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>> KRISTOPHER ADAMS: Thank you to those presenters. Let's give them another round of applause. I will see if this clicker works. Here we go. Going to talk about digital accessibility. Background. Legal things in there that we will go over fast. Talk about the team intro to digital accessibility and things we are trying to teach and sell across the Commonwealth. Not just to IT partners but digital directors that coordinate and create websites. Anybody that creates any Digital Products for consumption and Digital Products we have out there for our internal employees to consume. Want to make sure everyone has access to Digital Products and it's not like a PDF like handing someone a blank piece of paper if they cannot see it. We are taking a look at things like that. I want to talk about the things we built along the way. Digital accessibility I consider part of emerging technology. There is not a lot out there. There is accessibility management platforms by different vendors. They meet certain levels but there is so much more we can do. We are building tools to supplement these platforms that we have to improve testing and remediation. I want to talk a little bit about where we are going. We have the entirety of leadership support. I will leave with resources and tools at the end. Not stuff that's internal to the Commonwealth but stuff that if you want to continue your education after the presentation. And then we will have time for questions. Definitions I have here, a lot of people are familiar with the Americans With Disabilities Act title II from 1990, federal law that requires state and local governments to ensure digital services websites, all electronic communication is accessible to individuals with disabilities including access to services. That's key, we want to ensure access to programs and services the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania offers. That's just what we are committed to. Web content accessibility guidelines, we call it WCAG, guidelines to ensure compatibility with best practices. Levels 2.1, WCAG 2.1 levels A and AA. But we encourage folks to go beyond that. This is an ever-changing thing as an emerging technology. Technology changes, we have to change to adapt to ensure access is equal. The Department of Justice digital accessibility rules came out April 2024. These are federal regulations that implement title II of the ADA. Basically, a reminder that hey everyone, ADA has been around, since 1990. Get off of your butts and get stuff done. Not to be blunt but that's pretty much what it was. A reminder that we took seriously and begin implementing this program. A little bit about the Department of Justice rule. It set WCAG 2.1 as a

standard, adopting that as a mandatory minimum for state and local governments with minimal exceptions. Very limited exceptions, it is not something that someone can say I don't really have the resources to do this right now. That's not considered an exception. They did put forth an April 24 2026 deadline. That encourages us to work towards and ensure all web and mobile content and apps meet WCAG 2.1 a and AA compliance with directly managed by us or vendors that work for us to create digital content. The deadline is more of a let's get started type of thing but we are trying to get as much done now in advance of the deadline as we can. One of my goals is to make Pennsylvania a leader in the space and encourage other states to follow. The DOJ's tailored approach recognizes 100 percent compliance is not obtainable. 100 percent of the time. We can strive towards that. That's the goal in the goalpost will change as technology changes but we continue to adapt and evolve over time tickets 100 percent as close as we can. The digital accessibility program commitment demonstrates what Pennsylvania's long-term strategy to enhance accessibility align closely with recently proposed state bill, House Bill 45 of 2025 with key considerations. So, we are aligned with legislature on moving in this direction. Which helps when trying to sell it. Why should we do this? Provides inclusive public service as we said. Everyone should have equal access to the services the Commonwealth provides. Ensures equitable access to government services, information and resources residents including those with disabilities. A lot of how I sell it circles around that. User experience. I tried to get people from a pragmatic side. If I can't get it from the heart side and explain that when we have streamlined user experience for folks, we continue to use that service whether it's hitting your license renewed, getting a fishing license or anything else you go to state government four. We want to make that better. Right now, I know everyone in this room has used at least some level of government service through interacting with the Internet. And a lot of it is not that great. We are trying to improve it. Risk reduction and compliance, strengthens adherence to federal accessibility laws. Minimizing legal risk while reinforcing commitment to equity and inclusion. Operational efficiency, investing in accessibility from the start reduces the need for costly retrofits and future accommodations. I will get into this later. Leadership opportunity. Positions us as national leaders in digital excess ability demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement. I am not good with the clicker but we will get there. Maybe. There it is. Okay. There is a picture on here and it shows two people in the process of baking muffins. One picture they are adding blueberries to the baking mix and mixing it together to create these muffins. In the other picture they forgot to add the blueberries Gamera trying to smash them into the muffins after they are already baked. That doesn't work out so well. That's how it is with digital accessibility. If we create a product and don't incorporate digital accessibility from the front and it is extremely difficult to put it in after the facts. You have to, stuff I don't understand because I'm more of a salesperson, the code in the background, you have the coatings directly so screen readers know what they are looking at and can read out where they are going and direction. You have code links to skip from beginning to end or find headings and navigate a webpage or a digital application like somebody who would be able to see it. There's - - the way we look at it is everyone plays a part in making digital content accessible. Designers, developers, digital directors, anyone that develops digital content is who we look to as an audience to teach to fish. Our unit is not huge. The Commonwealth is big and we need to teach folks across the board how to do this and bake it into their everyday practice. I keep looking over here and it's right in front of me. I can't believe this. I just realized this. I love this. We will try again. Ready? Right there. I love it. Let's talk about principles of digital accessibility. Things should be

perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. Perceivable insurance content is visible and usable. All text for pictures. Captions, clear headings. Operable supports easy interaction. Making things keyboard friendly. Things like that. Understandable. Keep it clear with simple instructions, consistent design and easy to read content. That is a huge thing. And we will circle back to that because of language. We are trying to optimize content within. Reduce the reading level to something that is a little bit more understandable. I know we can't control all the words we use, scientific terms and things if we get into specific websites that might have bigger words. But making things as easy to understand as possible and then from there you can translate into different languages and it's easier to understand. Going back to a conversation Adrian and had before I popped up about AI. Letting a machine translate language happens all of the time but can be dangerous because you don't know what is going to spit out. Is it the correct language? The correct regional language? Is this vital? If misunderstood, can it impact them financially? With your health? Life or death situations. We want to make sure we put out is easy to understand and translate. And understandable for anyone using our services. I have to put these on. Assistive technology, I got glasses last year. I don't know how I lived without them. Robust. Build for the future. We want to make things that work across all devices. All browsers and assistive technology. When thinking about making webpages we don't just look at them in the square box on the computer, we have a sidebar. How is this going to look on a mobile device? An iPad? Make sure the layout can adjust as needed the screen size and be enlarged or made smaller. Color contrast. So many different things you don't normally think about unless you work or live in this space. Getting better with this clicker. Nice little picture here. What we have is to pictures. Under what seems like a canoe in a gigantic shark underneath. A big shark. Just an outline. The second picture is a tugboat with a fishing hook and the shark outline has a bunch of little fish inside of it instead of the big shark. That's how we tackle accessibility. You might look at a test and this is how we talk to IT about it and see thousands of issues and become overwhelmed like oh my goodness how my going to get started? Where do I start? What we try and teach is we have templates that can reuse code and global components that can be changed once and impact thousands of pages across the board. What we like to say is accessibility is not one big thing to travel but a lot of small things. When you take bite-size chunks out of it it's easy to consume and accomplish your goals. That's just a little bit about we try to talk to IT about it when we talk to developers a

d things like that about how important this is and how it is not that overwhelming when you take it in small bites. Items we look at, alt text for images is one. Right, there is a picture of green northern lights from the Aurora swirling in the night sky turning brighter near the horizon. Pretty good all text. Gives a description of what you're seeing and explains it in a way that is still concise but something like just night sky. Doesn't give detail, no effort put in. Terrible would be all to pick 04876.jpg. That doesn't tell you anything other than there's a picture and you don't know what's on it. We have PowerPoint you might be using and creating things along those lines with images that don't convey peaceful information. We recommend you mark those as decorative in all text so a screen reader will skip over it and not confuse or cause extra issues when someone's going through a PowerPoint that might not be able to see the picture there. Color contrast is big. First you how colors interact with each other. Ideally Brent standard makes it easy to pair dark and light colors. What's funny is when it comes to graphic design and accessibility the - - and okay standard is medium blue text on a blue background, lower ratio that I can see because of the thing but that's okay. Failing is an even lighter blue text on blue background color ratio is much lower. We have color contrast checkers,

