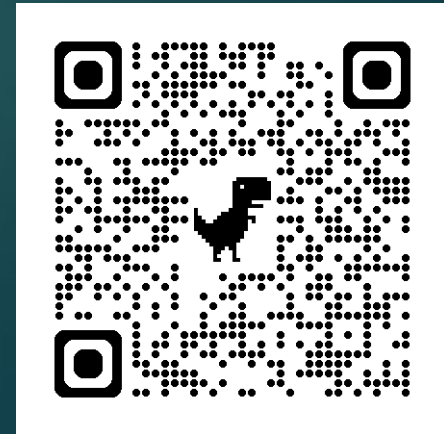
The New Federal Requirements

New DOJ Title II Rules Mandate WCAG 2.1 Level AA Compliance

The Department of Justice has established new federal requirements under ADA Title II, setting WCAG 2.1 Level AA as the strict technical standard for state and local government digital assets.

Key Mandate Coverage & Requirements:

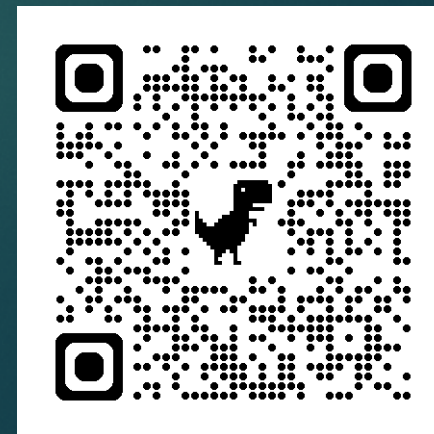
- **Scope of Digital Properties:** Applies across all public websites, web applications, mobile apps, digital documents, and third-party content or services.
- **Compliance Timelines:** Agencies must evaluate and align with upcoming legal implementation deadlines based on entity size.
- **Exceptions & Limitations:** Strict guidelines govern specific exemptions, requiring clear documentation for non-compliant assets.
- **Usability Impact:** Focuses on bridging strict legal requirement adherence with real-world digital accessibility and usability for the public.



What's my compliance deadline?

- ▶ April 26, 2027: entities with populations $\geq 50,000$
- ▶ April 26, 2028: entities under 50,000 and special districts
- ▶ DOJ pushed back the dates by a year in April 2026

Find more information in a Fact Sheet on **ADA.gov**.





What this means for
your organization

Accessibility compliance requires identifying ownership across all digital content and vendor systems.

Operational Diagnostics

Translating federal mandates requires asking critical operational questions:

- What digital content and services do we currently own?
- Who creates and publishes that content?
- Where are accessibility decisions being made?
- What systems and vendors are involved and who holds responsibility when something is inaccessible?

Systemic Ownership & Scope

Consider the massive volume of legacy content currently being maintained across all platforms.

Accessibility crosses organizational boundaries and requires shared responsibility across:

- Technology & IT Infrastructure
- Content & Communications
- Procurement & Vendor Management
- Program Areas & Executive Leadership

Accessibility Barriers Span Content, Documents, and Platforms

Key Barrier Domains

1. Website Content

- Page titles & structured headings
- Link text & alternative text for images
- Color contrast & keyboard access
- Multimedia captions & transcripts

2. Digital Documents

- PDFs, Word files, & Excel spreadsheets
- Scanned records & legacy archives

3. Technology Platforms

- CMS platforms & publishing templates
- Web applications & 3rd-party mobile tools

Automated Testing

- Identifies programmatic, syntax-level issues rapidly.
- Catches missing alt tags, basic contrast, & structural code errors.
- Misses context-dependent compliance elements.

Manual Review Requirement

Crucial for evaluating screen reader experience, logical reading order, keyboard navigation usability, and image description accuracy.

A high automated score does NOT guarantee actual accessibility.

Accessibility Backlogs Are Created By Decentralized Publishing & Broken Organizational Processes

Systemic & Publishing Practices

Organizations must move beyond individual accessibility defects to examine the root processes that generate them:

- Decentralized publishing across departments
- Large inventories of unmanaged legacy content
- Using PDFs as the default publishing format
- Addressing accessibility only after product launch

Governance & Capability Barriers

Underlying organizational constraints continuously compound backlog growth:

- Widespread lack of accessibility knowledge
- Vendor and procurement challenges
- Unclear ownership and responsibility
- Limited staff constrained by competing priorities

The core problem is not just the backlog itself, but the system that continually creates it.



Prioritizing Accessibility Work



Start where accessibility barriers have the greatest impact.

- ▶ Critical public services and essential tasks
- ▶ High-use content and known barriers
- ▶ Active documents and new services

Where Should You Start?

Consider impact on residents before the size of the backlog.

