



The 2019 ADA Compliance Meter Report

June 2019

Research Rationale

Given that the upcoming Democratic presidential debate is being held in Miami, FL, my team at the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired enthusiastically visited each candidate's website to find out more about them. As the first totally blind CEO of the organization, it was a disappointing exercise as I had difficulty navigating each candidate's campaign website. Not one was accessible for a blind person like me to navigate.

Website accessibility is this generation's wheelchair ramp. We cannot sit back while millions of Americans are shut out of a key part of life. Most of them are voters who want to know more about the candidates and their proposed policies. If they cannot access their platforms and beliefs, they are short-changed when it comes to making an informed voting decision.

The Americans with Disabilities Act guarantees people with all disabilities the right to equal access, including the blind and visually impaired. This means access to digital and online media in addition to physical spaces.

Below is a full report of our findings and methodology.

What We Uncovered

- None of the websites were compliant with the ADA.
- None of the candidates had an accessibility statement that provides a method of contact including a live email address and phone number that users can call for assistance.
- Candidate websites did not allow users to easily adjust color and font size.

Individual Presidential Candidate Scores

Top Four Candidates	Score
Joe Biden	3.00
John Delaney	3.00
Tulsi Gabbard	3.00
Kirsten Gillibrand	3.00

Middle Candidates	Score
Cory Booker	2.89
Julián Castro	2.88
Bill de Blasio	2.67
John Hickenlooper	2.67
Donald Trump	2.67
Bill Weld	2.67
Andrew Yang	2.67
Michael Bennet	2.56
Jay Inslee	2.56
Eric Swalwell	2.56
Marianne Williamson	2.56

Remaining Candidates	Score
Kamala Harris	2.44
Tim Ryan	2.44
Beto O'Rourke	2.33
Amy Klobuchar	2.25
Pete Buttigieg	2.11
Bernie Sanders	2.11
Elizabeth Warren	2.00

Our Methodology

An assessment was conducted by the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind from June 14 to June 17, 2019. The sample was comprised of 2020 presidential candidates' official campaign websites as they appeared on those dates. Websites were assessed for accessibility to persons using assistive technology software such as screen readers. Candidate websites were ranked in order of accessibility. The process consisted of analyzing each website using the latest assistive technology screen reading software such as JAWS for Windows and the World-Wide Consortium (W3C) Website Accessibility Content Guidelines (WCAG v2.0/2.1) subset of 10 criteria. The review was conducted by the CEO of Miami Lighthouse and her IT experts, all of whom are blind. Scoring was based on the following criteria and scale:

We used a subset of the most common criteria from the WCAG v2.0/2.1. The weighting scale numbers assigned to each criteria were evaluated on a 50 percent scale majority. Therefore, as an example using the criteria of: "Is website organized for ease of navigation" using our best knowledge and experience with assistive technology software, if more than half of the individual pages examined on a particular website exceeded 50 percent of the specific criteria such as if the pages contained proper region divisions for page organization, the weight score would be a 3 for mostly accessible. If it fell below half of the individual pages, then the score would be a 2 for somewhat accessible.

In addition, if the specific criteria could not be verified using assistive technology software, then the score for that particular criteria would be a 1 for not accessible and if the criteria was fully



verified using the assistive technology software throughout all pages on a site, then the score would be a 4 for fully accessible.

Criteria

- Is website organized for ease of navigation?
- Are headings appropriately structured?
- Do logos and links have descriptive alt text?
- Can users select active links with keystroke commands?
- Can users control changing images?
- Does site have play/pause video controls?
- Are users able to adjust color and font size?
- Can users easily fill out forms on site?
- Can users access error messages?
- Is there a commitment statement to website accessibility?

Scale

- 1: website was not accessible
- 2: website was somewhat accessible
- 3: website was mostly accessible
- 4: website was totally accessible

The Challenge

All candidates should ensure their websites are fully ADA compliant and immediately put an accessibility statement on their page. This statement should reinforce their commitment to website accessibility and should provide a phone number and live email address for anyone needing assistance navigating the website.

About the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Since 1931, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, an independent organization, has been Florida's premier rehabilitation organization serving the blind. The mission of the Miami Lighthouse is to provide vision rehabilitation and eye health services that promote education and independence, to collaborate with and train professionals and to conduct research in related fields. Miami Lighthouse serves over 22,000 blind and visually impaired people of all ages each year.

For more information, please contact Virginia Jacko, President and Chief Executive Officer at (305) 856-4176 or vjacko@miamilighthouse.org.

Why Don't Any of the 2020 Presidential Candidates Have a Website That's Fully Accessible to the Blind?



AT THE TOP:

Joe Biden	3.00
John Delaney	3.00
Tulsi Gabbard	3.00
Kirsten Gillibrand	3.00

Visit www.miamilighthouse.org for full results.