

HATFIELD RESIDENT FELLOWSHIP PROJECT BRIEF

Digital Accessibility Policy & Implementation Plan

Project Dates: September/2023 – April/2024

PROJECT GOAL

The overarching goal of this project was to provide a more equitable experience for the public when accessing Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) online information and services. A recent rule change to the Americans with Disabilities Act establishes digital accessibility standards and governments' responsibilities to comply with them. The Hatfield Fellow developed a comprehensive implementation plan to increase digital accessibility and advance OHA's equity goals by bringing the agency into compliance with the new federal accessibility standards.

TAKE-AWAYS

The expansive scope and transformational nature of OHA's digital accessibility project required a variety of creative research and implementation methods - deployed with flexibility and persistence - to deliver measurable progress towards the goal of equitable digital access to governmental information and services.

- **Equity** - OHA staff are dedicated to understanding and advancing equitable practices in healthcare and government services.
- **Transformation** - Advancing transformational policy is a highly complex and challenging undertaking. This fellowship project also demonstrated that it's an achievable goal with a capable team and well-designed plans.
- **Persistence** - A persistent and adaptable approach is essential when working to dismantle ineffective structures, policies, and practices.
- **De-siloing** - The "siloing effect" is an inherent problem in large agencies like OHA. Working with a diverse coalition presents broad opportunities to create efficient and resilient outcomes.

CHALLENGES

OHA is the first Agency in Oregon – a leading state in this regard - to undertake the monumental work of becoming fully digitally accessible. The reality of implementing transformation policies is often one that includes a daunting array of technical components laden with legal, logistical, and human implications. Going into this project, our team held appropriate expectation to that respect, though as we continued to scope the project, it grew to a level of volume and complexity that even our most seasoned policy analysts could have predicted. It seemed as if every question that we set out to answer held several more layers of questions within. The major challenges that presented largely had to do with scoping. We were attempting to answer questions that no one had ever asked, meaning that we would regularly uncover new aspects or considerations of the project that would then have to be integrated. The continuously expanding boundaries presented challenges to task delegation, timeline setting, and tracking the actual progress that was being made.

STRATEGY

The following tactics were key to the progress and successes achieved throughout the course of the fellowship project. Not only knowing *which* tactic to use, but also *how* & *when* to utilize them was vital to producing positive project outcomes.

- Research and document project boundaries.
- Coordinate input from subject matter experts.
- Identify problem areas and develop solutions.
- Utilize review and feedback from teammates.
- Continuously track, document, share, & revise my work.

RESULTS

Throughout the course of the project, the fellow either led or contributed to the development of the following policies, implementation plans, and outcomes:

- USDOJ & HHS Digital Content Rules (ADA Title II, 28 CFR-35): Agency Implementation Plan - **Lead Developer**
- USDOJ & HHS Digital Content Rules (ADA Title II, 28 CFR-35): Division Implementation Plan - **Co-Developer**
- Accessible Document Creation and Remediation: Processes & Procedures - **Co-Developer**
- Accessible Document Creation and Remediation: Training and Support Materials - **Co-Developer**
- OHA Policy: “Digital Procurement Policy” - **Contributor**
- OHA Policy: “Digital Content Creation and Management Policy” - **Contributor**