

Accessibility in GIS for State and Local Government

Faye Koenigsmark, PhD

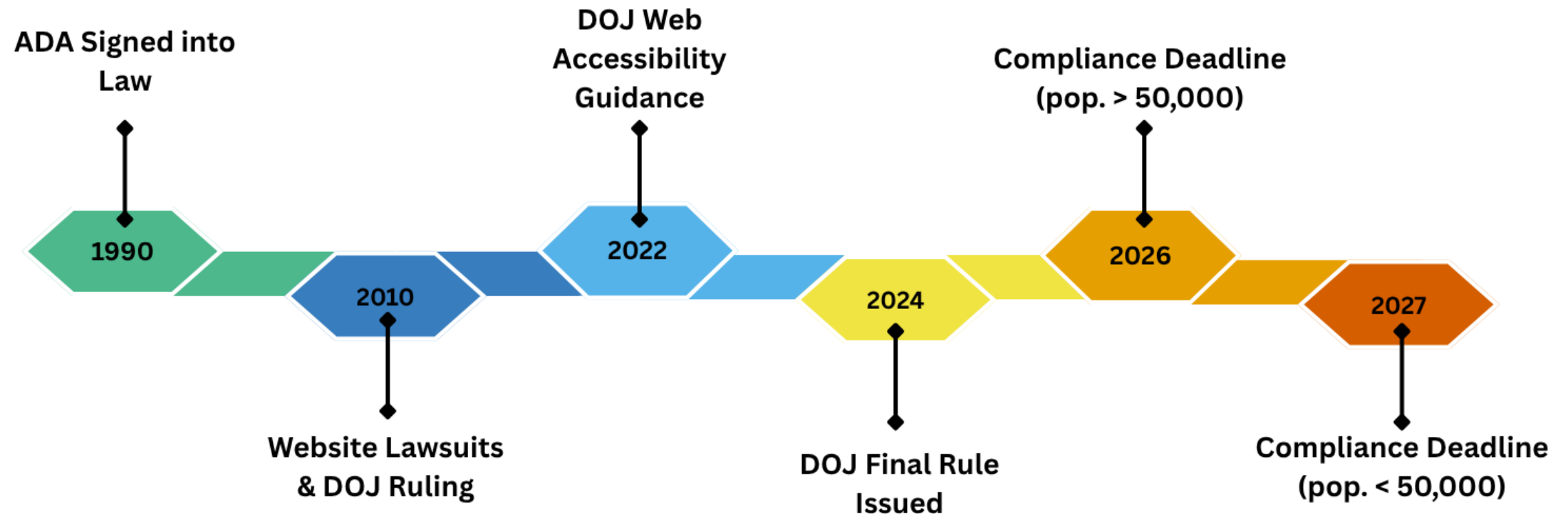
NC Geographic Information Coordinating Council | Accessibility Work Group

