



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Memorandum

Updated October 2024

TO: Interested Persons
FROM: Annabelle Tracy, IT Accessibility Manager
SUBJECT: The Colorado General Assembly Digital Accessibility Report

Purpose

The Colorado General Assembly is committed to providing equitable access to state-funded information and communication technology (ICT) and providing all individuals with the ability to participate fully in the programs, services, and activities of the General Assembly.

In accordance with [Section 24-34-802 \(1\)\(c\)\(II\), C.R.S.](#), this report outlines the ongoing efforts made by the staff of the legislative branch of the State of Colorado to improve and maintain a digital landscape that is inclusive and accessible to everyone, including its ongoing accessibility efforts to meet or exceed accessibility standards.

The staff of the legislative branch of the State of Colorado includes the state House of Representatives Staff, the state Senate Staff, and the General Assembly's nonpartisan staff agencies: the Legislative Council Staff; the Office of Legislative Legal Services, including the Office of Legislative Workplace Relations; the Joint Budget Committee Staff; and the Office of the State Auditor.

Accessibility Standards

The Colorado General Assembly is engaged in ongoing efforts to ensure that its ICT meets or exceeds the following standards and guidelines:

- Levels A or AA success criteria in the most recent official version of the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C);
- [8 CCR 1501-11](#) Rules Establishing Technology Accessibility Standards promulgated by the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology pursuant to [Section 24 85 103, C.R.S.](#); and
- the production and remediation of PDF documents to meet ISO 14289-1. Document management applications - Electronic document file format enhancement for accessibility - Part 1: Use of ISO 32000-1 (PDF/UA-1).



Accessibility Approach

Accessibility is integrated into all aspects of the organization, including but not limited to digital procurement, governance, application development, and publications. Ensuring accessibility requires an ongoing and iterative process as follows:

1. **Inventory.** Compiling an inventory allows staff to identify the scope of legislative digital products required to undergo changes, and informs the careful consideration and prioritization of existing products.
2. **Auditing.** Auditing allows staff to understand the scope and methodology of remediation that is required for each digital product.
3. **Remediation.** The remediation process implements the recommendations of the audit to ensure that digital products are accessible.
4. **Accommodation.** Establishing a reasonable accommodation request process enables a person with a disability to request the remediation of products not in active use or that may require additional alteration.

Ongoing Efforts

The following efforts in planning, budgeting, and policy development; personnel and administration; collaboration; procurement, software, and tools; and audit, evaluation, and remediation demonstrate the ongoing work towards compliance with [Section 24-34-802 \(1\)\(c\) \(II\), C.R.S.](#)

Planning, budgeting, and policy development

Efforts in planning, budgeting, and policy development include:

- the creation of a digital accessibility roadmap and plan;
- the budget for direct spending on accessibility totaling \$1.77 million in FY 2024-25, which represents 2.1 percent of total and 2.2 percent of General Fund appropriations to the Legislative Department. This excludes indirect spending on accessibility, which has not been quantified but likely exceeds direct spending. Indirect spending includes staff and operating budgets that improve accessibility but are implemented outside of the accessibility team;
- updates to the [Colorado Legislative Branch Policy on Services for Persons with Disabilities, Including Grievance Resolution Procedures Services for Persons with Disabilities](#) to include relevant language surrounding digital accessibility and reasonable accommodation;



- the ongoing inventory and prioritization of digital products produced and procured by staff;
- the creation and maintenance of an accessibility report-to-date in accordance with [Section 24-34-802 \(1\)\(c\)\(II\), C.R.S.](#);
- the creation of a technology accessibility statement and accommodation procedure in accordance with [8 CCR 1501-11](#);
- the release of an accommodation request webform and PDF form, enabling an individual to request accommodation in accordance with the Section 24-34-802 (1)(c)(II), C.R.S. and the updated Policy on Services for Persons with Disabilities;
- the creation of a central Accessibility page, accessible via the footer of the Colorado General Assembly website at leg.colorado.gov/accessibility; and
- the ongoing development of internal standard operating procedures and resources.

Personnel and administration

Personnel and administrative efforts include:

- hiring a Senior Accessibility Analyst during the 2023-24 fiscal year to coordinate the digital accessibility efforts of staff;
- contracting with additional accessibility-focused personnel during the 2023-24 fiscal year;
- hiring several additional accessibility-focused personnel in the 2024-25 fiscal year;
- the allocation of existing administrative resources within each legislative service agency;
- progress toward ongoing staff education and training in digital accessibility core competencies, best practices, software, and tools;
- establishing an accessibility team within the Legislative Information Services staff section; and
- progress towards hiring additional accessibility analysts during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Collaboration

Efforts in collaboration include:

- ongoing collaboration throughout the legislative branch, including the creation of the legislative staff digital accessibility working group and team-specific working groups;
- ongoing collaboration on accessibility standards and practices with the Colorado Governor's



Office of Information Technology, various state entities, and global digital accessibility technical working groups;

- ongoing collaboration with outside organizations and vendors on the development of accessibility tools; and
- ongoing collaboration in testing and evaluation of new digital products with the disability community.

Procurement, software, and tools

Ongoing efforts in procurement, software and tools include:

- the ongoing inventory and evaluation of software and tools in active use by staff;
- progress towards establishing an internal accessible procurement process;
- the purchase of the several accessibility-related software and tools in the 2024-25 fiscal year, including migration to new accessible email and collaboration software;
- the ongoing training of staff in accessibility best practices when using the new email and collaboration software; and
- the procurement of additional hardware devices and tools.

Audit, evaluation, and remediation

Ongoing efforts in audit, evaluation, and remediation include:

- Web accessibility:
 - completion of the third-party initial accessibility audit of key applications in active use;
 - the introduction and ongoing involvement of accessibility in the software development lifecycle;
 - creation of a centrally located accessibility page on the existing Colorado General Assembly website;
 - progress towards the development of a new, accessible Colorado General Assembly website;
 - the development of a comprehensive automated and manual testing approach to ensure accessibility and usability of web content, which includes:
 - automated and on-demand evaluation with [Siteimprove](#); and similar web



- accessibility evaluation tools;
 - manual content reviews;
 - manual testing with screen readers; and
 - manual testing with visual difference emulators.
- Document accessibility:
 - completion of the third-party initial accessibility audit of legislative publications;
 - the development of a PDF remediation intake and tracking process;
 - the ongoing evaluation and remediation of existing legislative publications in active use;
 - the ongoing remediation of newly created publications;
 - the ongoing evaluation and remediation of existing publication processes;
 - the ongoing conversion of bill text into an accessible format;
 - a comprehensive automated and manual testing approach to ensure accessibility and usability of PDF documents, including:
 - automated and on-demand automated evaluation with leading document accessibility software;
 - manual content reviews;
 - manual testing with screen readers; and
 - manual testing with visual difference emulators.
- Hardware and accommodation systems:
 - the ongoing evaluation of existing hardware and systems used in legislative proceeding accommodation requests; and
 - the ongoing training of staff in legislative proceeding accommodation procedures.

The Colorado General Assembly is committed to providing equitable access and effective communication to all individuals in accordance with the requirements of relevant Colorado statutes. The efforts outlined in this report intend to demonstrate the ongoing commitment and comprehensive approach of the Colorado General Assembly staff toward compliance with [Section 24-34-802 \(1\)\(c\)\(II\), C.R.S.](#)