Web Leads monthly meeting

May 14, 2025



Welcome and kickoff

Marcy Jacobs - marcy.jacobs@maryland.gov



Agenda

- Welcome and kickoff
- Feedback pilot: leveraging your dashboard
- Usability Testing
- Spotlights:
 - LABOR UI
 - DHCD website improvements
- DNS migration update
- Maryland CMS update

MDDS / DoIT Presenters

Marcy Jacobs: DoIT Dep. Sec., CDXO
Amy Behrens: IA, Content Strategist
Andrew White: Information Architect
Carrie Hane: MDDS CMS Adviser

Chad Smith: Service Designer

David Holmes: Sr. Dir., Engineering

Emily Ianacone: UX Research, Content Strategist

Jeffrey Pass: Sr. Dir., Web Experience

Lilly Madigan: Sr. Dir., UX, Service Design Nathan Miller: Communications Specialist

Guest Presenters

DHCD: Priya Rebello, Dir. Web & UX, Digital

Accessibility Officer

Qualtrics: Hailey Smith, and Maddie Rosenberg

Walker: Hannah Warren, Courtney Adkins, Troy Powell



Feedback pilot: leveraging your agency dashboard

Qualtrics

Hailey Smith
Maddie Rosenberg

Walker

Hannah Warren Courtney Adkins Troy Powell



Accessing your site's dashboard

- Dashboard access will require Qualtrics credentials
- Scan this QR code to request access to your agency dashboard →
- Walker will create an account on your behalf; you will finalize the process by creating a password



Link: https://marylandcx.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6S6M8ITIGZSUET4

Usability Testing

Lilly Madigan lilly.madigan@maryland.gov
Chad Smith chad.smith1@maryland.gov
Nathan Miller nathan.miller1@maryland.gov



What is usability testing?

What is usability testing?

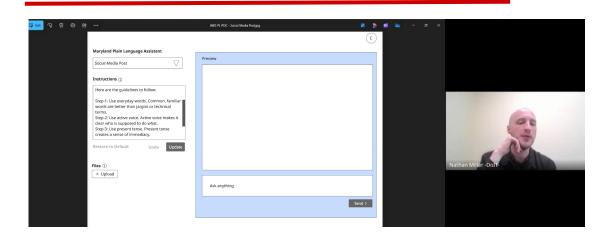
 A common research approach to assess how well potential end-users can understand what is being shown to them

How can usability testing help when making product decision?

 This technique can help to identify what is unclear and provide ideas on how to remove confusion



Plain Language Al Proof of Concept



Interview dates: 5/7 - 5/9 Number of sessions: 9

Session duration: 30 mins

Logistics:

- Google appointment scheduler
- Google Hangout



Outcomes

What did we learn?

- Participants wanted clearer guidance on how certain sections were intended to be used
- Priorities for what was critical for the first release verses future releases were clarified

How did the information change the design?

- Created language for tooltips and placeholder text
- Began shifting the design to help users become better plain language writers, not just rewrite their content

How did the information change the development?

Critical features for the first release were identified, helping limit scope



Spotlight: LABOR UI

Emily lanacone - emily.ianacone@maryland.gov
Amy Behrens - amy.behrens@maryland.gov



Labor Unemployment (LABOR UI)

The problem we're solving for

- Overgrown IA & outdated content
- Unclear answers for common questions
- No consistency across three websites (Labor UI site, BEACON portal, Maryland Workforce Exchange)

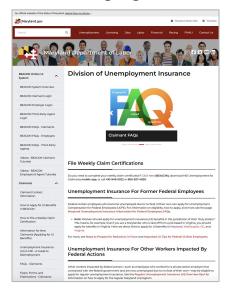
What we've done so far

- Completed sprint 1: Discovery and user research
- Completed sprint 2: Sitemap and key wireframes

Where we're headed

- Addressing "quick wins" now
- Content writing and design
- Unemployment insurance style guide for use online and by claims agents

Current Landing Page



Wireframe Landing Page





Help support LABOR UI usability testing

We're looking for feedback on the new unemployment insurance website design and content.

If you or someone you know has previous experience applying for unemployment insurance in Maryland and want to participate in a **30-minute usability test**, sign up using the QR code below or use <u>this Google forms link</u> (https://forms.gle/XUAihEqt8NzrTBHr6).