May 20, 2026

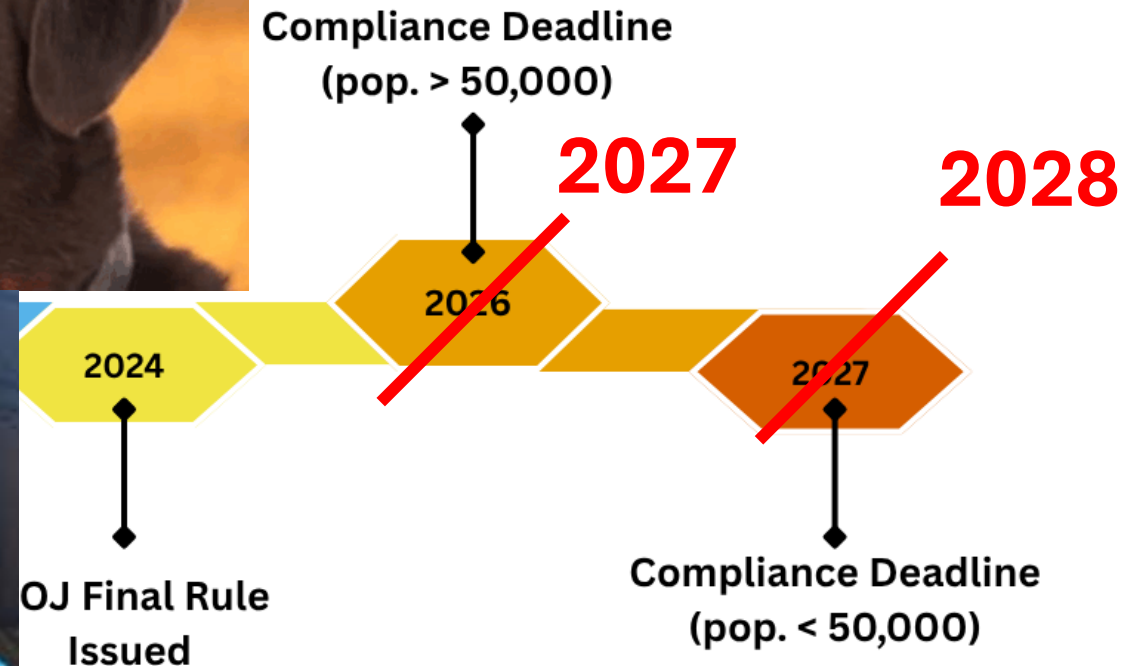
Outline

- DOJ Accessibility in Web Content
- Accessibility in GIS
- Workgroup goals and progress

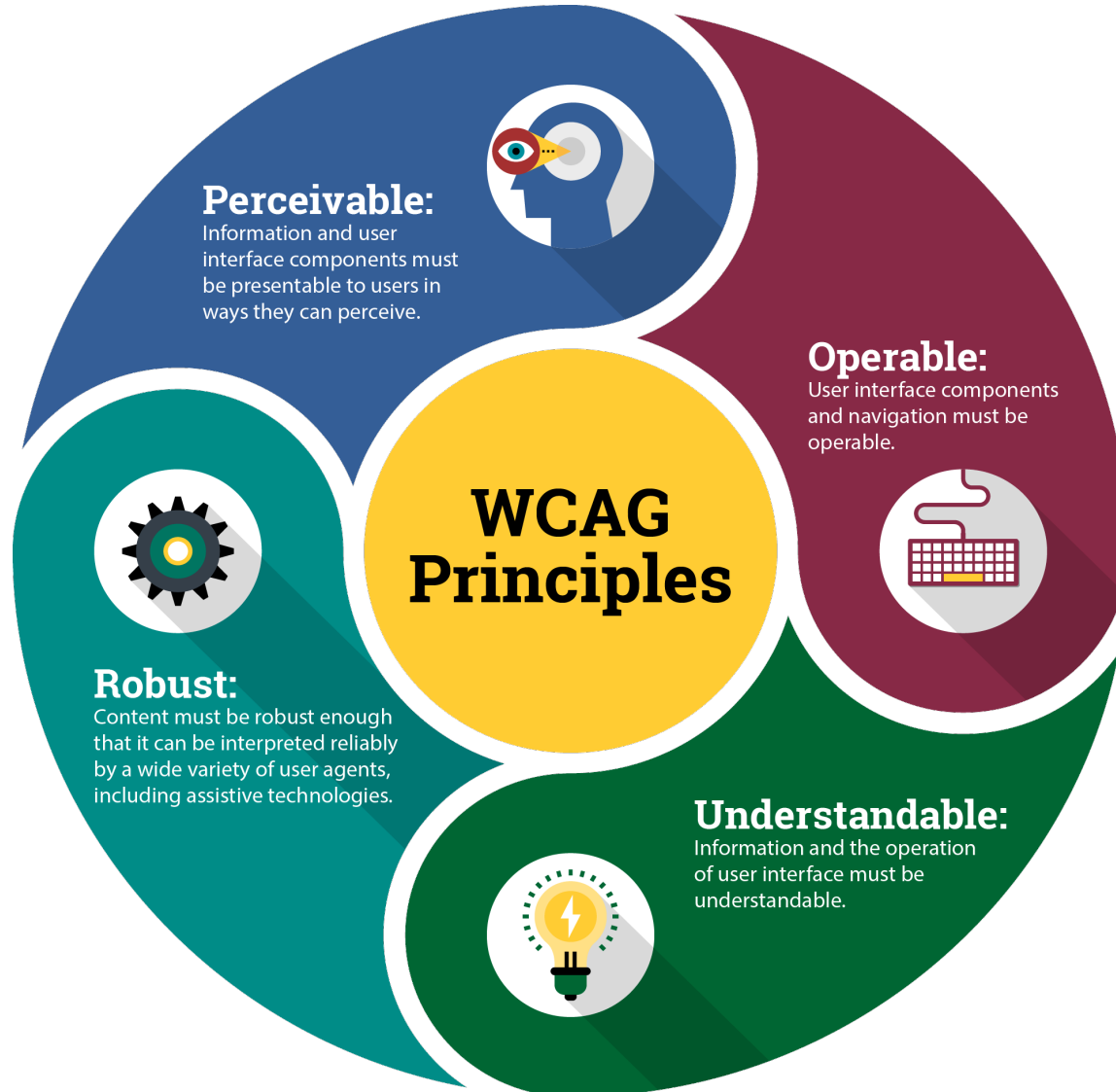
In 2024, the DOJ issued a web accessibility rule to help ensure government digital services are usable and accessible for all users.



