



NORTH CAROLINA
Department of Transportation

Digital Accessibility for Public Web Content

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina

Digital Accessibility Basics: Title II, Inclusive Content, and Accessible PDFs

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Agenda

- What digital accessibility is
- Why accessibility matters
- Title II overview
- Top 10 things content editors can do
- What makes an accessible PDF
- Q&A



What Digital Accessibility Is

What is Digital Accessibility?

- Ensuring digital content works for people of all abilities
- Applies to websites, applications, documents, multimedia, and more
- Removes barriers



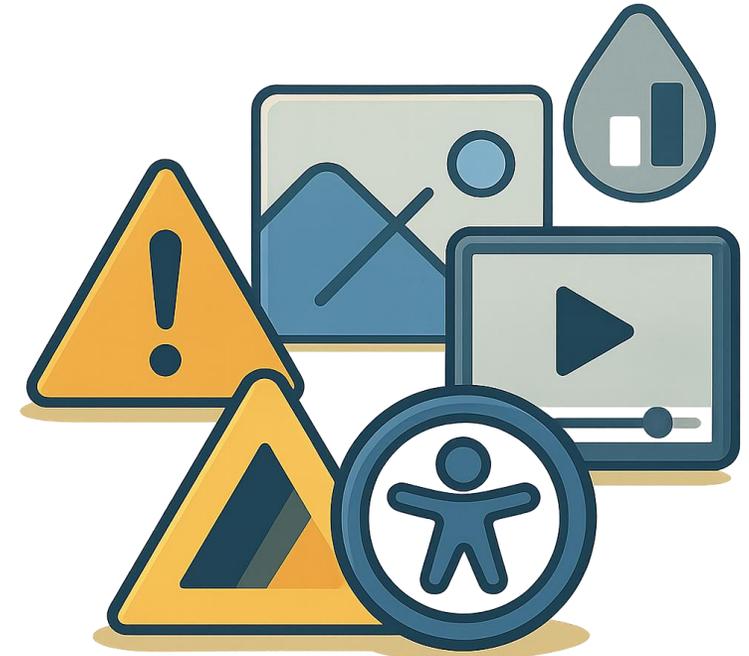
Who Benefits?

- People with visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive disabilities
- Older adults
- People with temporary limitations
- Mobile users, low-bandwidth users
- **Essentially: everyone**



Examples of Digital Barriers

- Images with no alt text
- Videos without captions
- Low color contrast
- Links labeled “click here”
- PDFs with no tags
- Keyboard traps or inaccessible menus



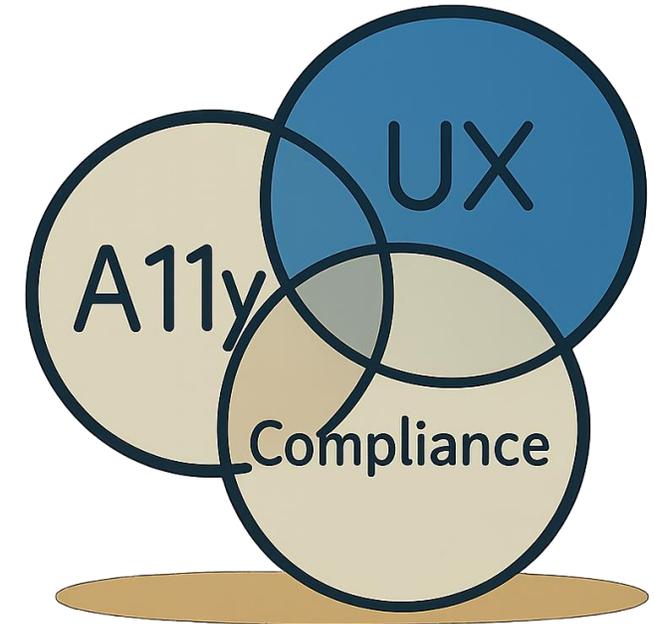
Assistive Technologies

- Screen readers (NVDA, JAWS, VoiceOver)
- Screen magnifiers
- Voice control (Dragon, dictation features)
- Switch devices
- Captions and transcripts
- Braille displays



Accessibility vs. Usability vs. Compliance

- Accessibility: People *can* use it
- Usability: People can use it *easily*
- Compliance: Meets legal requirements (ADA, WCAG, Section 508)



Good accessibility supports all three.

