Getting Started

This guide will offer you insights into how humans interact with technology, tips on what elements to include, and best practices in digital marketing. Our goal is to help you optimize your website into a useful & effective resource for your organization and the communities you serve.

Before we divide into the essential elements for websites, it is important to understand a few concepts that are fundamental to this process:

1 **People interact differently with technology than they do with print materials and in-person interactions.** This means in order to reach people through your website, you'll have to modify your website so it works with people's online behaviors.

2 **Your website is a marketing tool.** Websites can do a lot and we often get caught-up in all the features we can add to them, but forget why we need them. Your websites is there to promote your organization and help people find you. All the content on your website should support this purpose.

3 **Your website visitors have an agenda when visiting your website.** This concept is a combination of 1 & 2. Though your website's primary purpose is to achieve your organization's goals, your visitors also need to value what your website offers. This means your website needs to clearly acknowledge their problems/needs, and, most importantly, offer solutions. If done correctly, these solutions will align with your organizational goals.

4 **You are trying to establish trust and credibility, as well as your expertise with website visitors.** Your website will most likely be the first time someone interacts with your organization, and a poorly constructed website (meaning confusing language, bad grammar, typos, missing information, etc.) can lower your visitors' perception of your organization's ability to effectively assist them.

5 **When it comes to digital marketing, something that is useful and intuitive is more valuable to visitors than something that looks pretty.** It is more important to focus on strong content and an easily navigable website, then it is to focus on visual design. The harder it is for visitors to find the information they are looking for, the likelihood increases that they will leave and not return.