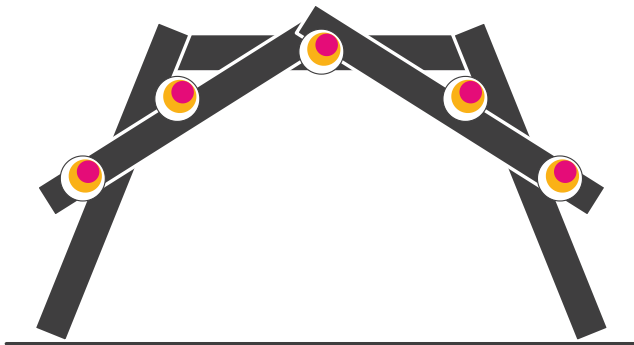


THE BRIDGE METHOD

Title II Readiness Toolkit

Checklists for counties, courts and community colleges, an accessibility statement template, a procurement guide and a 12-month plan.



How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is for the people who keep a public website running: web managers, communications staff, IT, ADA coordinators and the people who buy software and services. You do not need to be a designer or a lawyer to use it.

What is inside

Tool	What it helps you do
The rule in one page	Understand what the rule asks for, by when, and what it leaves out.
Readiness checklists	Find the barriers that block the services residents use most: one checklist for every public entity, and one each for counties and cities, courts, and community colleges.
Accessibility statement template	Publish an honest statement that tells people how to report a barrier and get help.
Procurement guide	Ask vendors the right questions and put accessibility into contracts.
12-month plan	Turn the work into a sequence your team can follow, and a shorter track if your date is April 26, 2027.

What applies where

The rule, its dates and its exceptions are U.S. federal law and apply only to state and local governments in the United States. The checklists, the statement template, the procurement questions and the 12-month plan are built on WCAG, an international standard, and work for any public website in any country. Each section carries a label: **Scope: universal** or **Scope: United States only**.

Not legal advice. This toolkit explains the rule in plain words and offers practical steps. It does not replace the rule or advice from your counsel, and using it does not by itself make a site conform to WCAG or comply with Title II.

The rule in one page

Scope: United States only. This is U.S. federal law. Outside the U.S., check the law of your country.

In April 2024 the U.S. Department of Justice published a rule under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It says how state and local governments must make their websites and mobile apps accessible to people with disabilities. It also covers content that a vendor builds or runs for a public entity under a contract, license or other arrangement.

Why “Title II”? The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is divided into five parts called titles. Title I covers employment, Title II covers state and local governments, Title III covers businesses open to the public, Title IV covers telecommunications and Title V holds general provisions. The web rule belongs to Title II, so it applies to public entities, not to private businesses.

The standard

Web content and mobile apps must conform to **WCAG 2.1 Level AA**, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines published by the W3C. Level AA includes every Level A criterion.

Compliance dates, as amended in April 2026

Public entity	Compliance date
State and local governments with a population of 50,000 or more	April 26, 2027
State and local governments with a population under 50,000	April 26, 2028
Special district governments, of any size	April 26, 2028

On April 20, 2026 the Department published an interim final rule that moved both dates one year later. It did not change the standard or the exceptions.

Which date applies to you

- Population comes from the 2020 Census.
- A department or office that belongs to a larger government, such as a sheriff’s office, a library or a county court, uses the population of that government.
- A city or county school district uses the population of its city or county. An independent school district uses Census estimates for the district.
- When the answer is not clear, ask your counsel and plan for the earlier date.

The five exceptions, in short

Each exception has conditions, and none of them removes the duty to give a person with a disability access when they ask for it.

- **Archived web content** made before the compliance date, kept only for reference, not changed since, and kept in a clearly marked archive.
- **Preexisting documents**, such as PDFs, posted before the compliance date, unless people still use them to apply for, take part in or get a service.
- **Third-party content** that others post on your site, unless it is posted for you under a contract, license or other arrangement.
- **Individualized, password-protected documents** about one person, property or account, such as a utility bill.
- **Preexisting social media posts** published before the compliance date.

Two things the rule does not offer

- There is no certificate or seal that proves compliance. What counts is whether the content conforms.
- A plug-in or overlay that claims to fix a site automatically does not make it conform. The barriers are in the design, the code and the content.

If your organization receives funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, such as a health department or a public hospital, the HHS rule under Section 504 has its own web requirements and dates. Check it separately.

Readiness checklists

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country. The items are written for U.S. public entities, but they work for any public website.

Start with the checklist for every public entity, then use the one for your type of organization. Work on the critical tasks first: the things residents must be able to do on your site without help.

