Developmental Disabilities Council Accessibility Assessment

Prepared for:

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council
2600 Martin Way E, Ste F
Olympia, WA 98506

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Prepared by:
Wandke Accessibility
Bellingham, WA 98225
Wandke.com

Executive Summary

Wandke Accessibility evaluated the accessibility of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council (the Council) to have a better understanding of what they could do to make their meetings more accessible for everyone. This report details the barriers that we identified along with recommended solution(s) for each barrier.

The highest priority is the dense material in the meeting packets. We recommend putting a cover page in front of each section with a plain language summary of what it is about, picture indicators, and action items for the Council Members.

The second priority is improving orientation and engagement. Council Members have expressed interest in learning who each other is and having job descriptions to know what they are expected to do. Creating name tags and saying your name before speaking is a good way to get the Council Members familiar with each other.

The third priority is the state plan. The state plan document has many of the same issues the meeting packet does. The state plan would benefit from having a table of contents so the Council Members know where they are in the document.

The last priority is utilizing assistive technology. Council Members and staff would benefit from more assistive technology for reading and seeing documents and emails. Using built-in tools from Windows is one way to help with this issue.

In the future, working with an accessibility consultant can help the Council understand and tackle these obstacles better, and find solutions for them. More work is needed to ensure that meeting materials and the state plan are accessible to everyone. Assisting Council Members and staff to find the right tools or methods can make their work easier. Conducting a thorough audit of website accessibility and providing support to implement necessary changes can make information accessible to a wider audience.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to schedule a meeting to go over this report by emailing Daman Wandke at daman@wandke.com.

Wandke

Accessibility

Thank you for your commitment to improving accessibility! We are glad to have the opportunity to be involved in this process with you!

Table of Contents

Website

Color Contrast

Barrier: On the WADDC website, there are some color contrast issues. This is a barrier because if colors that are used don't have enough contrast, someone with low vision will not be able to see it.

Recommended Solutions: Webflow has a color contrast tool that can be used to check if the colors are contrasted enough from each other. By using this tool, it will make sure that the text is readable.

Accessibility Checker

Barrier: There are currently no accessibility checks happening on the website. Most checkers are installed in your browser, which is prohibited by the Department of Commerce.

Recommended Solutions: Webflow has built-in accessibility tools that will catch some of the accessibility errors. There is also a web-based no-install needed tool called Wave. This tool can be used to check the accessibility of the website. However, tools like Wave only catch about 40 percent of the errors. Having a more comprehensive accessibility audit will ensure that all the errors are caught. Here is a link to Wave.

Accessible Names

Barrier: Accessible names are the text that is associated with an HTML. It should communicate what it is and how to interact with it. Not having an accessible name can make it hard for users to navigate through the site.

Recommended Solutions: Hire an accessibility consultant to do a more in-depth website audit to find specific solutions.

Focus Indicators

Barrier: By not having focus indicators keyboard users can't tell where they are on the page or they may activate a control that they don't mean to. This can make it impossible for a keyboard user to use the site.

Recommended Solutions: We recommend adding a focus indicator on every interactive element. This will make it so sighted keyboard-only users can see where they are on the website.

Heading Structure

Barrier: Not having the proper heading structure will confuse a screen reader and read titles and texts in the wrong order or miss content.

Recommended Solutions: Having headings in sequential order makes it so screen readers can read the content to the screen reader user. Make sure to check the headings using Webflow to ensure the reading order goes as the following: Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, and so on. Webflow helps make sure that the heading structure is correct and that the headings are being slowly updated on the website.

Meeting Packet

Dense Material

Barrier: Having dense material makes it difficult for people with IDD to understand the content and causes Council Members to feel overwhelmed.

Recommended Solutions: To make the meeting packet less dense and more understandable we suggest a cover page for each of the sections that includes a plain language description of the documents, upcoming action items, and matching icons with it.

Building the Packet

Barriers: The use of several different applications to make the packet makes it so the format is all messed up and does not make sense.

Recommended Solutions: By using just one application for example using Word to create the packet, would make it so that the format stays the same and the accessibility stays correct.

Recorded Prep Video

Barrier: Since the council meetings have so much to cover in a short period, Council Members leave the meetings confused and/or not sure what their next steps are.

