



National Center on Leadership for the Employment
and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities

Designing Accessible Digital Services for a Modern Workforce System: Lessons from Federal and State Leaders

LEAD Center
July 9, 2026

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Facilitator

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Subject Matter Expert on
Career Pathways

(Facilitator)

LEAD Center

National Disability Institute (NDI)

Housekeeping I: Captioning and Recording

Captions - If you wish to personalize the captioning:

- Click the **“Show Captions” option** in Zoom control to view Captions.
- Alternatively, you may **open a captioning web page** in a new browser tab. **Click the link** posted in the Chat box to [access captions](#).
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Webinar Archive – This webinar is being recorded and the archive and supporting materials will be placed on the LEAD Center website under [Recent & Upcoming Events](#) within 10 business days.

Housekeeping II: Questions

Content questions?

Click on the Q&A button and type in your question.

Tech support questions? Type your question in the Chat box.





ODEP

Office of Disability Employment Policy

ODEP is the only non-regulatory Federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.



ODEP

Office of Disability
Employment Policy

ODEP's mission is to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, that meet the needs of America's employers.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ben Cheriyan

Policy Advisor

Office of Disability Employment
Policy

U.S. Department of Labor



Learning Objectives



Through this webinar, attendees will:

- Understand how federal digital accessibility standards, including [WCAG 2.1](#), support compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the public workforce system.
- Apply state-tested strategies to strengthen digital accessibility.
- Identify ways to embed accessibility into organizational strategy and daily operations.
- Explore key strategies and actionable steps highlighted in the new LEAD Center brief, “Improving Digital Accessibility in the Public Workforce Development System.”

Opening Remarks



Naomi M. Barry-Pérez

Director

Civil Rights Center

U.S. Department of Labor

Section 188 of WIOA

- Section 188 of WIOA requires that online service platforms be consistent with modern accessibility standards.
 - Source: [29 CFR 38.15\(a\)\(5\)](#)
- Examples of accessibility standards:
 - [Section 508](#)
 - [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)

Section 188 and WCAG

- Section 188 does not require that recipients meet WCAG 2.1 standards.
- BUT: Meeting the WCAG 2.1 standards satisfies Section 188 standards.

WCAG 2.1 Standards

- The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) enforces WCAG 2.1 standards.
 - Seek [DOJ](#) guidance for WCAG 2.1
- Fact Sheet: [New Rule on the Accessibility of Web Content and Mobile Apps Provided by State and Local Governments](#).
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information Line: 800-514-0301 (voice) / 1-833-610-1264 (TTY).

Section 188 Standards

- U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) enforces Section 188 standards.
 - Seek [DOL](#) guidance for Section 188
- Civil Rights Center (CRC):
[Contact Us | U.S. Department of Labor](#)



COLORADO

**Department of
Labor and Employment**

Digital Accessibility & Accommodations



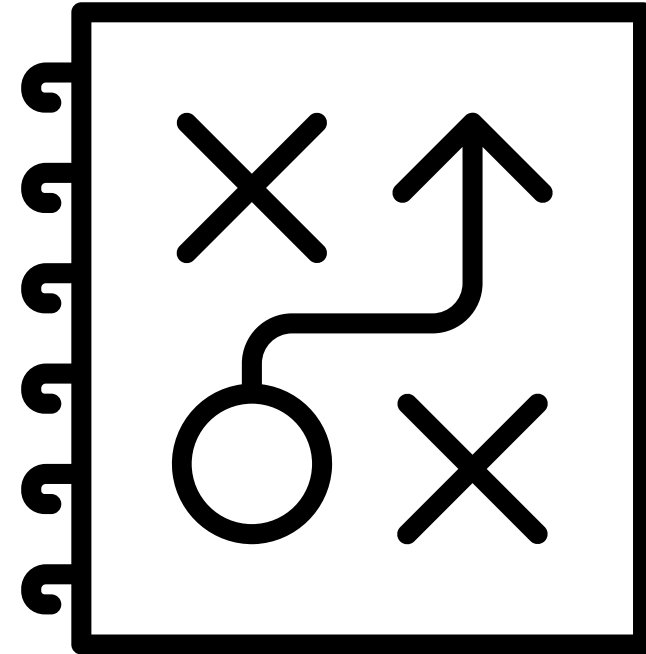
Britt Otter, Web Accessibility Administrator, Division of Labor Standards and Statistics, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Renee Rinehart, E&T Accessibility Coordinator, Division of Employment & Training, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Robin Bauknecht, Senior Evaluation and Systems Training Advisor, Division of Employment & Training, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Challenges

- Buy-in, Awareness, and pushback
- Funding
- Decentralized government
- Staff turnover & onboarding



Successes

- Structural (operational)
- Human Resources - people power!
- Symbolic
- Political



Policy

- [HB 21-1110 State Law](#)
- [SPP 2403 Digital Accessibility Policy](#)
- [OIT Technical Accessibility Standards Rules](#)

HB 21-1110

- Requirements
 - Internal & external digital content
 - Accessibility statement
 - Accommodations
 - Exceptions
 - Undue burden
 - Fundamental alteration
 - Direct threat