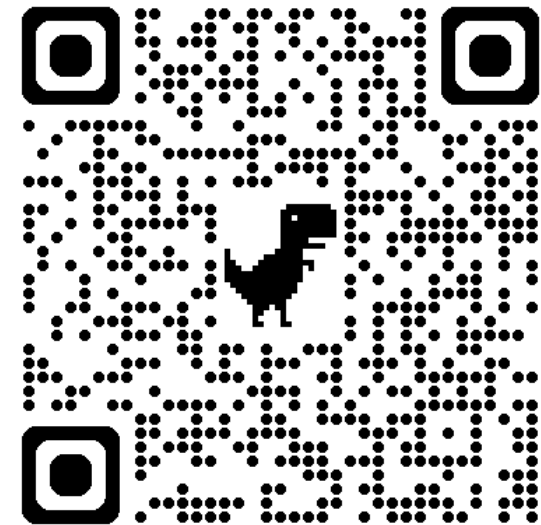
In 2024, the DOJ issued a web accessibility rule to help ensure government digital services are usable and accessible for all users.



The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are an internationally recognized set of standards to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities



WCAG 2.2 Level AA is the technical standard for state and local governments' web content.

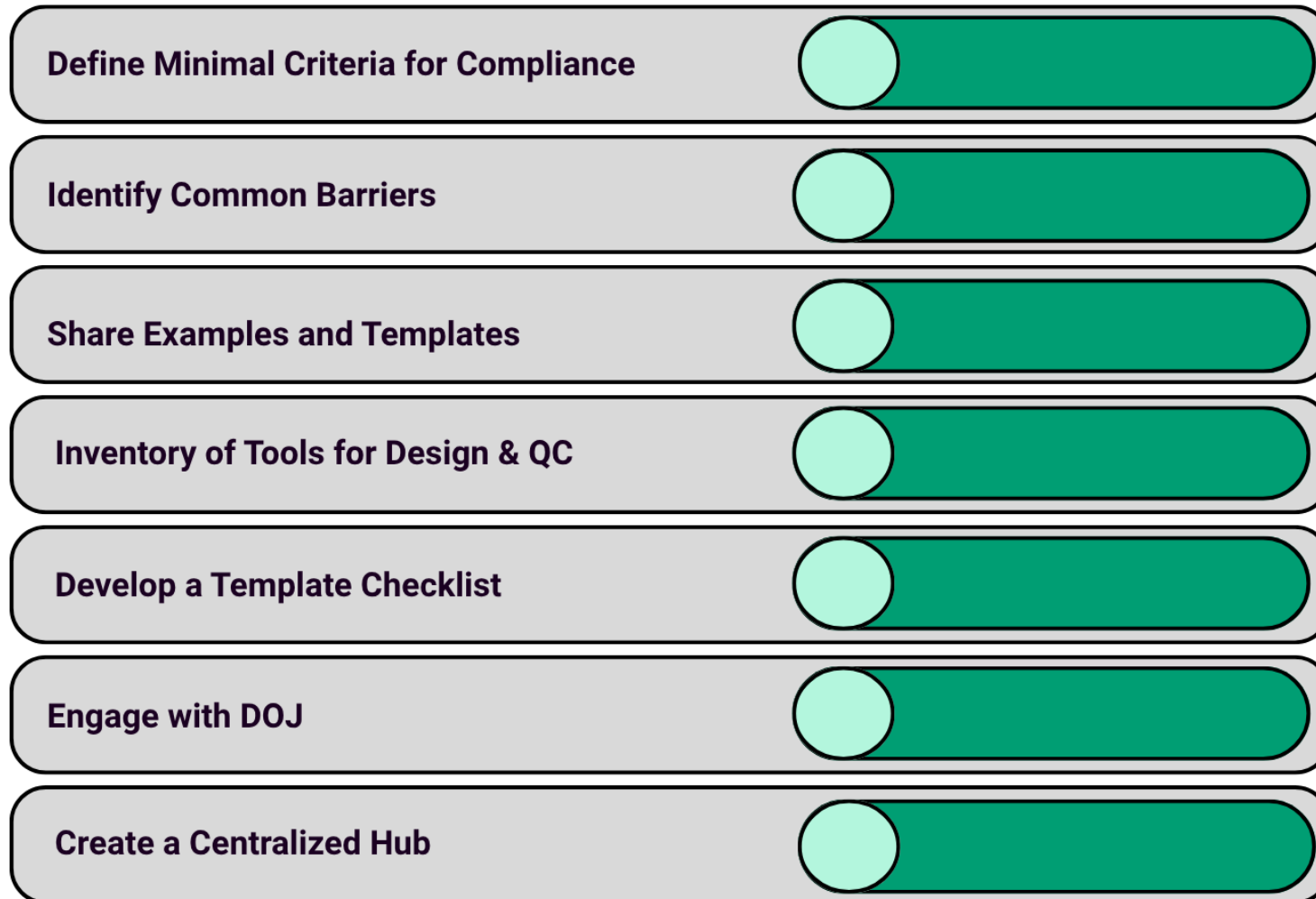


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The NC Geographic Information Coordinating Council (GICC) established the Accessibility Working Group to help state and local government geospatial teams navigate these accessibility requirements in GIS web content.

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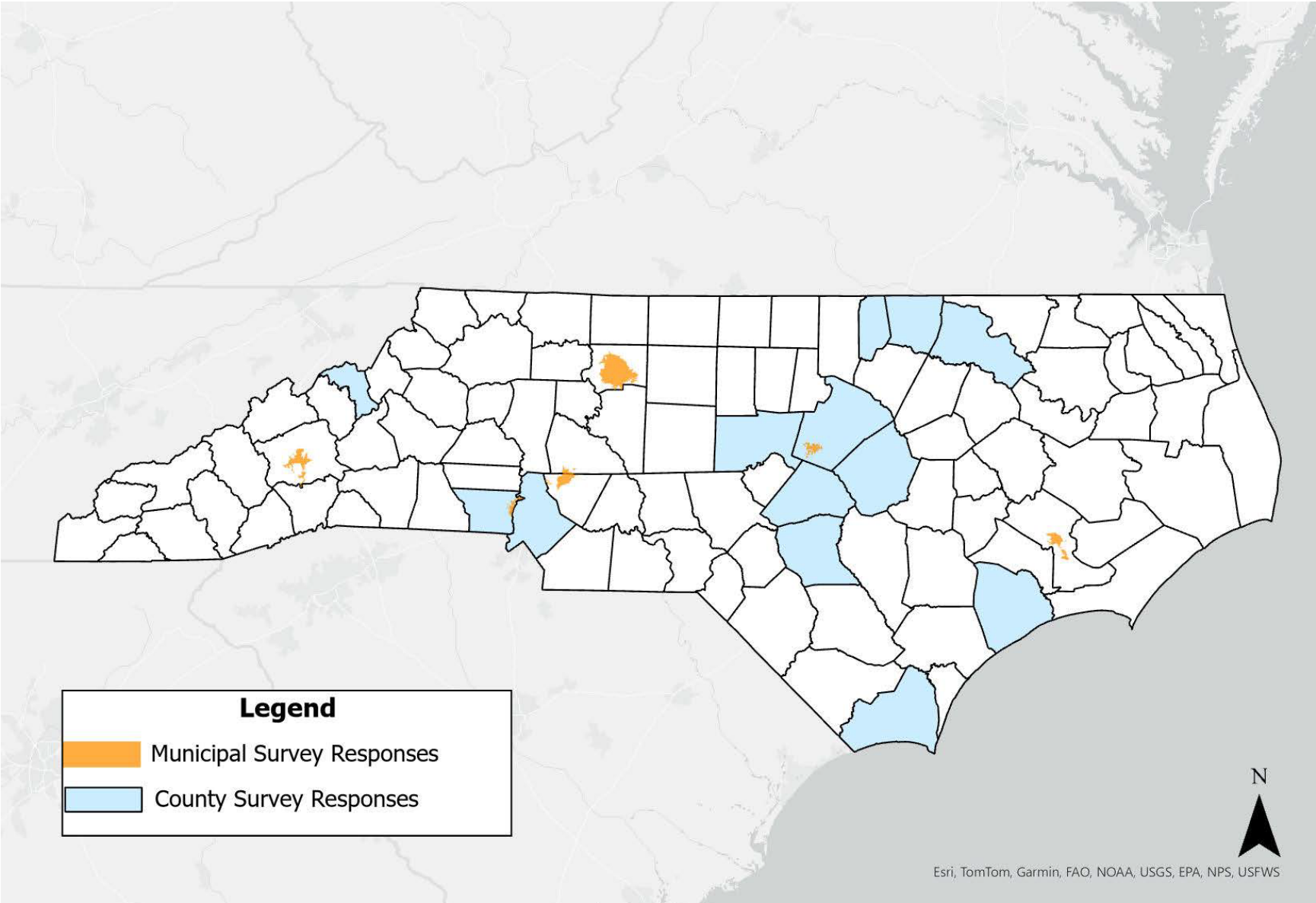