there's one in chrome but you can check their websites and when you do the little list color in this color it will tell you whether it passes or fails. Some of them even show you colors you could use that would pass. Very helpful if you know where to find them. And we will have some of those links at the end of the presentation. Proper heading structure. Touched on this a little bit but headings go in order of importance from heading one, every document or webpage should have a single heading one, title. Heading three, may be a paragraph text, lists, things along those lines. When creating a document, they use the example of creating a Word document. You want to use the styles to be able to create your headings and next things underneath. When you create it's like school. Create the outline first and then fill it with information after. Allowing people with a screen reader to jump from section to section including table contents. That helps a lot. That helps those who can see the document because they can see where to go and a screen reader can use that to know where they want to go to find the needed information quickly as opposed to reading the entire document to get to what they want. That's all I have on headings. What we built is exciting stuff. I get excited because I have a really cool team. Not a big team vertical team. I hire smart people do smart things. Strategic engagement is what I'm good at. We secured IT delivery - - I went out and made friends with everybody. I've been around 20 years in the Commonwealth. I know a lot of people. Some of you in the audience, too. I went to every CIO and explained what we are doing, why we're doing it, he met this presentation the caveats added. Got their buy-in and acceptance to move down this path. So that was exciting. I was able to hire two portfolio managers and my two portfolio managers actively collaborate with these IT centers. The Commonwealth has six IT delivery centers that service multiple agencies that are similar in nature. That way especially with their IT, if their applications crossover, things along those lines. Health and Human Services delivery center, the big one they help is Health and Human Services. As well as - - my two portfolio managers each have three delivery centers they connect with. A connection point and we are prioritizing applications based on data driven how much we are used by Pennsylvania. Getting into the next part. Impact driven prioritization. There is a list of 24 laps, things like driver and vehicle services. The fund fishing PA, state part reservation system. Things using the Commonwealth and those Pennsylvanians who may be visitors as well. Focusing on those, we want to baseline test. Whether we do it for we have IT do it for the vendor do it using platforms to see what they are doing and keep them honest. Get the baseline test so we know where we are currently. Working with delivery centers to create remediation that we share with agencies on how to fix those things over time. Sometimes you can do everything right away because of resource limitations. Currently it was brought up earlier, and a bit of a budget impasse right now but you can make a plan. You can document and work towards it. You can hit high notes first, the things that are going to impact users the most and work your way down. That's how we are partnering and working through. Trying to find efficiencies and innovation. This is where I talked earlier about developing tools to accelerate testing and provide IT delivery centers what they need to do this faster and better because again resources are scarce so we listen to the issues they are running into and build tools to bridge the gap wherever we can. Escalation issue resolution. We are acting as a key escalation point to remove accessibility barriers. We will get into this later but I have created a governance group with IT delivery centers where we can come together quarterly and talk about the challenges we are facing. Best practices that are working and if there is an issue that we can't fix at our level I have an escalation process that goes to my Executive Director Bree Pardo and she can work with the governor's office as well as other CIOs to remove the blockage and keep us moving forward.