Spotlight: DHCD website improvements

Priya Rebello - <u>priyarosita.rebello@maryland.gov</u>



Progress and best practices

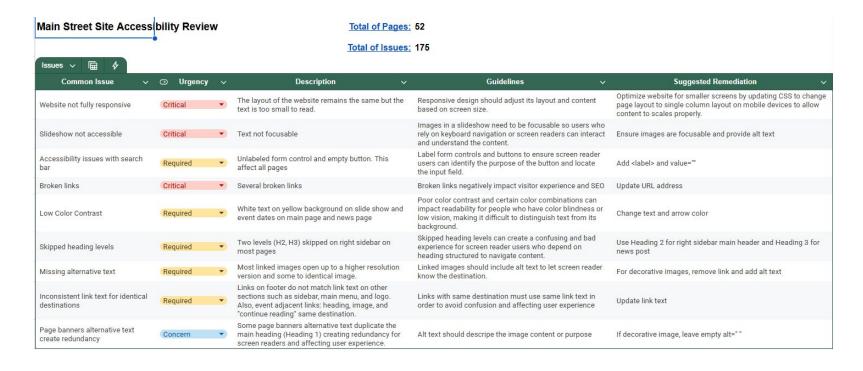
With support from DoIT, we're updating our <u>agency website</u> to make it easier for everyone to use.

We're excited to switch to the Drupal CMS. As we prepare for this change, we're focusing on:

- Accessibility compliance
- ROT analysis
- Navigation improvements
- Consistency and standardization
- Plain language implementation
- Data-driven design

Accessibility compliance

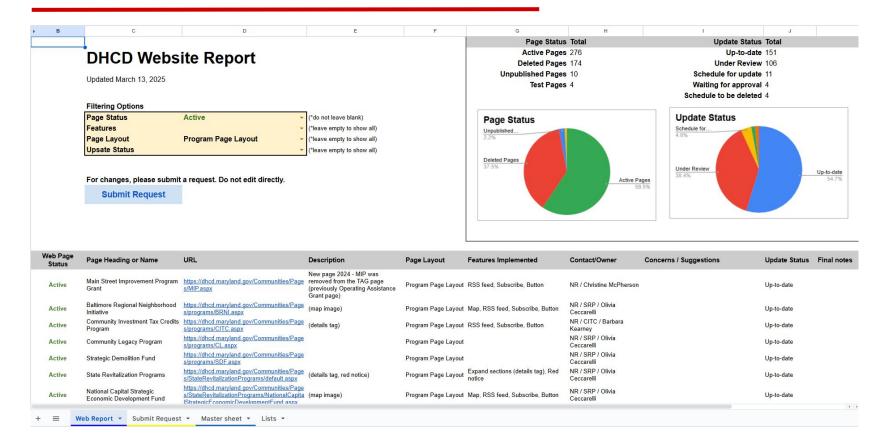
Working with the Office of Accessibility and MDOD to make sure our content is accessible to everyone.



ROT analysis

- Review content to find and remove anything that's no longer useful.
- Refresh and update outdated material.
- Consolidate similar information.
- Use the Content Workbooks to guide our review.

