



Fiddleleaf

Accessibility Services

Accessibility Governance

Today's Agenda

- Who We Are
- Primer on Accessibility in Ontario
- A Comprehensive Accessibility Program for Municipalities
- Centralized and Decentralized Governance
- Governance Roles and Responsibilities
- Training and Upskilling
- Setting your Compliance Level

Who is Fiddleleaf Accessibility?



Mandie Malott

- Certified Web Accessibility Specialist with IAAP
- Founder, Consultant, Huge Accessibility Nerd



Julia Malott

- Operations, Design, Accounting, Moral Support... Sidekick!
- Municipal Nerd

A collection of colorful circles and rings in shades of pink, orange, teal, and lime green, some with dashed outlines, arranged in a decorative pattern on the left side of the slide.

What we do at Fiddleleaf?

- Public Sector Accessibility Consulting
- Live and On-Demand Training
- Document Remediation
- Have Interesting Conversations about anything accessibility related!

Digital Accessibility in Ontario

Recap of the last two decades

- AODA enacted in 2005
- First deadline Jan 1, 2014, for new websites and web content to conform to WCAG 2.0 A
- Second deadline Jan 1, 2021, now WCAG 2.0 AA for all content
- This applies to websites, web tools, PDFs, etc.

Four years later...

Everything in Ontario is fully
accessible!

Right?!

Changing Accessibility Climate

- Manitoba local government WCAG 2.1 AA requirement started May 1, 2024
- American with Disabilities Act updated April 2024 to require WCAG 2.1 AA compliance by April 2026 or 2027
- Some states have stricter requirements, i.e Colorado requiring 2.1 AA by mid 2025
- European Union required WCAG 2.1 AA as of 2021

Comprehensive Accessibility Plan



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Compliance is not just about training and remediation, and best practices. It also requires a governance structure to outline roles, responsibilities and processes.

Accessibility Governance

- Centralization / Decentralization Structure
- Roles, Responsibilities and Processes
- Setting a Target Compliance Level
- Training and Upskilling

Centralized Governance Model

- Content routed through the communication (or other) team for accessibility / plain language / quality check
- **Benefits:** Consistency and Control
- **Challenges:** Staffing challenges, potential bottlenecks, lack of awareness from individual departments


Decentralized Governance Model

- Each department has its own accessibility champion responsible for content
- **Benefits:** Faster updates, content creators take ownership
- **Challenges:** Requires robust training and co-ordination to ensure consistent delivery

Hybrid Governance Model

- Communication oversees major publications and provides oversight, while departments maintain less prominent publications
- Larger municipalities may benefit from a key group responsible for oversight without micromanaging

Roles and Responsibilities

- Individuals need to be responsible for integrating accessibility into their work, but there needs to be an overseeing management layer
 - Smaller municipalities may choose to have a person per department, larger ones may have a key group
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Sample Roles Structure

Small Sized Municipality

- One Designate to spearhead accessibility
- Acts as a filter / approver for all external content

Medium Sized Municipality

- One Champion to train, coordinate and audit across all departments
- Point people trained and accountable in each department

Large Sized Municipality

- Central department to manage municipal accessibility strategy
- Ongoing training/upskilling/auditing program to support departments

Responsibilities

- Who reviews content—Department Leads? Communications Team? Clerks Department?
- How will changes to perpetually updated content be tracked? How often will changes be reviewed? (quarterly, annually?)
- Who will ensure ongoing compliance?

Two-pass Approach to Publication

- Group responsible for the oversight of accessibility can't be the ones doing all the work
- Difficult to hand over content written by someone else for a central team to 'make it accessible'
- Some faucets of accessibility depend on **how** content is designed, not just fixing up tags in PDF or adding alt text

Audits are Necessary!

- Start with an audit when establishing a governance plan to understand your baseline
- Establish regular audits (either internal or external) to verify quality and consistency across departments / content producers

Note: A “clean scan” from an accessibility checker does not mean compliance!

Gated Content Publishing

- Consider carefully who releases content into the 'wild'. Consider all content that gets posted to your website and social media, not just major publications / recurring meeting artifacts
- Curated list of approved publishers means more consistent outcomes and less training / auditing requirements

Training as an Ongoing Activity

- With Onboarding, Upskilling and Reskilling for team members, training will never be a one-shot deal
- Do you have a centralized structure where an internal expert can deliver training?
- Would you benefit from a recurring training plan / on-demand training resources?

Define your Compliance Standard

- Be realistic about what resources you have available to you and what you can accomplish
- Focus first on what has the greatest impact for your citizens

We don't know what 'practicability' means yet under the AODA. You don't want your municipality to be the ones to answer this question!



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Accessibility Jeopardy!