Website/App Accessibility Assessment

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# Overview

## What is VolunteerMeet?

VolunteerMeet is a platform that helps groups that work for abortion access and reproductive justice to recruit and screen potential volunteers. It has been used by many large organizations. Digital Defense Fund, the organization behind VolunteerMeet, wants to make sure that people with disabilities are not being left out.

## How did we assess its accessibility?

Our work focused on the application process. Specifically, we looked at how to fill out the form posted on VolunteerMeet to become a member of the T4RJ Coalition. We used the Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (WAVE) by WebAIM and the AXE Chrome plugin as automated testers. Additionally, we used screen readers and a keyboard to manually test the website.

## What accessibility problems did we find?

We found several accessibility problems with the application process on VolunteerMeet, with the most serious one being that the text on the form does not have enough contrast. This makes it hard for users with low vision to read the questions written in the form. Fortunately, it can be fixed easily by making the text darker.

Additionally, we found some errors with how the radio buttons are organized in the form. Currently, when the user traverses the radio button options in the form, only the first option can be selected, because the focus will then jump to the next element in the page instead of iterating through all the radio buttons. This issue will need to be fixed in the HTML code. There are other problems we found with the checkboxes and the radio buttons; one relates to the error message when the user doesn’t select any option, and the other regarding the missing *fieldset* and *legend* tags.

We also found some minor accessibility issues, such as missing information about links and not specifying the language of the page. Other potential areas of improvement include better error suggestions and website optimization for mobile devices.

Up next, there’s a summary of the problems we found. We grouped them into three categories by severity: severe, moderate, and minor. The severity was determined based on the frequency, impact, and persistence of the problem, for more details, please refer to the appendix section.

| **WCAG #** | **# Severe problems** | **# Moderate problems** | **# Minor problems** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced)**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#contrast-enhanced) | 1 |  |  |
| [**2.4.3 Focus Order**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#focus-order) |  | 1 |  |
| [**2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context)**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#link-purpose-in-context) |  |  | 1 |
| [**3.1.1 Language of Page**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#language-of-page) |  |  | 1 |
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| [**3.3.2 Labels or Instructions**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#labels-or-instructions) |  | 1 |  |
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| [**4.3 Positioning important page elements before the page scroll**](https://www.w3.org/TR/mobile-accessibility-mapping/#positioning-important-page-elements-before-the-page-scroll) |  |  | 1 |

# Accessibility Issues

## Severe problems

### **WCAG** [**1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced)**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#contrast-enhanced)

In the member application page, the text labels do not have enough contrast with the background of the form. This problem is present across all the fields in the form and will prevent blind or low vision users from reading the text.

Example:

Screenshot of the First Name label, the text color is light gray and the background is white. There's a red star at the end.

The [current contrast ratio](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/?fcolor=6E6E6E&bcolor=FFFFFF) has a value of 5.09:1 which is sufficient to pass the WCAG 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) but not enough for the WCAG 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced).

This issue only occurs within the form on the member application webpage. It is not present on the landing page, the privacy, and the terms of service webpages.

## Moderate problems

### **WCAG** [**2.4.3 Focus Order**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#focus-order)

We found a problem with the focus order when using a keyboard to navigate the form in the member application webpage. Near the end of the form, there is a question “Can we share your data, if we notice that your skills match the needs of other groups?”; however, after taking users to the “Yes, please share my data with other reproductive justice groups.” option, the focus skips the radio button option “No, please do not share my data with other reproductive justice groups.” and jumps straight to the Submit button of the form.

This happens only when using a switch device such as a keyboard, not when using a screen reader. Interestingly, going backwards from the Submit button does take users to the “No” radio button. If the user continues tabbing backwards, it will then skip the first option “Yes”. This seems to be a problem with the navigation order of the radio buttons. However, it is possible for the user to select the “No” option by reverse tabbing from the Submit button.

### **WCAG** [**3.3.1 Error Identification**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#error-identification)

As part of testing, we tried submitting the form without filling any of the fields. This results in an error message popping up that listed the missing questions.

For most of the questions that miss an answer, the prompts of questions themselves are listed in the error message. However, for the questions that require checkboxes and radio button selections, it is the options, instead of the questions being asked, are listed. For screen reader users who rely on this message to learn what they have missed in the form, this issue makes it difficult for them to locate the questions they need to fill in.



This only happens if the user tries to submit the form without answering a required question, so it only appears in the member application webpage.

