

# DuPage County Digital Accessibility Policy

## Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for managing, maintaining, and ensuring the accessibility of DuPage County's digital services, including public-facing digital content such as PDFs, images, media, web applications developed by or for the County, third-party applications and platforms used to deliver County information and services. Ensuring accessibility allows all users, including those with disabilities, to access County services and information independently and equitably. It aligns with governance best practices and complies with a minimum of A and AA standards in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 (WCAG 2.1) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) accessibility rule.

For practical guidance on how to meet these standards, refer to the DuPage County Digital Content Accessibility Guides, which includes specific requirements for PDFs, media, social media, and more.

## Compliance Timeline

DuPage County strives to be fully compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards by April 24, 2026, in accordance with the Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance. We are committed to continually improving the accessibility of our digital content and services.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- All County employees and elected officials publishing content intended for public use on County websites and other external facing digital properties managed by the County.
- All County departments and staff who procure, renew, configure, or administer public-facing third-party applications, platforms, or embedded tools used to deliver County information or services.
- Third-party vendors providing public facing digital services.

## Governance & Responsibilities

- **Digital and Web Services:** Oversees website governance, accessibility compliance, and training for web editors. Provides guidance on accessible PDF creation and remediation.
- **Web Editors:** Maintain and update content following County standards.
- **County Board Office Communication Staff:** Collaborates with Digital and Web Services to oversee website governance and ensure accessibility compliance. Manages the County's official social media presence and is responsible for ensuring that all social media and multimedia content adheres to accessibility standards.
- **Procurement Team:** Ensures third-party vendors comply with accessibility policies before contract approval.

## Content Publishing Standards

- **Accessibility Compliance:** All digital content must adhere to accessibility standards as outlined in the County's Digital Content Accessibility Guides. This includes requirements and best practices for multimedia, keyboard navigation, alternative text for images, and other WCAG criteria.
- **Use of PDFs:** Although PDFs may be used, HTML is the preferred format. PDFs must meet accessibility standards before publication, ensuring they are readable by assistive technologies.
- **Responsibility for Content Accessibility:** Our websites are designed and maintained to meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards. Web Editors are responsible for ensuring that the content they add, such as text, images, PDFs, and media, complies with these standards.
- **Public Accessibility Statement:** All County public-facing websites and major public-facing web applications must include a link to the County Accessibility Statement page, which provides instructions for reporting accessibility barriers and submitting an ADA accessibility complaint.

## Third-Party Vendor Requirements

Third-party software provided to the public must meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards per the DOJ accessibility ruling. Vendors must provide an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) or Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT).

Accessibility requirements must be evaluated as part of the selection, purchase, configuration, and renewal of any public-facing third-party application or platform. Departments must obtain and review the vendor's ACR or VPAT and confirm remediation commitments before contract execution or renewal.

Vendors failing to comply must submit a remediation plan before contract renewal. If no plan is submitted within a reasonable timeframe, the County may reconsider vendor contracts or seek alternative solutions.

## PDF Accessibility Policy

### General Guidelines

HTML is the standard format for all public content on our websites. PDFs should only be used when necessary, such as when HTML is not feasible or when the document's format must be preserved. Website Content Management

Our websites are for sharing important information and services, not for storing unnecessary files. Web Editors in each department or elected official's office should regularly review and remove PDFs, files, or web pages that are no longer needed. This keeps our content useful, relevant, and easy to use for everyone.

### Appropriate use of PDFs

1. **Official Documents:** Forms, reports, or legal documents that cannot effectively be converted to HTML. These documents must still be made accessible.
2. **Archived Materials:** Documents kept for historical or research purposes that are not actively used for current government programs or services.

### *Archived Documents*

Archived Documents should:

- Be stored in a dedicated section of the website clearly marked as an archive.
- Not changed or updated after being archived.

### *Exceptions*

In line with the DOJ rule, the following types of content may be exempt from full accessibility requirements:

- Archived web content that is not altered or updated after the compliance date and is clearly labeled as archived.

- Content that the County is not responsible for developing or creating, except if it is essential for public service.
- Web content that would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the County's programs, services, or activities.

However, we will strive to make these materials as accessible as possible and provide accessible alternatives upon request.

### **Approval and Documentation**

Exceptions must be reviewed and approved by Digital and Web Services, documented, and revisited as needed. When an exception applies, the County will strive to make the content as accessible as possible and provide accessible alternatives upon request.

### **Providing Accessible Alternatives**

We are required to provide accessible versions of any digital content upon request, even for those items that may be exempt from accessibility standards. This ensures everyone has equal access to our information and services. Requests for accessible formats should be fulfilled within 10 days. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, depending on the complexity of the issue or other mitigating factors.

### **Forms and Fillable PDFs**

Fillable PDF forms should be avoided whenever possible. Instead, all public-facing forms must be converted into accessible HTML forms or recreated using an approved platform such as Formstack. This ensures that users with assistive technologies can complete and submit forms independently and efficiently.

Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Digital and Web Services Team.

### **Document Creation Standards**

All new or updated documents must follow WCAG 2.1 AA standards. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Proper document structure (like headings and tags).
- Text descriptions for images (alt text).
- Compatibility with assistive technologies like screen readers.
- Proper color contrast and use of color.

## Document Remediation

Documents that do not meet accessibility standards and cannot be converted to HTML should be prioritized for remediation based on their importance and frequency of use.

## Media Accessibility

All media content (including videos, audio recordings, and animations) published on County websites or social media platforms must meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards. This ensures that all people, including those with disabilities, can fully engage with our digital materials.

Please refer to the DuPage County Media Accessibility Guide for detailed requirements and best practices.

## Social Media Accessibility

All content posted on official County social media platforms must be accessible to users with disabilities. This includes using image descriptions (alt text), providing captions or transcripts for videos, and avoiding content that relies solely on visual cues.

Please refer to the DuPage County Social Media Accessibility Guide for detailed requirements and best practices.

## Website Audits & Maintenance

Digital and Web Services will regularly audit the website to identify and address accessibility issues.

A public feedback form is available for users to report any accessibility barriers they encounter. Digital and Web Services will review all feedback and notify the relevant content creator of any issues.

Web Editors are responsible for resolving reported accessibility issues within 10 days. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, depending on the complexity of the issue or other mitigating factors.

## Enforcement & Policy Updates

### Training Requirements

- All Web Editors must complete annual web and accessibility training.
- Those who haven't completed training may have their editing privileges suspended until they do so.

## Content Creator Responsibilities

Content creators are responsible for ensuring their content meets accessibility standards. Digital and Web Services and the DuPage County Board Office communications staff will provide support and resources to help creators meet these standards.

## Quality Assurance

Digital and Web Services may review content for accessibility compliance. If necessary, they may revise or remove content that doesn't meet accessibility standards.

## Policy Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practices and legal requirements. Content creators will be notified of any significant policy changes.