Why Digital Accessibility Matters

Inclusion and Equal Access

- Ensures everyone can access information and services
- Supports participation in education, employment, and civic life
- Builds trust with the public and your users



User Experience & Practical Benefits

- Clearer content benefits all users
- Easier navigation improves engagement
- Fewer support requests
- Better search engine optimization
- Works better on all devices and connection speeds



Legal & Policy Requirements

- ADA, Title II, and Section 508 set expectations for accessible content
- Growing attention on web, documents, and multimedia accessibility
- Proactive compliance reduces risk



Title II Overview

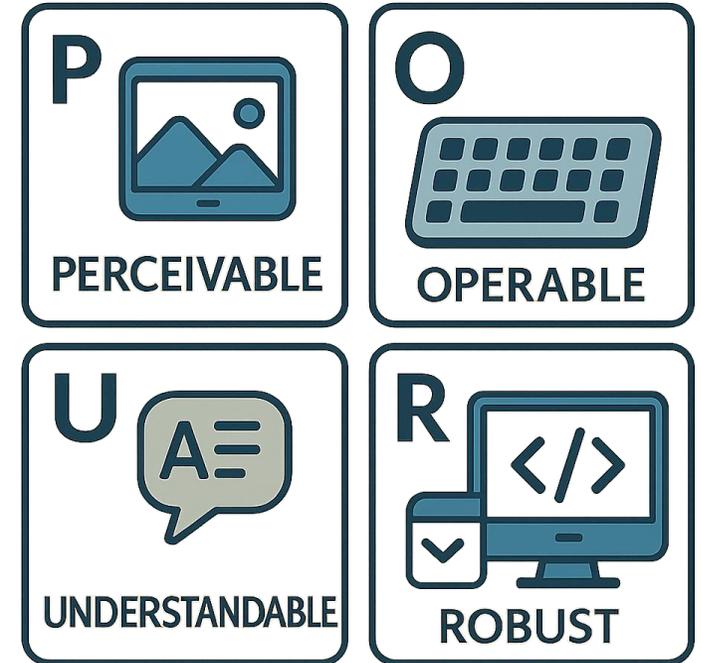
What is Title II?

- Part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Applies to state and local governments
- Covers websites, apps, documents, forms, multimedia, social media ...
- Requires effective communication for people with disabilities



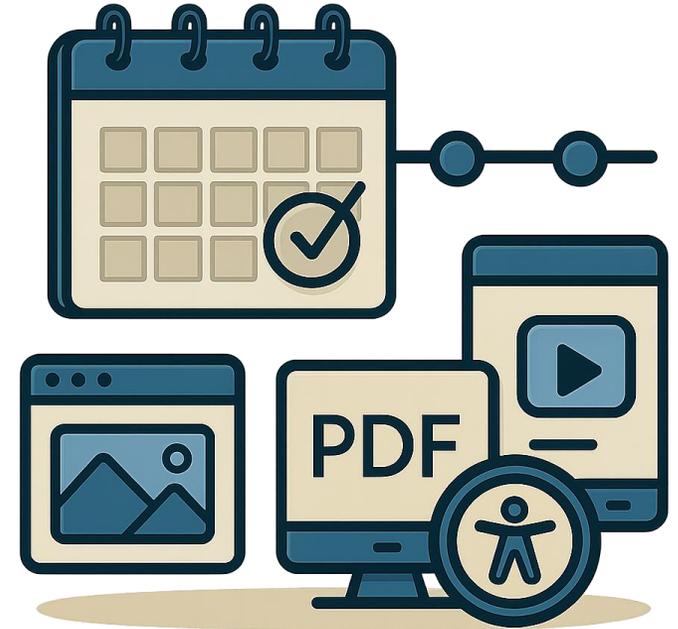
WCAG 2.1 AA Requirements

- State and local government must follow WCAG 2.1 AA standards:
 - **Perceivable** – Content must be presented clearly
 - **Operable** – All functions must be keyboard-accessible
 - **Understandable** – Content must be readable and predictable
 - **Robust** – Works with assistive technology



Scope & Deadlines

- Covers public-facing content
- Some exceptions:
 - archives;
 - legacy documents not in active use;
 - content posted by 3rd party;
 - individualized documents that are password-protected;
 - preexisting social media posts
- Compliance deadlines vary by organization size (For NC: April 24, 2026)



What This Means for Content Creators

- Your daily content decisions directly affect accessibility
- Editing practices = compliance outcomes
- Accessibility is a shared responsibility across teams
- Small changes make a big difference



