



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 1/27/2026

File #: 26-52

To: Board of Supervisors

From: County Administrative Office

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

2026 Digital Accessibility Policy

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the 2026 Digital Accessibility Policy as a replacement for the Website Accessibility Policy.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The recommended actions support the following areas of the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Plan:

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other

Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:

On September 7, 2016, the County of Humboldt entered into a Consent Decree with the United States Department of Justice, committing the County of Humboldt to ensure that its programs, services and activities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). Section L.41.a. of the consent decree requires the County of Humboldt, on an annual basis, to adopt, implement and publicly post a policy confirming that County of Humboldt web content conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ("WCAG") 2.0 Level AA.

In response to this requirement, on November 8, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Information Technology Website Accessibility Policy, which aligned with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. On October 16, 2018, the Board adopted a revised version of the Information Technology Website Accessibility Policy to reflect evolving accessibility practices.

The ADA and the 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 508) require public entities to eliminate accessibility barriers in information technology and to provide individuals with disabilities access to information that is comparable to the access available to others. Section 508 further emphasizes the obligation of public agencies to develop, procure and maintain accessible digital technologies.

Title II of the ADA requires the County of Humboldt to provide individuals with disabilities equal access to public programs, services and activities. Equal access means providing the same information and functionality, delivered in a timely manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. In addition, Title I of the ADA prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in all aspects of employment, including, without limitation, job application procedures. Accordingly, the County of Humboldt must ensure that its employment-related digital content, including, without limitation, online job applications and employment information,

meets applicable accessibility standards.

The County of Humboldt seeks to deploy information technology that is designed, developed or procured to ensure that both internal and external digital content and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including, without limitation, those who rely on assistive technologies.

The County of Humboldt now strives to achieve compliance with the WCAG 2.1 Level AA, which is the widely accepted accessibility benchmark across both the public and private sectors. In April 2024, the United States Department of Justice issued a new final rule under Title II of the ADA establishing WCAG 2.1 Level AA as the required technical standard for digital accessibility. This rule applies to public entities' websites, mobile applications and other digital services, with compliance deadlines based on population size. Under this rule, Humboldt County must achieve compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA no later than April 24, 2026.

To meet these updated federal requirements, a new Digital Accessibility Policy has been developed to support the County of Humboldt's continued efforts to provide equitable digital access for all members of the public and County of Humboldt employees. Adoption of the 2026 Digital Accessibility policy is necessary, as the existing Information Technology Website Accessibility Policy is now outdated and no longer reflects current legal requirements or technical accessibility standards.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

ADA Internal Service Fund (3552)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Financial Impacts are minimal and primarily relate to staff time to draft the Digital Accessibility Policy and monitoring ongoing compliance efforts.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Staffing impacts include digital access training efforts led by the County Information Technology Division and departmental staff time for those assigned to the maintenance and compliance of departmental web pages and digital content.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose to not adopt the 2026 Digital Accessibility Policy as a replacement for the Information Technology Website Accessibility Policy. However, this alternative is not recommended as the County of Humboldt's website and other forms of digital access will not be in compliance with the ADA.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Digital Accessibility Policy
2. Humboldt County Digital Standards and Style Guide

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: 11/8/2016, 2/27/18, 10/16/18

File No.: C-5, C-8, 18-1288