

Section 508 Compliance Guide

Americans regularly interact with the U.S. government through a variety of technological resources, such as websites, kiosks, and other online applications. Section 508 is a federal law with standards to ensure that Americans have equal access to electronic resources and programs such as these, regardless of disability status. Section 508 standards comprise the technical requirements and criteria necessary to determine if a federal agency's electronic information and data comply with the law.

Worldwide, hundreds of millions of people have visual impairment, hearing loss, or other disabilities. Section 508 requires all federal content to be as accessible to these individuals as it is to those without a disability. This accessibility ensures that all users have the ability to access a given product or service, regardless of personal capabilities.

In order to establish compliance, [company] will assess the maturity of its 508 compliance program by using criteria that ranges from ad hoc, meaning no compliance present, to measured, meaning results are actively tracked and compliant. The law requires Section 508 compliance in each of the following domains: acquisition, technology life cycles, testing and validation, compliance management, and training. [Company] will implement a program to ensure compliance in each of these domains.

[Company] will begin its assessment by identifying challenges and strengths, as well as creating an iterative plan to address problem areas, such as gaps in policy. It will then assess the organization's preparedness to adopt the necessary changes, and create a plan for adopting these changes. The plan also includes a budget and target milestones to present to stakeholders. An effective Section 508 compliance policy contains each of these aspects, and ensures that employees know compliance is the responsibility of all those who work for the organization. Thus, [company] will create a plan that addresses these aspects of the program to ensure effectiveness.

Once [company] creates the compliance plan, the next step will be to assemble a program team consisting of members who are familiar with project execution and Section 508 law. The organization will also collaborate with federal partners to enable leveraging of existing best practices and resources. This collaboration creates a more mature and comprehensive final program.

[Company] will then determine the technological needs of users who have disabilities using a range of methods, and incorporate these needs into market research and development and acquisition processes. [Company] will implement a rigorous testing process to ensure the validity of compliance results.

Once the organization establishes compliance, it will create a plan to track and monitor accessibility and to address any problems that might arise. As a final measure to ensure accessibility, [company] will educate its employees about the importance of Section 508 compliance by assessing current accessibility training and providing additional training where necessary. Once this project reaches completion, [company] will be fully compliant with Section 508 law.