DHCD website content report



Detailed DHCD website page inventory

Α	В	С	D	Е	F		G		Н	T .	J		K /
te/F \Xi	Web Page Status	Page Heading or Name =	URL =	Description =	Page Layout	Ŧ	Features Implemented	Ŧ	Contact/Owner =	Concerns / Suggestions	Update Status	∓ F	Final notes
HCD W	lebsite												
	Active	HB 90 - AFFH Compliance Form	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/AFFH-Compliance- Form.aspx	Active Wufoo form	Inner page	·	Form		Research / Bernice Mensah	New page (2023)	Up-to-date	·	
	Active	NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY: Assisted Housing Relief Program	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/AHRP-NOFA.aspx	NOFA	NOFA page	·		•	OPA?	Orphan page. Application period is CLOSED	Under review	-	
	Active	Rental Security Deposit Calculator information	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/CalculatorInfo.aspx		Inner page	*		•	OPA	Delete? Orphan and empty page	Under review	*	
	Active	Consolidated Plan	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/ConsolidatedPlan.a spx	Details tag - Use to create expand/collapse section to shorten page length	Inner page	·	Expand sections (details t		Research / Bernice Mensah	Bernice wanted old documents to be added to zip folder.	Up-to-date	¥ 5	Had meeting with Bernice 10/1 show how created zip folders a documents.
	Active	Contact Us	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/Contact-Us.aspx	Wufoo form Embedded	Inner page	-	Form	*	OPA	Web part has extra padding	Up-to-date	+	
	Active	Homepage	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/default.aspx	DHCD homepage	Homepage		Button (RSS feed images)		OPA		Up-to-date	•	
	Active	DHCD Sponsorship Request Form	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/DHCD-Sponsorship -Request-Form.aspx	Embedded Wufoo form	Inner page	·	Form	·	Community Engagement		Up-to-date	•	
	Active	Event Request Form: DHCD Community Engagement	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/EventRequestForm aspx	Embedded Wufoo form	Inner page		Form		Community Engagement		Up-to-date	·	
	Active	google225b516ba9d4d7af.html	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/google225b516ba9 d4d7af.html			·		•	OPA	Not a page - Html file. Should it be moved out of the "page" folder?	Under review	-	
	Active	(GovDelivery Subscription Snippet)	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/GovDeliverySubscri ptionSnippet.aspx	Used by Subscribe page		·	External app	÷	OPA / Priya		Under review	÷	
	Active	Green and Healthy Task Force	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/GreenHealthyTask Force.aspx	Table	Task Force		Table		OS / Robyne Chaconas		Up-to-date	•	
	Active	How Can We Help You?	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/Help.aspx	(details tag replaced DolT's accordion) - yellow banner - button	Contact page	·	Expand sections (details t Gold banner	·	OPA		Up-to-date	•	
	Active	Información en Español	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/informacionenespa nol.aspx	Active Wufoo form	Inner page	•	Form	·	OPA	SPANISH orphan page (only linked to landing pages through hidden section) -don't know how users navigate to this page - appears in search results - 183 views in the las 12 months	Under review	-	
	Active	Community Engagement Mailing Request Form	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/ Pages/MailingRequestFor m.aspx	Embedded Wufoo form	Inner page		Form	-	Community Engagement		Up-to-date	-	
		0, 10, 11, 0	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/										

Navigation improvements

- Made menus easier to understand and use.
- Added a sticky menu on the left for related content and in-page navigation on the right to help users move around the page more easily.

Reinvest Baltimore

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Council

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative

The Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative (BVRI) program provides capital to Baltimore City's community-based development organizations to successfully redevelop as many properties with Vacant Building Notices (VBNs) as they can. Based on community-driven vacancy reduction plans, organizations will be funded for a range of strategies, such as property acquisition, stabilization, renovation, and demolition. The Department's investments are targeted to build from the strength of community assets to achieve whole block outcomes.

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative is part of Reinvest Baltimore, which is guided by the Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Council.

Maryland DHCD and its partners have a strong sense of urgency to replace vacant properties with investments that propel the health of Baltimore City neighborhoods. Organizations are expected to be nimble, efficient, and fast.

Eligible Activities

Grants and loans to finance:

- Acquisition, stabilization, and renovation of vacant buildings.
- · Acquisition and aggregation of vacant lots for the purpose of new infill housing construction and/or community open space.
- · Urgent demolition of properties.
- Other predevelopment activities for renovation and new construction projects.

Awarded funds support activities that accelerate the remediation of vacant properties, particularly those with VBNs.

Eligible Applicants

On this page

Eligible Activities

Eligible Applicants

Eligible Project Locations

Resources

Application

Training

Contact Information

Reinvest Baltimore News

Data Dashboard

Consistency and standardization

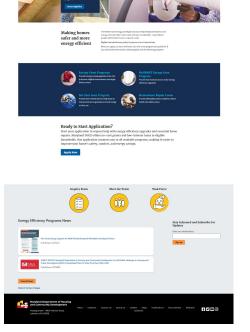
We are working on templates to keep design and content consistent across our pages. Each template will match a specific page or content type.

