



ADA Website Standards Updates

PRESENTED BY
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The What

WCAG 2.1, Level AA sets a specific technical standard that state and local governments must follow to meet their existing obligations under Title II of the ADA for web and mobile app accessibility.

There are many guides that provide step by step instructions and specific guidelines to explain the rule's requirements for making sure your Port's web content and mobile apps are accessible.

Deadlines

Special districts (Ports):

- **April 26, 2028**

Cities and counties with a population of 50,000 or more:

- **April 26, 2027**

Cities and counties with a population of 49,999 or less:

- **April 26, 2028**

The Who

These new rules apply to special district governments, which are defined in the ADA to include a “public entity other than a county, municipality, township, or independent school district, authorized by state law to provide one function or a limited number of designated functions...as a separate government...”

This includes Washington public port districts.

The Where

Web Content

“Web content” is defined as the information and experiences available on the web, like text, images, sound, videos, and documents.

Example: If a county web page lists the addresses and hours of operation for all county parks, that web page must meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA even if a local web design company made the web page and updates it for the county, or if the county uses a template that was created by a private company.

These requirements include when you have an arrangement with someone else who provides or makes available a mobile app for your government.

Mobile Apps

Mobile apps are software applications that are downloaded and designed to run on mobile devices like smartphones and tablets.

Example: If a city lets people pay for public parking using a mobile app, that mobile app must meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA even if the app is run by a private company.

The Why

Perceivable

Information and user interface components must be presented to users in ways that they can perceive.

Understandable

Information and user interface operation must be easy for a user to grasp.

Operable

User interface components and navigation must be functional for users in ways they can operate.

Robust

Content must be robust enough so that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of users, including those employing assistive technologies.

Perceivable

Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

Text Alternatives

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

Time-based Media

- Provide alternatives for time-based media.

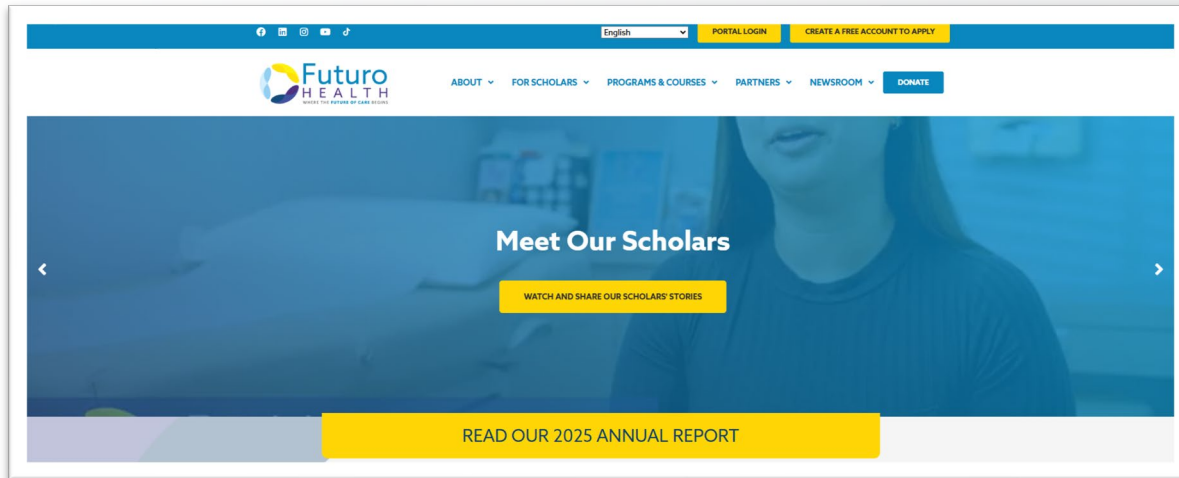
Adaptable

- Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure.

