



A guided journey out of PDF Hell

*How to create accessible PDFs — an
interactive workshop and support clinic*



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*A special thank you
to our members!*

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Today's Agenda

- 1 Quick legal refresher
- 2 To remediate or not to remediate?
- 3 How: two document case studies
- 4 PDF accessibility checklist
- 5 Q&A

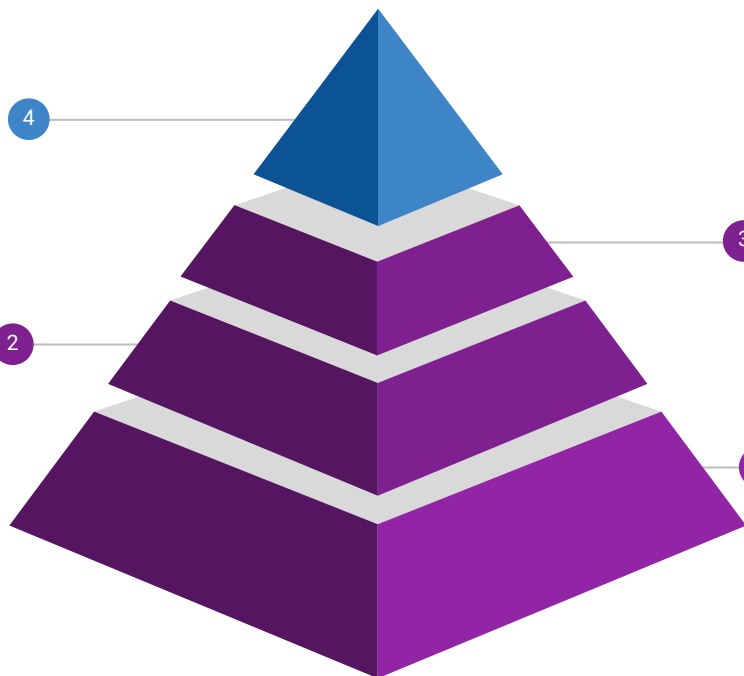
Legal foundations for website accessibility

WCAG 2.1 AA Guidelines

The international web accessibility guidelines that are referenced (directly and indirectly) by both state and federal laws regarding web accessibility.

Section 508

A law referenced by the ADA that more specifically outlines how to meet accessibility standards for electronic content, including websites.



State Laws

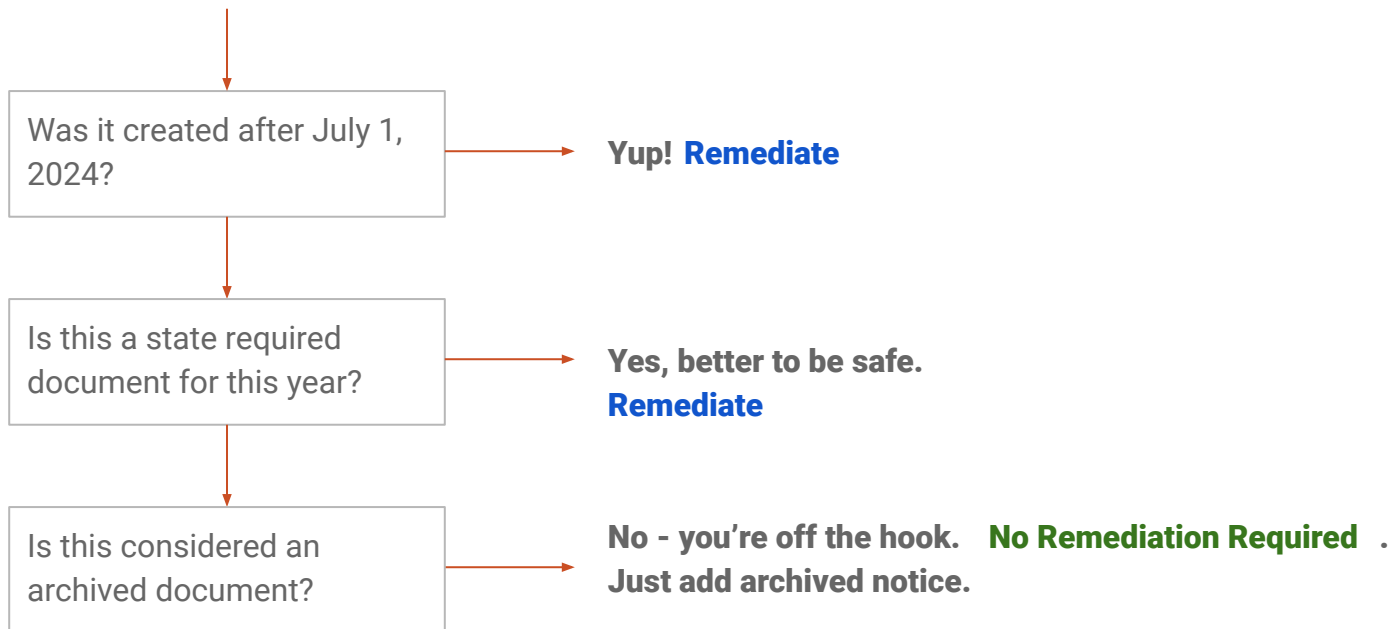
Requires that state agencies comply with accessibility guidelines. Examples include HB 21-1110 in Colorado or AB 434 in California.