- Homepage
- Division-level page
- Sub-division page
- Program page
- Campaign page
- Contact page
- Resource page
- Team page

Program page template



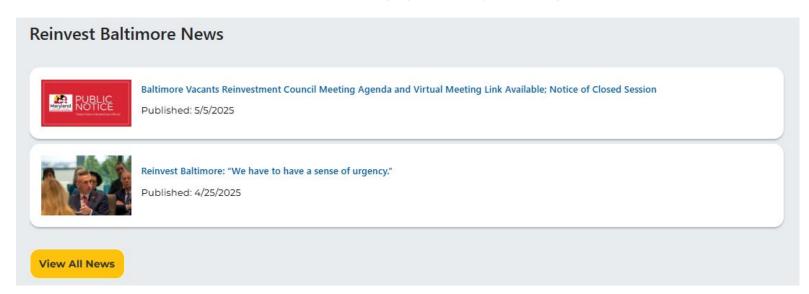
Stay Informed and Subscribe for Updates



Whole Home Energy and Repairs

Real-time updates

- An integrated dynamic news feed directly into multiple program pages. This integration keeps content fresh and enables news cross-pollination across the site.
- Previously, public information was siloed. Now, it appears instantly on the page when a press release is published; no manual updates needed.
- It also supports better communication and engagement by allowing news to be shared more widely.



Subscribe by topic

Let users sign up for email updates about the program.

- This helps increase sign-ups and keeps people interested and engaged.
- Give users another chance and an easy way to subscribe.

ontact information below.
c

Subscription confirmation message



Welcome prireb@yahoo.com (Sign Out)

Success

prireb@yahoo.com has been successfully subscribed to Reinvest Baltimore for Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

Subscriber Preferences



Your contact information is used to deliver requested updates or to access your subscriber preferences.

Plain language implementation

Rewriting content to make it easier to understand by following the Maryland Plain Language Standards.

Sustainable Communities page prior to implementing the Plain Language Standards:

Sustainable Communities: Enhancing Maryland Communities by Prioritizing Investment

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Sustainable Communities Program is a place-based designation offering a comprehensive package of resources that support holistic strategies for community development, revitalization and sustainability. Led by the Department, Sustainable Communities has provided local governments with a framework for promoting environmentally, economically and socially responsible growth and development in existing older communities.

List of Approved Sustainable Communities

Sustainable Communities Act of 2010

The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010 established a shared geographic designation to promote efficient use of scarce State resources based on local sustainability and revitalization strategies. The Sustainable Communities program consolidated geographically targeted resources for historic preservation, housing and economic development under a single designation. The designation places special emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multimodal transportation and development that strengthens existing communities. The legislation designated the Governor's Smart Growth Subcabinet as the body charged with final approval of Sustainable Communities designations.

What are Sustainable Communities?

The 2010 Sustainable Communities Act defines Sustainable Community Areas as places where public and private investments and partnerships achieve:

- · Development of a healthy local economy;
- Protection and appreciation of historical and cultural resources:
- · A mix of land uses:
- Affordable and sustainable housing, and employment options;
- Growth and development practices that protect the environment and conserve air, water and energy resources, encourage walkability and recreational opportunities, and where available, create access to transit.

Plain language implementation

Sustainable Communities page after the Plain Language revisions:

Sustainable Communities

Program Overview

Sustainable Communities: Enhancing Maryland Communities by Prioritizing Investment

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Sustainable Communities Program provides a specific designation for local areas.

The program supports community development, revitalization, and sustainability through coordinated strategies. It gives local governments resources to improve older communities and promote growth that is environmentally, economically and socially responsible.

Sustainable Communities Act of 2010

The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010 created a shared geographic designation to promote the efficient use of State resources. This designation uses local sustainability and revitalization strategies.

The Sustainable Communities program combines resources for:

- · Historic preservation
- · Housing and economic development under a single designation

The program focuses on:

- Infrastructure improvements
- Multimodal transportation
- · Development that strengthens existing communities

The legislation gives the Governor's Smart Growth Subcabinet final approval over Sustainable Communities designations.

What are Sustainable Communities?

