



PENNSYLVANIA
TECH ACCELERATOR

Why Accessibility Matters

**Supports Coordinator
Training Series
Training #3
2026**

Trainer

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State of the States
In Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



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Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator Partners



Office of Developmental Programs
Office of Long-Term Living



Institute on Disabilities



State of the States
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KU CENTER ON
DISABILITIES



We will ride!

Denver, CO 1978

Gang of 19 threw themselves in front of buses until the Regional Transportation District (RTD) was willing to talk about the absence of accessible buses.

We will ride! – The Gang of 19



Photo from Denver Public Library



Accessibility

Accessibility provides opportunities for all to engage in experiences, environments, services information, and tools so that all can equally participate regardless of physical, cultural, linguistic, age, disability, or status.

The goal of accessibility is to eliminate barriers of participation.



5 A's of Access

Affordability – financial resources

Availability – sufficient volume and variety

Accessibility – obtain the service

Accommodation – tailored to fit the individual's need

Acceptability – individual's motivation and trust

Universal Design vs. Accessible Design

Universal Design – Designing environments and products that are aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone without the need for adaptation or specialized design

- Universal Design Project

Accessible Design – focus on making sure a product can be used by the most number of people through accommodations or adaptations for any disability or impairment – related to an equitable experience through different means



Access Friction

Access Friction – Describes the conflict when accessibility needs for one interfere with the accessibility needs of another

Light Sensitivity



Noise Levels



Accessibility Features

Accessibility features are often broken down by functional need:

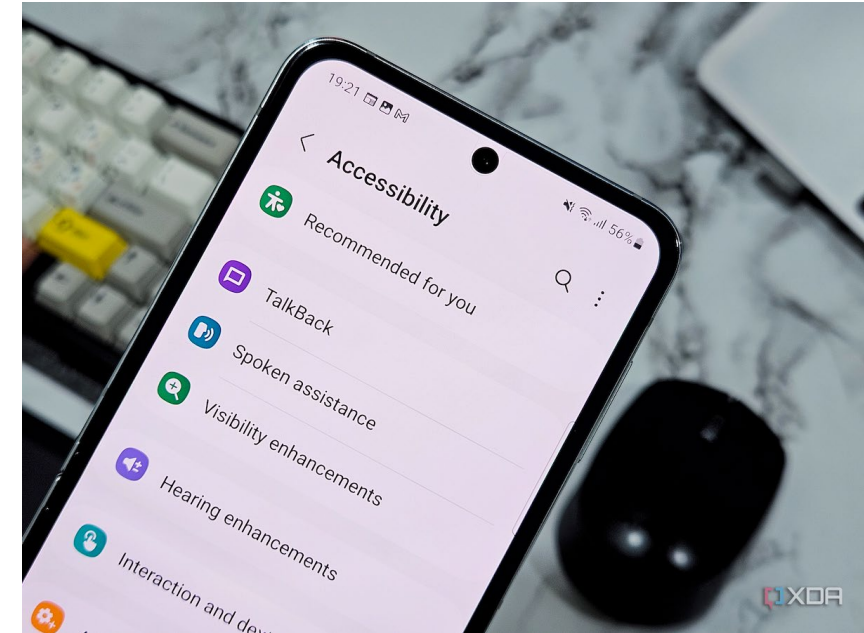
- Cognitive
- Visual
- Auditory
- Motor
- Speech



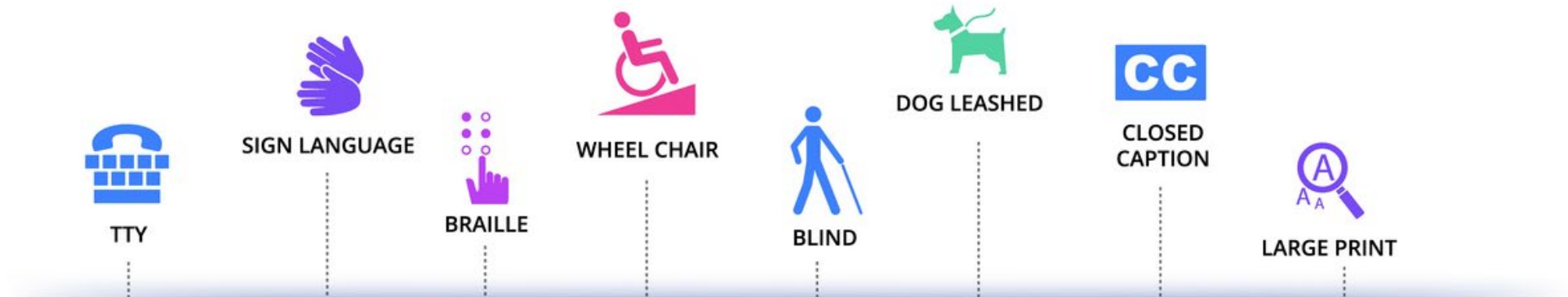
Accessibility Functional Need

Accessibility features are often broken down by functional need:

