ADA Website Accessibility

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Christie DeSanctis
Director, Business & Conventional Finance Policy
cdesanctis@nar.realtor
202-383-1102

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ADA Enforcement by Federal Agencies

- The U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Title I of the ADA. Title I prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in applying for jobs, hiring, firing and job training.

- The U.S. Department of Transportation enforces regulations governing transit, which includes ensuring that recipients of federal aid and state and local entities responsible for roadways and pedestrian facilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability in highway transportation programs or activities. The department also issues guidance to transit agencies on how to comply with the ADA to ensure that public transit vehicles and facilities are accessible.

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) enforces regulations covering telecommunication services. Title IV of the ADA covers telephone and television access for people with hearing and speech disabilities. It requires telephone and Internet companies to provide a nationwide system of telecommunications relay services that allow people with hearing and speech disabilities to communicate over the telephone.

- The U.S. Department of Justice enforces ADA regulations governing state and local government services (Title II) and public accommodations (Title III).

- The U.S. Department of Education, like many other federal agencies, enforces Title II of the ADA, which prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the department.

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also enforces Title II of the ADA relating to access to programs, services and activities receiving HHS federal financial assistance. This includes ensuring that people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have access to sign language interpreters and other auxiliary aids in hospitals and clinics when needed for effective communication.

- Another federal agency, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), also known as the Access Board, issues guidelines to ensure that buildings, facilities and transit vehicles are accessible to people with disabilities. The Guidelines & Standards issued under the ADA and other laws establish design requirements for the construction and alteration of facilities. These standards apply to places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and state and local government facilities.

https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada
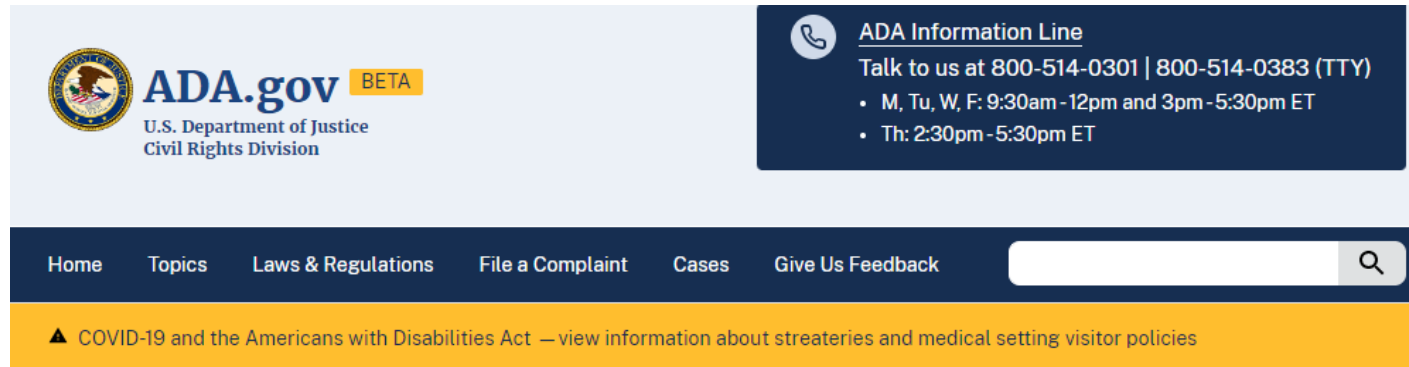
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Website Accessibility Barriers

- **Poor color contrast.** People with limited vision or color blindness cannot read text if there is not enough contrast between the text and background (for example, light gray text on a light-colored background).

- **Use of color alone to give information.** People who are color-blind may not have access to information when that information is conveyed using only color cues because they cannot distinguish certain colors from others. Also, screen readers do not tell the user the color of text on a screen, so a person who is blind would not be able to know that color is meant to convey certain information (for example, using red text alone to show which fields are required on a form).