Structural/Operational

- Office of Information Technology (OIT) Accessibility Program:
 - OIT Accessibility Website with resources
 - Dedicated staff
- Colorado Department of Labor (CDLE):
 - Accessibility Intranet Page
 - Accessibility Newsletter
 - Temp Accessibility Analyst Position
 - Dedicated accessibility staff in Divisions
 - Established workflows

Human Resources

- Level Access Training
- IT Accessibility Training
- Accessibility Lunch & Learns
- Upcoming: Statewide Articulate Google Accessibility Training Series
- Partnerships:
 - Governor's Office
 - Office of Information Technology
 - Secretary of State

Symbolic

- Accessibility Champions Committee
- Awards
 - CDLE Employee of the Year Award 2023
 - CDLE for All Award
- All Staff Meetings

CDLE Resources

- [Accessibility Statement on website](#)
- [Accommodation Request Form](#)
- [Accessibility Feedback Form](#)
- [Equally Effective Alternative Access Plan](#)
- [Vendor Accessibility Checklist](#)
- [Accessible Websites Toolkit](#)
- [Empathy Lab](#)
- [Accessibility Planning Core Criteria](#)



Digital Accessibility | State of Minnesota



Jay Wyant, Chief Information Accessibility Officer, Minnesota Office of Accessibility, Minnesota IT Services

Heather Stein, Director of the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity and State Equal Opportunity Officer, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Samantha Clayton, Digital Accessibility Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

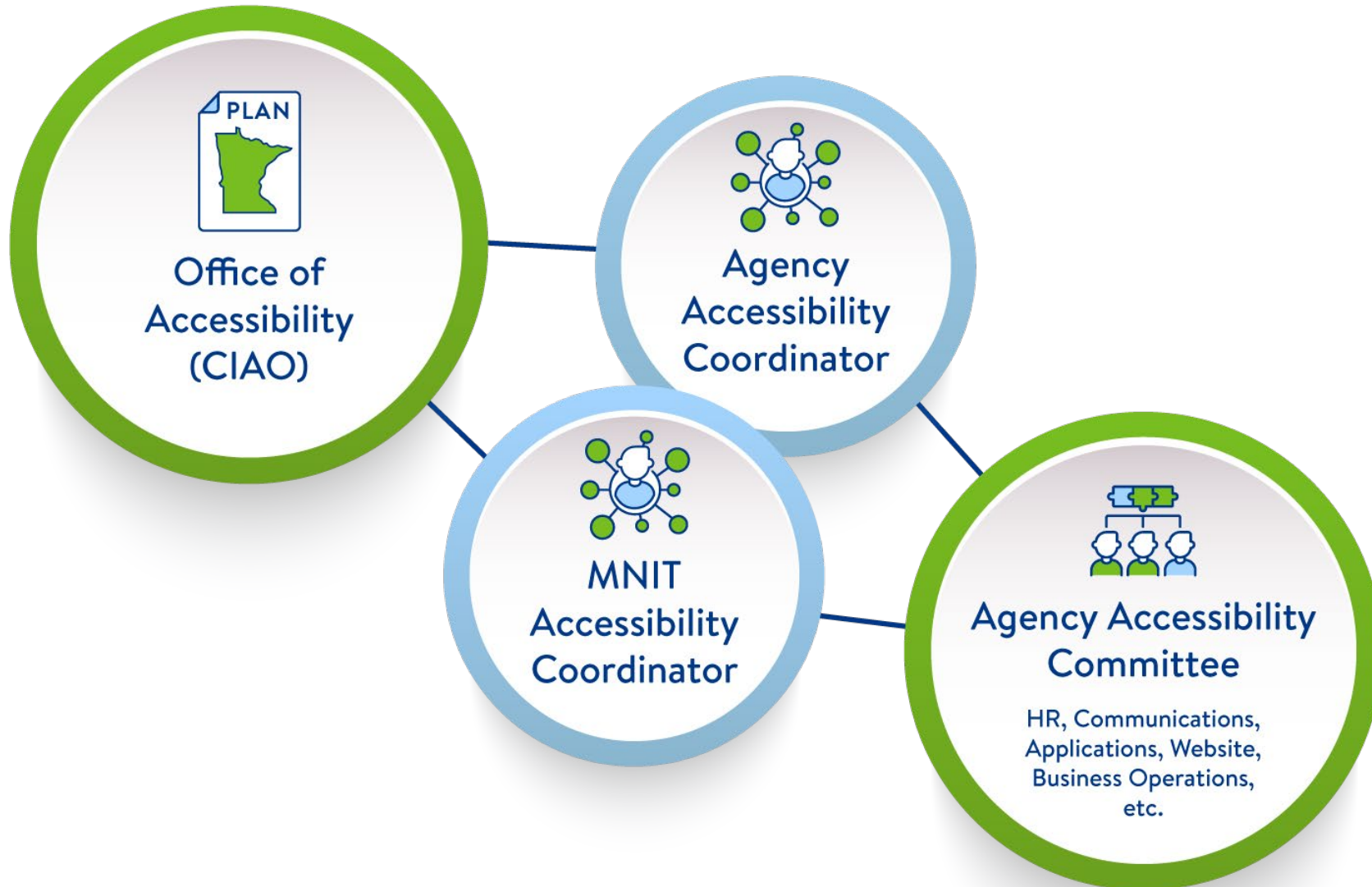
Timeline

- 2009 – State legislature mandated an accessibility standard ([16E.03, subd. 9](#))
- 2010 – Standard effective September 1.
 - Section 508
 - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
- 2011 – State legislature appropriates funds for Office of Accessibility
- Feb 2012 – Chief Information Accessibility Officer hired
- July 2024 – MN Standard updated to include WCAG 2.1

Accessibility: whose job is it?



