



# ACCESS NEWS

## *New DOJ Rule on Accessible Web Content*

On April 24, 2024, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division (DOJ) issued a final rule revising Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This update requires state and local governments to ensure their websites and mobile applications are accessible to people with disabilities. To achieve this, the DOJ is adopting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA, which outlines 50 success criteria for website accessibility. These include making images and documents readable by assistive technologies for individuals with vision impairments, as well as providing captions for live and pre-recorded videos for those with hearing loss.

The DOJ has outlined exceptions to this rule in their fact sheet. These exceptions include archived content that is no longer in use, existing conventional electronic documents, third-party content in some cases, password-protected individualized documents, and pre-existing social media posts.

### DOJ Compliance Dates

**Public Entity Size:** Fewer than 50,000 persons/ special district governments

**Compliance Date:** Three years after the publication of the final rule or April 24, 2027

**Public Entity Size:** 50,000 or more persons

**Compliance Date:** Two years after the publication of the final rule or April 24, 2026

The Regulatory Flexibility Act provides considerations for small governmental jurisdictions with populations under 50,000, such as cities, counties, towns, school districts, and special districts. On October 17, 2023, the Office of Advocacy submitted a comment to the DOJ, expressing concerns that the compliance costs and burden hours for small governments were underestimated. While small governments aim to provide accessible services to their constituents, they often face limited budgets and a lack of technical staff to meet the high standards outlined. Advocacy recommended that the DOJ consider regulatory alternatives that offer flexibility to smaller jurisdictions while still enhancing website accessibility.

State and local governments rely heavily on websites and mobile apps to deliver many of their services, programs, and activities. However, when these digital platforms are not accessible, they create barriers for individuals with disabilities. For instance, a person who is blind may use a screen reader to convert visual information into speech. If a government website displays an image without descriptive text (also known as "alternative text" or "alt text"), the screen reader cannot convey the image's content, leaving the person unaware of essential information.

Inaccessible websites and apps can prevent individuals with disabilities from accessing important government services, such as ordering mail-in ballots or retrieving tax information –services that are readily available to others online. Additionally, barriers like these can exclude people with disabilities from fully participating in civic or community events, including town meetings or school programs.

This new rule aims to ensure that people with disabilities can fully access state and local government services, programs, and activities through websites and mobile apps. It will also offer clearer guidance to governments on how to comply with ADA requirements.

The Accessibility Committee here at Clover Park will be watching this issue and promoting resources and workshops that will help us meet these goals. We are looking forward to more information from the SBCTC and the state of Washington in general on what processes and support they will be providing to increase accessibility.

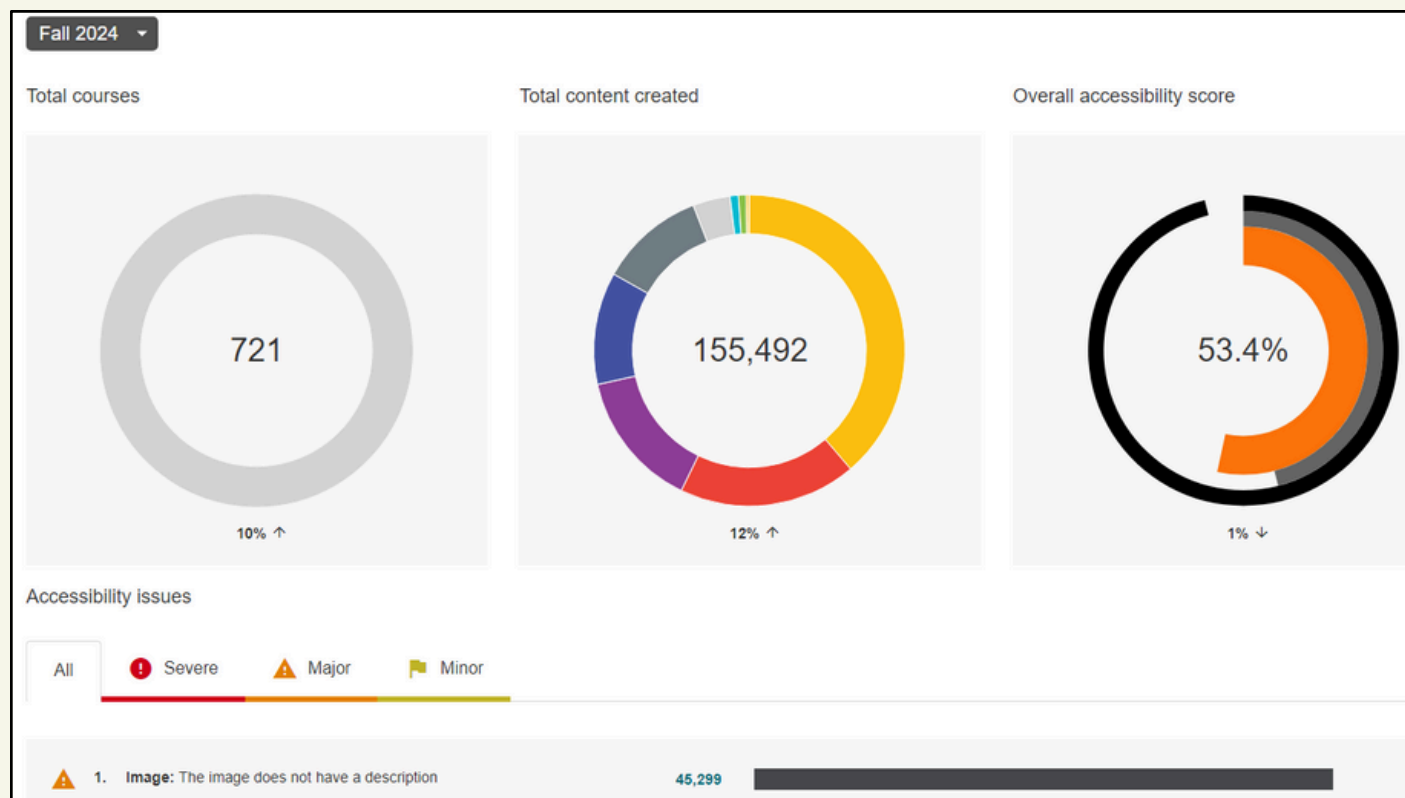
### OUR NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Fall Quarter edition of the Accessibility Newsletter presented to you by the Accessibility Committee. Each quarter, this newsletter looks at a single accessibility concept or skill, aiming to empower staff and faculty with the knowledge and tools to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment. Additionally, this newsletter will contain links to information and services to support an accessible campus.