- **Lack of text alternatives ("alt text") on images.** People who are blind will not be able to understand the content and purpose of images, such as pictures, illustrations, and charts, when no text alternative is provided. Text alternatives convey the purpose of an image, including pictures, illustrations, charts, etc.

- **No captions on videos.** People with hearing disabilities may not be able to understand information communicated in a video if the video does not have captions.

- **Inaccessible online forms.** People with disabilities may not be able to fill out, understand, and accurately submit forms without things like:
  - Labels that screen readers can convey to their users (such as text that reads "credit card number" where that number should be entered);
  - Clear instructions; and
  - Error indicators (such as alerts telling the user a form field is missing or incorrect).

- **Mouse-only navigation (lack of keyboard navigation).** People with disabilities who cannot use a mouse or trackpad will not be able to access web content if they cannot navigate a website using a keyboard.

https://beta.ada.gov/web-guidance/

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Department of Justice (DOJ) Website Accessibility

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Department of Justice (DOJ) Website Accessibility

"**[B]usinesses... have flexibility in how** they comply with the ADA's general requirements of nondiscrimination and effective communication, [and] still must ensure that the programs, services, and goods that they provide to the public—including those provided online—are accessible to people with disabilities."

"Businesses... can currently choose how they will ensure that the programs, services, and goods they provide online are accessible to people with disabilities."

Existing technical standards provide helpful guidance concerning how to ensure accessibility of website features:
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- Section 508 Standards

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•**Color contrast in text.** Sufficient color contrast between the text and the background allows people with limited vision or color blindness to read text that uses color.

•**Text cues when using color in text.** When using text color to provide information (such as red text to indicate required form fields), including text cues is important for people who cannot perceive the color. For example, include the word "required" in addition to red text for required form fields.

•**Text alternatives ("alt text") in images.** Text alternatives convey the purpose of an image, including pictures, illustrations, charts, etc. Text alternatives are used by people who do not see the image, such as people who are blind and use screen readers to hear the alt text read out loud. To be useful, the text should be short and descriptive.

•**Video captions.** Videos can be made accessible by including synchronized captions that are accurate and identify any speakers in the video.

•**Online forms.** Labels, keyboard access, and clear instructions are important for forms to be accessible. Labels allow people who are blind and using screen readers to understand what to do with each form field, such as by explaining what information goes in each box of a job application form. It is also important to make sure that people who are using screen readers are automatically informed when they enter a form field incorrectly. This includes clearly identifying what the error is and how to resolve it (such as an automatic alert telling the user that a date was entered in the wrong format).

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•**Text size and zoom capability.** People with vision disabilities may need to be able to use a browser's zoom capabilities to increase the size of the font so they can see things more clearly.

•**Headings.** When sections of a website are separated by visual headings, building those headings into the website's layout when designing the page allows people who are blind to use them to navigate and understand the layout of the page.

•**Keyboard and mouse navigation.** Keyboard access means users with disabilities can navigate web content using keystrokes, rather than a mouse.

•**Checking for accessibility.** Automated accessibility checkers and overlays that identify or fix problems with your website can be helpful tools, but like other automated tools such as spelling or grammar checkers, they need to be used carefully. A "clean" report does not necessarily mean everything is accessible. Also, a report that includes a few errors does not necessarily mean there are accessibility barriers. Pairing a manual check of a website with the use of automated checkers can give you a better sense of the accessibility of your website.

•**Reporting accessibility issues.** Websites that provide a way for the public to report accessibility problems allow website owners to fix accessibility issues.

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DOJ Website Accessibility Resources

- [18F Accessibility Guide](): a comprehensive accessibility guide with resources published by 18F, a digital services agency under the General Services Administration (GSA).

- [Digital.gov](): this site, which is part of the Technology Transformation Services at the GSA, has resources on design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities.

- [Section 508 Information and Communication Technology Accessibility Standards](): standards published by the U.S. Access Board addressing access to information and communication technology under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- [Section508.gov](): a website published by the GSA with tools and training on implementing website accessibility requirements under Section 508.

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)](): guidelines published by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium.

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