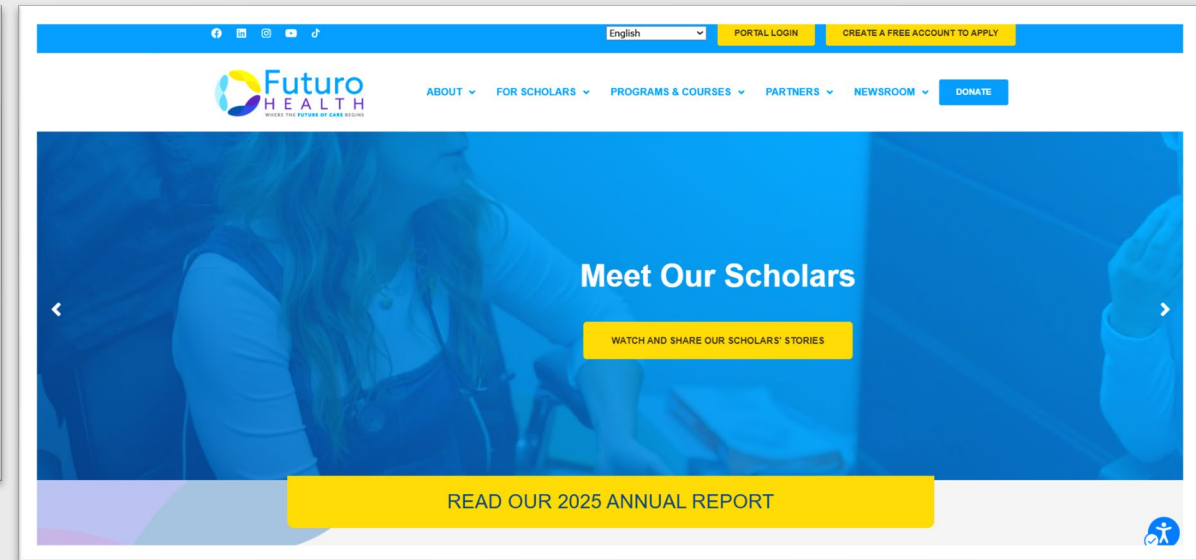
Distinguishable

- Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.

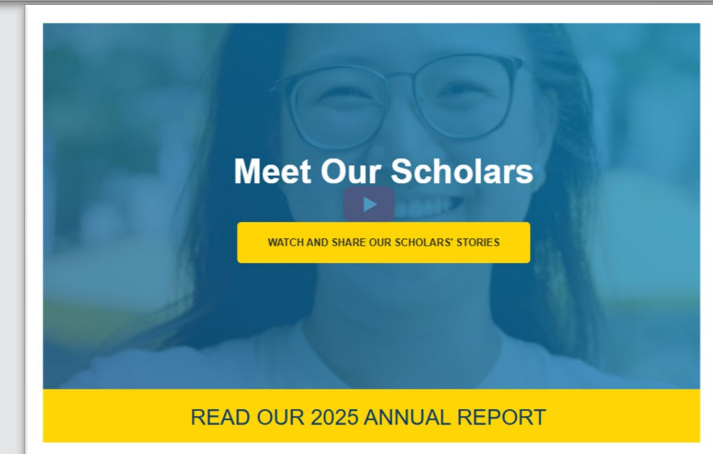
Perceivable Example



Original



More Accessible



Operable

User interface components and navigation must be operable.

Keyboard Accessible

- Make all functionality available from a keyboard.

Enough Time

- Provide users enough time to read and use content.

Seizures and Physical Reactions

- Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures or physical reactions.

Navigable

- Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are.

Input Modalities

- Make it easier for users to operate functionality through various inputs beyond keyboard.

Understandable

Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.

- **Readable**
 - Make text content readable and understandable.
- **Predictable**
 - Make web pages appear and operate in predictable ways.
- **Input Assistance**
 - Help users avoid and correct mistakes.

Robust

Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

- **Compatible**
 - Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies.

Understandable Example

Input Assistance

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Accessibility Feedback". The form is contained within a dark blue header and footer. The main content area is white and contains the following elements:

- Header:** "Accessibility Feedback" in white text on a dark blue background.
- Introductory Text:** "Have an accessibility issue? Fill out the form and click 'Send Feedback'." followed by "Feedback".
- Form Fields:** Five input fields with labels: "Full Name", "E-mail", "Country", "Phone Number", and "Issue Type". The "Issue Type" field is a dropdown menu with the text "--Choose a Problem--".
- Text Area:** A large text area with the placeholder text "please explain your problem".
- Agreement:** A checkbox followed by the text "I have read and agree to Equalweb's [Terms of service](#) and [Privacy policy](#)".
- Bot Check:** The text "please declare your not a robot!".
- Validation:** The text "All fields are required." is displayed below the bot check.
- Buttons:** A dark blue "Send Feedback" button and a "Close" button with a circular arrow icon.
- Accessibility Features:** Vertical scrollbars are visible on the right side of the form, indicating that the form is designed to be accessible for users with limited mouse control.

