



The 2019 ADA Compliance Meter Report: Updated September 2019

**Update, September 10, 2019: Since June 26, after our first report, four presidential campaigns have contacted Miami Lighthouse for the Blind for counsel and have made updates to their websites: Joe Biden, Cory Booker, Elizabeth Warren and Andrew Yang.*

Research Rationale

Given that the first Democratic presidential debate was 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 in June. 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 our first full report of our findings in June, our updated September report on the Democratic candidates who qualified for the September 12 debate and the Republican nominees and the methodology.

What We Uncovered in June

- 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 as of June 26, 2019

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

What We Uncovered in September

- Though none of the websites are still fully compliant with the ADA, many of the candidates' websites showed improvements in accessibility.
- Four of the candidates added an accessibility statement that provides a method of contact including a live email address and phone number that users can call for assistance.
- The most marked improvement came from Andrew Yang, who now has the most accessible website and we saw a drop in Amy Klobuchar, who added video and image content that was not accessible or provided alt text.

Individual Presidential Candidate Scores as of August 30, 2019

"Rank"	Candidate	8/30/19 Score	6/26/19 Score	Improvement
1	Andrew Yang	3.56	2.67	0.89
2	Joe Biden	3.40	3.00	0.40
3	Cory Booker	3.11	2.89	0.22
4	Julian Castro	3.00	2.88	0.13
5	Bill Weld	2.78	2.67	0.11
6	Donald J. Trump	2.67	2.67	0.00
6	Kamala Harris	2.67	2.44	0.22



8	Beto O'Rourke	2.50	2.33	0.17
9	*Joe Walsh	2.44	n/a	n/a
10	Elizabeth Warren	2.30	2.00	0.30
11	Pete Buttigieg	2.20	2.11	0.09
12	Bernie Sanders	2.11	2.11	0.00
13	Amy Klobuchar	2.10	2.25	(0.15)

*Was not running during the first Miami Lighthouse analysis in June.

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?



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- 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

Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a nationally accredited comprehensive institution, is 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.

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