

# Improving Access to Information at the Health Benefit Exchange

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## 1. The Problem

- The Washington Health Benefit Exchange (WAHBE) helps state residents choose health insurance plans and sign up for Medicaid.
- U.S. federal regulation requires state exchanges to provide equal access to people with disabilities. That applies to websites and mobile apps, too.
- **Accessibility benefits people of all abilities**, but most exchanges don't have full access plans in place.
- WAHBE requested a resource guide to help them swiftly create a plan and adopt best practices.

Inclusive design "is not only going to result in better accessibility for people with disabilities, but more inclusion across the board."

*Sina Bahram*

*accessibility consultant, computer scientist and researcher, who is also blind*

## 2. Our Process

- Gathered more than 100 resources from searches of the web and over 20 scholarly and popular-press databases.
- Requested practices from all U.S. health exchanges and 8 European agencies.
- Contacted over 20 advocacy organizations and accessibility experts.
- Selected resources and identified best practices.

## 3. Outcomes

We created a **comprehensive guide of accessibility resources**, including:

- Relevant regulations and standards
- Website accessibility and policy toolkits
- Accessibility plans from other agencies
- Guidance from experts, especially on the users' role in the design process

## 4. Impact

- Our guide should **accelerate WAHBE's accessibility planning** and lead to better access for Washingtonians with disabilities.
- We will share the resource guide with other interested state health exchanges.
- The UW MLIS program is considering a course on accessibility.



This poster is designed for all abilities. Large-print and audio versions are at our website, [www.improvinginformationaccess.org](http://www.improvinginformationaccess.org).