

Website Accessibility Summary

ADA Standards

Websites of public organizations must be readable by screenreaders and other accessibility tools for people with disabilities.

A – This standard is the basic level. Everyone must be at least level-A compliant. Having a level-A issue is considered serious and should be addressed.

AA – This is the standard the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is trying to ensure everyone meets and is the level most of the written laws and regulations define as acceptable. All of our sites except our Internal site meet this standard. The Internal site is on our radar for a redesign in 2018.

AAA – This is the “gold” standard. If your site meets AAA requirements 100%, it’s probably just black and white text. We actually meet most of these since we eliminated, ironically, the color gold from our website, which was causing contrast issues.

The January 18, 2018 “deadline.”

This is a federal deadline that applies to federal agencies. It requires sites to be at least AA-level compliant by January 18, 2018. This deadline does not apply to Barton, as we answer to our state’s laws. We are not a federal agency.

So when is *our* deadline?

Technically several years ago, but the regulation was never enforced and there was no education from the state on the requirements of public organizations to meet standards. Now that it’s getting attention, the mentality behind enforcement is “you better be making progress and working on this.” We have only a couple remaining issues to address – PDF documents linked to the site and as mentioned, our Internal site. Both of these issues are already being address or plans are in the works. We also simply have to make “reasonable accommodations” if we have a complaint, and we’ll be fine. We have been in touch with the main guy behind these regulations at the state, just to be sure!

Accessibility checkers:

AMP – This is the one used by the state. We run checks with this after we use our tools, which are technically more in-depth than AMP.

Wave.webaim.org – This is the one used by the Federal government.

Powermapper – A checker that was recommended at a conference I attended recently. It’s not bad, but ours is better.

SiteImprove – We prefer this one – the ADA checker is a product attached to a tool we purchased a few years ago. This sends alerts if an editor changes something on the website that creates an accessibility issue so we can address it in real-time. It’s a more proactive approach.