

Section 508

The Rehabilitation Act

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Overview

[Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) mandates that all federal agencies provide comparable electronic and digital information to those with disabilities. All federal agencies are responsible for not posing an “undue burden” onto employees and members of the public with disabilities who are seeking information. It affects various methods of communication, including but not limited to computers, software, and electronic office equipment.

Section 508 transforms the way federal agencies approach disability, access and customer experience, ensuring that services are inclusive, usable, and equitable. By adhering to its requirements, agencies can create digital platforms and services that cater to all individuals, fostering greater public trust and engagement. Its core principles are equality of access, inclusivity, and usability.

Requirements for Agencies

- **ICT Accessibility Standards:** ICT must conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA, as specified by the Revised 508 Standards. These include:
 - **Perceivable:** Content must be presented in ways that users can perceive (e.g., providing text alternatives for images).
 - **Operable:** Users must be able to operate interfaces, including through keyboard navigation.
 - **Understandable:** Information and operation of the interface must be clear and predictable.
 - **Robust:** Content must be accessible to assistive technologies.
- **Scope of Coverage**
 - **Websites and Web Applications:** All federal websites and web-based tools.
 - **Documents:** PDFs, Word documents, and other digital files must be made accessible.
 - **Multimedia:** Videos must have captions and audio descriptions; audio content must have transcripts.
 - **Software Applications:** Federal software must include accessibility features.
 - **Hardware:** Devices like monitors must accommodate physical accessibility needs.
 - **Robust:** Content must be accessible to assistive technologies.
- **Assistive Technology Compatibility:** ICT must support assistive technologies, enabling seamless use by individuals with disabilities.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Updates:** Agencies are required to regularly assess and update their ICT to meet evolving accessibility standards and user needs.

What Does This Mean for Government?

Federal agencies are required to:

- Ensure that all electronic and information technology (EIT) that agencies develop, buy, maintain, or use must be accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities, including websites, software, PDFs, multimedia, and hardware.
- Agencies must require all new procurements meet Section 508 standards, document accessibility conformance (e.g., via VPATs), and respond to accessibility complaints or audits; noncompliance can result in civil rights complaints or corrective actions.
- Agencies must continuously evaluate and update their digital assets to align with 508 Standards and integrate accessibility into design, content publishing, and IT lifecycle management processes.

This Policy also signals that disability access extends into digital services for the Federal Government, and agencies are responsible for providing services that are accessible to all.

What Does This Mean for Industry?

For contractors, integrators, and developers involved in providing public-facing services, this policy is a requirement to understand and implement all requirements put forth by Section 508.

Key takeaways for vendors:

- Design accessibility into the product roadmap: Build all software, platforms, and digital content to meet or exceed the Revised Section 508 / WCAG 2.0 AA standards from the start — this ensures eligibility for federal contracts and simplifies procurement compliance.
- Position your solution as “508-compliant by design” in marketing and proposal materials. Provide clear VPATs (Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates) and documentation to make procurement officers’ compliance checks easy — a strong differentiator in competitive bids.
- Partner early with federal IT and accessibility offices: Engage agency Section 508 coordinators, CIOs, and procurement teams through pilots, demos, and accessibility testing programs. This builds trust, helps shape requirements, and can create a fast-track path onto government contracting vehicles.

In short, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal agencies to ensure all electronic and information technology is accessible to people with disabilities in all digital forms.

About Technology by Policy

Tech by Policy is a Carahsoft initiative that helps technology vendors align their solutions to evolving federal, state, and local policy priorities to accelerate growth in the public sector. The program connects policy to procurement—translating executive orders, modernization mandates, and compliance frameworks into actionable go-to-market strategies.

By mapping technology capabilities to government missions, Tech by Policy enables vendors to build visibility, strengthen credibility, and drive adoption through policy-aligned positioning, campaigns, and education.

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