Top 10 Things Content Editors Can Do

Use Proper Headings

- Use built-in heading styles
- Keep logical order: H1 → H2 → H3
- Helps screen reader navigation



Add Alt Text to Images

- Describe the purpose, not every detail
- Mark decorative images as decorative
- Essential for screen reader users



Write Descriptive Link Text

- Avoid “click here” or “read more”
- Use meaningful labels:
“Download the annual report”
- Helps everyone understand link purpose



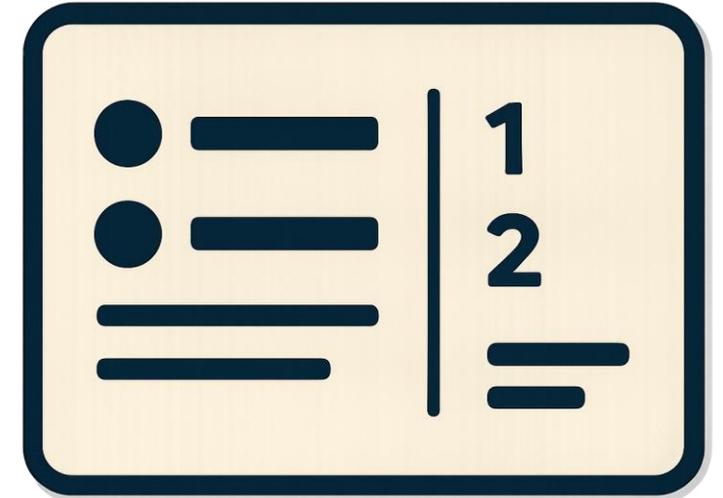
Ensure Good Color Contrast

- Text must stand out clearly from background
- Measurable contrast ratios (minimum 4.5:1)
- Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning



Use Real Lists

- Use built-in bullet/number list tools
- Don't type your own dashes or numbers
- Improves screen reader interpretation



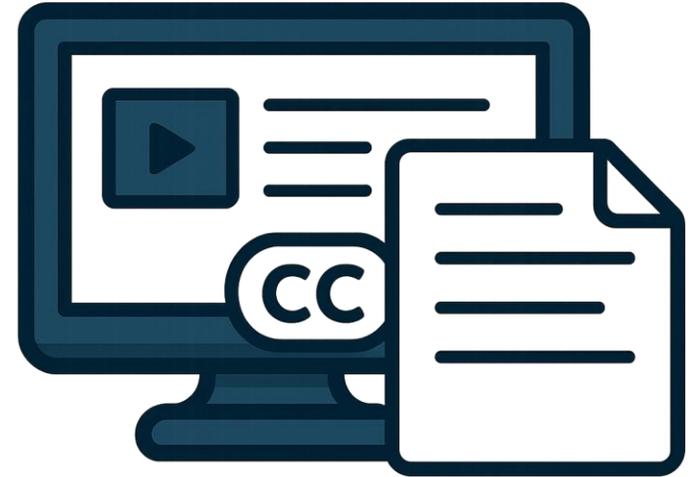
Avoid Images of Text

- Text inside images can't be resized or read by screen readers
- Use actual text whenever possible
- If unavoidable, provide full alt text



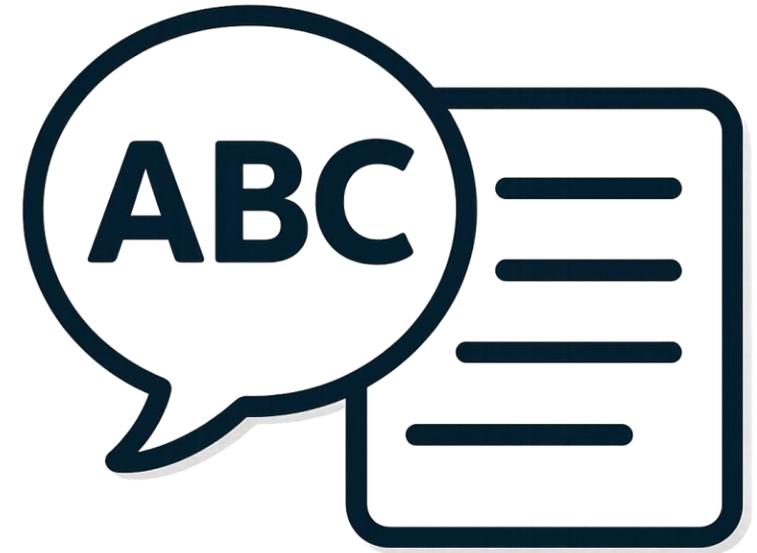
Provide Captions & Transcripts

- Captions for all videos
- Transcripts for audio content
- Improves comprehension for all users