## Your Accessibility Challenge

If you are a faculty member or staff with web content or a course in Canvas, review that content for images that do not have “alt text,” that is, descriptions that will allow the images to be interpreted by a screen reader. Authoring alt text is similar to writing a caption for an image, but the two are different. An image caption is text that displays on the screen. Alternate text is read aloud to someone using assistive technology, but is hidden from a sighted user.

Canvas, MS Word, and Adobe all have built in tools to allow the editor to provide alt text and to check your materials for accessibility. Visit the WebAim website for more information specifically on making images accessible. If you would like to learn more about accessibility in course materials, contact the Teaching & Learning Center at [tlc@cptc.edu](mailto:tlc@cptc.edu).



The above image is from the admin report interface of ALLY in Canvas. It measures the accessibility of materials in Canvas. The number one problem it is reporting out on is the many images that do not have alt text and are therefore unreadable by screen readers. Granted, the program does not take into account any duplicated files which is a separate problem in Canvas. We believe that this is a critical issue on campus, but it is also one problem that can be easily fixed.

### Accessibility Micro-Courses

The WA State Board for Community and Technical Colleges offers a variety of accessibility-related micro-courses. Each course is approximately 3 hours in length and focuses on particular skills and/or content creation programs. Current micro-courses include: Understanding Accessibility, Accessible Design Concepts, Universal Design, Accessible Word Documents, Accessible PPT, Email Accessibility, Accessible PDFs, Canvas Accessibility. Participants are awarded with digital badges upon completion of each micro-course. Participants who complete five micro-courses (15 hours) will also receive a certificate from SBCTC.

Open enrollment - no fixed dates

[Register for class](#)

## About the Accessibility Committee

The Clover Park Community College Accessibility Committee, in support of college and state policies, will establish, review, and evaluate collegewide accessibility plans and advise the Student Learning Council in regard to promoting and providing appropriate, effective, and integrated access for students, employees and community members. To that end, the committee will:

- model and facilitate a culture of accessibility for all faculty, staff and students;
- provide training and support to improve the level of accessibility;
- serve as a clearinghouse for accessibility questions, resources, and issues for CPTC.

## Accessibility Committee Membership

### Co-Chairs

- Geoff Cain – Teaching & Learning Center
- Melissa Medina – Disability Resources for Students

### Members

- Stefanie Bosen - Finance and Administration
- Rachael Butler – Workforce Development
- Jessica Carey - Instructor
- Lisa Cutler - Learning Resource Center
- Pearl DeSure - Learning Resource Center
- Betzaida Solorio-Flores - Student
- Brady Hageman - eLearning
- Sidhu Harman - Marketing
- Pamela Jeter – Director IT
- Pam Munizza – Instructor
- Harman Sidhu - Marketing
- Sheli Sledge - Equity Diversity & Inclusion
- Eric Stokes - Instructor
- Leah Wilkins – Workforce Development
- Blair Wilson - Student

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## Disability Resources

- [General disability resources](#)
- [Disability resources for students](#)
- [Disability resources for faculty](#)




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