



Website Accessibility Requirements Overview

Overview

In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) published a final rule under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requiring all state and local government entities to ensure their websites and mobile applications are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

This rule clarifies and strengthens long-standing ADA obligations to provide equal access to digital services, information, and programs offered by public entities.

For municipalities serving fewer than 50,000 residents, compliance with the rule is required by April 26, 2027.

Why This is Important

Municipalities increasingly deliver services, information, and public engagement through websites, forms, and other online platforms. When these platforms are not accessible, residents with disabilities may be unable to access essential services such as:

- Paying utility bills or taxes
- Viewing agendas, minutes, or meeting recordings
- Applying for permits, licenses, or village programs
- Accessing emergency alerts or community updates

The new rule ensures equal access to government services while also reducing legal risks and improving overall user experience for all residents.

Key Requirements

- All municipal web content and mobile apps must comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). This standard includes requirements such as:
 - Alternative text for images
 - Captions for videos and audio
 - Sufficient color contrast for text
 - Keyboard navigation

- Accessible forms and documents
- Applies to:
 - Village websites, mobile apps, and digital documents
 - Content created or managed by third-party vendors under contract with the Village
 - Services like online payments, permits, registration systems, and digital agendas
 - Limited Exceptions: Certain types of content may be exempt (e.g., archived materials, preexisting documents not actively in use, password-protected individualized documents and social media posts created before compliance dates).
- Compliance deadlines:
 - State and local governments serving 50,000 or more residents must comply by April 24, 2026.
 - Smaller jurisdictions, including the Village of Lombard (close to 45,000 residents), have until April 26, 2027 to ensure that all web content and mobile applications meet the new accessibility standards.
 - Special district governments follow the same April 26, 2027 compliance date.

Impacts for the Village

- The Village must review all web content for compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards.
- Contracts for website management, hosting, or app development must include ADA compliance requirements.
- Existing PDFs and online forms will need to be made accessible or replaced with accessible alternatives.
- Employees who create or upload online materials will require training on accessibility practices (e.g., creating accessible PDFs, adding alt text).
- The Village will need to adopt a policy outlining responsibilities, review processes, and procedures for addressing public accessibility requests.

Next Steps

- A meeting has been scheduled with CivicPlus to review the Village's current compliance status and discuss available accessibility tools within the existing website platform.

- Staff will explore opportunities to engage an external organization to conduct a professional website accessibility audit.
- Key web pages and documents will be identified and prioritized for early remediation.
- Staff will develop a Village Web Accessibility Policy and provide targeted training for website content editors and other staff involved in maintaining online materials.
- An annual review process will be established to ensure continued accessibility and full compliance with ADA requirements by April 2027.

Additional Resources

- ADA Small Entity Compliance Guide: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/small-entity-compliance-guide/>
- WCAG 2.1 Guidelines: www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/