

Report on Electronic Information Resources (EIR) Accessibility

2018 BIENNIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT



This report addresses Government Code, Section 2054.055(b)(9), which requires DIR to provide a summary of agency and state progress in providing access to electronic and information resources (EIR) to individuals with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

More than 1.6 million Texans have disabilities, many with limitations that affect interaction with the internet, telephone and other electronic communications.

Focusing efforts on making state agency electronic and information resources (EIR) accessible, citizens and state employees will be able to perform a myriad of functions independently, regardless of disability.

State accessibility laws require state agencies to develop, procure, maintain and use accessible EIR. DIR has set standards relating to the accessibility of state websites and technologies in Texas Administrative Code.

As part of DIR's initiatives in support of our EIR, DIR collaborates with public and private organizations to facilitate progress in EIR accessibility at the state, national and international levels:

- Driving elevated levels of accessibility across Texas agencies and its vendor community;
- Identifying and communicating best practices for EIR accessibility;
- Evaluating and recommending revisions to statewide accessibility standards, rules and guidelines; and
- Providing input to federal government and national organizations in the development of accessibility policies and legislation.

EIR ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES

Over the past biennium, continued progress has been made in accessibility across state agencies with varied degrees of improvement. DIR recognizes the complexity and challenges in complying with accessibility rules and has developed several important initiatives to assist agencies in advancing EIR accessibility.

REVISIONS TO EIR ACCESSIBILITY RULE 1TAC 206

In fiscal year 2018, DIR completed review and revisions to [1 TAC 206](#) which include technical standards and governance provisions for web accessibility. The most significant revision was moving to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA as the new technical standard for web accessibility. Moving to this new standard has several advantages:

- It maintains harmony with federal procurement regulation [US Section 508](#) which moved to this standard in January of 2018
- It is technology “agnostic” providing greater flexibility on how websites are designed
- There are a plethora of tools and development platforms that support this standard, making the development of accessible websites more efficient
- It is considered the “de facto” technical standard for the IT industry

It should also be noted that WCAG 2.0 AA Guideline 1.2 for time-based media is excluded from the new 1TAC 206 provisions and covered separately in this rule.

An additional improvement is the inclusion of a provision that directs agencies and IHE's to ensure that new websites and applications have the ability to adapt content to end user devices such as mobile phone, tablets, or other devices which are available to the general public.

ACCESSIBILITY OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN DIR'S COOPERATIVE CONTRACTS PROGRAM

One of the more challenging areas in EIR Accessibility is the dependency on vendor products and services. DIR has continued to refine its processes and tools to assist us in the selection of vendors who are awarded contracts in the program as well as for other procurements. This includes a scoring methodology that DIR has introduced for recent solicitations of Comprehensive Web Development Services and Technology Based Training. This effort has resulted in higher levels of vendor's understanding of

2018 BIENNIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

EIR accessibility and its value in DIR procurements and contract awards. Given the emphasis DIR has given to EIR Accessibility, we expect many vendors to improve their postures in this area to have a greater chance of contract awards which ultimately benefit state employees and the public.

POLICY-DRIVEN ADOPTION FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Policy-Driven Adoption for Accessibility or PDAA criteria has been expanded to be included in all DIR solicitations where EIR accessibility plays a role. Additionally, PDAA tools have been published on the [US General Services Administration US Section 508 resources page](#), further enhancing its use in federal procurements.

DIR WEB ACCESSIBILITY SCANNING PROGRAM

DIR continues to offer web accessibility web scanning services at no charge to Texas agencies and institutions of higher education. The service is being utilized by approximately 25% of these agencies and institutions with many other agencies and institutions possessing their own instances of web accessibility scanning tools / services. This free service analyzes websites for compliance to the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, and other non-accessibility aspects such as quality errors to assist agencies to identify and remedy these issues as well.

OUTREACH

Outreach continues to be an important aspect of EIR accessibility efforts. DIR provides leadership in this arena at the international, national, state, local government levels. Highlights of outreach during the current biennium include:

- Presentations, learning sessions and panel discussions
 - CSUN Disability Conference,
 - ACCESSU Technical Conference,
 - Texas A&M Chancellors Summit,
 - US General Services Administration,
 - blog post on ICT accessibility procurement hosted on the g3ICT website,

- International Association of Accessibility Practitioners webinar on accessibility practices in procurement,
- Think Tank work sessions for the Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technologies (PEAT),
- “Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities” produced by the National Council of State Legislators
- Moderation of the Public Electronic Services on the Internet (PESO) list with over 300 subscribers offering discussion forums, meetings and webinars on EIR accessibility issues.
- Continued consultation with agencies and the vendor community on a wide range of accessibility-related topics.

