

Digital Accessibility Progress Report

June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026

Accessibility Standards

Our ongoing technology accessibility efforts rely on the technical standard provided by:

- 8 CCR 1501-11 Rules Establishing Technology Accessibility Standards
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3c) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA or higher.
- Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 4
- Department of Justice (DOJ) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II, Subpart H

Accessibility Maturity

The accessibility maturity model outlined below is a high-level view of specific digital accessibility priorities across the County. There are numerous components that fall in each identified item with their own specific outlined criteria.

Stage Definitions

- **Inactive** – No public facing work. The county is actively inventorying technology, assessing needs and/or have begun to make investments.
- **Launch** – Recognized need organization-wide. Planning has been initiated and activities per department are being organized.
- **Integrate** – Timeline for integration has been established with various county departments. Implementation is well defined and in process.
- **Optimize** – Incorporated organization-wide. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of new processes and practices are defined. If any actions are taken, assess those actions and adjust accordingly to ensure needs are met.

High-level Accessibility Maturity Progress

Accessibility Priority	Stage	Criteria
Accessibility Plan	Optimize	Incorporated organization wide.
Structured Grievance Process	Optimize	Incorporated organization wide.
HB21- 1454 Report Compliance	Optimize	Incorporated organization wide.
Systems & Applications Review	Launch	Recognized need organization wide. Compiled and organized data.
Content Management System (CMS) Audits, Remediation and Systems	Integrate	Timeline for integration has been established with AWS provider.

Contract, Procurement & Budget Processes	Launch/Integrate	Planning and department activities are organized, and implementation is in testing phase.
Training & Communication	Launch	Recognized need organization-wide and planning is initiated.
Internal Documentation Processes	Inactive	Inventorying technology, assessing needs and/or have begun to make investments.
Quality Control & Process Improvement	Launch/Integrate	Planning and department activities are organized, and implementation is in testing phase.

Annual Progress

El Paso County has continued to advance its digital accessibility efforts since 2024. Over this time, we've strengthened our commitment to making our online services, websites, and digital materials more accessible and user-friendly for all residents. The following sections outline both the progress we've made and unique challenges the county has faced as we work toward full digital accessibility across the organization.

Accessibility Priority Progress includes:

Accessibility Plan

- Updated the Digital Accessibility Plan with high-level view of digital accessibility priorities across the county. The accessibility plan is in the optimize stage of the high-level accessibility maturity progress model. The plan has been incorporated organization-wide with the approval of the Digital Accessibility Governance Board and County Administration. The plan is under a continuous monitoring and annual evaluation process to ensure incorporation of new processes and practices. If any actions fall outside the scope of the plan but impact accessibility, a review will be triggered outside of the annual review process.

Structured Grievance Process

- A structured grievance process has been established and implemented organization wide; it currently resides in the optimize stage of the high-level accessibility maturity progress model. The grievance process mirrors the established Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) grievance structure. The mirrored structure is under a continuous monitoring and annual evaluation process to ensure the set structure remains applicable and user friendly to El Paso County residents.

HB21-1454 Report Conformance

- El Paso County participated in the accessibility conformance extension from the State of Colorado. To operate under the extension, quarterly reports on good faith effort demonstrating progress needed to be established and publicly posted. Four reports outline the extension year and live on the [El Paso County Digital Accessibility webpage](#).

Systems and Applications Review

- Completed an inventory of all internal- and external-facing third-party applications used across county departments and offices. In addition, the Digital Strategy and Technology (DST)

Department has established an Asset Manager role to maintain and oversee the county's digital application inventory and ensure it remains up to date.

- Established a digital accessibility assessment process for third-party and new applications in collaboration with the Department of Communication and the Digital Strategy and Technology (DST) Department. This includes a flowchart that clearly outlines each step of the review process.
- Issued a notice to county vendors that provide information and communication technology (ICT) requesting Accessibility Conformance Reports (ACRs) for their platforms. The notice also outlines options for vendors to partner with the county on remediation efforts if their products do not meet accessibility compliance requirements.
- Established an ACR review process to assess risk and non-compliance areas for ICT vendors. The review process is designed in a structured format, created by the City of Colorado Springs, and shared with the county to ensure reviews are consistent between local and regional vendors.