For every public entity

Done	Check	Who usually owns it
☐	You have named one person who leads web accessibility and can make decisions.	Leadership
☐	You have a list of the critical tasks on your site, such as paying, applying, registering, reporting or finding a place and an hour.	Web manager with each department
☐	You have an inventory of the site: pages, PDFs, videos, forms, maps and third-party tools.	Web manager
☐	Each critical task can be completed with a keyboard only.	Web manager or vendor
☐	Each critical task can be completed with a screen reader.	Web manager or vendor
☐	Text contrast, headings, link text and form labels have been checked on every template.	Designer or vendor
☐	Videos have accurate captions, and live meetings have captions.	Communications
☐	Documents people need are web pages first, and the PDFs that remain are tagged.	Each department, with communications
☐	Third-party tools for payments, forms, calendars and maps are listed with their owner and contract.	IT and procurement
☐	An accessibility statement with a working way to report barriers is published and linked from every page.	ADA coordinator
☐	Staff who publish content know the basic rules: headings, link text, alt text, plain language and tagged documents.	Communications
☐	New purchases include accessibility requirements in the contract.	Procurement
☐	You check the site again on a schedule, at least every quarter, and after every redesign.	Web manager

Counties and cities

Done	Check	Who usually owns it
☐	Paying taxes, fees, utilities and fines works with a keyboard and a screen reader, including the payment provider's pages.	Finance and IT
☐	Permit, license and service request forms are web forms with visible labels and clear errors.	Each department
☐	Meeting agendas, packets and minutes are web pages or tagged PDFs, posted with the meeting.	Clerk
☐	Meeting videos and live streams have accurate captions.	Clerk and communications
☐	Emergency alerts and service changes are published as text on the site, not only as images or social media posts.	Emergency management
☐	Maps and GIS tools have a text alternative for the key information, such as a list of addresses, hours or zones.	GIS
☐	Public notices and legal notices are text, not scanned images.	Clerk
☐	Job listings and applications work with assistive technology, including the hiring platform.	Human resources
☐	Parks, library and recreation registrations work on a phone at 320 px wide.	Parks and library
☐	Contact information for each department is easy to find and the same on every page.	Web manager

Courts

Done	Check	Who usually owns it
☐	Self-help pages and court forms are available as web pages or accessible forms, not only scanned PDFs.	Self-help center
☐	Case search and dockets work with a keyboard and a screen reader, including the vendor's system.	Court IT
☐	E-filing works with assistive technology, and there is a documented alternative when it does not.	Clerk and court IT
☐	Hearing calendars and remote hearing instructions are text, with step-by-step guidance for joining.	Court administration
☐	The juror portal and juror questionnaires work with assistive technology.	Jury office

Done	Check	Who usually owns it
☐	How to request an ADA accommodation is published in plain language, with more than one way to ask.	ADA coordinator
☐	How to request an interpreter is easy to find, and key pages are available in the languages your community uses.	Language access
☐	Opinions, orders and rules are published as tagged documents or web pages.	Clerk and court IT
☐	Payment of fines and fees works with a keyboard and a screen reader.	Finance
☐	Time limits in online forms can be extended, and work is not lost when a session ends.	Court IT

Community colleges

Done	Check	Who usually owns it
☐	Applying, enrolling and registering for classes work with a keyboard and a screen reader, including the student system.	Admissions, registrar and IT
☐	Financial aid pages and forms are clear and accessible.	Financial aid
☐	The course catalog and class schedule are web pages, not only PDFs.	Registrar
☐	The learning management system and its templates have been reviewed, and instructors know the basics for course content.	Distance learning and instructional design
☐	Course videos and lecture recordings have accurate captions.	Instructional design
☐	Library databases and e-resources have been checked with the vendors, and their accessibility reports are on file.	Library
☐	How to request accommodations from disability services is easy to find from every student page.	Disability services
☐	Events, athletics and campus maps publish key information as text.	Communications
☐	Emergency alerts and campus closures appear as text on the site.	Campus safety
☐	Department and program pages follow the same templates, so editors cannot break headings or contrast.	Web manager

Accessibility statement template

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country. Adapt the formal complaints section to the procedure your law requires.

An accessibility statement tells people what you are doing, what still has problems and how to get help now. Replace the highlighted fields, delete what does not apply and keep the language plain. Publish it as a web page and link it from the footer of every page.

Accessibility statement for [website name]

[Entity name] wants everyone to be able to use this website, including people with disabilities. We are working to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA.

How we are doing

This website partly meets WCAG 2.1 Level AA. We last reviewed it on [date] using [how you tested: keyboard, screen readers, automated tools, testing with people with disabilities].

Known problems

We know about these problems and are fixing them:

[Problem, the pages it affects, and what to do in the meantime. Example: Some meeting packets from before 2025 are scanned PDFs. Call the Clerk's office to get them in another format.]

Content from other organizations

Some services on this site are run by other companies, such as [payment or registration system]. We are asking them to fix the problems we find. If one of them stops you, contact us and we will help you complete the task another way.

Tell us about a barrier

If you cannot use part of this website, contact [name or office]:

Phone: [number] · Email: [address] · Form: [web address] · Mail or in person: [address]

Tell us the page and what you were trying to do. We will reply within [number] business days.

Other formats

You can ask for any document in another format, such as large print, a tagged PDF, a Word file or plain text. There is no cost.

Formal complaints

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can file a grievance with [ADA coordinator and grievance procedure].

This statement was updated on [date].

Keep it honest

- Do not claim full compliance unless the site was tested and passed.
- Name real problems and give a way around them today.
- Make the contact options work for people who cannot use the website: a phone number and an email are the minimum.
- Review the statement every time you finish a round of fixes.

