

ADA: Is your website as accessible as your buildings?

Presenter: Misty Curn



ND Assoc. of Counties Conference - Oct. 2026

Can everyone access and use your county's digital services?

Digital accessibility is about equal experiences and access to information



Vision disabilities

Screen readers

- Headings
- Links
- Descriptions of images

Visual impairments

- Color contrast
- Browser settings



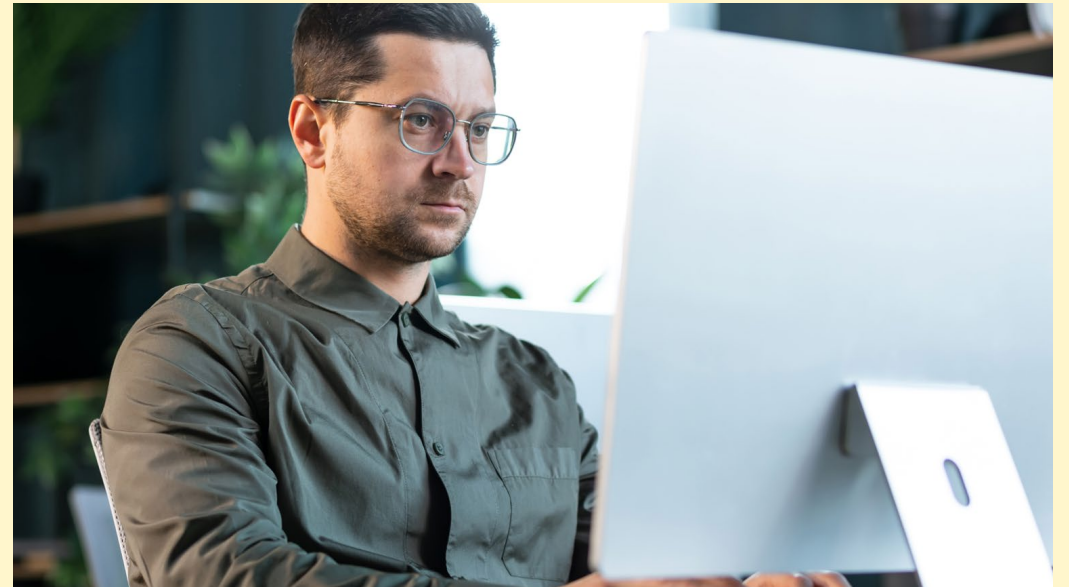
Hearing disabilities



elections each county has an auditor
that's a resident of

Cognitive and learning disabilities

- **Clear descriptive headings**
- **Well-structured content**
- **Consistent navigation**
- **Simple, clear writing**



Digital accessibility doesn't happen by default

Digital systems and documents aren't automatically accessible

Accessibility requires training and intention

Without accessibility, you create barriers

How digital accessibility affects counties

2024 DOJ Rule

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Nondiscrimination - Basis of Disability
- Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities



Deadlines

Population Served	Compliance Deadline
Less than 50,000	April 26, 2028
50,000 or More	April 26, 2027

DOJ Rule compliance standard

WCAG

Web Content
Accessibility
Guidelines

Version 2.1, Level
AA

Existing and new

Content and digital
systems must be
compliant

Ongoing

Not a one-time fix

What needs to be accessible

Digital content and systems available for the public to access

- Websites
- Forms and applications
- Documents (PDFs, Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Mobile apps and portals
- Videos, recorded meetings, live streams
- Podcasts (audio files)
- Social media

Making digital a priority

Partnership

- NDIRF
- NDACo
- NDLC





Just like buildings need ramps or elevators, digital content must be accessible to all



Responsibility

- County leadership
- County staff
- Vendors who provide systems
- Vendors who do work