Content Management System (CMS) Audits, Remediation and Systems

- Improved overall digital accessibility scores through automated review from the average site score of 82.2% to an average of 93.16% as of February 2026. Automated testing scans weekly providing county departments with up-to-date accessibility information and recommendations for remediation.
- All public-facing PDFs on El Paso County's main websites are processed through DocAccess to ensure accessibility features are included. This approach has significantly reduced the workload on County staff and minimized strain on internal systems by streamlining the document remediation process.
- At the start of 2026, the County onboarded a new Amazon Web Services (AWS) provider to support and enhance its digital infrastructure. This provider assists with system performance and maintenance; security monitoring, compliance, and incident response; application development and support; content governance and accessibility; DevOps and CI/CD processes; system integration and interoperability; and staff training and knowledge transfer.
- Implemented the Recite Me accessibility toolbar across all County websites to support users with language needs, cognitive differences, color vision deficiencies, dyslexia, and other accessibility needs. The tool provides features such as text-to-speech, translation, and customizable display settings to improve usability. Recite Me has also introduced an analytics dashboard that provides insights into how the toolbar is used, helping the County make more informed decisions about accessibility and language support.

Contract, Procurement & Budget Processes

- In 2025, brought on board Converge Accessibility as a consultant to assist the county in identifying and creating process for Procurement and identifying layers of risk within the county based on current standing. The Converge team, in collaboration with DST, County Communications, Procurement and County Legal, worked on solidifying a procurement intake form to assess if forms of ICT will be involved with the intended outcome product. The intake form allows for expedited review processes without large disruptions to established procurement deadlines or RFP timelines.
- Digital Accessibility clauses have been added to all contracts that provide the county with any type of ICT service or those with components of ICT. Contract language includes the needs to conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1, level A and AA requirements.
- Digital Accessibility language has been added to RFPs that request any type of ICT for assessment prior to final selection. The language states an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) must be provided upon submission.

Training and Communication

- Provided regular updates to County leadership and the Board of County Commissioners on digital accessibility requirements, including recent changes to Colorado regulations and updates to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II, Subpart H, which now explicitly include digital accessibility.
- Shared digital accessibility articles with County employees through the weekly “Connections” newsletter, covering topics such as regulatory updates and practical tips for incorporating accessibility into daily work.
- Drafted digital accessibility training modules for El Paso County employees, with the first module scheduled to launch in September 2026. This will be the first in a series of training courses designed to build knowledge and support ongoing accessibility efforts across the County.
- Developed and distributed guidance materials for Document Remediation Liaisons, as identified by department leadership. These guides outline the responsibilities, requirements, and expectations of the liaison role, and support departments in carrying out document remediation efforts effectively.

Internal Documentation Processes

- Documentation processes will be underway once the County finalizes its formal assessment procedures and governance policies. Recommended reporting structures have been prepared, and a comprehensive review—and potential implementation—of these recommendations is scheduled to begin in the third quarter of 2026.

Quality Control & Process Improvement

- Conducted GAP Analysis of digital accessibility implementation county-wide based on state and federal regulations and the current digital accessibility standing of the county. Findings demonstrated the largest focus area needs to be organizational, not technical. Overall analysis findings will guide future digital accessibility work, allowing the county to establish a strong framework of continued and sustainable growth.
- Implemented software assessment for all ICT being considered for use within the county. This process is for ICT that is intended to be utilized internally and externally.

Unique challenges:

- Advancing WCAG compliance requires ongoing investment in modern tools, technology, and specialized expertise. As with many public organizations, available funding must be balanced across numerous service needs, which can influence the pace at which new accessibility tools, assessments, and staffing structures are implemented.
- The County manages many essential services and initiatives, and accessibility work must be integrated alongside these ongoing responsibilities. As a result, limited staffing capacity and competing operational priorities can affect the pace of County-wide accessibility implementation.
- Establishing consistent accessibility standards across the County has been an ongoing effort as governance structures continue to evolve. The creation of the Digital Accessibility Governance Board marked an important step forward, and the County is now working to strengthen this framework so it can provide clearer direction and more sustainable processes across all departments.
- Supporting County-wide adoption of accessibility practices requires ongoing change management. As departments balance many essential responsibilities, varying levels of training and awareness

can affect how quickly new accessibility processes are integrated. Continued education and communication efforts are helping build confidence and support for consistent implementation across the organization.

- Building internal accessibility expertise remains an ongoing challenge. With only one staff member dedicated to digital accessibility—who also supports other priorities—it can be difficult to provide comprehensive guidance across all departments. As the County continues to grow its accessibility work, there is an opportunity to expand internal capacity, strengthen shared knowledge, and reduce reliance on external resources.
- The County is continuing to strengthen its process for reviewing the accessibility of third-party applications. Currently, reviews are handled by a single SME, which can extend turnaround times when workload demands are high. As governance policies and approval pathways mature, clearer processes will help ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated early to avoid potential issues later in the implementation process.
- The County's decentralized structure presents coordination challenges for implementing accessibility practices consistently across departments. This also creates an opportunity to evaluate how people, processes, and technology are aligned, and to strengthen cross-department collaboration as accessibility efforts continue to mature.