



ACCESSIBILITY

ADA COMPLIANCE

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY SITE IS COMPLIANT?

This document provides an overview of the main areas of concern for an accessible Economic Gateway website.



DESIGN

Addressing aspects of the visual presentation



PROGRAMMING

Addressing aspects of built-in features and functionality



CONTENT POPULATION

Addressing aspects of unique content on each page

The information has been simplified to address the most common concerns and scenarios you can expect to encounter.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

WHAT ARE THE COMPLETE STANDARDS?

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are broken in to 4 principles – perceivability, operability, understandability, and robustness – with further break down of aspects for consideration within each section. Those elements are graded from A (the most essential) to AAA (the most accommodating for those with disabilities).

A quick reference of WCAG Compliance Standards can be found [here](#). That page shows the 2018 update (2.1) of the original 2008 (2.0) standards. It is a somewhat simplified presentation of the standards, but is a fully comprehensive list, rather than the selected points of common concern addressed in this document.

Full technical documentation of the standards can be viewed [here](#).

I. DESIGN

Accessibility can significantly affect design (in terms of requiring high contrast, large fonts, etc.) so it is down to you to set a bar for what level of accessibility you want to achieve against what level of design aesthetic you want to prioritize.

NEW SITES/DESIGNS

If you are having a new site designed then you can notify your design team that accessibility is a primary concern for you and this will be taken into account in creating the design. This means that topics such as ensuring high-contrast content, large or resizable text, priority of key content in the layout and other accessibility topics will influence the appearance of your design.

EXISTING SITES

You can use the **WAVE checker** to gauge what kind of adjustments might be required for an existing website and discuss with your GateKeeper rep what sorts of changes should be made to accommodate issues that are noted. Such changes usually require template changes, which will be subject to scheduling with the programming team.

II. PROGRAMMING

We build all our templates to be *at least* compliant at an 'A' level of the ADA Compliance Standards (this covers basics like keyboard navigation, code quality for parsing, template structure, etc.).

Our admin is built to accommodate the inclusion of added information needed for accessibility of content populated through the CMS.

NEW SITES

For clients particularly concerned with ADA compliance we can perform additional testing during the template building phase to try to incorporate some additional aspects of accessibility from the AA or AAA levels.

EXISTING SITES

Clients with existing sites can request the same extended checks be performed for increased accessibility support, however, this requires programming time and is subject to the availability of the programming schedule. Since existing sites may not have been designed with accessibility considerations in mind, it may not be possible to facilitate all the additional areas tested.

III. CONTENT POPULATION

Golden Shovel's pre-population team follows basic standards for best practice when doing the initiation population of a site. However, a site is a living organism to which new content should regularly be added and the biggest area where accessibility comes into play is in the content you populate to your site over time, and the standards implemented by the client are not something Golden Shovel can control or enforce. We provide an Accessibility Checker on our admin's content fields which can help you check the contents of that field and flag accessibility concerns for you, but it is up to you to use this tool and act on that information (this will flag things like repetitive links, missing ALT attributes, and some structural issues within content - largely relevant to those using screen readers). You must decide what level of accessibility you will adhere to in the content you put on your site. The most common areas for consideration are:

-  *Have you provided ALT attributes for all images? Is it brief and concise?*
-  *Have you chosen images with high-enough contrast?*
-  *Are you correctly using Headings?*
-  *Are your links phrased so that people can tell what they link to by the text?*
-  *Have you avoided linking clustered items to the same thing?*
-  *Have you structured your content logically and without reliance on visual cues such as color or size?*
-  *Have you avoided using table headings for visual formatting?*

More advanced topics for consideration include:

-  *What level of language skills/education is required for someone to understand your copy?*
-  *Do you provide transcripts of audio and video on your site?*
-  *Do you add captioning to videos?*
-  *Do you provide sign language interpretation of audio files?*

The above is just a selection of the considerations for accessible content that you will most often need to address, and the range those considerations can cover. It's advisable to first determine your desired level of compliance (A-AAA), review all the aspects of that level (see the Accessibility Standards section), and create guidelines for those who generate and populate your site content to follow to ensure the desired level of compliance.