- ▶ Can someone apply, pay, register, and obtain essential information?
- ▶ How many people use the service, and how often?
- ▶ Is the content current, critical, or frequently downloaded?
- ▶ Could a new publishing decision prevent another barrier?

Remediation and Prevention

There are two types of work to be done:

- ▶ Remediation: Fix existing accessibility barriers
- ▶ Prevention: Change practices so new barriers are not introduced

Both are necessary for sustainable progress.

Build Accessibility Into Existing Processes

Accessibility should be part of everyday operations.

- ▶ Content creation and publishing
- ▶ Design, development, and quality assurance
- ▶ Document production and review
- ▶ Procurement, vendor management, and training

Accessibility Starts at the Beginning

Set expectations early. Verify them before release.

- ▶ Include accessibility in project requirements.
- ▶ Ask vendors for evidence and remediation commitments.
- ▶ Test keyboard, forms, focus, and assistive-technology use.
- ▶ Make accessibility part of acceptance criteria.

Who Needs to Be Involved?

Accessibility crosses departments. Responsibility must be explicit.

- ▶ **Leadership:** priorities, funding, accountability
- ▶ **Program and content owners:** service outcomes and information
- ▶ **IT and QA:** platforms, integrations, technical testing
- ▶ **Procurement, legal, and vendors:** contracts, risk, and remediation

How to Measure Progress

A scanner score is only one piece of the picture.

- ▶ Priority services reviewed and barriers resolved
- ▶ Document inventory and remediation progress
- ▶ New inaccessible content and recurring issues
- ▶ Training, procurement requirements, and pre-launch testing
- ▶ Feedback from residents

From Compliance to a Roadmap

Turn the requirements into a manageable sequence of decisions.

- ▶ Inventory digital services and content
- ▶ Establish owners and assess priority services
- ▶ Prioritize and remediate high-impact barriers
- ▶ Prevent new issues through processes and training
- ▶ Test, measure, and improve continuously

The Roadmap Starting Point

Choose one important service. Identify one action. Prevent one recurring problem.

- ▶ What service or content should we assess first?
- ▶ Who needs to be involved?
- ▶ What can we fix, and what process can we change?



Interactive Workshop

Apply a triage framework to identify high-impact barriers and establish prevention workflows.

20-MINUTE TRIAGE & PREVENTION SPRINT: Moves beyond a technical checklist to require cross-functional decision-making across key public digital services.

STEP 01 • SERVICE SELECTION

Select High-Priority Service

Choose one critical digital service (e.g., online payment portal or permitting application).

Key Questions:

- Who relies on this service?
- What is the public-service impact if it becomes inaccessible?

STEP 02 • BARRIER MAPPING

Map Friction & Ownership

Analyze the end-to-end user journey to uncover structural and technical obstacles.

Key Questions:

- What likely accessibility barriers exist in the workflow?
- Who currently owns existing maintenance and support?

STEP 03 • ACTIONABLE OUTCOMES

Define Two-Tier Action Plan

Establish immediate fix and long-term recurrence prevention.

1. Immediate Step

Direct remediation action to fix current active barriers.

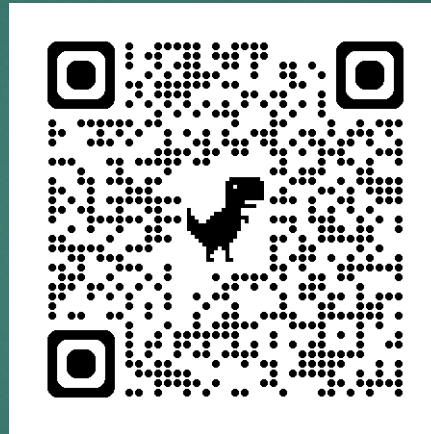
2. Process Prevention

Workflow change to ensure the barrier does not recur.

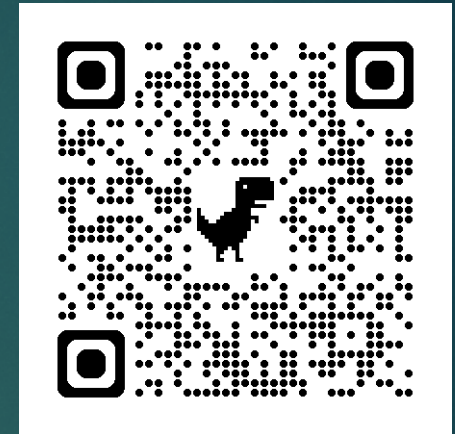
Discussion/Questions?



Accessibility Checklist



GTA website
/Accessibility Compliance



ADA Fact Sheet

AND orchard.georgia.gov

THANK YOU!