ADA Compliance

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects the rights of people with disabilities. It's broad reach extends to websites, but doesn't reference web accessibility specifically.

To remediate or not to remediate?

That is the question!



[Archived Content as Defined by DOJ](#)

1. Archived web content

State and local governments' websites often include a lot of content that is not currently used. This information may be outdated, not needed, or repeated somewhere else. Sometimes, this information is archived on the website.

- Your state or local government's web content that meets **all four** of the following points would not need to meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA:
 1. The content was created before the date your government must comply with this rule, or reproduces paper documents or the contents of other physical media (audiotapes, film negatives, and CD-ROMs for example) that were created before your government must comply with this rule, **AND**
 2. The content is kept only for reference, research, or recordkeeping, **AND**
 3. The content is kept in a special area for archived content, **AND**
 4. The content has not been changed since it was archived.
- **Example:** A water quality report from 1998 that a state has stored only for research purposes in an "archive" section of its website and has not updated would fall under the exception. The exception would also apply to handwritten research notes or photos that go with the 1998 water quality report that the state scans and posts to its website in the archive section.



The exception does not apply unless all four points are present. If any point is missing, the exception does not apply.



2. Preexisting conventional electronic documents

Some state and local governments have a lot of old documents, like PDFs, on their website. It can sometimes be hard to make these documents meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA.

- Your state or local government's documents that meet **all three** of the following points do not need to meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA:
 1. The documents are word processing, presentation, PDF, or spreadsheet files; **AND**
 2. They were available on your state or local government's website or mobile app **before** the date your state or local government must comply with this rule; **AND**
 3. They are not currently being used to apply for, access, or participate in your state or local government's services, programs, or activities.
- **Example:** This exception would apply to a PDF flyer for a Thanksgiving Day parade posted on a town's website in 2018, or a Microsoft Word version of a sample ballot for a school board election posted on a school district's website in 2014.



The exception does not apply unless all three points are present. Where any point is missing, the exception does not apply.



3. Content posted by a third party where the third party is not posting due to contractual, licensing, or other arrangements with a state or local government

Third parties sometimes post content on state and local governments' websites or mobile apps. Third parties are members of the public or others who are not controlled by or acting for state or local governments. Your state or local government may not be able to change the content third parties post.

- Content that is posted by third parties on your state or local government's website or mobile app would not need to meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA.
 - **Example:** A message that a member of the public posts on a town's online message board would fall under the exception.


 **This exception only applies to content posted by a third party. Content that is not posted by a third party, including the following, is not covered by the exception.** +

 **What the exception does not change** +

4. Individualized documents that are password-protected

State and local governments sometimes use password-protected websites to share documents that are for specific individuals, like a water or tax bill. It might be hard to make all of these documents accessible right away for everyone, and there might not be a person with a disability who needs access to these documents.

- Your state or local government's documents that meet **all three** of the following points do not need to meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA:
 1. The documents are word processing, presentation, PDF, or spreadsheet files, **AND**
 2. The documents are about a specific person, property, or account, **AND**
 3. The documents are password-protected or otherwise secured.
- **Example:** A PDF version of a water bill for a person's home that is available in that person's secure account on a city's website would fall under the exception. However, the exception does not apply to the city's website itself.

 **The exception does not apply unless all three points are present. If any point is missing, the exception does not apply. Here are some examples related to a town water bill:** +

 **What the exception does not change** +

5. Preexisting social media posts

For many state and local governments, making all of their past social media posts accessible may be impossible. There also may be very little value to making these old posts accessible because they were usually intended to provide updates about things happening at the time they were posted in the past.

For these reasons, your state or local government's social media posts made before the date your government must comply with this rule do not need to meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA.

- **Example:** This exception would apply to a 2017 social media post by a city's sanitation department announcing that trash collection would be delayed due to a snowstorm.



What the exception does not change



If none of the exceptions apply, do state and local governments always have to make web content and content in mobile apps meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA?



Case Study 1: simple document with a table

Most Common Error: “Untagged PDF”

- Notice for proposed budget amendment
- Use Adobe Acrobat auto-tag
- Fix reading order
- Update Document Title

Case Study 2: Transparency Notice

A PDF'd version of a web page (Transparency Notice)

- HTML file turns into gibberish when printed as PDF
- Two choices - link to the [original](#) or send for professional remediation

Case Study 3: 3rd party-supplied scanned document

- OCR to Word, then export as an accessible PDF

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