**Sacramento County Disability Advisory Commission (DAC)**

**Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors 2021-22**

**(Excerpt)**

**3. Disability Access Issues Not Addressed in the SETP**

**b. County Web Pages and Other Electronic Processes**

The accessibility and compliance of the County’s web pages and kiosks did not receive an in-depth evaluation in the SETP. However, the SETP did include the following County-Wide Findings regarding Web Access:

“Most departments publish information about their programs, services, and activities on the County’s website. Several departments also noted having social media pages. Based on survey responses and interviews, there appears to be a disconnect between some departments and the Department of Technology (DTech) on the responsibility of ensuring web content is accessible.”

According to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, the number of U.S. lawsuits alleging that websites, apps and digital videos were inaccessible to people with disabilities rose 64% in the first half of 2021 from a year earlier. Plaintiffs filed 1,661 lawsuits claiming digital violations of either the federal Americans with Disabilities Act or California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act between Jan. 1 and June 30, up from 1,012 in the comparable period of 2020, according to the report by UsableNet Inc., a technology firm that offers accessibility-compliance technology and services. (Lawsuits Over Digital Accessibility for People With Disabilities Are Rising, July 15, 2021)

***Recommendations***

Given the public’s increased reliance on internet-based processes to do business with the County, and lacking a comprehensive assessment for accessibility, the DAC strongly recommends as soon as possible that the County implement the Web Access findings and recommendations in the ADA Self Evaluation (pages 20-21), below:

* Hire an independent external web and internet access consultant team to work with the Department of Technology in evaluating the accessibility of the county’s website, department webpages, and county kiosks, as well as assisting in the implementation of the access improvements which are needed for making them accessible to people with disabilities. Also, the consultant team is to provide comprehensive training for staff as to how to make the county’s website, department webpages, county kiosks, and documents accessible to people with disabilities.
* Assign the Department of Technology to provide web access standards and oversight to all departments for posting their own documents on the county website and departmental webpages.
* Review website postings for access before being posted.
* Adopt Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA as the County standard.
* Obtain input from people with disabilities regarding the accessibility of the County website and all county kiosks.
* Seek information regarding how accessible the county website and department webpages are to people using screen reader, magnification, and other assistive software, as well as completing online forms.

Additionally, the DAC recommends the following:

1) Provide funding to the Department of Technology (DTech) to establish a permanent DTech Division of Web and information and Communication Technology (WICT).

2) Hire or appoint a permanent web accessibility coordinator and staff for the WICT who have verifiable knowledge and experience in making websites accessible by at least meeting the requirements of accessible website development, Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 amended, Title II of the ADA 1990 amended, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and 2.2 at the level AA, and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The coordinator and/or staff shall be responsible for but not limited to:

* Coordinating the county’s compliance with regulations and standards for information and communication technology (ICT) and web access.
* Providing ongoing oversight, support, and training for designated staff to be knowledgeable about accessible website development, Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 amended, Title II of the ADA 1990 amended, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and 2.2 at the level AA, Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and when updated or new regulations are issued.
* Providing ongoing oversight, support, and training for designated staff to be knowledgeable about the development, procurement, maintenance, and use of ICT that is accessible to people with disabilities.
* Creating a program or comprehensive guidance to evaluate any proposed online services or documents for compliance with the ADA/WCAG, and usability by people with disabilities.
* Performing any necessary document remediation to bring the County into compliance.
* Conducting an accessibility evaluation of all countywide and departmental proposed and existing projects (including the design and administration of survey instruments) for their accessibility and usability by people with disabilities.
* Conducting an annual website accessibility evaluation.
* Supervising independent external web, internet, and/or ICT access consultant team(s) to work with the WICTO and Department of Technology in evaluating the accessibility of the county’s website, department webpages, ICT (including county kiosks), as well as assisting in the implementation of the access improvements which are needed for making them accessible to people with disabilities.