We have communities of practice. Two different ones. One for digital content creators. Your graphic designers, artists and illustrators, digital directors, a collaborative space for employees involved in creating, managing and improving digital content. We have been talking a lot about the webpage. Our head, Taylor -- happens talking about our new public web presence, more uniform looking, more accessible, trying to optimize that accessibility. Trying to optimize language within it to simplify. As I was talking earlier for translation and easier understanding. On the other hand, my technical side is IT delivery center community of practice. Not ever solutions architects, developers, project managers, business analysts. That's a dedicated forum for employees focus on creating more delay accessible obligations where we get into the code. What really needs to be done. This is bad code, good code, things along those lines. How to make it easier for them to understand and incorporate into daily work. I touched on governance but will talk more here. Strategic oversight and account ability insurers strategic alignment and risk management through roles. I will discuss later. Resource allocation facilitates decisions, secures funding and prioritizes accessibility initiatives and compliance monitoring and continuous improvement. We are using audit, testing, reporting to drive ongoing accessibility advancements. All documentation we are doing is data you're collecting that helps me trying to sell upstream for more resources. Not for my team but for IT delivery centers working on this. The more resources they have, the faster they can get this done. Roles and responsibilities. I talk about structures of the Commonwealth. We have IT centers serving agencies and as, big O AIT. Agencies are responsible for -- they own the content, whether it's they fix it and update it themselves or vendor does they are ultimately responsible. IT delivery centers are responsible for application reviews, remediation planning, accessibility testing, stakeholder collaboration to document compliance and recommend system improvements. O AIT, code PA, us, we ensure visibility compliance through tools, training, governance, tracking while ensuring IT delivery centers with their work plans and any roadblocks that we remove roadblocks wherever we can. Risk management. We like transparency in our reporting. Government transparency is a big deal. We establish a baseline for each IT delivery center to track progress of accessibility maturity with digital content. We have ongoing measurements, monitoring maturity growth and -- that come out of the accessibility management platforms that we test through and verify that when we fix things that they improve scores. We also provide access to reporting tools. Key stakeholders have visibility into their applications and websites and can see where they stand, where we are going with them. Views go the like oh AIT, our CIO and my Executive Director, Bree Pardo. Code PA accessibility program team has access; IT delivery centers CIOs and their accessibility teams have access. We are working on access for agency partners now. We have to silo it so they can only see their stuff. And we want to be able to have digital directors have access because they need to continue to optimize those websites. Guessing at the battery issue. It can't be me. There we go. We have created, in the beginning when Adrian introduced me, he brought up lean leadership. I have been in the Commonwealth for a long time. I have seen waste, taxpayer dollars wasted and I cannot stand it. I like to optimize make things lean and move faster better. Get things done as quickly it is possible but right. We created a couple of tools and I want to talk about that briefly. Under lean testing we developed a streamlined manual testing methodology. There's could two kinds of tests that you can do for websites and applications. You can have the management platform call through and find accessibility issues but that catches like 20 percent. Not all of it. Yes, you manual testing to catch the rest. It is a lot of manual testing that needs done. If I go to the IT guys and I say you are going through these 255

tests they stare at me like oh my God, they are in shock. It's a lot of work. We broke it down to a certain amount of tests that catch major issues that affect the most people. Alice and starting point. Start with that, work through those issues and then best practice over time is to get that 100 percent. To get through all other test there. Other manual tests. It has kind of cut testing time by 80 percent just on the first pass. And we have updated accessibility management platform spot check to align with testing methods. We work with a vendor using their tool and they adjust their tool based on what we say we need. The tool is used by other states. Our fixes are helping them as well. Leaders in the nation. That is the goal. On the other side, enhanced clarity. Trying to improve what the excess ability management platform spits out. Testing results for easy to understand especially by developers on those that have not done this before. Allows for more effective fixes, helps deliver meaningful code corrections from automated testing and also helps them plan remediation better. Provides accurate data remediation efforts. Where we are going. If I knew the clicker was going to get me like this, I wouldn't have had so many in between slides. Future goals. We have a strategic roadmap. We are coordinating with IT delivery center partners to restructure project roadmap across the board. We are standardizing testing as I said. Baseline testing efforts to prioritize applications and websites. Trying to create sustainable accessibility. By integrating accessibility into modernization, optimizing resources and training our IT teams. We want this to be second nature. This is how we do things now and we will continue doing things this way going forward. That helps us develop accessible content. We are looking at policy and tools optimization. simplifying digital accessibility - - user feedback is super important. We cannot hear what users think or where they are having trouble and how do we know? That's why we asked the question and get involved. We get down in the weeds and talk to people. It's important to find out what we can do to help and you can only hear that by talking to people that are using the systems. The last slide is just me leaving folks with some general tools that are out there for everybody to use. There is links in there. Arizona State IT accessibility site is fantastic. I'm going to beat it when I get mine up there but you will get there. Teach Access skills, hiring toolkit is a good tool. The Section 508 site on how to create digital accessible products has a wealth of information. They see trends in excess ability standards site in the department of homeland security is a trusted tester program. One of my portfolio managers went through that and that it was the most difficult test ever had to take and he is an educated person. It's no joke. Color contrast checker, one of many out there. Figured I would throw them on their provokes. My legal team but a disclaimer that's there that I will not read all the words I don't understand. That is it for me. I hope I did not go too fast. No, I nailed it. I did all right. Questions? I'm here. What do we have? People in line?

