QRCA PRO BONO CASE STUDY

Southwest Colorado Cares (SWCC) Website Usability and User Experience Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SWCC and the QRCA collaborated to conduct user experience and usability testing of a newly developed resource directory website. The QRCA provided pro bono expert qualitative research consultation by providing guidance on methods, connecting SWCC with other resource directory developers, and providing project management, moderation, and analysis services. The QRCA provided a detailed report of recommendations guided by the data to inform changes to the SWCC website to improve user experience.

PURPOSE

A user experience and usability exploration to assure that SWCC's recently developed Website is functional and easy to navigate, so that it can be a meaningful resource for care providers and community members in the region.

TIMEFRAME

June to September 2026

PARTICIPANTS

16 total end-users. 12 (75%) were care partners, defined as either nonprofit workers or healthcare providers. 4 (25%) were community members. Members of the disability, elderly, and Spanish-speaking community were represented.

METHODS

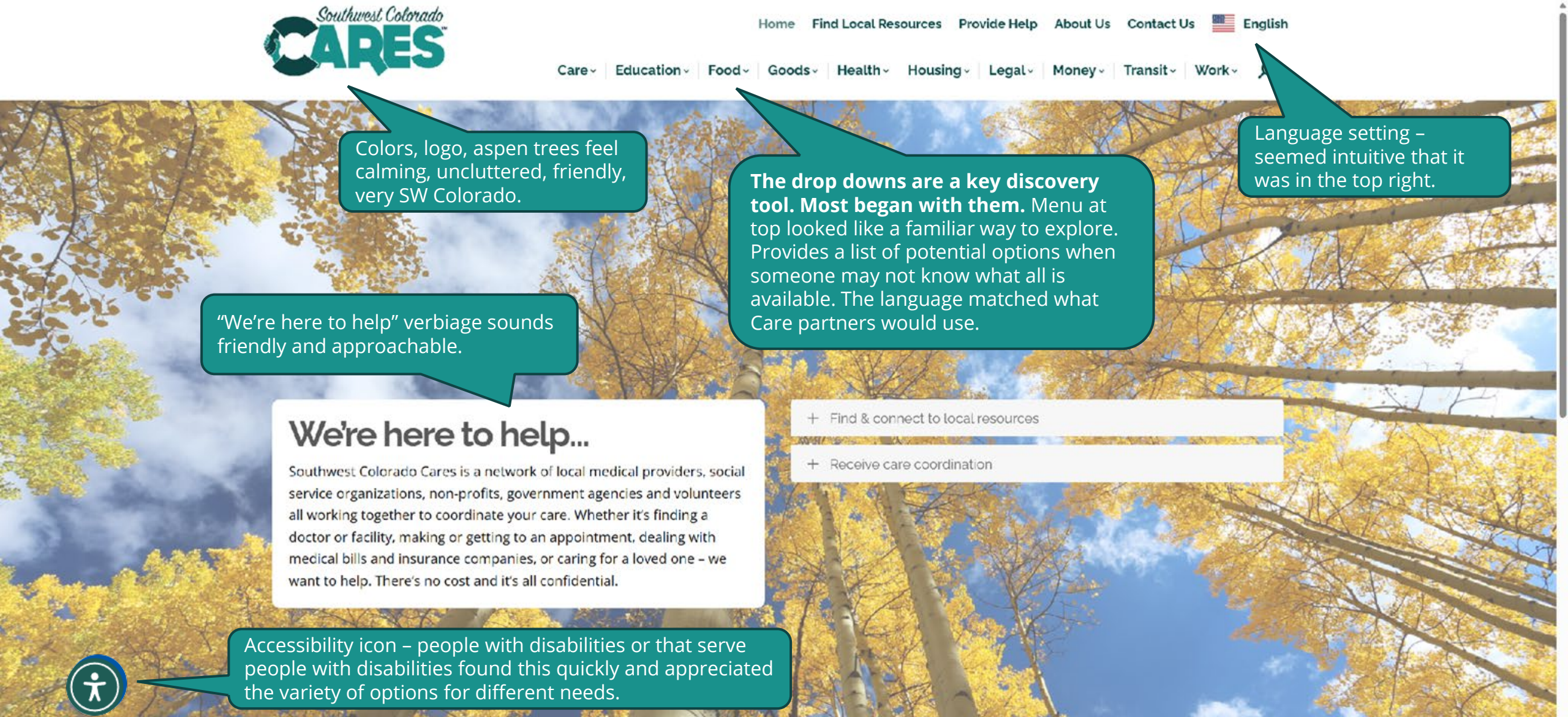
SWCC recruited participants and collected consent forms. QRCA conducted remote key-informant usability and user experience interviews. Participants shared their screen and navigated the site through a semi-structured guided interview with a QRCA moderator. They provided feedback on the website functionality, organization, presentation, and information while navigating the website. Interviews were recorded and transcribed through Zoom. De-identified transcripts were analyzed, and results were provided in a visual report.

