



STATE OF NEW JERSEY IT CIRCULAR Title: Web Accessibility Policy	NO: 07-12-NJOIT		SUPERSEDES: N/A	
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	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Office of Policy and Planning			

ATTN: Directors of Administration and Agency IT Managers

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish and communicate the State of New Jersey's position regarding Web accessibility requirements for Executive Branch websites, web-based applications and online services. The objective is to improve the ease with which all users, including those with disabilities, can access and benefit from web-based government services and information.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all web-based development, e.g. websites, web services and web-based applications provided by Executive Branch agencies that operate websites as a public service. It is anticipated that any web-based Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) applications will meet the web accessibility requirements. Independent State entities are strongly encouraged to adopt this policy or a similar policy.

This policy applies to all temporary workers, volunteers, contractors, and those employed by contracted entities, and others who administer enterprise information resources.

III. DEFINITIONS

Please refer to the Statewide Policy Glossary at <http://www.nj.gov/it/ps/glossary/>.

IV. INTRODUCTION

- A.** The Internet and the World Wide Web are often the preferred channels for government service delivery. Websites that are not designed for accessibility deny the disabled and others the ability to reap the benefits that the Internet brings. Compliance with these guidelines will help to ensure that New Jersey websites serve the largest possible audiences.
- B.** In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to reflect the newly emerging focus on technology. While state governments are not directly subject to the Act, Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any federally funded programs or activities. It may be inferred that federally funded State programs have some responsibility to meet the requirements of Section 508, which governs federal websites.
- C.** The U.S. Department of Justice issued an opinion in September 1996 stating that the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Titles II and III require state and local governments and the business sector to provide effective communication whenever they communicate through the Internet. This effective communication rule applies to covered entities using the Internet for communications regarding their programs, goods, or services.
- D.** Web pages that are not designed to be accessible bar individuals with disabilities from participating in and reaping the benefits of e-government and e-commerce.
- E.** Accessible Web design provides benefits beyond the community of disabled persons. For example, people with slow modems and low bandwidth can access the electronic content of an accessible Web site even if they do not have state-of-the-art computer equipment. Additionally, people with personal digital assistants and cell phones can access the content of websites incorporating accessible Web design features.

V. POLICY

- A.** New Jersey State agencies subject to this policy shall take reasonable steps to design and develop websites and Web services that are accessible to people with disabilities as well as those without disabilities.
- B.** Agency Web page developers, designers, programmers, and content providers shall become familiar with the guidelines for achieving universal Web accessibility and shall apply these principles in designing and creating any official State of New Jersey websites.
- C.** Agencies shall take reasonable steps to meet the Web accessibility standards issued by the Access Board, Part 1194 to Chapter XI of Title 36 of the Code of

Federal Regulations, Subpart B Section 22, under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Many items in the Section 508 standards are similar to Level A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG) developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), but there are some variances.

- D. Any revisions to the Section 508 Web access standards shall be incorporated as a requirement of this policy unless agencies are otherwise notified.
- E. Agencies are strongly encouraged to go beyond the Section 508 accessibility standards and incorporate the additional Web design techniques contained in the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.
- F. All State agencies subject to the policy shall take reasonable steps to incorporate Web accessible design techniques when developing new Web pages, sites, and services. As existing Web pages, sites, and services are revised and updated, agencies shall take reasonable steps to ensure the accessibility of those pages, sites, and services.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Agency Senior Management is responsible for:
 - 1. Ensuring that websites and services under its control are designed and developed to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities.
 - 2. Developing and implementing a plan for meeting the objectives of this policy.
 - 3. Distributing this policy to appropriate agency personnel. Appropriate personnel are individuals involved with the design, development, creation, and maintenance of websites and Web services, including business unit managers with approval authority over business unit Web pages.
 - 4. Providing Web accessibility training opportunities, as necessary, to agency IT staff, agency Webmasters, Web designers, developers, programmers, and other Web content providers.
 - 5. Building Web accessibility awareness among business unit managers with approval authority over business unit Web pages.
 - 6. Establishing procedures to ensure that requests for external Web development and/or procurement of Web services contain design requirements for accessibility.
 - 7. Providing funding to a reasonable extent for the necessary tools and technologies to meet the objectives of this policy.

8. Monitoring the agency's compliance with this policy.
- B. New Jersey Office of Information Technology (NJOIT) is responsible for:**
1. Providing Web accessibility consultation, testing, and remediation services to client agencies.
 2. Developing and maintaining an Intranet site for achieving Web accessibility as a resource for employees who provide content for State Web pages.
 3. Promoting Web accessibility and a structured approach to Web design.
 4. Providing opportunities for accessibility training to NJOIT employees, as necessary. NJOIT shall extend internal training opportunities to the principal departments and agencies when feasible.
- C. Agency Web Designers, Developers, Programmers, and Other Content Providers are responsible for:**
1. Acquiring an understanding of the Section 508 requirements of the Rehabilitation Act and incorporating these requirements into their work products.
 2. Incorporating the Web accessibility design techniques recommended by the W3C and the State of New Jersey Web Site Standards and Guidelines developed by NJOIT into their work products unless a particular technique(s) would cause undue burden to the principal department or agency.
 3. Remaining informed regarding new Web accessibility techniques and shall incorporate new techniques as appropriate.

VII. COMPLIANCE

To achieve the objectives of this policy, a State department or agency must be able to demonstrate that it has incorporated all WCAG 2.0 Level A and paragraphs 1194.22 (l), (m), (n), (o), and (p) of Section 508 for new or revised Web documents.

VIII. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Links to the following references and resources for achieving Web accessibility:

- A. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 \(WCAG\)](#)**

- B. [W3C Web Access Initiative](#)
- C. [The Federal IT Accessibility Initiative Training \(free online training\)](#)

Signature on File

10/27/2014

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DATE