

What Governments Need to Know

Governments are moving their constituent interactions online. Web-based services can be incredible for efficiency and engagement, but governments must ensure they're accessible to their entire constituency. It's the law.



What are the rules?



ADA

(Americans with Disabilities Act)

Removed what President George H.W. Bush called a “shameful wall of exclusion” for disabled Americans. Made discrimination based on disability illegal in the U.S.



Section 508

(of the Workforce Rehabilitation Act)

Requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Many states have adopted versions of Section 508 requirements.

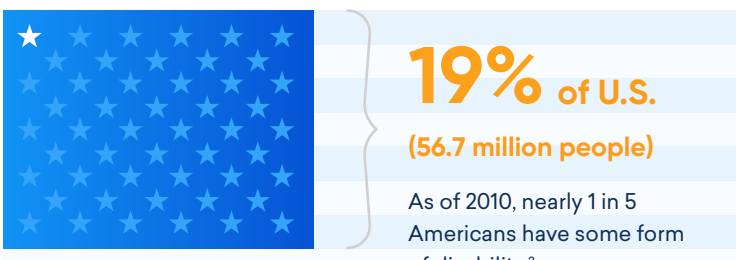


WCAG 2.1

(Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)

The latest version of accessibility rules created by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international standards organization. Lays out universal principles for making online services accessible to people with disabilities.¹

Accessibility matters.



1973

The Rehabilitation Act is passed, prohibiting Federal discrimination on the basis of disability in education and employment.

1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act further prohibits discrimination based on disability in all areas of public life

2001

Section 508 is added to the Rehabilitation Act to help accessibility legislation keep pace with technology

2003

The U.S. Department of Justice releases a guide for state and local governments recommending they develop an action plan to improve web accessibility³

2008

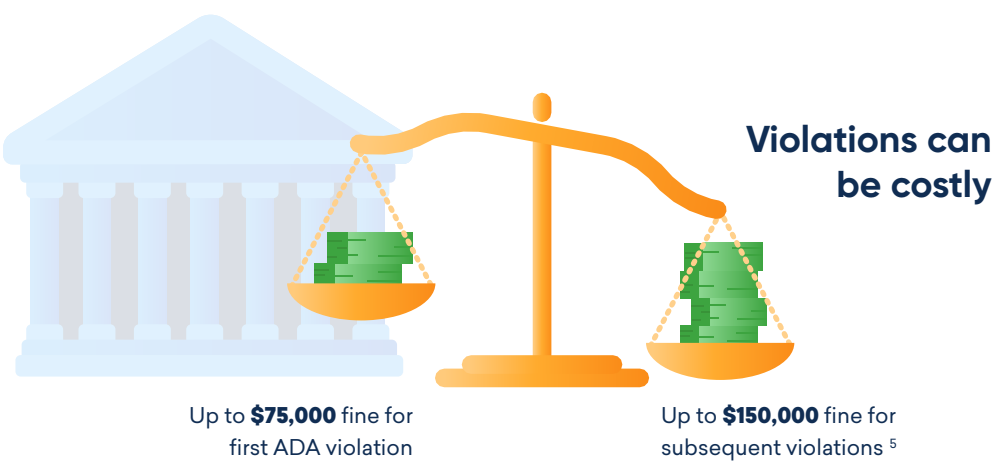
The first version of WCAG is developed to standardize web content accessibility guidelines internationally

2017

The U.S. Access Board adopts parts of WCAG 2.0 into Section 508


Legal trouble.

Since 2011, **150+** local governments in the US have been sued for website accessibility issues.⁴




Who's protected?


WCAG 2.1 requires web content to accommodate certain classes of people, including:




Visually-impaired




Hearing-impaired



Mobility-impaired



Cognitively-impaired




Non-English speakers

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Sources

¹ <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>
² <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html>
³ <https://www.essentialaccessibility.com/blog/local-government-website-accessibility/>
⁴ <https://www.adpharos.com/2017/12/12/ada-lawsuits-target-websites-in-georgia/>
⁵ https://www.ada.gov/civil_penalties_2014.htm