>> SPEAKER: We do have one in the chat. Our users with disabilities part of the community's practice and if not is there a way to - -

>> KRISTOPHER ADAMS: They are, one of our testers is actually in the disability community as well. They have voices in these communities of practice and as we work through testing. Also discover items that are internal that might be difficult for people to use because they are using them and is not working properly for them like HR information, things along those lines. I can be difficult. A small team focuses on external stuff. We don't want to lose sight of internal stuff. We want to be able to do everything they can't do everything. It's a lot of teaching people how to do stuff and then letting them to dry themselves and spreading outward across. Teaching a person to fish sort of thing. When it comes to our user experience research, we have a user experience arm of PA. They

cover everything when it comes to user experience service. Ensuring a diverse audience, those from the disabled community, different races, creeds, people from all over Pennsylvania to be able to provide a wide variety of input from all sides. Yes. There's a hand up.

>> SPEAKER: This is not a state government related question but I was wondering if you know folks who manage grassroots nonprofit websites. Especially if they are using standardized platforms like Squarespace. Do they have those kinds of accessibility things failed then? Because your headings for example, all of that you are not choosing. It's all on their backend. So, do they have built-in? Is there a way to sort of do an audit of your own website to see how it's performing?

>> KRISTOPHER ADAMS: Some are better than others. We chose Adobe because it's apparently accessible with a lot of stuff built-in. Adobe has a lot of skin in this game right now. One way to check, a lot of these companies are required to have a V pad. Like a voluntary assessment of their own accessibility compliance. And we require that with people that we contract with. We can see where they are. And kind of test that audit. We have experts in the field I can do this which makes it easier. But some ways to do that would be user experience testing, I think. Having somebody view it themselves, try and use the website that you have and be able to give you live feedback on where they are having trouble and where could be improvements. Then you can have that conversation with the vendor. I counted from the standpoint of this is everywhere not going away. If you fix it for us, you're fixing for other customers and then you can sell it that way. Hopefully that helps. Somebody in the back there.

>> SPEAKER: Hi. Thank you for the information. On our website we use a recite me bar which is where you click on the top of the website and then there is accessibility features that you can choose like changing the font. Changing the color contrast. Language. We found that, we haven't got any complaints. Not that that's a bar you would want to use. But do you have any thoughts about tools like that? As far as accessibility for websites.

>> KRISTOPHER ADAMS: I do. They are called overlays. The community is not a big fan because it changes the way they interact with computers. Let's say somebody has their assistive technology set up to work with the computer, work with websites as they are? Whether they are accessible or not. They can tell if something is more accessible or not. - - He can get in the way more so than help. Depending on the user and what they require in order to operate their computer. I'm sorry it's bad news kind of but that's just how we look at it. It's like being sold as a quick fix when it's not a quick fix yet. My recommendation is no overlays when you can.

>> SPEAKER: Another question online. How does CODE PA ensure underrepresented communities, especially rural, elderly or disabled populations?

>> KRISTOPHER ADAMS: That goes back to my user experience research group. They do research all of that to ensure when we are creating something new or working towards creating something new that we are including everybody and not forgetting anyone when it comes down to where they are, whether it's urban or rural. Language barriers, accessibility barriers. Trying to collect the whole gamut of information that way we are able to create products that equitable to everyone who uses them. Hopefully that answers. Any other questions? Well, I had a lot of fun. The quicker I did not like but other than that it has been great. You so much. Enjoy the rest of your day.

>> SPEAKER: Let's give Christopher another round of applause. Great information. It's great to see the Commonwealth in CODE PA are working on these. We know as technology advances it disenfranchises certain populations. Great to be on the cutting edge in front and being intentional about that. Speaks highly of our Commonwealth.