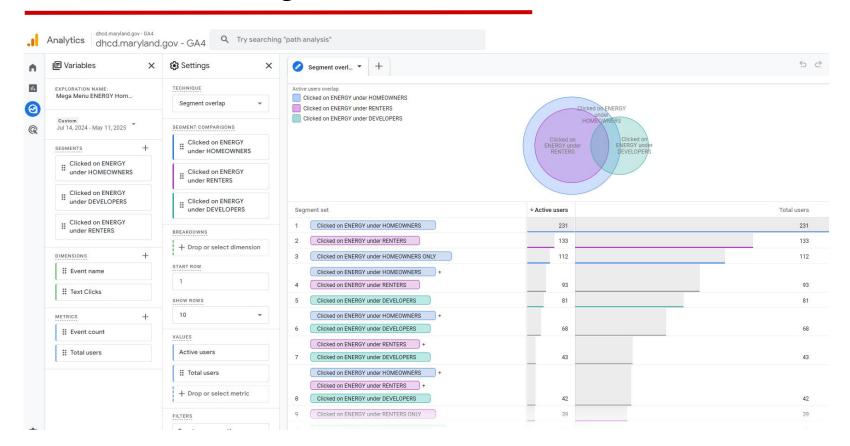
The 2010 Sustainable Communities Act defines Sustainable Community areas as places where public and private investments work together to achieve:

- · Development of a healthy local economy
- · Protection and appreciation of historical and cultural resources
- · A mix of land uses
- · Affordable and sustainable housing, and employment options
- · Growth and development practices that:
 - · Protect the environment
 - Conserve air, water and energy resources
 - Encourage walkability and recreational opportunities
 - · Create access to transit where available

Data-driven design

- Using data from Google Analytics and the Qualtrics dashboard to make better design choices.
- The following is an example of Google Analytics data from the past ten months, showing user interactions with the 'Energy' menu item across three sections of our website's mega menu.

Data-driven design



DNS migration effort

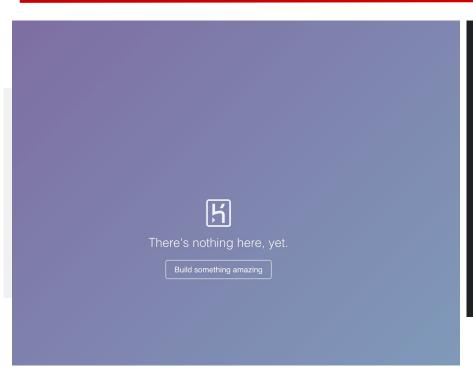
David Holmes - david.holmes@maryland.gov

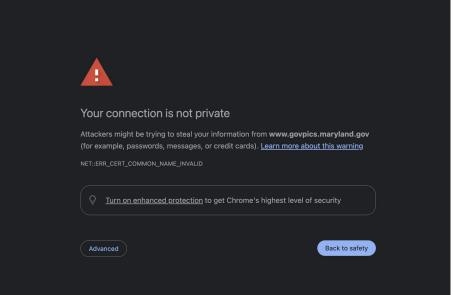


Our Current DNS environment

- 14,077 DNS records across 254 zones
- Aging and Outdated Infrastructure
- No Disaster Recovery Plan
- Security risks from unmanaged DNS records
 - <u>mappingmaryland.com</u>, .net, .org
 - 2019health.maryland.gov
 - https://vendorpayment.maryland.gov/

Examples



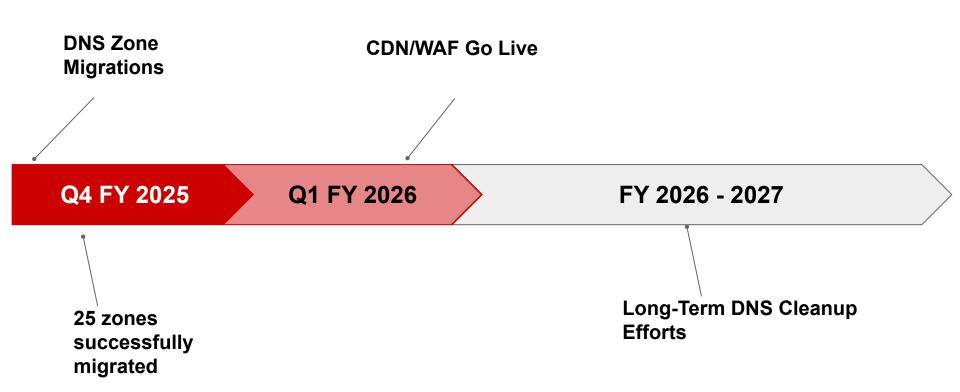


New DNS Provider

Cloudflare

- Cloud Based
- Web Application Firewall
- SSL Certificate Management
- Content Delivery Network / Caching
- Analytics

Timeline for the new DNS Migration



What do agencies need to do?

- Most agencies don't need to take any action
- OSM will reach out to agency that do need to make updates

Questions on DNS?



