

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2024 General Assembly Session | 2/20/24

In accordance with the provisions of 30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of legislation impacting local governments.

HB 1355 (Amended): Information Technology Access Act; numerous organizational changes to Act (Patron: Del. Kathy L. Tran)

Bill Summary: Information Technology Access Act; digital accessibility. Makes numerous organizational changes to the Information Technology Access Act. The bill defines "information and communications technology" as it relates to digital accessibility, defined in the bill, for all persons with disabilities. The bill permits the head of each covered entity, defined in the bill, to designate an employee to serve as such covered entity's digital accessibility coordinator and provides that such digital accessibility coordinator is responsible for developing and implementing such covered entity's digital accessibility policy. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025.

Local Fiscal Impact: Net Additional Expenditure: X Net Reduction of Revenues:

Summary Analysis:

Number of Localities Responding: 2 Cities, 1 Counties, 2 Towns, 0 Other

Localities estimated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$6,000 to \$2.4 million over the biennium. Cities and Counties reported a much greater impact than Towns.

Localities identified the bill's fiscal impact as the increase in personnel costs needed to hire a digital accessibility coordinator, integrators, and other contractors, as well as staff time to review vendor contracts for compliance; increased recurring operating costs for licensing subscriptions, compliant software, and policy development/compliance; and one-time operating expenses to replace hardware.

One County would need to rescope IT capital projects to develop custom solutions for each department of the County, resulting in one-time capital expenses.

Net Increase in Expenditures: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities

Locality	Nonrecurring Expense - Operating		Nonrecurring Expense - Capital		Nonrecurring Expense - Other		Total Increase in Expenses (Biennium Total)
	FY25	FY26	FY25	FY26	FY25	FY26	
Chesterfield County				2000000		0	2,400,000
City of Alexandria		1000500				0	1,400,500
City of Winchester							75,000
Town of Christiansburg		6000					7,500
Town of Rocky Mount						5000	6,000

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
Chesterfield County	<p>The fiscal impact of this legislation is broad in nature and would require the County to procure multiple large-scale solutions across the majority of operations to be in compliance. With virtually all aspects of county operations having a digital touchpoint, there would need to either be one solution that could be used in conjunction with the technology related services/products the county already has, or more likely, multiple solutions to address things on a case-by-case basis. The case-by-case basis scenario would require the county to upgrade current technology related products or implement new ones entirely if in house or current vendor solution is unavailable.</p> <p>Over the last five years, the County's IST department has spent \$22,100,000 on capital projects, which doesn't include other tech related projects from public safety and projects already underway, such as a new ERP system. This bill could potentially require the county to rescope many projects that have already been done in addition to future tech related projects. It is difficult to understate the financial implications of this legislation on county operations, but the numbers given are a conservative estimate on the one-time cost to address current disability accessibility and the ongoing maintenance and subscription cost related to those solutions. Additionally, this analysis assumes the County would hire a digital accessibility coordinator to oversee and ensure compliance with state and federal laws.</p>
City of Alexandria	<p>Estimated fiscal impact range to start the City towards aligning with the proposed scope change compared to current ADA compliance activities would be roughly in the range of \$1M - \$1.5 million in capital and operating expenses for technology on-site/in-person, online/virtual, and City staff and solution needs to properly source the compliance needs. Technical staff would likely be a combination of FTEs and professional services for website, software, and hardware implementations, integrations, enhancements and sustainment. Non-Personnel expenditures would be roughly \$1,000,500 based on industry observations for licensing and hardware costs. Integrations for technology platforms used to present information to the public (i.e. City Public Website) estimated starting at \$100K - \$200K in vendor / product specific professional services working with City technical and functional staff to address ADA compliance requirements.</p>

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
City of Winchester	<p>1. Existing hardware/software in all departments, city websites, etc., must be assessed for digital accessibility.</p> <p>a. Existing purchased hardware/software not meeting the requirements may need to be replaced with other products.</p> <p>b. Existing free products (e.g., Greenshot screenshot capture software) may need to be replaced with paid alternatives for digital accessibility, resulting in new products that will likely carry annual maintenance or subscription fees.</p> <p>2. Modify procurement process and future RFPs to adhere to purchasing from approved vendors that have completed an Accessibility Conformance Report or provided an Accessibility Roadmap for nonconformance areas.</p> <p>a. We could limit the vendors we purchase from, which may increase costs or result in higher consultation/maintenance/subscription fees.</p> <p>b. Any vendor in use that is providing a Vendor Accessibility Roadmap must be reviewed annually; this has the potential to be an extensive list that could be costly in personnel time.</p> <p>3. Purchasing additional specialized components to meet digital accessibility needs, such as alternative input devices (motion tracking, head pointers, etc.), screen magnification software, text readers, and speech input software.</p> <p>a. Any accompanying hardware/software required for these components will have additional costs associated:</p> <p>i. Warranties</p> <p>ii. Software licensing</p> <p>iii. Hardware (microphones, adaptive tracking via webcam, etc.)</p> <p>4. A digital accessibility coordinator would need to be appointed, a digital accessibility policy created, and an established identifying barrier to access procedure and comprehensive grievance procedure must be published on the city website.</p> <p>a. A digital accessibility coordinator is required. The role is designated to an existing staff member, indicating increased responsibilities/workload with a potential salary increase.</p> <p>b. The procedure must be published on the website and reviewed regularly.</p>
Town of Christiansburg	I would estimate one-time cost associated with the drafting of a digital accessibility policy of \$6,000 which would be staff time and legal consultation costs. I would estimate recurring costs of annual review of the policy and compliance with the policy at a cost of \$1,000 personnel and \$500 in operating costs.
Town of Rocky Mount	There will some one-time costs to develop this policy. \$5,000 is only an estimate. We also estimate some recurring costs to ensure the policy is being followed.