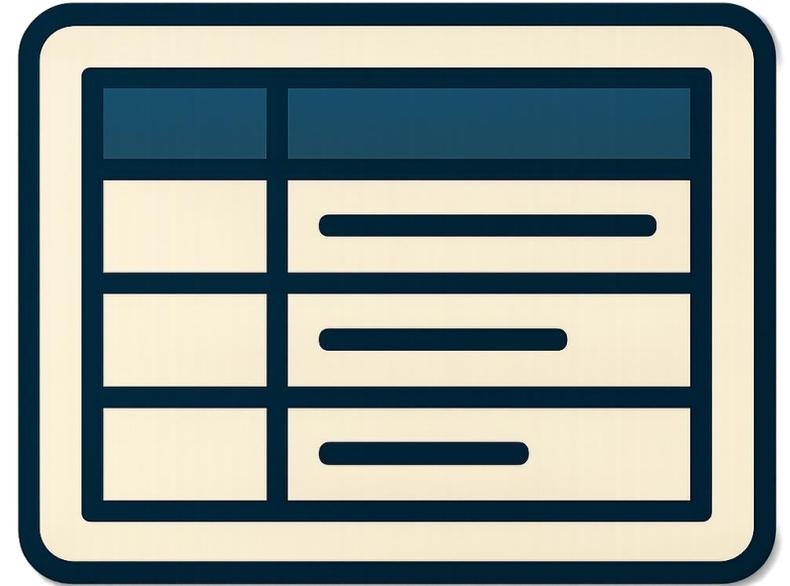
Use Clear, Plain Language

- Write simply and directly
- Avoid jargon when possible
- Supports users with cognitive disabilities and ESOL learners



Create Accessible Tables

- Use simple layout
- Define header rows
- Avoid merged cells if possible
- Include captions or summaries when helpful



Check Keyboard & Focus Order

- Ensure users can tab through a page or component
- Focus order should follow visual order
- Don't hide important content behind hover-only controls



What Makes an Accessible PDF

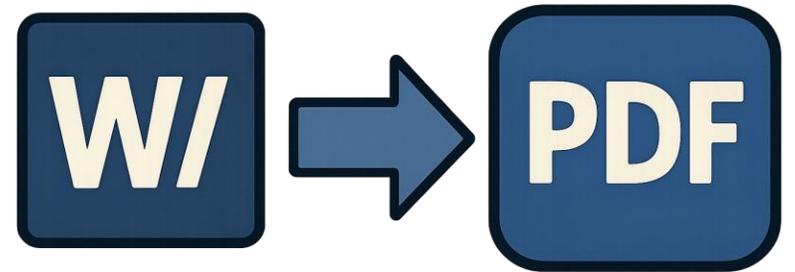
What Makes a PDF Accessible?

- Tagged properly (headings, lists, paragraphs)
- Clear reading order
- Alt text for visuals
- Logical structure for navigation
- Descriptive links
- Color contrast
- Accessible tables



Start With an Accessible Source

- Most accessibility should be done *before* exporting
- Use headings, lists, styles in Word or other tools
- Saving as PDF
 - Options > Ensure Document structure tags



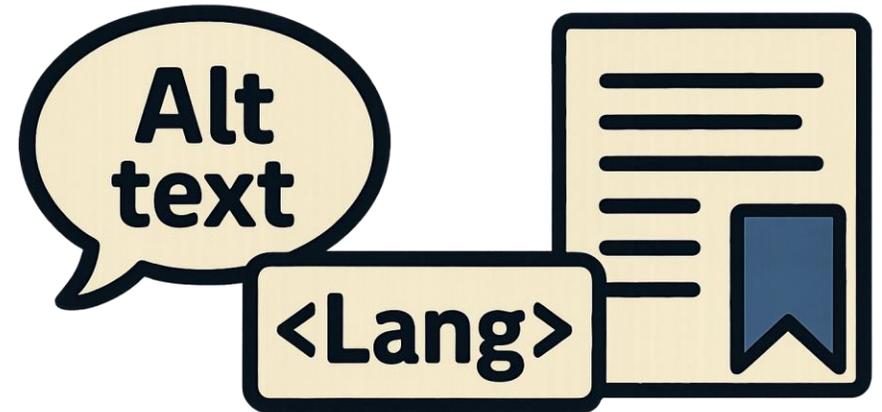
Tag Structure & Reading Order

- Tags identify elements for screen readers
- Reading order defines the flow of content
- Fix in Acrobat if needed



