

# Indiana Disability Resource Finder

A summary of a task-based usability study of a live state resource directory.

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## Overview

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The Indiana Disability Resource Finder connects people with disabilities and their families to services and programs. This evaluation measured how easily users could navigate the site and complete common goals, and prioritized the issues that got in their way.

## Method

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- **Four participants** from varied academic backgrounds, on both desktop and mobile.
- **Five task scenarios** reflecting realistic goals: finding events, applying topic and location filters, locating age-specific resources, and using navigation shortcuts.
- Each task scored on a **1 to 5 difficulty scale** and each issue on a **0 to 4 severity scale**, with completion and time-on-task recorded.

## Key Findings

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- **Navigation discoverability.** The primary entry point ("Start Your Journey") was not obviously the path to resources; some users defaulted to the search bar or external links and stalled.
- **Search expectations.** The search required near-exact wording. Broad or partial terms (for example, "middle school") often returned nothing, which read as a dead end.
- **Button visibility.** "Back to Top" and "Clear Filters" were low-contrast and easy to miss, especially the dark "Clear Filters" control on a dark filter panel.
- **Mobile gaps.** No "Back to Top" control on mobile forced tedious manual scrolling on long results pages.
- **Adaptability.** Difficulty ratings dropped sharply on later tasks as users learned the layout, pointing to a first-run clarity problem rather than a structural one.

## Recommendations

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- Relabel the entry point in plain language (for example, "Find Resources") and give homepage actions clearer, larger affordances.
- Make search keyword-tolerant (partial matches) and offer suggested queries.
- Raise contrast on "Clear Filters" and surface selected filters as removable chips for clear system feedback.
- Add a persistent, visible "Back to Top" control on both desktop and mobile.

## Outcome

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Most tasks were completed, and the site's step-by-step filtering was a genuine strength once found. The highest-impact wins are first-run clarity: clearer labels, more forgiving search, and more visible controls. Findings were ranked by severity so the team could fix the most damaging issues first.

Participant identities omitted. Prepared as a public portfolio summary.