Recommended Solutions: We suggest recording a video going over the packet as soon as it becomes available. This video should go over each section in plain language and highlight any key points and/or action items. By going through the packet and recording the video, Council Members can come back to the video and study it. We also suggest if possible hosting a Q&A follow-up once the recording becomes live. To ensure the videos are accessible make sure captions and audio descriptions are provided. Here is a good resource for [audio descriptions](#).

Organization

Barrier: The table of contents is helpful, but there is also a need to have it be more accessible for the Council Members.

Recommended Solutions: By using a table of contents with links that take the Council Member to the appropriate sections. Using QR codes would also be useful.

Screen Reader Accessible

Barrier: The meeting packet is not screen reader accessible. For example, there are no alternative texts on pictures or graphs (pages 27-30, and 32-54 of the October meeting packet).

Recommended Solutions: The meeting packet needs to be accessible to screen readers. This accessibility can help people who have difficulty seeing and people who have difficulties with reading.

Color Coding

Barrier: In the meeting packet on pages 61-64 and 83-84, the colors do not indicate what the colors stand for. This is not accessible for people who are color-blind or have low vision.

Recommended Solutions: Color can not be used as the only way to communicate information. If color coding is used, a word or icon should be used with it and there should be an explanation of what each of the colors means.

Picture Indicators

Barrier: The packet is so dense and can be difficult to understand, having picture indicators can be useful for people who have difficulty reading or processing material.

Recommended Solutions: Having logos or pictures to indicate different sections of the meeting packet can help bring a new level of understanding and mental organization to the Council Members who are reading the packet.

Meetings

Zoom Meetings

Barrier: In Zoom meetings, captions are an issue, and comments in the chat box get left out of the meeting. One of the barriers was that the video was delayed from the audio making it difficult to follow along. When presentations are being presented it might be hard for Council Members who are visually impaired to see the presentation.

Recommended Solutions: Have a person on staff be in control of the background work of the Zoom meetings. We also suggest using several Owls during the council meetings so those watching from home can easily follow the conversations that are being had. We recommended that the Council Members who are in-person at the meeting join the Zoom meeting without audio so they can have the presentation on their screen to make it easier for them to see.

Presenter Prep

Barrier: There is a push to allow Council Members to present with little notice during meetings. This added flexibility is great but also adds some technical challenges that can disrupt the meetings.

Recommended Solutions: The AV team should meet up with every presenter during the break before their presentation to make sure the presenter knows how to turn on their sound, show their screen, and other technical things to make the process go smoother. We also recommended that if possible go over the PowerPoints ahead of time. A presenter checklist may be helpful to make meetings run smoother.

In-Person Meetings

Meeting Space

Barrier: In one of the bathrooms in the hotel there was a foot pedal trash can. This is not accessible for people who use wheelchairs or have limited mobility. A Council Member complained also that the doorways were too narrow.

Recommended Solutions: Check with Council Members on how wide they need the doorways to be at the meetings. Add to the meeting checklist to ensure that trash cans do not require a foot pedal to open.

Council Member Involvement

Council Member Engagement

Barrier: Council Members have expressed wanting to get to know each other so they know who each other is during the council meetings. By not knowing who each other is, there have been some issues where a Council Member was talking about another Council Member and had no idea that person was right next to them. Council Members also want to be more engaged during the meetings.

Recommended Solutions: By providing name tags Council Members can see who each other are. For Council Members who have visual impairments, we encourage Council Members and staff to say their names before speaking. We also suggest that bios that are made for the Council Members and staff are accessible for each Council Member. Lastly, before the council meeting to help Council Members be more engaged send a simple document with things that Council Members should be thinking about.

Orientation

Barrier: The Council Member survey shows some Council Members do not know what their roles are as Council Members and leave meetings unsure of what to do next. They leave the meetings frustrated and overwhelmed. This makes it hard for Council Members to do their jobs.

Recommended Solutions: Some Council Members expressed wishing they had an orientation or some sort of onboarding process for when they joined the Council. They also want job descriptions of what their roles are as Council Members. We suggest writing out each Council Member's job description and giving the Council Members access to it on the website. For those who want onboarding, having a Zoom meeting

with each Council Member to give them an overview of what it means to be a Council Member and what they are expected to do.

