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## Why Accessibility Matters

### Ensuring Your Website is Truly Compliant and Accessible

**Dear Interested Municipality,**

This document was created to help municipalities understand the growing importance of website accessibility and the latest updates related to digital compliance under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Recent guidance and enforcement trends make it clear that accessibility extends far beyond what is visually apparent on a website, involving behind-the-scenes structure, code, navigation methods, and assistive technologies used by individuals with disabilities. This overview is intended to clarify what true accessibility means today, why many websites that appear compliant may still fall short, and what municipalities should be aware of moving forward to reduce risk, improve public access, and meet evolving federal expectations.

More information can be found on the ADA's website -  
<https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/>

**I look forward to speaking with you,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keegan Widmyer".

**Keegan Widmyer**  
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# Why Accessibility Matters

## Ensuring Your Website is Truly Compliant and Accessible



### *What It Is*

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Web accessibility means making your site usable for all people, including those with disabilities. It's **not just about visuals, it's about functionality for everyone**, whether they're using a screen reader, keyboard shortcuts, or assistive technology.



### *Thinking "We Think Our Site is Accessible" Isn't Enough*

Assuming your site is accessible isn't enough. True accessibility involves elements you can't see without special programs or commands. Visitors with visual impairments, hearing difficulties, or motor disabilities rely on features like **screen readers, keyboard navigation, and alt text for images**. If these are missing, your site isn't truly accessible.



### *Beyond What You Can See*

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Accessibility goes **beyond how a website looks**. Many essential requirements exist behind the scenes, including proper heading structure, meaningful alternative text for images, and the ability to navigate the site using a keyboard. These elements allow assistive technologies, such as screen readers, to function correctly. Without this underlying structure, users with disabilities may be **unable to access information or interact with public services**, even if the website appears modern and visually complete.



### *Who Needs to Comply and By When*

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State and local governments must ensure their websites and mobile apps meet **WCAG 2.1 Level AA** standards under updated ADA rules published April 24, 2024. Entities serving 50,000+ residents must comply by **April 24, 2026**, while governments with less than 50,000 residents and "special districts" have until **April 26, 2027**. Compliance ensures equal access to digital services and information for all residents.



### *What's At Stake*

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Failure to comply by the above deadlines can result in **legal action and fines**. **More importantly**, it means excluding community members who rely on accessible websites to engage with your services and receive information.

## What It Is

Beyond legal compliance, upgrading to an **ADA-compliant**, modernized website brings **tangible benefits** to your community. Here's how it can transform your municipality's online presence:

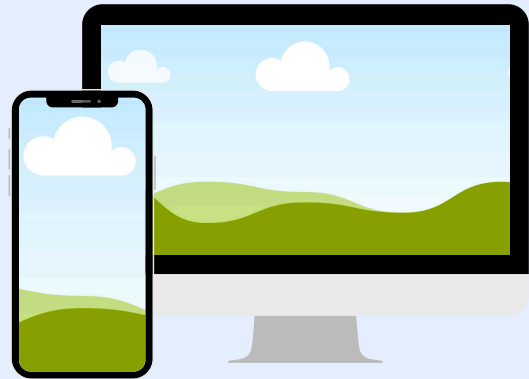


### Plain Grove Township Case Study

PLAINGROVETWP.ORG

EnforceMG recently designed **Plain Grove Township's website** to meet ADA and WCAG 2.1 AA standards. The launch of the new site resulted in:

- **Website traffic** increased 7x in peak months relative to the old website
- **Mobile activity** and user engagement significantly increased
- The redesign was **well-received** by community members and council members, seeing it as a **step forward** in their digital progression



An up-to-date, accessible municipal website increases usability, search engine visibility, and user satisfaction

## Modernization Matters

- ✓ **Findability:** Residents can access public information easily
- ✓ **Reduced Inquiries:** Fewer calls to the municipality office for basic information
- ✓ **Improved Engagement:** Visitors can quickly find and utilize township services
- ✓ **Future-Proofing:** The website remains functional and relevant as standards evolve, making it easier to adhere to new standards if or when they come out

A modern, ADA-compliant website is a tool that empowers your entire community to **participate fully**, access essential information, and engage with local government.

Ready to modernize your website? **Contact us** to learn more about how an ADA-compliant website can benefit your municipality. **Please note that as we approach this deadline, our queue will line up fast!**

### Usability Enhancements

ADA compliance isn't just about meeting standards, it's about making your website easier for everyone.

 **Improved Navigation**

 **Enhanced Readability**

 **Mobile Optimization**