### **WCAG** [**3.3.2 Labels or Instructions**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#labels-or-instructions)

On the member application form, questions with checkboxes or radio buttons are missing the *fieldset* and *legend* tags in code. This problem may prevent some screen readers from understanding the correct structure of checkbox and radio button questions, which makes it difficult to read the legend for each checkbox item or radio button.

The issue only happens in the two questions in the form that require the user to check an option in the checkbox selections or a radio button. These are:

1. What skills are you hoping to share with the abortion access movement?
2. Can we share your data, if we notice that your skills match the needs of other groups?

## Minor problems

### **WCAG** [**2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context)**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#link-purpose-in-context)

In the privacy policy webpage, the link to the European Economic Area contact information doesn't have a link text associated with it. This means that screen readers will read the whole link instead of just a small amount of text describing the link's purpose.

The link is this one:

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/dataprotection/bodies/authorities/index_en.htm>

And as an additional detail, it appears that the page doesn’t exist anymore.

Another link that is not accompanied by a link text is for opting out of interest-based advertising. The link is the following:

<http://www.aboutads.info/choices/>

These issues were only found in the privacy policy webpage and the websites that these links point to are well-explained by the context, it’s just inconvenient to have to wait for the screen reader to read the whole link.

### **WCAG** [**3.1.1 Language of Page**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#language-of-page)

Language is not specified for the website. Looking at the html, we can see that the html *lang* tag is missing. This will potentially prevent screen readers from reading the content in the correct language. It may also prevent automatic translation from working properly. This issue is present on all pages of the website.

### **WCAG** [**3.3.3 Error Suggestion**](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#error-suggestion)

On the member application website, checkboxes and radio button selections are not highlighted in red if the users skip over them, while other text input fields are highlighted when they are skipped. It would be helpful to add this feature because it gives the user a visual cue that they have skipped a required question.

Actual behavior after skipping:



Expected behavior after skipping:



The issue only happens in the two questions in the form that require the user to check an option in the checkbox selections or a radio button.

### **WCAG** [**4.3 Positioning important page elements before the page scroll**](https://www.w3.org/TR/mobile-accessibility-mapping/#positioning-important-page-elements-before-the-page-scroll)

When users access the landing page of VolunteerMeet using a mobile device in landscape mode, the “Apply now” button is not visible on the first page. Extra scrolling is required for users to see it.

Landing page (page 1 of 2):



Landing page after scrolling (page 2 of 2):



The “Apply now” button should be visible on the first page of the landing page when in landscape mode so that users don’t have to scroll to see the button. Since the button becomes clearly visible on page 2, this is considered a minor issue.

# Potential Remedies

For the [WCAG 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced)](#_w5aq30l2fem9), the styling of the text labels in the form needs to be changed to a darker color to increase contrast. There’s a useful contrast calculator available at [WebAIM: Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) that can help with the font color selection. Alternatively, the text styling can be made bold or the text itself can be made larger (at least 18 point). The current contrast ratio is sufficient to pass the WCAG 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced) for [large scale text](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#dfn-large-scale).

Regarding the [WCAG 3.3.1 Error Identification](#_i8yw1bacnzm5), the code that reports errors in the required form fields needs to be updated, so that it can correctly report the questions associated with checkboxes or radio buttons selections. Specifically, it should list the content of missing questions instead of all the checkboxes / radio button options.

With respect to the [WCAG 3.3.2 Labels or Instructions](#_u3gjs9yt6un3), the *fieldset* and *legend* tags need to be added to the form’s HTML code. Here’s a good [example of using the fieldset and legend tags](https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTML/Element/fieldset).

For the [WCAG 2.4.3 Focus Order](#_3mu1aro99xkv) issue, the HTML code of the page needs to be fixed (i.e., to reflect the correct structure of questions and their options) to allow the users to iterate through all of the radio button options in an efficient way.

With regards to the minor issues, the [WCAG 2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context)](#_go3bx338kd9b) problem can be fixed by modifying the HTML code of the privacy policy website to have a descriptive link text associated with each of the two external links. For the [WCAG 3.1.1 Language of Page](#_93yih5d1d0sl),  a correct HTML *lang* tag should be added to each webpage to specify that they are in English. This should be a rather quick fix.

As for the fix for [WCAG 3.3.3 Error Suggestion](#_oh0wo3zgjzh8), the code that does the required field highlighting needs to be changed to highlight the checkboxes and radio buttons if the user skips all of them in a particular question.

Regarding the last minor issue encountered, [WCAG 4.3 Positioning important page elements before the page scroll](#_xkjfjnfkryk), the website should be optimized for mobile devices so that the “Apply now” button is visible on the first page, without the need for scrolling.