



HB24-1454

One-Year Grace Period for Web Accessibility Compliance

Sponsors: Reps. Ortiz & Pugliese/Sen. Lundeen

Pursuant to legislation passed in 2021, all public entities in the state (counties, municipalities, special districts, school districts and state government agencies) are required to comply by July 1, 2024, with federal website standards that allow disabled persons to access online information and services via web reader software. The bill also established a new right of action for noncompliance and public entities can be fined \$3,500 per plaintiff, per instance of noncompliance. Since the bill's passage in 2021, counties have been working diligently but achieving compliance has proven to be much more costly and time-consuming than was originally estimated.

Local governments across the state formed a working group in 2022 with CCI, CML, SDA and the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) to provide a forum for discussion, education and the sharing of best practices in website accessibility. OIT has also provided a number of templates, training modules and staff expertise to assist local governments. However, the scope of this challenge has proven very daunting and resource intensive (from both a staffing and financial standpoint). While local governments have made significant progress, the majority have not yet achieved 100% compliance in web accessibility and are concerned about lawsuits once the deadline arrives this summer.

HB 1454 maintains the implementation deadline of July 1, but provides a one-year grace period that protects public entities from liability as long as they can demonstrate good faith progress toward reaching the website/technology compliance requirements, per the federal standard. The bill will also give local governments time to achieve compliance with new rules that were promulgated by OIT in February that clarify definitions and help guide compliance work on website accessibility.

**Allow Local Governments to Complete Web Compliance
Efforts Without Fear of Litigation**

Vote YES on HB24-1454