Staff Operations

Email Organization

Barriers: Emails can be overwhelming when someone is receiving a lot in a short period of time. By having an organized in-box staff can ensure that they are not missing any emails and have a cleaner inbox.

Recommended Solutions: We recommend staff members create 'groups' in their emails. Step-by-step instructions are available on Microsoft's website. Another recommendation we have is the ability to change your reading view of an inbox. By going to 'view' and then 'reading panel' staff members can change where they want to read an email that they receive from: below, left, and right.

More Portable Devices

Barrier: Having heavy laptops be the only device provided for staff members makes it hard for staff to take them from place to place to work.

Recommended Solutions: By allowing staff to have a Surface Pro tablet with a keyboard, staff will be able to comfortably take their device from place to place. The Surface Pro tablet is a Windows product that is lightweight.

Simplifying Icons in Microsoft Office

Barrier: The standard ribbons in Microsoft Office can be too busy for Council Members and Staff.

Recommended Solutions: By customizing the ribbon inside Microsoft Office products, for example, Outlook and Word, Council Members and staff can access frequently used products with ease.

Calendar

Barrier: Calendars can become messy and overwhelming for Council Members and staff. When events on the calendar get canceled, they do not get removed from the calendar. This issue seems to be known by the Department of Commerce's IT department.

Recommended Solutions: Removing already canceled meetings can clear up the space. Reminders while helpful can become annoying when they will not go away.

Microsoft Edge

Barrier: It can be hard for Council Members and staff to find and remember where frequented websites or pages are.

Recommended Solutions: Bookmarking websites and pages on Edge will make it easier for Council Members and staff to get to their most frequently visited websites and pages. Cleaning up the bookmarks ensures easier access to the websites that are on frequently used. Clicking on a bookmark can be easier than remembering a website address.

Assistive Technology

Built-in Windows Technology

Barrier: Some Council Members and staff have difficulties seeing or reading information to engage in Council work and activities.

Recommended Solutions: Council Members and staff could be more engaged by using assistive technology tools that are built into Windows. Inside the Windows settings, there is a section called 'Ease of Access'. In this section, 12 categories of different accessibility needs can be met. Council Members and staff who need accessible accommodations on their Windows device should go into their settings and to the 'Ease of Access' section and play around with the settings to see if the accessibility accommodations provided by Windows are enough for them.

ZoomText

Barrier: The built-in accessibility tools in Windows are helpful but there may be other tools that could be more helpful.

Recommended Solutions: If Council Members and staff do not like how Windows does its magnification and narration, we suggest tying out ZoomText. This product is a screen magnifier and screen reader. There is a 30-day trial available for download.

WATAP

Barrier: Council Members and staff do not know what assistive technology could be helpful when engaging in Council work and activities.

Recommended Solutions: The Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP), based at the University of Washington, is available to do assistive technology evaluations. This resource may be helpful for some Council Members and staff. Here is a link to the WATAP website.

NVDA Screen Reader

Barrier: On the website, one of the Council Members is not able to use the screen reader Recite Me. By not having an accessible screen reader, Council Members, and other screen reader users can not access the website.

Recommended Solutions: We suggest that Council Members and other screen reader users use the NVDA Screen Reader. This is a free, no-download site for the staff or Council Members to use.

Accessible PDF Creator

Barrier: The meeting packet needs to have accessibility features added to the document. The Council currently uses Microsoft Kofax.

Recommended Solutions: Further testing is needed to see which accessibility features can be added using Microsoft Kofax. The industry standard for creating accessible PDF documents is Adobe Acrobat Pro. Another tool that might be helpful is CommonLook PDF.

State Plan

State Plan Document

Barrier: The main purpose of the council meetings is to complete the state plan. Council Members who might not understand the state plan and what their role is in it make it difficult for them to do that. The document has similar issues to the meeting packet in terms of formatting, density, and language. This is a barrier because the Council Members need to understand what they are looking at.

Recommended Solutions: The state plan document would benefit from having a table of contents so that the Council Members know where they are in the document as well as more obvious headings for each section.