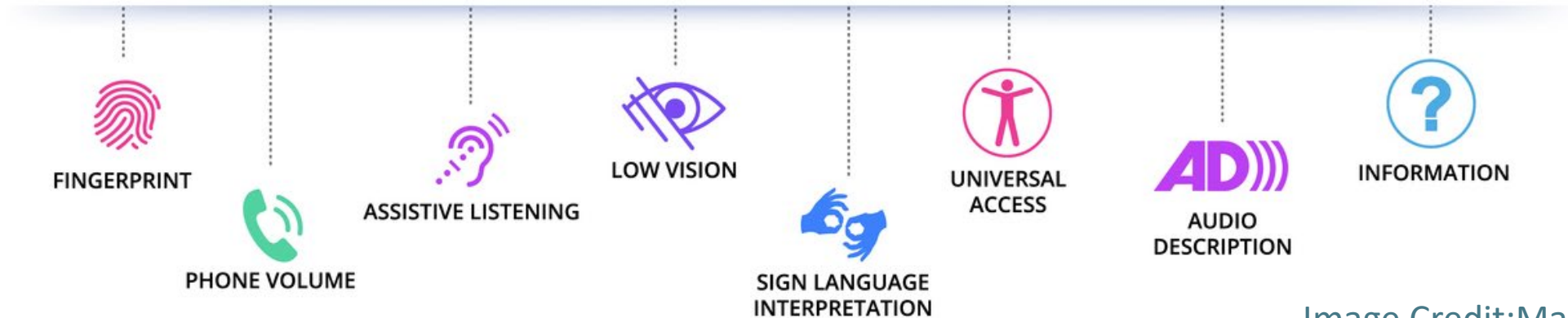
- Cognitive
- Visual
- Auditory
- Motor
- Speech



Accessibility Features continued



ACCESSIBILITY



[Image Credit:Maanas](#)

Legal Considerations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – prohibits discrimination based on disability and requires businesses to provide equal access to digital services

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act – sets specific standards for technology and web-based applications used by federal agencies

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act – individuals have equal access to federally funded programs





Why Accessibility Matters for Practitioners?



Image Credit: <https://mypatheducation.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Carer-with-Young-Girl-in-Wheelchair.jpg>

Role of Practitioners

Accessibility is used as a method for narrowing down technology solutions in the feature matching process.

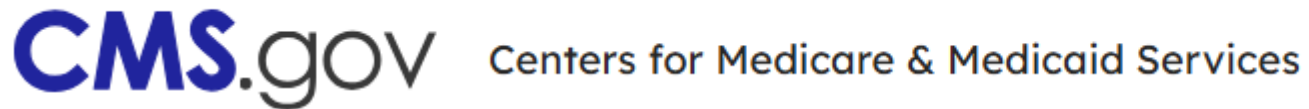
Must be a consideration in any technology solution investigated.



Procurement

Why do we procure accessible Information & Communication Technology (ICT) at CMS?

[Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 \(29 USC § 794d\)](#) requires that all information and communication technology (ICT) that CMS develops, procures, maintains or uses is accessible to persons with disabilities.



[Source: Voluntary Product Assessment Template \(VPAT\) Information | CMS](#)

Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)

- The Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) captures accessibility specifications and features from information and communication technologies. The Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) provides details of conformance to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and remedial actions to obtain compliance.
- Before procurement investigate accessibility features in technology solutions, ask vendors, and request accessibility reports such as a VPAT



Sustainable Use

- Rates of abandonment of assistive technologies can be as high as 78% (hearing aids) (Galvin & Donnell, 2002)
- Common reasons for abandonment
 - Design and functional issues
 - Individual motivation
 - Insufficient training or support
 - Expectations
 - Social mismatch
 - Cost and maintenance
 - Changing needs



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Accessibility as an Expectation

- Baked-in not retrofitted
- Accessibility is everyone's task
- Built into the process
- Built into the conversations
- Leads to inclusive environments



*"My friend has a cell phone. Why can't I
have one? Technology, and the help of
others can help me become more
independent."*

- Heidi Myhre

Support Accessibility

Third Thursday of Each May is Global Accessibility Awareness Day.

“The purpose of GAAD is to get everyone talking, thinking, and learning about digital access and inclusion, and the more than One Billion people with disabilities/impairments.”



Global Accessibility
Awareness Day

Other Training Series Topics

- **#1 The Self-Directed Model for Identifying Technology Solutions for Individual Goal Attainment**
- **#2 Technology Solutions Specialists: Leadership and Peer Mentorship**
- **#4 Technology Agility, Resilience, and Literacy Training for Users and Professionals**
- **#5 Technology-Related Services, Waiver Policies, and Resources for Technology Acquisition**
- **#6 Innovative and Emerging Technology Solutions for Community Living**





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