

Digital Accessibility Planning

Compliance will be a team effort: It should include Communications as well as IT and others responsible for any public-facing state digital content, whether a website, app or document that gets posted or shared via a website. Below is an example project timeline for 2-year compliance for North Carolina state government websites and apps.

Timeline

Phase 1: Preparation and initial assessment

Timeframe	Focus	Strategies
Month 1	Awareness and team development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise awareness among agency stakeholders about the importance of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and the regulatory rule requirements.• Raise awareness among stakeholders about the US Department of Justice (DOJ) Accessibility Rule.• Raise awareness among stakeholders about the North Carolina Digital Accessibility and Usability Standard.• Form a core team focused on digital accessibility.• Begin sharing information and resources about digital accessibility strategies and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1 AA).
Months 2-3	Baseline accessibility inventory and audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform a baseline inventory and audit of current web content and mobile apps. Utilize information available on your site's Acquia Optimize (formerly Monsido) dashboard for insights.

Timeframe	Focus	Strategies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review roles and responsibilities for information sharing. • Choose tools and methodologies for the audit, considering both automated tools and manual testing.

Phase 2: Planning and resource allocation

Timeframe	Focus	Strategies
Month 4	Develop a compliance strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the audit findings, develop a detailed plan for achieving WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance, including prioritizing the most critical web content and applications. Use web analytics to help determine the most critical web content. Those on the Digital Commons platform should review their GA4 analytics, including their site's Looker Studio dashboard. • Identify training needs for staff and plan for acquiring or accessing necessary technology and expertise. Training resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Writing for the Web (available in state LMS in January 2025)
Months 5-6	Resource allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources for the implementation of the compliance plan. • Begin/continue training on digital accessibility strategies and WCAG 2.1 Level AA requirements.

Phase 3: Implementation and remediation

Timeframe	Focus	Strategies
Months 7-12	Remediation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start the remediation of existing web content and mobile apps to address identified accessibility barriers. Develop and implement procurement and content development processes to ensure that any newly purchased or developed web content or applications are compliant.
Months 13-18	Continued remediation and testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the remediation efforts, focusing on less critical content identified in the initial audit. Perform ongoing testing of web content and mobile apps for compliance, using both automated tools and user testing with individuals with disabilities.

Phase 4: Evaluation and continuous improvement

Timeframe	Focus	Strategies
Months 19-21	Comprehensive review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a comprehensive re-evaluation of web content and mobile apps to ensure all content meets WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.
Months 22-24	Sustainability and continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop or update policies and procedures to maintain ongoing ADA web compliance, including regular training and audits. Continue to provide training for new staff and refresher training for existing staff.

Strategies

Phase 1: Preparation and Initial Assessment

Strategy: Raise Awareness and Build Knowledge

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Conduct awareness sessions and workshops for all stakeholders on ADA Title II and web accessibility basics.	How can we effectively communicate the importance of web accessibility to all stakeholders?	
Distribute informational materials through various channels (e.g., emails, newsletters).	What are the best platforms or mediums to reach our diverse community?	

Strategy: Conduct a Comprehensive Baseline Accessibility Inventory and Audit

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Choose a combination of automated tools and manual testing methods for the audit.		
Compile an inventory of current digital assets to be audited.	<p>Which web pages, applications, and content are most critical and should be prioritized in the audit?</p> <p>How will we ensure the audit is thorough and accounts for various types of disabilities?</p>	

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Review roles and responsibilities for information sharing.	<p>Who is responsible for creating and sharing digital content on behalf of the PSU?</p> <p>What processes and procedures are in place for information governance?</p>	
Perform the audit and document findings.		

Phase 2: Planning and Resource Allocation

Strategy: Develop a Detailed Accessibility Compliance Strategy

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Based on audit findings, prioritize accessibility issues for remediation.	How do we prioritize accessibility issues for remediation based on the audit findings?	
Set clear, achievable goals for accessibility improvements.	What are the specific, measurable goals we aim to achieve in our compliance strategy?	
Create an action plan outlining steps, responsible parties, and timelines.		

Strategy: Allocate Necessary Resources

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Identify budgetary needs and allocate funds for the implementation of the strategy.	How can we ensure that resources are allocated efficiently to support our compliance strategy?	
Determine staffing needs and assign roles and responsibilities.		
Procure necessary technology and tools for accessibility evaluation and content management.	What are the critical tools and technologies needed to support our accessibility efforts?	

Phase 3: Implementation and Remediation

Strategy: Execute Remediation Plan and Monitor Progress

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Implement the steps outlined in the action plan to address accessibility issues.		
Conduct regular progress reviews and adjust strategies as needed.	<p>How can we effectively track and measure progress towards our accessibility goals?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to adapt our strategy based on progress reviews?</p>	

Strategy: Provide Training and Support

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Develop and deliver training programs for staff involved in web content creation and management.	How do we ensure that all relevant staff receive adequate training on web accessibility standards and practices?	
Offer ongoing support and resources to address emerging accessibility questions and challenges.	What support mechanisms are needed to address ongoing and emerging accessibility challenges?	

Phase 4: Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Strategy: Conduct Comprehensive Evaluation and Seek Feedback

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Perform a comprehensive evaluation of the accessibility of web content and applications.		
Collect feedback from users, especially those with disabilities, on the usability and accessibility of digital assets.	<p>How do we ensure that our digital assets are accessible and meet the needs of all users, including those with disabilities?</p> <p>What methods are most effective for collecting and incorporating feedback from users?</p>	

Strategy: Implement Continuous Improvement Processes

Tasks	Guiding questions	Planning notes
Based on evaluation and feedback, identify areas for further improvement and enhancement.	How can we establish a culture of continuous improvement regarding web accessibility?	
Update the accessibility compliance strategy and action plan to reflect new goals and initiatives.	What are the next steps in enhancing the accessibility of our digital assets beyond initial compliance?	