Minimal Criteria	Common Barriers	Examples & Templates	Tools for Checks	Template Checklist	Engage DOJ	Centralized Hub
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We collectively defined a core set of principles to address accessibility compliance across different ESRI products.

Surveys were distributed to state and local government GIS professionals to identify common barriers.



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Most barriers aren't about intent- they're about capacity, tools, and legacy systems.



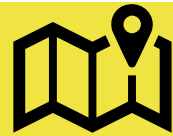
WHO

- Limited staff capacity



WHAT

- What are the criteria?
- Prioritization



WHERE

- Where can we find resources on this topic?



WHEN

- Time!



HOW

- How do we test?
- How do we design?

A Resource Tracker was created for users to share accessibility resources.

Accessibility Resource Tracker ☆									
ID	Topic	Resources	Source	Source Type	Effectiveness	Reviewer	Notes	Review Status	See Document
1	Esri Accessibility	https://www.esri.com/en-us/accessibility/overview	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To		Ross, Nancy L.		FYI	
2	Enhanced Contrast basemaps	https://www.esri.com/arcblog/products/arcgis-living-atlas/mapping/working-with-enhanced-contrast-basemaps-to-improve-accessibility	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To				FYI	
3	Community	https://community.esri.com/accessibility	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To				FYI	
4	Mapping the way to digital accessibility	https://www.esri.com/arcblog/products/arcgis/mapping-the-way-to-digital-accessibility	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To				FYI	
5	Red ... Green ... What?	https://www.esri.com/arcblog/products/arcgis-living-atlas/mapping/red-green-what	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To				FYI	
6	Designing and testing for accessibility in GIS and mapping	https://www.esri.com/arcblog/products/arcgis/mapping-and-testing-for-accessibility-in-gis-and-mapping	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To				FYI	
7	HUB and Enterprise	https://www.esri.com/arcblog/products/arcgis-hub/uncategorized/arcgis-hub-sites-designing-for-accessibility	Esri Resources	Esri Blog/Article/Recom... To				FYI	

A Resource Tracker was set up for users to share accessibility resources.

All Accessibility Resources							
Filter By: Guidance Color/Contrast Videos Best Practices AGOL ARIA ArcGIS Pro Extensions Checklists							
All Resources Search							
Title	Primary WCAG	Resources	Purpose/Description	Tags	Source	Source Type	WCAG List
Esri Accessibility		View	Overall explanations of ESRI actions, resources, assistance.	ESRI General blog, forum, Reference	Esri Resources	Esri Blog Article Recommendations How To	
Working with Enhanced Contrast basemaps		View	A 2023 blog from ESRI discussing how to handle accessibility with Basemaps. Shows you how to create your own Basemap contrasts.	ESRI General blog, forum, Reference;contrast; basemaps; colorblind; basemaps	Esri Resources	Esri Blog Article Recommendations How To	
Community		View	The ESRI forum for users to share and collaborate on accessibility.	ESRI General blog, forum, Reference; color friendly	Esri Resources	Esri Blog Article Recommendations How To	
Mapping the way to digital accessibility		View	This 2025 ESRI blog reviews their comprehensive approach to accessibility at a high level while providing links to select resources.	ESRI General blog, forum, Reference; color friendly	Esri Resources	Esri Blog Article Recommendations How To	
Red ... Green ... What?		View	A 2020 ESRI blog of brief overview of how some view reds and greens as similar colors. This is a good introduction to color challenges.	ESRI General blog, forum, Reference;contrast; basemaps; colorblind	Esri Resources	Esri Blog Article Recommendations How To	

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We have collected information on tools used for accessibility checks by group members.



