



2024 Legislative Issue Form

To propose a CCI legislative issue, please complete this form.

Feel free to use more than one page and include any supplemental materials.

1.) **Contact Information** (of person bringing forth issue):

- a. **Name:** Carrie Geitner
- b. **Title:** Commissioner – District 2
- c. **County:** El Paso
- d. **Phone Number:** (813) 435-0896
- e. **E-Mail Address:** carriegeitner@elpasoco.com

2.) **Issue/Problem to be addressed** (What is the problem this legislation is seeking to solve?)

During the 2021 legislative session, **House Bill 21-1110: Colorado Laws for Persons with Disabilities** was signed into law by Governor Polis. This legislation strengthens the state's protections against discrimination based on disability, specifically in the context of digital accessibility and requires the state to establish accessibility standards using the most recent web content accessibility guidelines published by the World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative or the International Accessibility Guidelines Working Group.

El Paso County is supportive of the intent of this legislation and strives to ensure that accessibility of services, whether physical or digital, is uniform for all the residents of the county. The county has been extremely proactive with ADA accessibility and is fully committed to improving accessibility across the county.

There are some concerns around the ability to be fully compliant with HB21-1110 by July 1, 2024. The county's communications department is well underway in identifying and correcting websites, web applications, and apps that would fall under the guidelines of this legislation; as well as thousands of PDF's that are housed online. At a minimum, the county is looking at thousands of hours of work to make the required changes and implement new procedures, training, and guidelines across the county organization, which is all a part of becoming fully compliant.

3.) **Background on this Issue/Problem** (How did this come to be? Why are you seeking a legislative remedy?)

If websites are not fully compliant with the criteria outlined in HB21-1110, local governments could be subject to injunctive relief, meaning a court order to fix the problem as well as be subject to a fine. Failure to comply would also be classified as a state civil rights violation.

El Paso County is supportive of the goals of the legislation and has taken steps to achieve full compliance. The State has allocated \$43 million to implement HB21-1110, and to the extent that counties cannot leverage the same resources, it stands to reason that a legislative remedy to alter the implementation requirements is warranted. However, instead of blanket relief, entities would be required to submit a comprehensive plan and demonstrate regular progress to avoid fines or state civil rights infractions.

4.) **Proposed Solution/Legislative Remedy to this issue.**

The proposed solution/legislative remedy to this issue would be to advocate for a phased approach to implementation of HB21-1110, instead of a set date to be fully compliant. This would mirror federal ADA standards. Where a self-evaluation with a transition plan would be required to be submitted to the state on July 1, 2024, outlining the barriers and the approach to remove the barriers. This approach will lessen the financial burden allowing smaller agencies to become compliant, like when the Americans with Disabilities Act was introduced in 1990.

Please submit this completed form to Brittney Becerra at bbecerra@ccionline.org

By Friday, July 7.



5.) **Have you explored a non-legislative solution to this problem?**

Legislative action is required for relief.

6.) **Statutory Citation to be modified AND proposed/revised language (The Colorado Revised Statute is available for free at [this link](#), by selecting “Colorado Revised Statutes”).**

N/A

7.) **Relationship of this issue to County Commissioner’s roles and/or authorities.**

While websites are maintained by various county related entities, the Board of County Commissioners is ultimately involved in paying for any fines incurred as a result of a violation. This is especially troublesome if departments or elected offices are making exceptional strides to achieve compliance but need additional time.

8.) **Has this proposal been approved by the Board of County Commissioners?**

Yes, this proposal has been approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

9.) **List any potential Proponents/Opponents & their perspective; indicate any groups/individuals with whom you have already discussed this issue.**

The El Paso County Board of Commissioners, along with county administration, and the county’s Communications department is very supportive of this concept.

10.) **Have you visited with your legislator(s) about this proposal? What was their reaction? Are members of your delegation likely to sponsor, support, or oppose this proposal?**

El Paso County is in preliminary discussions with delegation members. The Board authorized this idea on 06/27/2023.

11.) **Anticipated Fiscal Impact (to counties, state, other stakeholders, etc.).**

Using a phased approach for implementation would benefit counties by giving them more time to comply. As the bill is currently written, if a county is non-compliant on July 1, 2024, they would be subject to monetary damages and/or a fine of \$3,500 for each violation. Moving to a phased approach would also ease the burden this bill places on staff to get all the work done in a compressed timeframe. Larger counties, like El Paso, have a large digital footprint and are required to address not just websites but all technology, hardware, and software, that is both public-facing and internal-facing, and includes applications, kiosks, digital signage, documents, video, audio, and third-party tools.

12.) **Please list the local subject matter experts CCI staff can follow up with for more information on this proposal.**

Brandon Wilson, Legislative Affairs Specialist, El Paso County Government Affairs

13.) **If your county is submitting multiple issue forms, please rank each issue.**

2/2

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