REPORT SAMPLE:

Home Page Information Findings



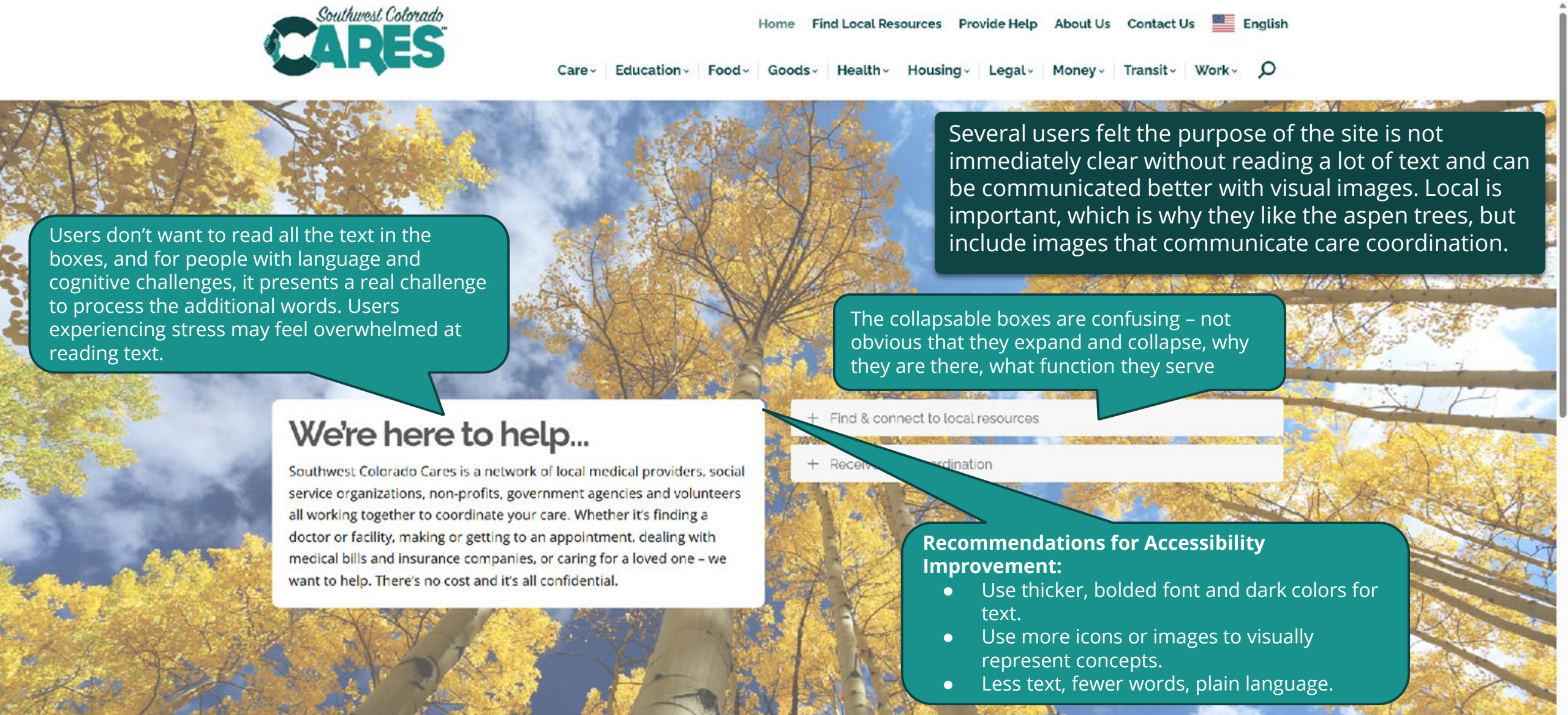
What's Already Working



HIGH
MED
LOW

What Needs Improvement

Currently the front page has friction between what the user wants to achieve (finding resources) and what we feel we need to say (long explainer blurbs in text boxes).



