

Website Accessibility Tools

Why This Matters for Your Agency

Government-adjacent organizations like HRAs, PHAs, and CDAs face real legal exposure around web accessibility under the ADA and Section 508. Beyond compliance, accessible websites serve the people who need you most, many of whom may have visual, motor, or cognitive disabilities. The good news: most of these tools are free and take minutes to run.

Quick Page Scanners

Start here. These browser-based tools give you instant visual feedback without any setup.

- **WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (FREE)**

wave.webaim.org

The gold standard for quick checks. Overlays icons directly on your page to show exactly where errors are; red for problems, yellow for warnings, green for good. No technical background needed.

Color Contrast Tools

Color contrast is one of the most common and most fixable accessibility failures. These tools check if your text is readable.

- **WebAIM Contrast Checker (FREE)**

webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker

Enter any two hex color codes and instantly see if they meet WCAG AA or AAA standards. Simple, fast, bookmarkable.

Screen Reader Testing

Automated tools catch maybe 30–40% of accessibility issues. Testing with an actual screen reader reveals the rest.

- **NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) (FREE)**

nvaccess.org

The most widely used free screen reader for Windows. Lets you hear your website exactly as a blind visitor would. Eye-opening for most people the first time.

- **VoiceOver (Apple) (FREE)**

Built into Mac, iPhone, and iPad — no download needed

Apple's built-in screen reader. Enable it in Accessibility Settings. Test your site on Safari to see how mobile visitors with visual impairments experience it.

- **JAWS (Job Access With Speech) (PAID)**

freedomscientific.com/products/software/jaws

The most widely used screen reader among people who are blind or have low vision. A free 40-minute demo mode is available. Worth testing on if you want to see how your heaviest screen reader users experience your site.

Full-Site Audit Tools

These go beyond a single page and can scan your entire site. Useful for getting a broader picture of where you stand.

- **Google Lighthouse (FREE)**

Built into Chrome DevTools (F12 → Lighthouse tab)

Google's built-in audit tool checks accessibility, performance, SEO, and best practices all at once. Great for a quick overall health check. Scores 0–100.

- **PageSpeed Insights (FREE)**

pagespeed.web.dev

Google's web-based version of Lighthouse. Paste your URL and get a full report including accessibility score, performance, and mobile usability.

PDF Accessibility

PDFs are a major accessibility blind spot for most agencies. These tools help you evaluate and fix them.

- **Adobe Acrobat Accessibility Checker:** Built into Adobe Acrobat (Tools → Accessibility → Full Check). Checks PDFs against accessibility standards. Free if you already have Acrobat.