Exceptions

There are limited exceptions for some kinds of content that are not as frequently used or that may be particularly hard to address right away.

1. Archived Content
2. Preexisting Conventional Electronic Documents
3. Some Third-Party Content
4. Individualized password-protected documents
5. Preexisting social media posts.

Each exception has specific criteria that must be met in order for it to apply.

Internal Compliance

Create Policies

- Ensure staff is posting content that's accessible.
- Identify a staff member to coordinate your efforts and answer questions.
- Describe how regular testing will be conducted. This may include working with people with disabilities.
- Explain addressing requests to make accessible content that falls under an exception to the rule.

Enable Requests

- Include, in prominent locations, how the public can ask content be more accessible when the content falls under an exception to the rule.
- Provide a way for people to notify you if there are any accessibility issues with web content or mobile apps (e.g. email address, accessible link, accessible web page, etc.).

Train Staff

- Utilize thorough and ongoing staff training.
- Tailor training based on staff responsibilities.

Best Practices

The ADA still requires that Ports provide individuals with disabilities with effective communication, reasonable modifications, and an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from Port's services, programs, and activities.

- Ensure all content is still accessible.
- Ensure links are correct.
- Consider using a consultant.
- Train staff to ensure compliance in the future.
- Create policies and revise existing policies for compliance.
- The use of two versions of the same web content or mobile app, one non-accessible and one accessible, is usually not allowed.

Thank You



Sources & Important Information Locations

Direct Sources:

Accessibility of Web Content and Mobile Apps Provided by State and Local Government Entities: A Small Entity Compliance Guide

<https://www.ada.gov/resources/small-entity-compliance-guide/#when-the-rules-requirements-for-web-content-and-mobile-app-accessibility-start>

How to Meet WCAG (Quick Reference)

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/quickref/?versions=2.1>

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1

<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#perceivable>

Indirect Sources:

October 2024 Knowing The Waters – ADA Website Rules Update:

<https://www.washingtonports.org/ktw-october-ada-website-rules-update/>

April Deadline Approaching to Implement Mandatory ADA Standards for Local Government Websites and Apps

<https://mrsc.org/stay-informed/mrsc-insight/february-2026/ada-standards-websites-apps>

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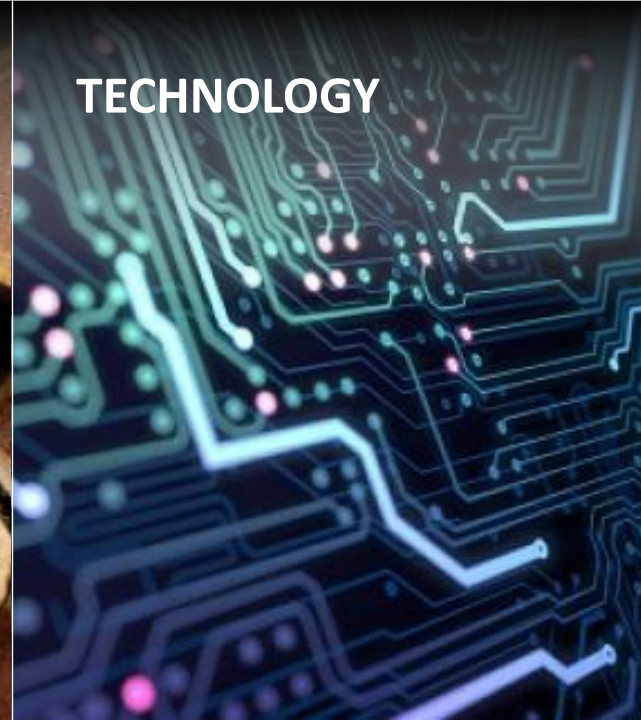
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