

# **Youth & Young Adult Friendly Resource Directories: Design Guide**

## **Standards for clear searches, crisis access, and trusted designs.**

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A practical, mobile first playbook for anyone building or improving an online resource directory for teens and young adults. It covers search and filters, “near me” navigation, crisis access, plain language content, accessibility, privacy, and the governance needed to keep information accurate and trusted.

### **1) Mobile optimization**

**Why it matters:** Most young adults are phone-first

#### **Recommendations:**

- Guarantee parity across iOS and Android; test on low-end devices and multiple browsers.
- Reduce page weight (optimize images, defer non-critical scripts) to speed up on cellular.
- Use large tap targets such as “Back to results,” and phone-native actions (tap to call/text).

### **2) Search & filter improvements**

**Why it matters:** Youth need fast paths and may not know categories.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Keyword search with auto-suggest (e.g., “free food,” “birth certificate,” “housing”).
- Filters: *For Youth, Free, Open Now, LGBTQ+ friendly, Walk-in available, Near transit.*
- Include a “Top 5 Common Needs” quick menu on homepage and search page.
- Maintain filters as users click through, and display a simple navigation trail so users always know where they are. Add a clear “Back to results” button on each detail page.
- Show more categories up front with an option “View all” rather than hiding them.

### **3) Geo-based navigation**

**Why it matters:** Many rely on walking and public transit.

**Recommendations:**

- Geofence the map to Delaware County by default; allow widen/drag as a user choice.
- Integrate Google/Apple Maps for walking, driving, and transit directions.
- Display distance from the user; add “Near me” and “On a bus route” toggles.

**4) Shareability & outreach**

**Why it matters:** Youth discover help via peers, socials, and trusted community spaces.

**Recommendations:**

- One-tap share buttons and downloadable “resource snapshot” PDFs/QR codes for schools, shelters, libraries.
- Co-branding on key pages with trusted community partners (youth orgs, schools, clinics) to boost trust.
- Use plain language and friendly tone; add youth quotes/testimonials and “What to expect” snippets.

**5) Crisis-mode access**

**Why it matters:** Sites must work when someone is stressed, unsafe, or in a hurry.

**Recommendations:**

- Persistent “Get help now” banner with one-tap call / text / chat options and after-hours information.
- Short triage (“Are you safe?” → show crisis numbers and nearest open supports).
- Quick-exit button, content warnings where appropriate, and clear hours/eligibility on every listing.

**6) UX fixes & visual refresh**

**Why it matters:** Visual clarity = trust; false cues waste time.

**Recommendations:**

- Fix false affordances: style links/buttons consistently; remove “dead” elements.
- Modern card layout with clear icons (in-person/virtual, cost, docs needed), and readable contrast.
- Progress indicators on multi-step tasks (e.g., “Step 1 of 3: Eligibility”).

**7) Map & listing accuracy**

**Why it matters:** Wrong results = lost time and trust.

**Recommendations:**

- County-level default plus city/zip code filters; show open/closed now and last-verified date.
- Add a “Report an issue” link on each listing; route fixes to a shared inbox.

**8) Accessibility, privacy, and governance**

**Recommendations:**

- Meet WCAG 2.2 AA criteria: captions, alt text, keyboard navigation, sufficient contrast, large tap targets.
- Sixth–eighth grade reading level; bilingual core pages (English/Spanish to start).
- Plain-English privacy; minimal data collection; no dark patterns.
- Include Youth advisory testing during each release (compensated). Add a feedback widget on resource pages.
- Complete Monthly link checks, quarterly content audits, and analytics on search success and time to find help.

Thanks for viewing, and for the work you do to make resources accessible. We hope this playbook gave you practical steps to simplify navigation, build trust, and help young people find support faster. For additional guidance, co-design sessions, or youth usability reviews, please contact the VFC Youth Advisory Council at [voicesforchildren@delcocasa.org](mailto:voicesforchildren@delcocasa.org).