How we're set up at the State



DEED Digital Accessibility Milestones

- Reorganized July 2025 to move Digital Accessibility Coordinator from Communications to Equal Opportunity office to root requirements in equal opportunity laws.
 - Replicate operations service delivery model to centralize responsibility for policies, procedures, training, resources, tools, technical support, ongoing monitoring.
- Strategic planning with customer input.
 - Change management plans to update mental models from thinking “Digital accessibility is one person’s job, to this is our responsibility to serve Minnesotans.”

DEED Digital Accessibility Milestones, cont.

- Identify tools, resources, and establish clear divisional ownership and accountability
 - Program Administrators have budgetary responsibilities for non-compliance.
- Remediate existing digital accessibility barriers
- Implement a sustainable compliance and governance model
 - Centralized ownership of agency expectations, technical expertise, tools, resources, and monitoring

Long-Term Success Depends on Shared Responsibility

Group	Primary Responsibility
Leadership	Provide sponsorship, remove barriers, and support program accountability
Program Area Liaisons	Coordinate classification and remediation within their program areas
Equal Opportunity Office	Provide accessibility expertise, training, and technical assistance
Customer Innovation	Manage project planning, coordination, reporting, and communication
Communications	Archive, replace, and publish website content while validating accessibility requirements
MNIT	Support reporting, technical solutions, and system implementation

Key Message: Digital accessibility is a shared responsibility across DEED. Long-term compliance depends on collaboration between all partners.

Why Accessibility Matters



Basic guidelines for all content

- Content structure
 - Properties/Title
 - Headings & Styles (tags)
- Navigation: consistent, predictable, multimodal
- Images and non-text elements (machine-readable content)
- Color contrast
- Meaningful links
- Forms



Implementing accessibility:

- Reduces risk
- Reduces costly rework
- Enables better, more effective tech

Accessibility Baked Right In



Illustration by Brian Parsons, UX Designer for Sony PlayStation.

<http://www.bpdesigns.net/> or <https://www.linkedin.com/in/brianjhparsons/>

Quick Takeaways

- Accessibility is a means to better, more useful digital information
- There are simple things you can learn and apply today
- Start with a policy
 - Point to free training and resources
 - Set short-term goals, such as adding alt text to images
- Leadership buy-in is key
- Build culture where it is everyone's responsibility

- [MN Office of Accessibility site](#)
 - [Quick cards](#)
 - [Free Accessible Word training](#)
 - [Role-based training on WCAG 2.1](#)
 - [Procurement page \(updating soon\)](#)
- [Subscribe to Office of Accessibility newsletter](#)

Thank You!

For more information, visit:

[Office of Accessibility / Minnesota IT Services](#)

[Mn.gov/mnit/About-mnit/Accessibility](https://mn.gov/mnit/About-mnit/Accessibility)



Questions?

LEAD Center Resources

Brief - Improving Digital Accessibility to Support Federal and State Workforce Goals: Successful and Replicable Practices from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

- The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) made its websites, online tools, and other virtual services fully accessible to Americans with disabilities.
- This brief explains CDLE's digital accessibility strategies, including the department's carefully structured approach, so other states, regions, and local workforce areas can adapt and apply them.
- The information in this brief can help organizations at any stage, whether they are launching a new accessibility initiative or strengthening ongoing efforts.

LEAD WIOA Technical Assistance (TA) Center

- The **National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD)** is a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) TA center, grant funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor.
- The LEAD Center helps states, workforce development professionals, and American Job Centers (AJC) implement WIOA, in service to Americans with disabilities.
- Through its resources, tools and TA, the LEAD Center:
 - increases career pathways for people with disabilities that ensures employers have access to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy;
 - supports financial literacy training and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities; and
 - improves coordination and collaboration of workforce development system partners, contributing to a more effective system.

Stronger Workforce, Smarter Solutions — Powered by LEAD Center Technical Assistance

Do you serve people with disabilities? Is your team ready to:

- ☐ Learn strategies that improve employment outcomes?
- ☐ Harness data-driven planning and cross-agency collaboration to advance policy adoption?
- ☐ Support individuals with a wide range of disability experiences?

If so, the LEAD Center can help!

State workforce agencies, AJC teams, and WIOA partners are invited to request LEAD Center Technical Assistance (TA). Targeted and intensive TA engagements begin with a formal request and signed agreement.



**Scan QR code or visit this link
to learn more:**

LEADCenter.org/Technical-Assistance

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Thank You for Joining!