Ampera

Aspiritech

Human Services Research Institute & Accessibility

2023

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THE CHALLENGE

Human Services Research Institute (HRSI) is a nonprofit dedicated to improving public services and support for populations with disabilities.

In 2022, they found their own resources in need of improvement.

For a long time, HSRI had been providing webinars, guides and other information through its Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance and Resource Center on the Administration for Community Living's (ACL) website. This Technical Assistance Center served as an online hub for ACL grantees, including state and local governments, as well as for any organizations that deliver services to this audience.

But hosting this information on a landing page on the ACL domain had its limitations, and it would often take weeks if not months to make simple updates and upload new resources. So, the ACL contracted HSRI to build a standalone website making the resources easier to access and keep current.

While HSRI had the subject matter expertise to build the website, it was not fully staffed to complete a website build quickly. It needed support to ensure that the functionality and accessibility of the new website would be as good as possible—especially for the community of people it served. "Aspiritech understood it's not just because it's something to do—it's the right thing to do," says Teresita Camacho-Gonsalves, HSRI's Project Director for the Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance Resource Center.

THE SOLUTION

HSRI hired Aspiritech to conduct a structured accessibility review of the new Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance and Resource Center website and advise on what needed remediation before launch.

A mission-aligned partnership

HSRI hired Aspiritech to conduct a structured accessibility review of the new Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance and Resource Center website and advise on what needed to be remediated before the site could go live.
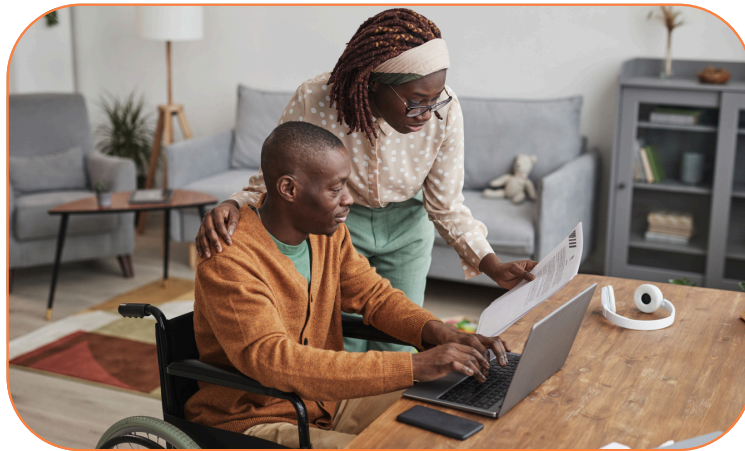
The opportunity to work with the tech analysts and project managers at Aspiritech—an organization with a shared, people-centered mission to provide employment opportunities across the country for people on the autism spectrum—added meaning to the work. "

Recognizing that we value a lot of the same things increased the willingness to want to work together," says Vivien Solomon, a research analyst for HSRI and project manager for the website build.

The Aspiritech team's expertise was immediately felt, and soon after beginning the work on the Traumatic Brain Injury website, HSRI expanded its ask to include both conducting the remediation itself and working with HSRI on another website it was developing for a government client.

So, in October, while the first project was still underway, the Aspiritech team expanded its remit to include a 508-compliance audit and remediation for the second HSRI website—this one housing technical assistance webinars and resources for the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems.

> Aspiritech understood it's not just because it's something to do—it's the right thing to do."
>
> *Teresita Camacho-Gonsalves,*
> *Project Director for the Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance Resource Center, HRSI*

THE OUTCOME

In addition to having a good system in place to organize and execute on the accessibility testing and remediation work, Aspiritech showed real value in its ability to troubleshoot —and tenacity to find a solution.

"We had an issue where some of the code was flagging the accessibility tester in a weird way," says Elayne Otstot, HSRI's project coordinator for the NCAPPS project. "MK was able to get to the bottom of it," she says.

After researching the issue, and spending hours on the phone with the website development platform provider, the Aspiritech project manager learned that the issue was with the platform itself. She explained to HSRI what could and could not be achieved within the platform and found a simple solution—avoiding costly development fixes.

This persistence not only saved time and money for HSRI; Apiritech's team walked away with valuable learnings and new best practices that it can apply to future clients using the same web development platform.

With both websites completed on time, HSRI now is looking for opportunities to continue working with Aspiritech going forward. "We want to set up a system where, quarterly, Aspiritech does an accessibility audit and remediation, because we're going to continue to upload documents and links," says Camacho-Gonsalves.

"It's been such a great relationship that we want to continue, so I think that tells you a lot."

WHY IT WORKED

Expertise, Good Communication and a Little Bit of Grace

HSRI attributes the success of both projects with Aspiritech to number of factors:

CLEAR & TIMELY COMMUNICATION

HSRI appreciated that the Aspiritech team was transparent and tracked its progress with shared spreadsheets that allowed the HSRI team to go in on its own time to see what had been done and where they were in the project timeline.

FLEXIBILITY

Building websites is not HSRI's day job, and its team members had to balance already busy schedules with this development work. Adding to that, HSRI's clients are government agencies, which made for unpredictable timelines for feedback and approvals. Aspiritech's flexibility with scheduling meetings and accepting feedback over email was critical. "There was that understanding—and giving each other grace," says Solomon.

FOLLOW-THROUGH

There were a few unplanned tasks that needed to be done after the website work was completed, and Naughton and the Aspiritech team stepped up without hesitation. "[The team] was very generous and said, 'We will carry this to the end at no additional cost," says Camacho-Gonsalves. "That just shows you about the organization, their values, and the workers."

DEEP KNOWLEDGE AND GUIDANCE

Everyone on the HSRI team noted how knowledgeable the Aspiritech analysts and project managers were.

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More importantly, they valued that the Aspiritech team, led by Accessibility Project Manager MK Naughton, took the time to untangle some of the more complicated accessibility challenges uncovered in the audit. "They were patient enough to explain terms and things we did not understand," Solomon says.

Aspiritech employs more than 100 experienced testers and more than 90 percent of the team is on the autism spectrum. The team is deeply committed to accessibility in the digital space for all people.

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If anyone's looking for accessibility work, doing an audit and remediation, definitely Aspiritech is No. 1 on my list— no reservations."

OUR TEAM

Aspiritech is a team of 100+ people on the autism spectrum who specialize in QA, data services and accessibility testing. We work with partners around the country.

FIND OUT MORE

Are you looking to make your digital presence accessible to everyone? We'll be your partner in the journey.

"The fact that Aspiritech creates valued employment and career development for a neurodiverse group of employees aligns very well with our intent to ensure the companies we do business with share the values of HSRI as an organization."

Alexandra Bonardi,
Vice President, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, HSRI

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GIVE US A CALL

We're always here to answer questions! Call Aspiritech CEO Tara May at 517.862.2893 or CMO Brad Cohen at 847.807.1784.

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SEND US AN EMAIL

Reach out to info@aspiritech.org or bradc@aspiritech.org anytime for more information!

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CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

View more case studies, meet our team, and submit an inquiry — all available by visiting www.aspiritech.org!

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THANK YOU

We look forward to helping your digital products become truly accessible to all.

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