2018 DIR EIR ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY OF TEXAS STATE AGENCIES AND STATE FUNDED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Figures 1 and 2 are related to externally facing websites / pages, and web applications, and compares the data from the 2016 IRDR results to the 2018 results. For both EIR types. Most of the responses show that compliance remains strong and has stabilized around the shown levels. There is however, still opportunity for improvement, and agencies should continue to strive to further increase compliance levels.

This latest Accessibility survey was the 1st year that agencies and IHEs were asked about EIR accessibility metrics and goals in response to a new provision in 1TAC 213.21(f) and 1TAC 213.41(f) requiring agencies to “... establish goals for making its EIR accessible, which includes progress measurements towards meeting those goals.” Figure 3 reports the responses of the metrics agencies are measuring now, planning to measure, or not planning to measure. Setting goals and tracking progress towards meeting them is a critical factor in making progress for any initiative, and EIR Accessibility is certainly an initiative that warrants such actions.

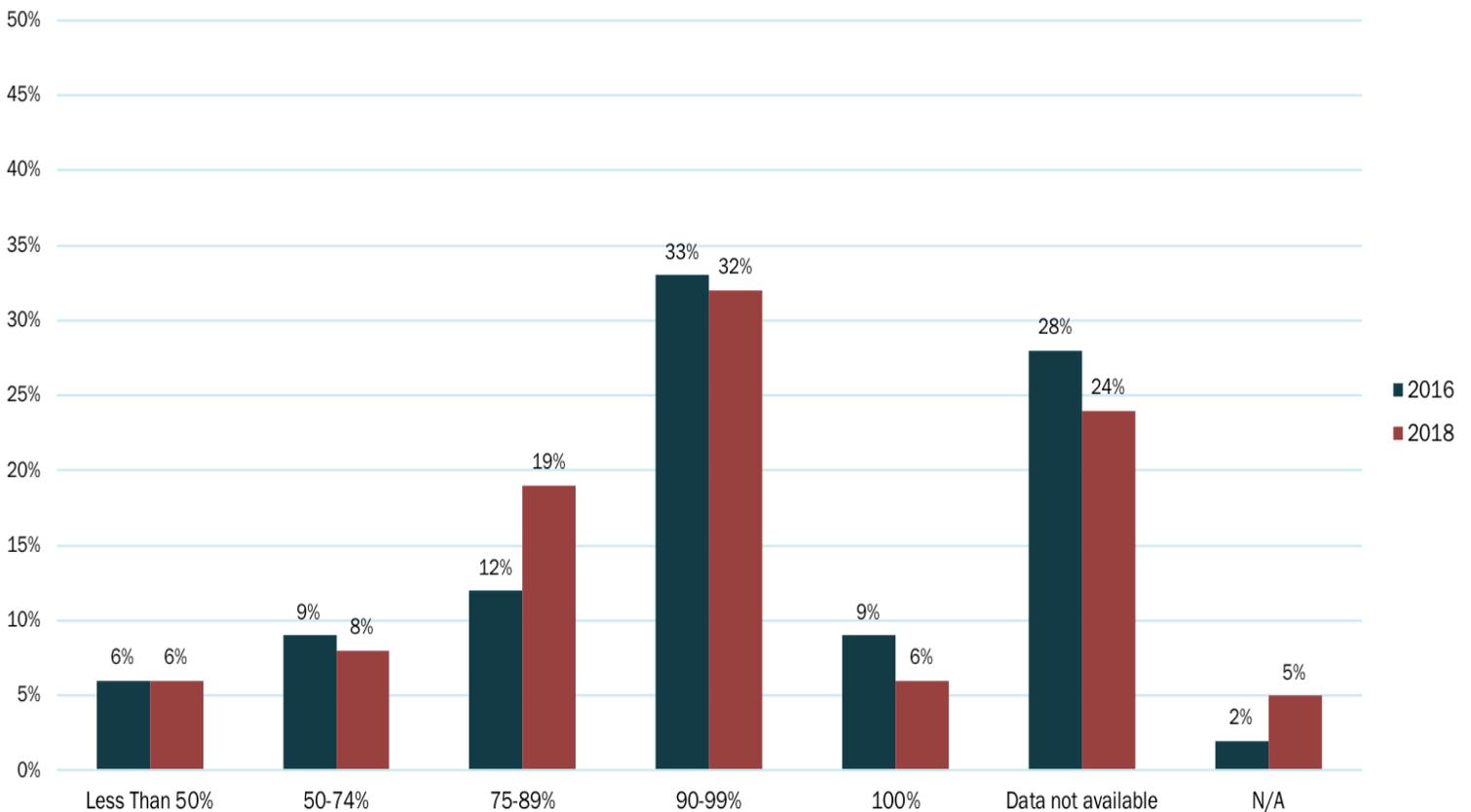
As stated above, 1TAC 206.50(a) and 1 TAC 206.70(a) contain a new technical standard for web accessibility known as WCAG 2.0 Level AA. While the effective date for