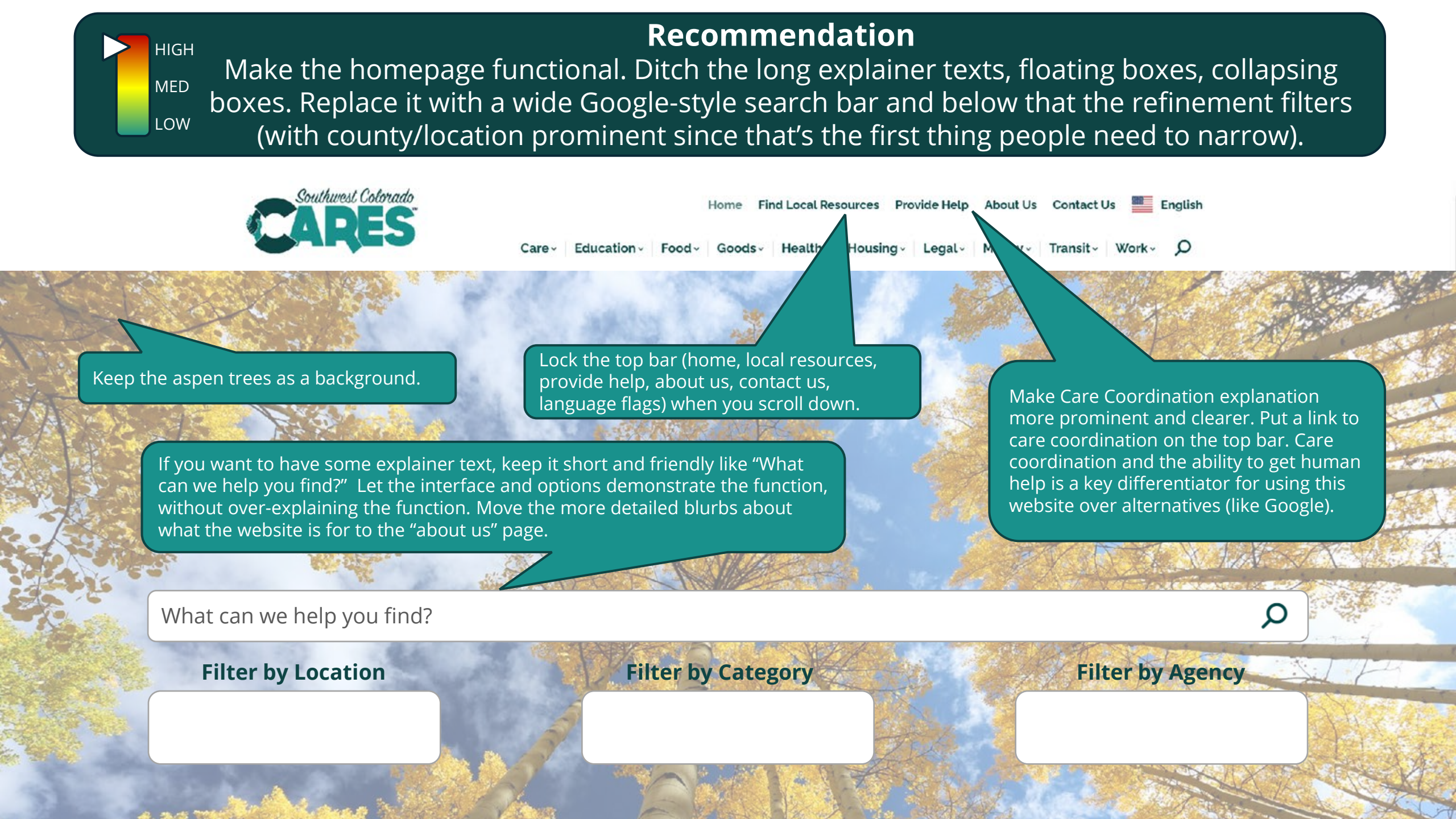
Several users felt the purpose of the site is not immediately clear without reading a lot of text and can be communicated better with visual images. Local is important, which is why they like the aspen trees, but include images that communicate care coordination.