Story insights Beta

Suggestions

Accessibility
1 issue

Media
1 issue

Experience
No issues

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We identified checklists targeted towards overall GIS content as well specific apps.



We connected with the Southeast ADA Center who presented at our workgroup meeting.

Digital Access Practical Points

April 2026

Marsha Schwanke



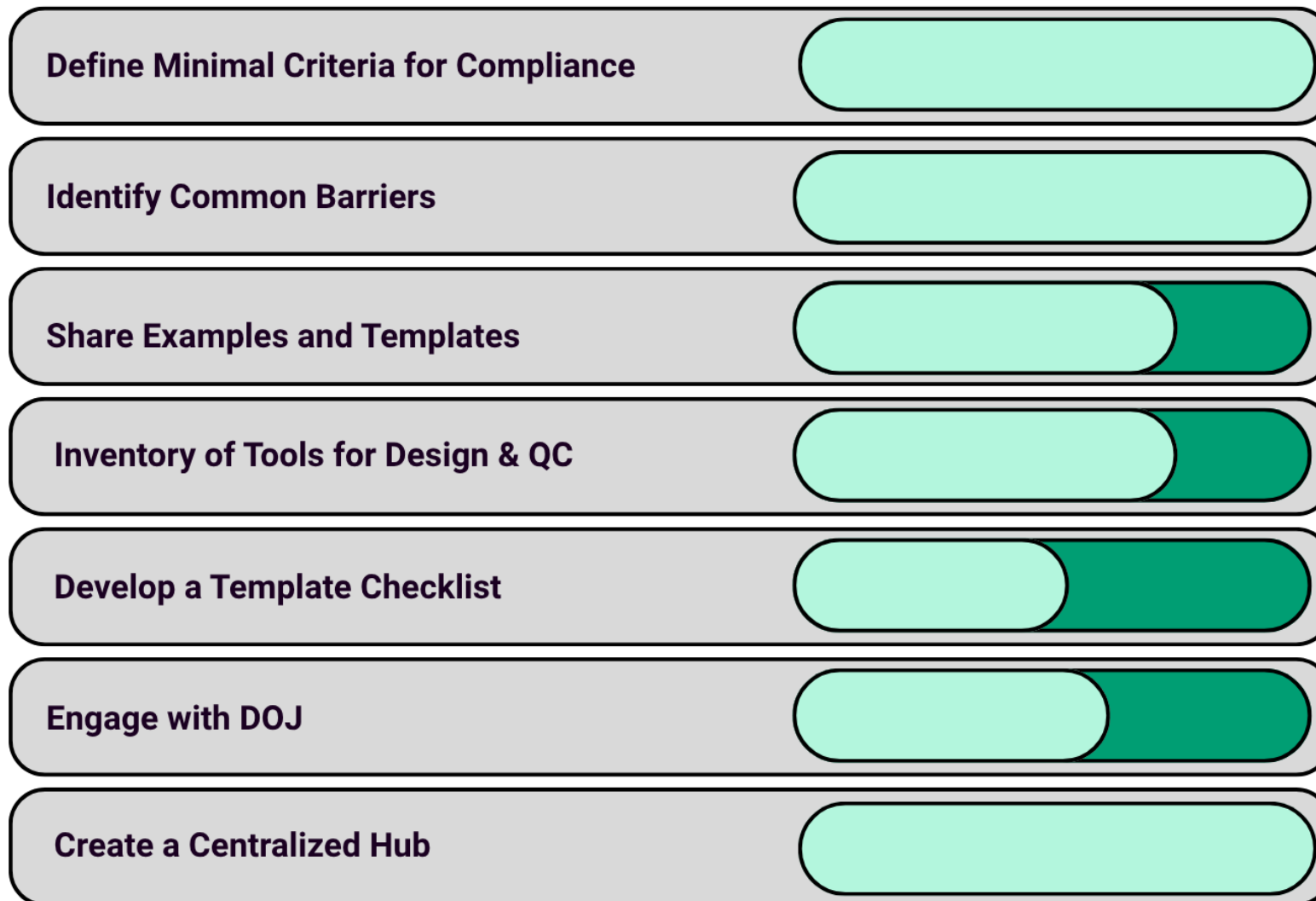
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We created a public facing hub to share resources and information.



The Accessibility Working Group will continue advancing its goals to help state and local governments understand and implement web accessibility requirements.



Thank you!

Questions?

Contact :
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Interest in joining the State and Local Government
Accessibility Work Group?
Email : darrin.smith@nc.gov