full compliance to this rule is in 2020, DIR communicated recommendations to all IRMs and EIRACs in August of 2013 to begin specifying this technical standard as soon as possible. Early adoption of this standard not only will reduce the cost of remediation of new applications to bring them into compliance prior to 2020 effective date, it helps drive the vendor community to plan for and implement to this standard when developing COTS products or development service deliverables requiring WCAG 2.0AA compliance. Figure 4 indicates agency

status of adoption and implementation of WCAG 2.0 AA. Figure 5 reports what agencies consider to be inhibitors in their journeys to achieve improvements in EIR accessibility for their organizations. More than a third of the results indicate gaps in accessibility skills within the organization, combined with deficiencies in staff training. Lack of budget for accessibility initiatives is also still a big inhibitor, and ties directly back to the skills and training challenges identified.

Figure 1

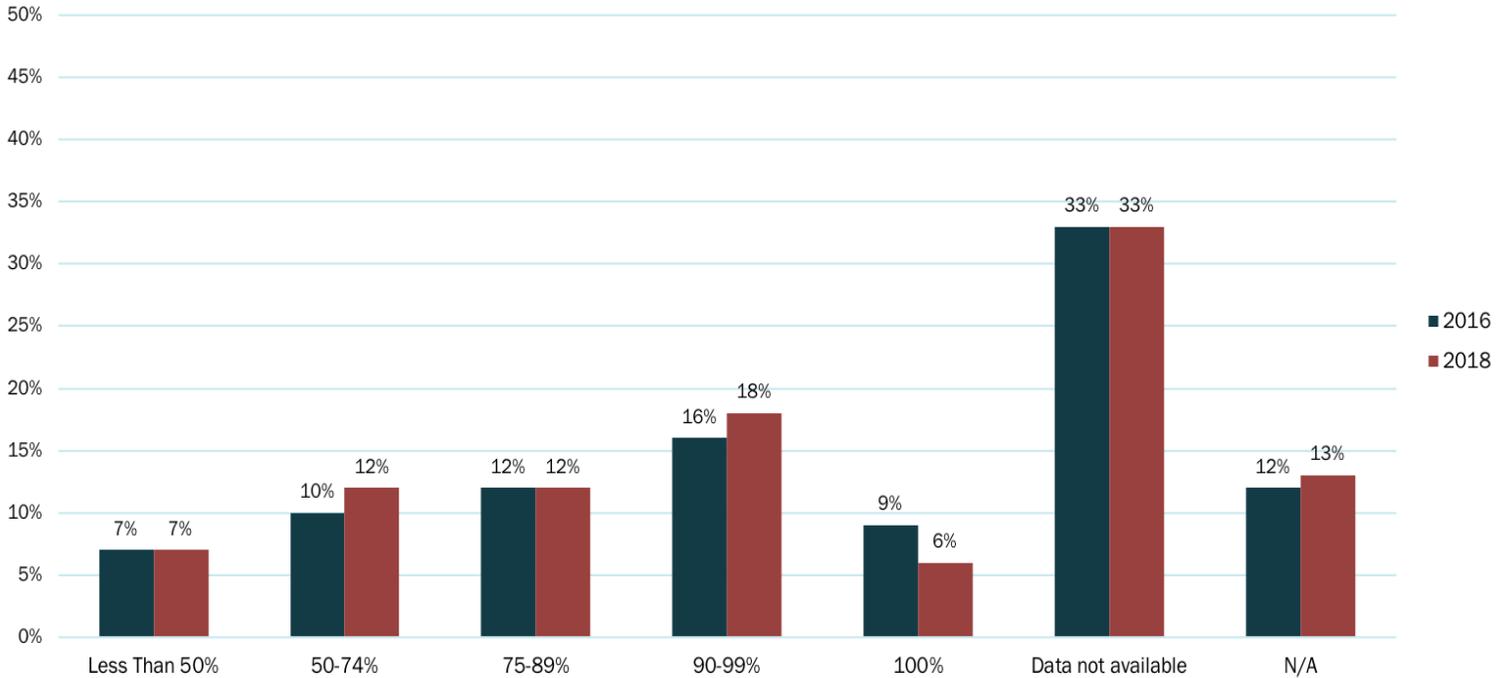
What percentage of the agency's externally facing web pages are in full compliance with state accessibility requirements, 1 TAC 206 and 213?



