



TECHNICAL UPDATE

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ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE FOR COLORADO GOVERNMENT

Colorado's accessibility law regulates the way public entities meet website accessibility standards and mandates that government websites have to provide proper accommodations for individuals with disabilities. These technology standards ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same access as everyone else to participate in state and local services, activities, and employment opportunities.

[House Bill 21-1110](#) and the Office of Information Technology's (OIT) accessibility standards relate to all technology, hardware, and software, that is both public-facing and internal-facing. This includes technology provided by or procured by a government entity that is used by the public or a government employee. This technology includes websites, applications, kiosks, digital signage, documents, and forms. Compliance is also recognized in the creation and publishing of content, such as text, links, images, video, audio, and embedded third-party applications. It is recommended to establish a written plan for implementing accessibility standards as part of your annual IT Roadmap.

IMPORTANT TERMS AND REMINDERS

Platform Providers: OIT, SIPA (Colorado.gov websites), or other in-house development teams or vendors contracted to provide a platform.

- A platform is what the website or application is built on. For example, Colorado.gov is built on the Drupal platform supported by NIC/SIPA.

Content Owners: State agencies and county governments.

- Content owners are individuals and teams that create, publish, and maintain online content like text, links, images, forms, PDFs, documents, and embedded third-party applications.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): International Web standards, current version 2.1, level AA criteria.

Legislation places responsibility for compliance on both platform providers and content owners. OIT has statutory authority in C.R.S. 24-85-101 to establish statewide accessibility standards. Previously, there was no formal process and little enforcement. **All state agencies and local governments must be compliant with state standards by July 1, 2024.** However, HB24-1454 has recently been introduced, and if passed, a one-year extension with detailed requirements could be provided. OIT will provide resources, training on the state standards, and tools to assist with accessibility, but agencies and local governments will need to make the changes and improvements to their own online content.

[Accessibility resources](#), testing tools, and an [FAQ](#) are available to help government agencies get started with accessibility compliance for persons with disabilities.

FUTURE IMPACT

The impact of [HB21-1110](#) makes it a state civil rights violation for a government agency to exclude people with disabilities from receiving services or benefits because of lack of accessibility. The act adds language to strengthen current Colorado law related to protections against discrimination on the basis of disability for persons with disabilities, specifically as those laws relate to accessibility to government information technology.

Any county that doesn't meet OIT's web accessibility standards could be subject to injunctive relief, meaning a court order to fix the problem, actual monetary damages, or a fine of \$3,500 payable to the plaintiff, who must be someone from the disability community.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

Counties need to review their online presence before the July 1 deadline to ensure they are in compliance. IT staff may need additional support and funding for designing, developing, and maintaining accessible technology. CTSI recommends looking at paid internships or utilizing college students studying web design for additional support. There is an increased potential for losses if counties are unprepared before the deadline. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861-0507.