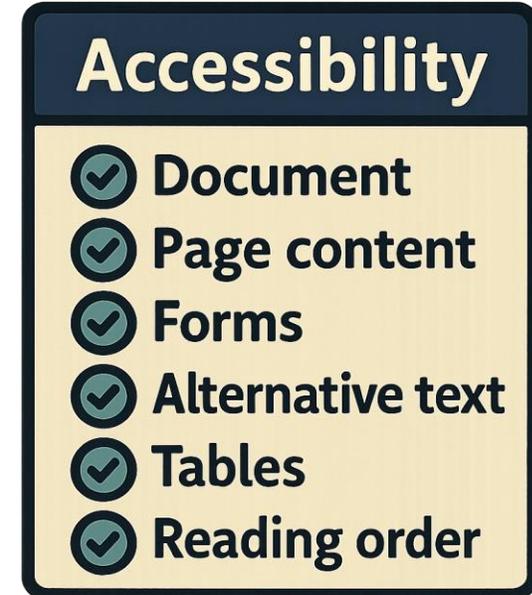
Alt Text, Metadata & Bookmarks

- Add alt text to images and charts
- Set document language and title
- Use bookmarks for long documents (typically >10 pages)



Checking & Fixing Accessibility

- Run Acrobat's accessibility checker
- Manually review reading order
- Verify tags, headings, lists, and tables
- Confirm links, form fields, and labels



Summary & Key Takeaways

- Accessibility supports usability, inclusion, and compliance
- Many improvements come from simple editing habits
- Start with accessible sources to simplify PDF work
- Everyone plays a role in accessibility