Source: 2018 Information Resources Deployment Review & EIR Accessibility Survey

Figure 2

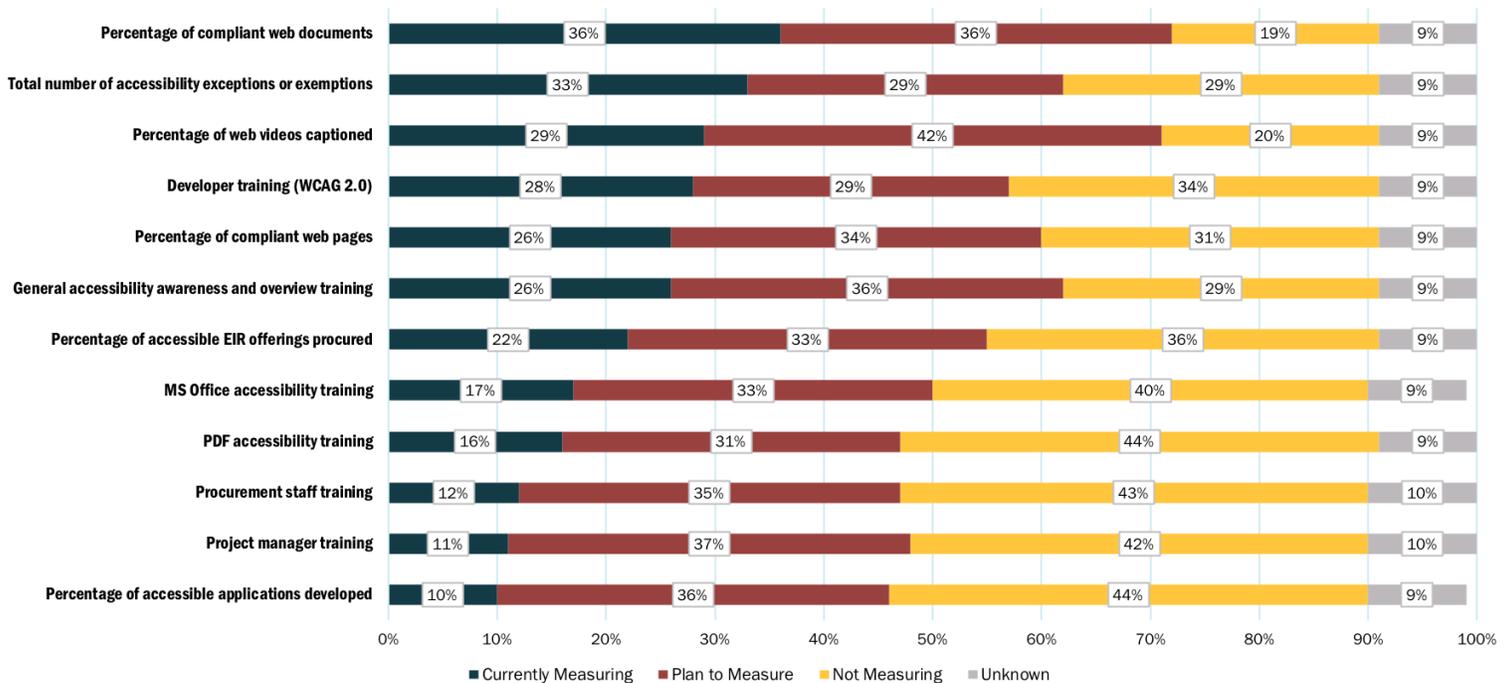
What percentage of the agency's externally web-based applications, are in full compliance with state accessibility requirements, 1 TAC 206 and 213?



Source: 2018 Information Resources Deployment Review & EIR Accessibility Survey

Figure 3

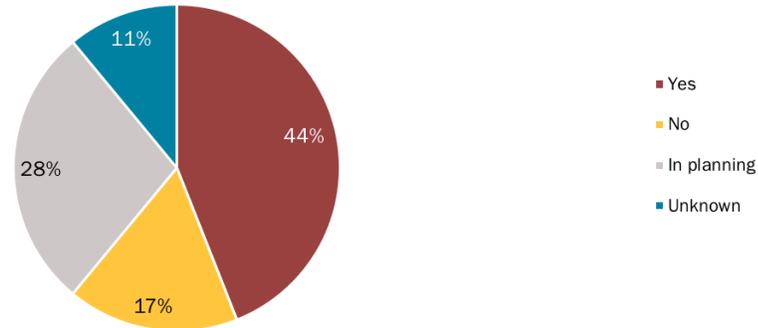
2018 Status of Accessibility Metrics in State Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education



Source: 2018 Information Resources Deployment Review & EIR Accessibility Survey

Figure 4

Has your agency begun to implement accessibility technical standards defined in WCAG 2.0 level AA for new website and web application development?

