Make your website accessible

To help make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities, the <u>Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications</u> requires some organizations in the province to make their websites and web content accessible. This summary will help you find out what you need to do.

What do I have to do?

Your website and its content must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, as outlined in the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

Beginning January 1, 2014:

- If you launch a new public website or your existing site undergoes a significant refresh, the site and any of its web content published after January 1, 2012, must conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, **Level A**.

Beginning January 1, 2021:

- All public websites and all web content on those sites published after January 1, 2012, must conform with WCAG 2.0 **Level AA,** other than providing captions on live videos or audio descriptions for pre-recorded videos.

You don't have to modify content posted before 2012 and you don't have to make your internal website accessible. If asked, you will need to work with individuals to make the content accessible to them in some way, like large print or Braille.

What does WCAG 2.0 do?

WCAG 2.0 is an internationally accepted standard for web accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international team of experts.

WCAG 2.0 sets out guidelines for organizations to follow to make their websites more accessible for people with disabilities. The guidelines cover things like writing web content in clear language, providing alternate text for images and making sure someone can navigate your website with just a keyboard.

Ontario

Each guideline has three levels of accessibility: A, AA and AAA. Level AAA is the highest level of accessibility. Following these guidelines should make it easier for everyone to access your website and content, including people without disabilities.

When does my website have to be accessible?

We're phasing in the WCAG 2.0 requirements to make it easy for you to build accessibility into your organization's website. The timelines are as follows.

Government of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly

2012 New public and internal websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions).

2016 All public websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions).

2020 All public and internal websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

Public sector organizations, businesses and non-profit organizations (50+ staff)

2014 New public websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level A.

2021 All public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012, must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions).

How do I comply with this?

Talk to your organization's web developer about complying with the requirements. Our Making your website more accessible guide includes information to help you work with web developers, whether they are in-house staff or external contractors.

What if it's not possible for me to do this?

Sometimes it may not be possible to meet the WCAG 2.0 requirements. For example, you used software and other tools that predate WCAG 2.0 to develop your website. You may be able to update or repair the products you used to support accessibility. If this is not possible, make sure you use software that supports accessibility the next time you revamp your site.

Want more detailed information?

Read Making your website more accessible.

Get an overview of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Check out this guide to understanding and implementing WCAG 2.0.

Read our policy guidelines.

GAATES' - WCAG 2.0 - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: An Introductory Guide for Web Developers.

GAATES' - A Guide for Hiring Contractors to Develop Accessible Websites and Web Content.

The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications is part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11. Read the regulation to find out more.