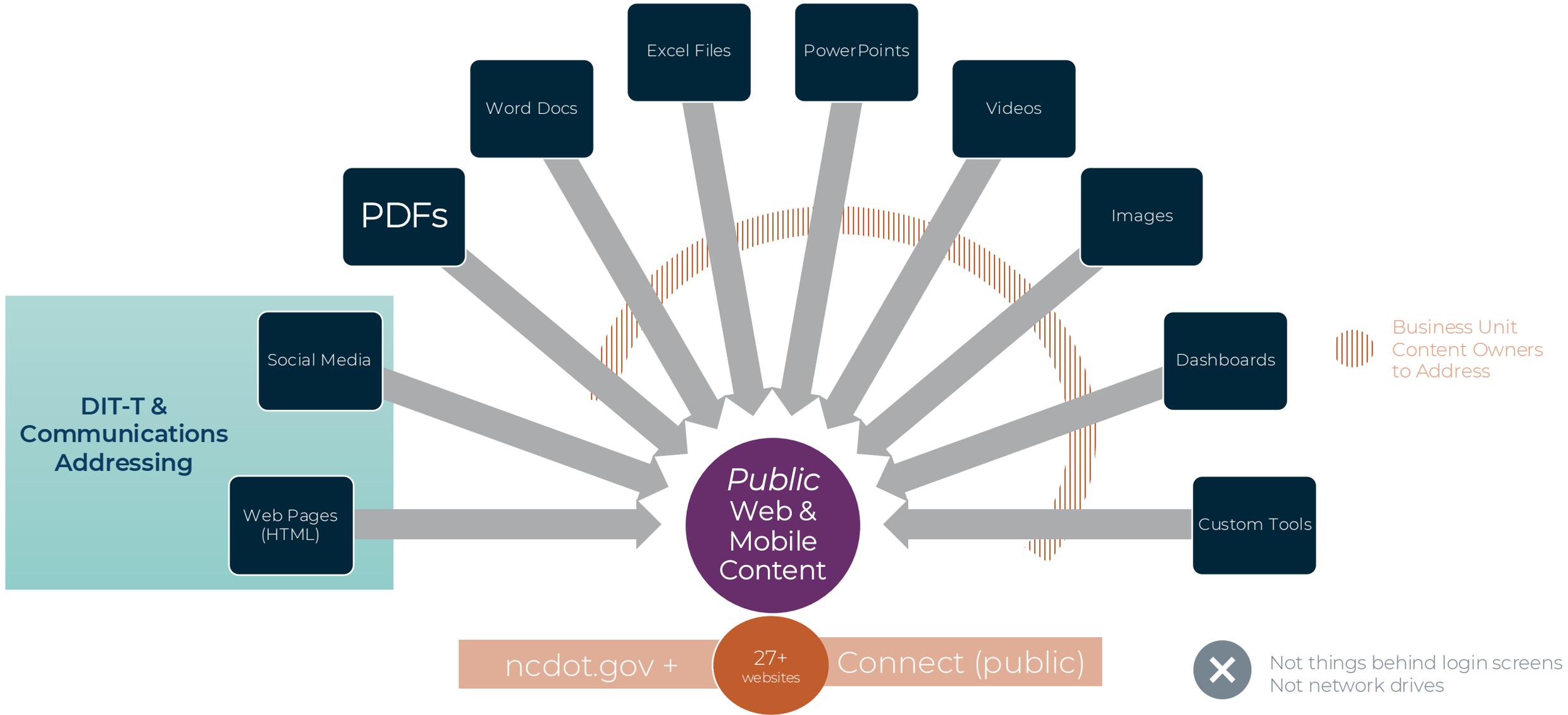


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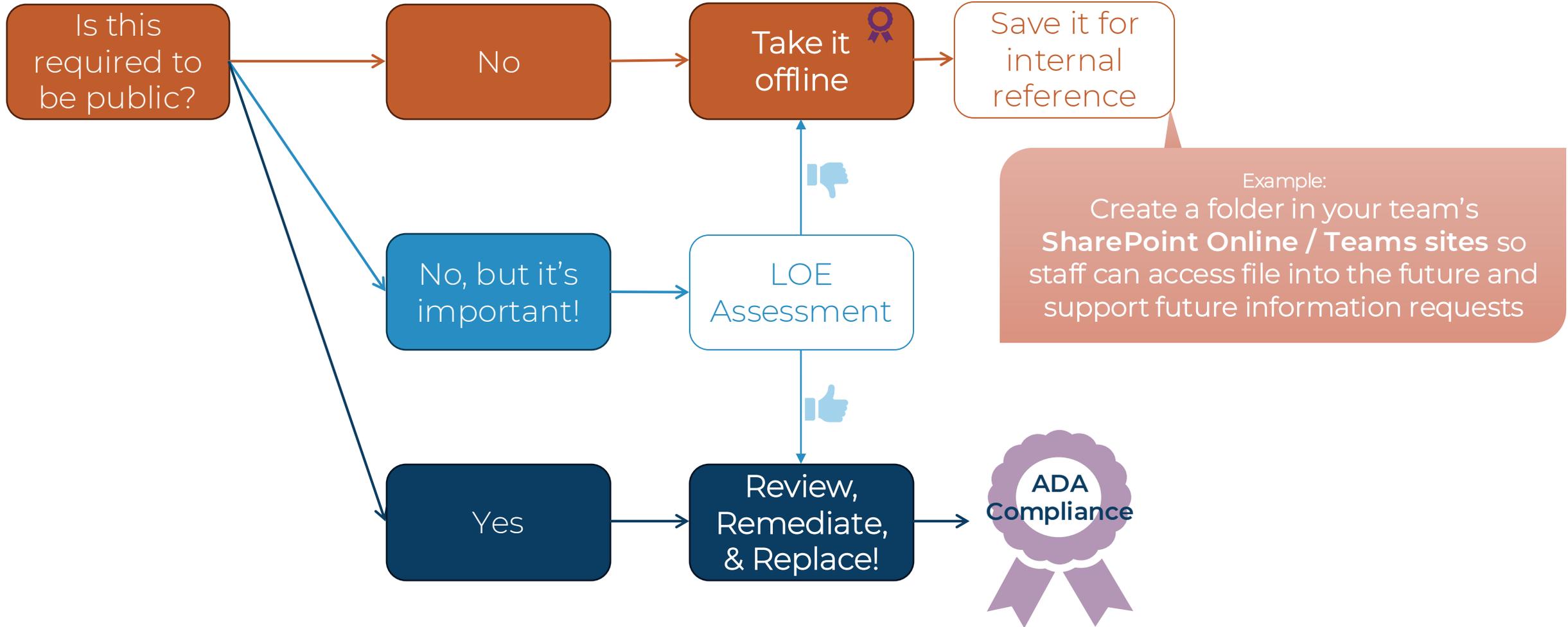
amy.hepler@nc.gov