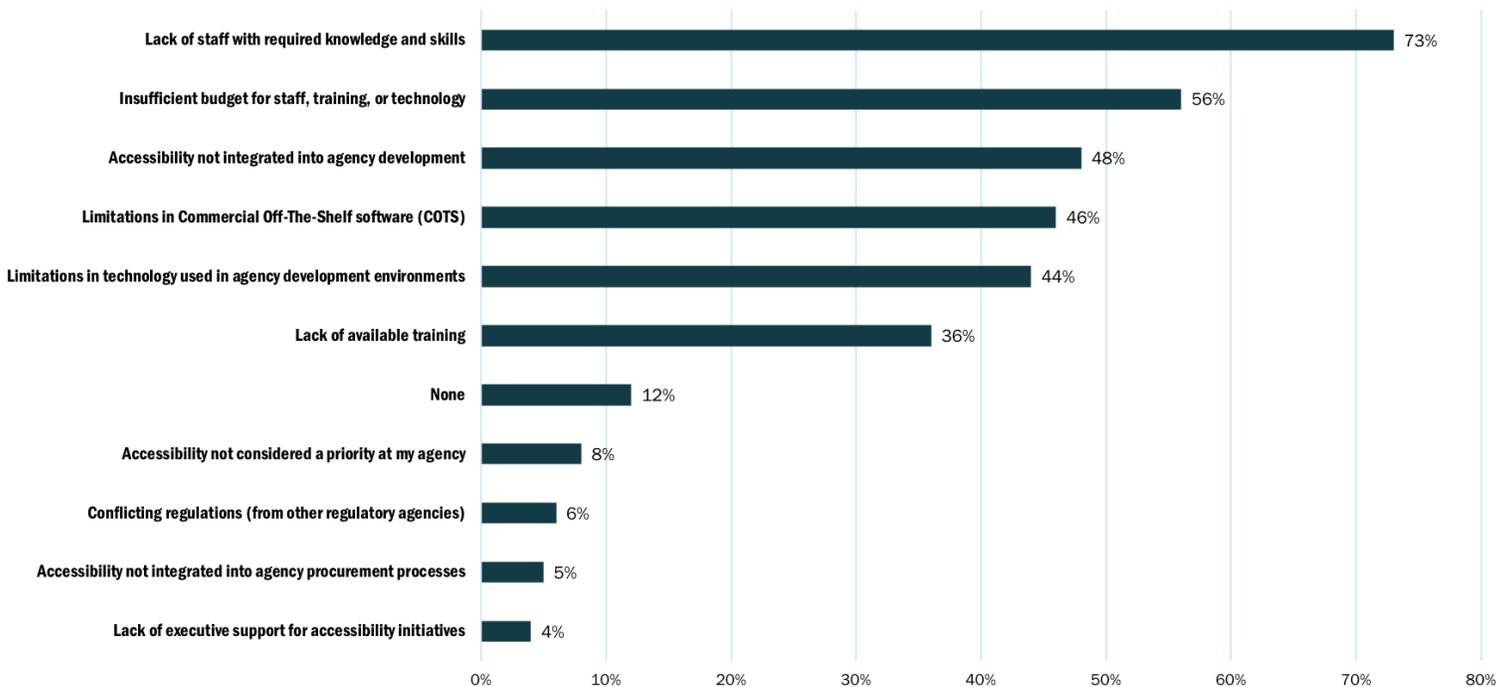


Source: 2018 Information Resources Deployment Review & EIR Accessibility Survey

Figure 5. Challenges identified by agencies as inhibitors to full compliance

(Multiple selections permitted)

What types of challenges has the agency faced when attempting to achieve compliance with state accessibility requirements? Select up to five.



Source: 2018 Information Resources Deployment Review & EIR Accessibility Survey

NEXT STEPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Agencies should use WCAG 2.0 Level AA as the technical standard for all new IT development projects and procurements
- DIR should investigate training offerings and funding options for EIR Accessibility with focus on developer / content producer training for WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- DIR should continue to drive accessibility criteria further into its Cooperative Contracts program
- Agencies should use results of the Accessibility Survey to understand their strengths and deficiencies and work with their EIR ACs to improve in areas where accessibility challenges remain.
- Agencies should consider submitting LAR line items to obtain needed funding for agency EIR accessibility initiatives.