Maryland CMS update

Carrie Hane - carrie.hane@maryland.gov

Jeffrey Pass - jeffrey.pass@maryland.gov

Andrew White - andrew.white1@maryland.gov



Timeline for the new CMS

Implementation vendor begins work

Drupal platform built

Q4 FY 2025

Q2 FY 2026

FY 2026 - 2027

Agency website content prep begins

First wave site migrations begin

Agency content prep and migrations continue

Migration Roadmap

We are planning the migration of the ~100 DolT-hosted sites, using **both qualitative and quantitative data**, including traffic volume, site complexity, an agency's self-sufficiency, and more.

MDDS will reach out in the coming weeks and months to discuss immediate next steps.

Your migration could look like:

Small Sites, In-progress Redesigns

Supported by MDDS

Medium-Large Sites

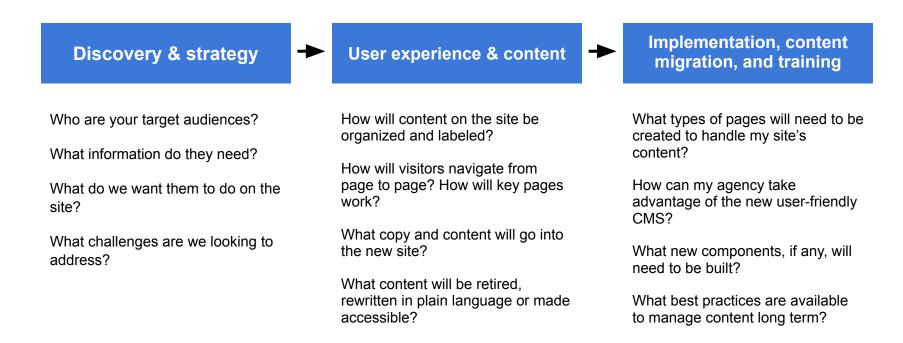
Supported by MDDS, vendor partner, or combo

Very Large Sites

Taken on a case-by-case basis

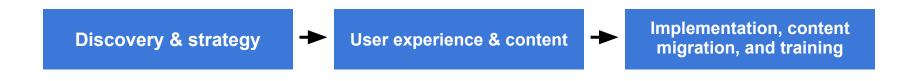
What does a website redesign look like?

All projects will follow a similar process that scales to site's size and complexity.



How might the process change?

Sample process



Kickoff survey and/or stakeholder interviews

Sitemap, homepage mockup, limited content support, limited user research

New Drupal site + hosting, Drupal training, limited migration support, no custom development

Kickoff survey, user interviews, strategy workshops, and/or other research activities Sitemap, homepage + other mockups, moderate content support, some user research

New Drupal site + hosting, Drupal training, some migration support, limited custom development

A quick note on PDFs and files

All PDFs and files must be made accessible prior to moving to Drupal, unless an exemption has been issued.

MDDS will provide guidelines to create accessible PDFs, but the responsibility of auditing and remediating digital files will fall to your agency.

Design for everyone. Accessible design is good design.

—MDDS Design Principles

What can my agency do now?

- **Review your team's workload.** Reworking content can be time consuming, so begin planning who can help in your redesign.
- Request a Content Workbook from MDDS. Keep in mind this is a snapshot in time.
- ldentify any content to archive, delete, or must be kept by legislative mandate.
- Keep track of all new content added following your audit.

Anything else I need to know?

Get Excited!

- Modernized site builder capabilities
- Accessibility improvements
- Consist, streamlined templates
- An easy-to-use experience to make site edits yourself

We're partners in this journey.

Your success is our success.

Q&A and discussion



Future meeting schedule (subject to change, bold indicates in person)

Web Leads Meeting

June 10th, 12:30-2 (in person, Crownsville)

July 9th, 2-3:30 (virtual)

August 12th, 12:30-2 (in person, Crownsville)

September 17th, 12-1:30 (virtual)

October 14th, 12:30-2 (in person, Crownsville)

November 19th, 12:30-2 (virtual)

December 9th, 12:30-2 (in person, Crownsville)

MDDS/Web Leads Open Office Hours

May 27th, 9-10 AM (virtual)



Thank you See you in person in Crownsville on June 10th

Feedback Survey



Survey link https://forms.gle/gn6WvfitXAMVKMpu9