NCDOT: Need to Knows

Scope of Digital Accessibility Compliance



Path to Compliance



LOE: Level of Effort

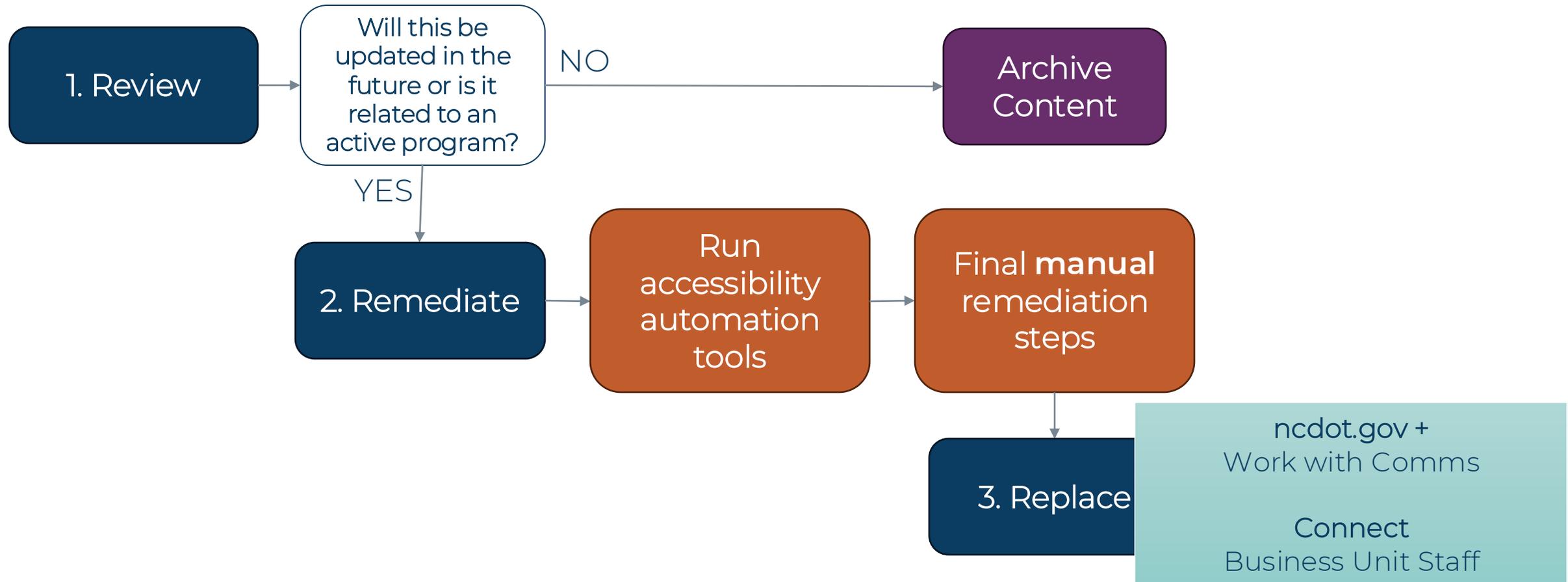
Assessing the Scope of your Web Content

As 3/4/2026 ... 143,759 artifacts on the NCDOT Connect and 12,631 artifacts on other DOT public webpages.

1	Unique Sections	Total Document Count	PDF Count	Non PDFs	Last Modified	Last file change
2	https://connect.ncdot.gov/	8374	14	8360	Kim Buttry, System /	9/26/2025
3	https://connect.ncdot.gov/anyrisk	1	0	1	No match found	2/18/2026
4	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business	24	24	0	Alfred L. Filler, Susa	12/19/2025
5	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/consultants	220	84	136	Jennifer D. Hernand	11/20/2014
6	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV	160	159	1	Kim Buttry, Christop	2/16/2021
7	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/ForeignTradeZone	2	1	1	No match found	5/20/2021
8	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/fuel	22	9	13	Kim Buttry, Mitchell,	2/10/2026
9	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/IT	20	5	15	System Account, Pa	2/24/2026
10	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/Prequal	49	42	7	Kim Buttry, Amye Hc	2/2/2026
11	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/Purchasing	136	86	50	No match found, Kin	1/22/2026
12	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/ROW	702	47	655	Yvonne M. Radford,,	9/26/2025
13	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/safety	1040	918	122	Jarvis K. Gray, Robin	5/25/2021
14	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/SmallBusiness	133	124	9	System Account, se	7/2/2020
15	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/SmallBusiness/BOWD	5	3	2	System Account, No	1/24/2024
16	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/SmallBusiness/Online-Cert-App-P	7	7	0	System Account	2/19/2026
17	https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/SmallBusiness/OnTheJobTraining	32	27	5	System Account, Ca	2/15/2017

What about exceptions?