Users don't want to read all the text in the boxes, and for people with language and cognitive challenges, it presents a real challenge to process the additional words. Users experiencing stress may feel overwhelmed at reading text.

The collapsable boxes are confusing – not obvious that they expand and collapse, why they are there, what function they serve

Recommendations for Accessibility Improvement:

- Use thicker, bolded font and dark colors for text.
- Use more icons or images to visually represent concepts.
- Less text, fewer words, plain language.


HIGH
MED
LOW
Recommendation
Make the homepage functional. Ditch the long explainer texts, floating boxes, collapsing boxes. Replace it with a wide Google-style search bar and below that the refinement filters (with county/location prominent since that's the first thing people need to narrow).
Southwest Colorado CARES
Home
Find Local Resources
Provide Help
About Us
Contact Us
English
Care
Education
Food
Goods
Health
Housing
Legal
Transit
Work
Keep the aspen trees as a background.
Lock the top bar (home, local resources, provide help, about us, contact us, language flags) when you scroll down.
Make Care Coordination explanation more prominent and clearer. Put a link to care coordination on the top bar. Care coordination and the ability to get human help is a key differentiator for using this website over alternatives (like Google).
If you want to have some explainer text, keep it short and friendly like "What can we help you find?" Let the interface and options demonstrate the function, without over-explaining the function. Move the more detailed blurbs about what the website is for to the "about us" page.
What can we help you find?
Filter by Location
Filter by Category
Filter by Agency

DELIVERABLES

- Final report provided in Google Slides, PowerPoint, and PDF formats
- Access to qualitative consultant expertise and trained moderators, analysts, and report writers
- Ongoing project design and project management support

PROJECT TEAM

Co-Chairs

Kathy Doyle, Greg Rathjen and Dona Vitale

Project Manager

Laura Anderson

Moderators and Observers

Emma Bonilla, Isa Cueto, Lisa Lin-Freeman, Susan Korbel, Brian Sarfatty, Dean Stephens, Casey Langer Tesfaye, Tanzania Scarborough, Jeff Walkowski, and Laura Anderson

Translators

Emma Bonilla and Isa Cueto

Analysts and Report Writers

Brian Sarfatty, Jeff Gartner, Greg Rathjen and Laura Anderson

Southwest Colorado CARES™
A Program of Community Connections, Inc.

September 29, 2026

Qualitative Research and Consulting Association Pro Bono Workgroup
2921 Landmark PL STE 215-522
Madison, WI 53713

Dear Members of the QRCA Pro Bono Workgroup:

On behalf of Southwest Colorado Cares, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your generous contribution of time, expertise, and effort in conducting user testing of the Southwest Colorado Cares website and resource directory.

The insights you gathered, and the thoughtful analysis presented in your report, have provided us with a deeper understanding of the experiences and needs of the people who will use our website and seek services through our care partner network. The quality, depth, and clarity of your findings are outstanding.

Your recommendations will guide improvements to make our website more accessible, user-friendly, and responsive to the needs of residents throughout southwest Colorado. By helping us better connect individuals and families with essential health and community resources, your work will have a lasting positive impact on the communities we serve.

Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your partnership and support. We deeply appreciate your dedication, professionalism, and contribution to the wellbeing of the people of southwest Colorado.

With gratitude,

Douglas McCarthy

Douglas McCarthy
Co-Director, Southwest Colorado Cares