Procurement guide: buying accessible

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country. The Accessibility Conformance Report and the VPAT template come from U.S. federal purchasing and are used by vendors worldwide; the VPAT also has an edition for the European standard EN 301 549.

Most public websites depend on products the entity buys: the content management system, payment portals, permit systems, case management, learning platforms and the firm that designs the site. The rule covers that content too, so accessibility has to be part of the purchase.

Before you buy

1. List the critical tasks the product will support, and who will use it: residents, students, staff.
2. Write the requirement in the request: the product and its content must conform to WCAG 2.1 Level AA.
3. Ask every vendor for an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR), based on the VPAT template for WCAG 2.1.
4. Ask for a live demonstration of a critical task with a keyboard and a screen reader.
5. Score accessibility in the evaluation, not only as a yes or no box.

Questions to ask a vendor

Question	A good answer looks like
Can we see your Accessibility Conformance Report?	A report for the current version, less than a year old, that says who tested it and how, and lists where the product does not conform.
How did you test it?	Manual testing with keyboards and screen readers, plus automated tools, by people with accessibility training. Ideally, testing with users with disabilities.
What does not conform yet, and when will it be fixed?	A specific list of issues with dates, not a promise that everything is compliant.
Can you show us a critical task with a keyboard and a screen reader?	The vendor completes the task during the demo without a mouse.
Who fixes accessibility problems we find after launch, and how fast?	A response time in the contract and no extra cost for fixing conformance issues.
Can our editors create accessible content with your tool?	Headings, alt text, table headers and captions are built into the editor, and the templates keep contrast and structure.

Contract language to discuss with your counsel

- The vendor will deliver products, services and content that conform to WCAG 2.1 Level AA, and will keep them conforming during the contract.
- The vendor will provide a current Accessibility Conformance Report and update it with each major release.
- The vendor will fix conformance issues reported by the entity within an agreed time, at no extra cost.
- The entity may test the product, and the vendor will share its own test results on request.
- If a part of the product cannot conform, the vendor will provide an equally effective alternative for users.

Red flags

- “100% compliant” or “ADA certified”. There is no such certification.
- An overlay or widget offered as the solution. It does not fix the code, the design or the documents.
- An ACR with every row marked “Supports” and no notes, or one that is several versions old.
- A vendor that cannot show a critical task without a mouse.

When you hire a web or design firm

Ask for evidence in the deliverables, not only promises: an approved color pairs table, annotated design files with reading order, focus order and alt text, a test report for each template, and training or guides for the people who will edit the site.

The 12-month plan

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country.

The plan follows the five phases of The Bridge Method. It assumes a small team and a site of a few hundred pages. Adjust the months to your size, but keep the order: each step starts from what the step before it confirmed.

Twelve months, five phases

Months	Phase	Work	What you have at the end
1 and 2	Understand	Name a lead. List the critical tasks. Inventory pages, documents, videos and third-party tools. Run a first review of the critical tasks.	A list of critical tasks and a map of the barriers in each one.
3	Understand	Decide what stays, what changes and what goes. Archive old content properly. Ask vendors for their ACRs.	A smaller site and a priority list.
4	Define the system	Set the accessible visual system: approved color pairs, type sizes, focus and target sizes. Fix the templates first.	Templates that are accessible by default.
5 to 7	Design and fix	Fix the critical tasks, one by one. Turn the most used PDFs into web pages. Caption videos. Work with vendors on their fixes.	The critical tasks work for people with disabilities.
8 and 9	Design and fix	Fix the rest of the content by priority. Train editors with short guides. Publish the accessibility statement.	A site where new content stays accessible.
10	Review	Test the critical tasks with keyboard, screen readers and zoom, and with people who use assistive technology.	A test report and a short list of remaining issues.
11	Review	Fix what the tests found. Update the statement.	An honest statement with dates.
12	Guide and transfer	Set the routine: who checks new content, when the site is reviewed, how purchases are checked. Measure the critical tasks.	A routine that keeps the site accessible after the project ends.

If your date is April 26, 2027

Scope: United States only. This is U.S. federal law. Outside the U.S., check the law of your country.

From late 2026 there are about six months. Keep the order and shorten each phase:

- **Weeks 1 to 3:** name a lead, list the critical tasks, review them and request ACRs.
- **Weeks 4 to 8:** fix the templates and the critical tasks first, with the vendors that run them.
- **Weeks 9 to 16:** convert or fix the documents people use to get services, caption videos and train editors.
- **Weeks 17 to 22:** test with keyboard, screen readers and users, fix and publish the statement.
- **After the date:** keep going with the full plan. Conformance is maintained, not finished.

Sources and license

- U.S. Department of Justice, ADA.gov: Fact sheet on the web content and mobile app accessibility rule for state and local governments. ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule
- Federal Register, April 24, 2024: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities (28 CFR part 35, subpart H).
- Federal Register, April 20, 2026: interim final rule extending the compliance dates (document 2026-07663).
- W3C: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. [w3.org/TR/WCAG21](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21)

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Information current as of November 2, 2026. Check ADA.gov for later changes.

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