Review, Remediate, & Replace



Archive Content

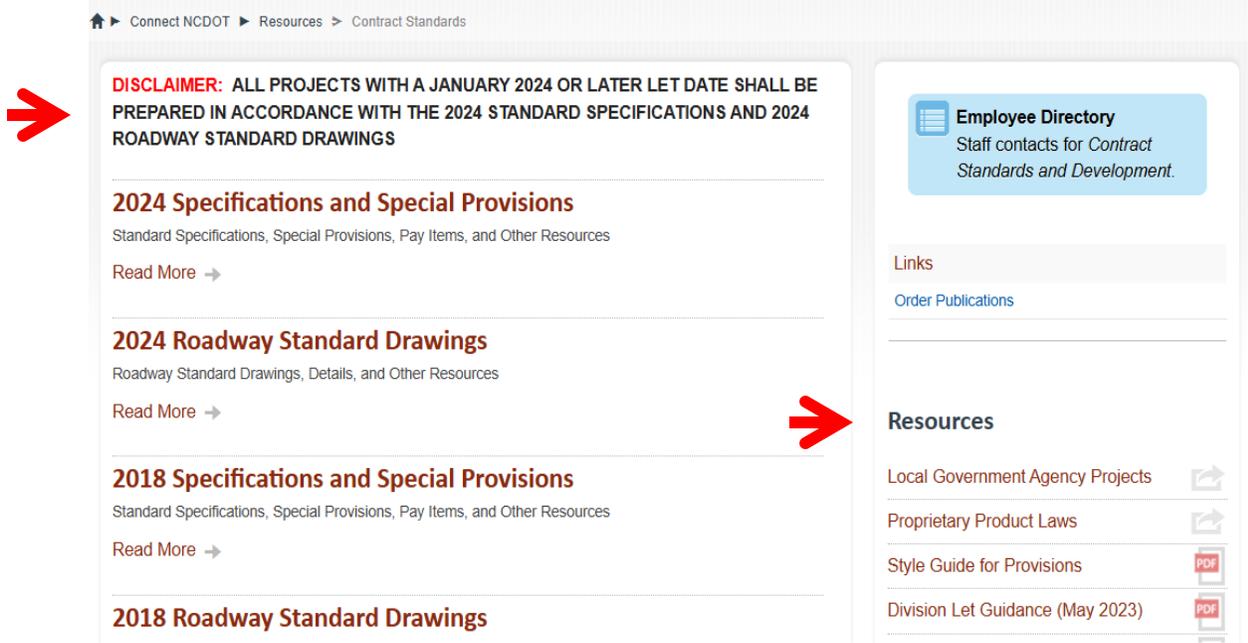
Archived web content means web content that—

- (1) Was created before the compliance date
- (2) Is retained exclusively for reference, research, or recordkeeping;
- (3) Is not altered or updated after the date of archiving; and
- (4) Is organized and stored in a dedicated area or areas clearly identified as being archived.

Example:
Content on this page is an archive of past agency business. If you have questions on this content and access, please contact [resource email account].



➔ **Contract Standards and Development Unit**
Standards Specifications, Roadway Standard Drawings, Pay Items, and Other Resources



Accessibility Support Tools



Key Websites:

<https://it.nc.gov/digital-accessibility>

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/Pages/Digital-Accessibility.aspx>

How to Get Support

- DOT Accessibility Question Portal
 - COMING SOON!
- DIT Accessibility Expert Support
 - <https://it.nc.gov/digital-accessibility/expert-accessibility-help>
- North Carolina Digital Accessibility Community of Practice
 - <https://it.nc.gov/digital-accessibility/expert-accessibility-help/digital-accessibility-community-practice>
- US DOJ ADA Information Line
 - 800-514-0301 (voice)

The image shows a screenshot of a web form with a light blue background and a vertical blue bar on the left. The form contains five numbered sections, each with a text input field:

- 1. Name ***
Enter your answer
- 2. Email ***
Enter your answer
- 3. Business Unit ***
Enter your answer
- 4. Describe the issue ***
Enter your answer
- 5. Relevant Files (Non-anonymous question🗨️)**
Upload file
File number limit: 1 Single file size limit: 10MB Allowed file types: Word, Excel, PPT, PDF, Image, Video, Audio

A green "Submit" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Q&A

Questions?

Thank you for your commitment to accessibility!