Your budget reflects priorities

Digital accessibility investment

- Training
- Tools
- Technology updates
- Vendors to assist with efforts



Don't buy accessibility problems

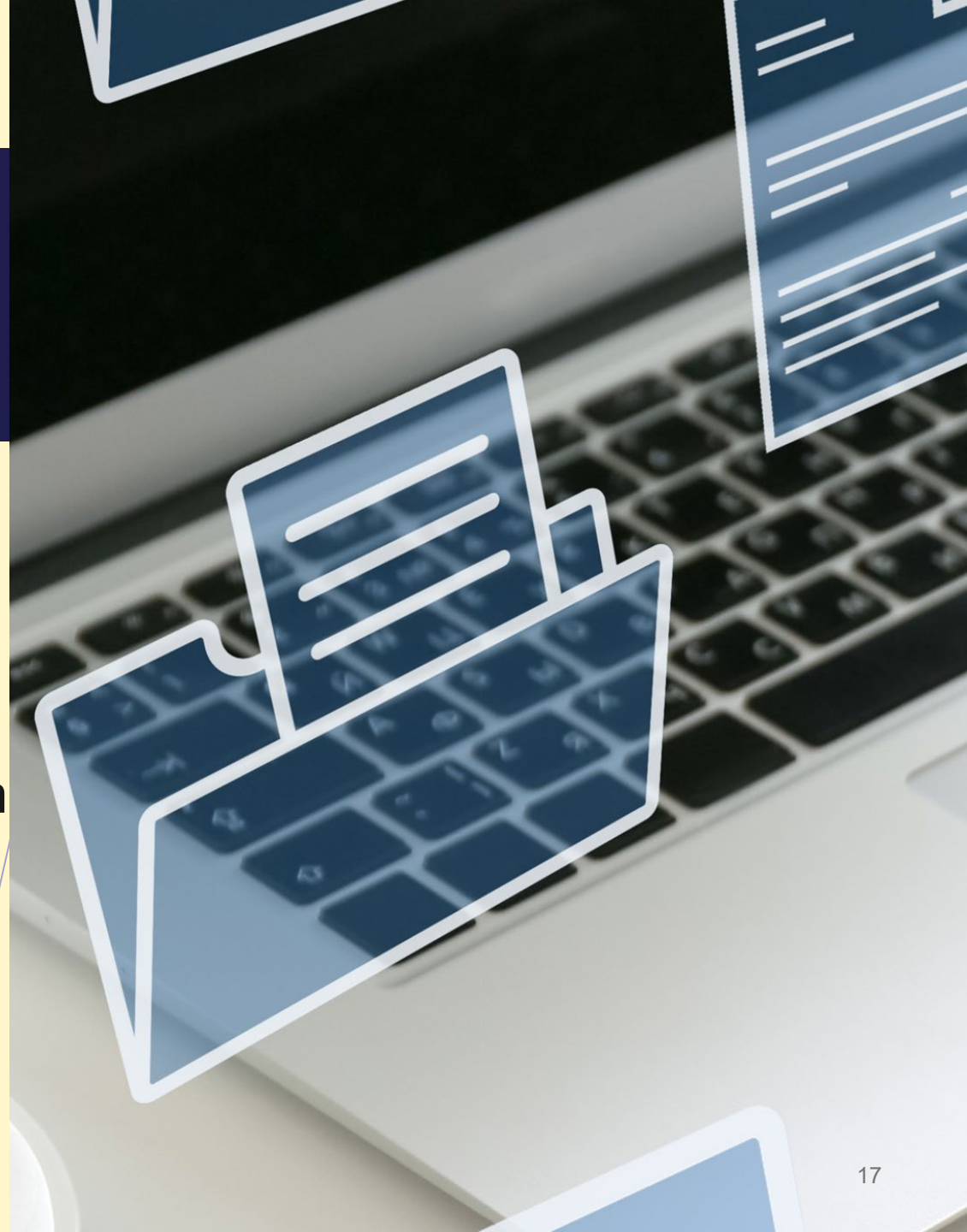
- New website platform, software system, form tool
- Accessibility needs to be considered before you sign the contract
- Don't just ask, 'Is it ADA compliant?' Ask for documentation



Vendor & contractor docs

Require accessible docs

- Proposals and solicitation responses
- Reports and deliverables
- Documents intended for public distribution



Be careful about shortcuts

**Accessibility
buttons**



**Accessibility
overlays**

**Automated
tools only**

**Document to
website page
tools**

**You can't
fix
everything
at once!**

What needs to be done

- Set goals, define clear expectations and accessibility-related responsibilities
- Make a list of existing digital content and services
- Train staff
- Purchase additional tools or resources if needed
- Develop workflows and processes
- Make content moving forward accessible
- Fix existing content
- Work with website developer and other vendors to make systems compliant
- Document progress

Take care of your people

Accessibility is additional work

- Provide time
- Provide training
- Provide tools and resources to help
- Make sure it is noted in job descriptions
- Recognize progress



Digital accessibility is the norm

Part of the culture

The goal is to build an organization that **creates accessible things in the first place.**

Show it's a priority

- Ensure county leadership support
- Give staff time to do the work
- Budget for tools, training, resources
- Hold vendors accountable
- Track progress

Thank you!

Misty Curn

- [Linkedin.com/in/mistycurn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mistycurn)
- www.luminarycontent.com

