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	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	DSS Policy Manual
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	2/Civil Rights
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## I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Social Services (DSS) to comply with [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998](#) in order to ensure that DSS employees and members of the public with disabilities have access to and use of electronic and information technology (EIT) that is comparable to that of others without disabilities.


## II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

### A. Purpose

- To increase awareness of [Section 508](#) regulations and standards throughout the Department.
- To ensure that reasonable steps are taken to include specific criteria in DSS procurement procedures and documents that comply, at a minimum, with [Priority 1 requirements](#) as set forth by the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\) Accessibility Initiative](#).
- To ensure that reasonable steps are taken to design all DSS information technology architecture to operate with various assistive technology.
- To ensure adequate validation testing of applications by engaging a cross section of individuals with disabilities to thoroughly test and provide feedback on the usability of the applications, using industry-recognized assistive technology.
- To ensure that individuals with disabilities who are DSS employees have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of the information and data by DSS employees who are not individuals with disabilities.
- To ensure that individuals with disabilities who are members of the public seeking information or services from DSS have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of the information and data by such members of the public who are not individuals with disabilities.
- To establish procedures for addressing issues and problems regarding noncompliance.

### B. Scope

This policy applies to all DSS employees, especially those responsible for the design, development, procurement, and/or use of electronic and information technology during the design phase and User Acceptance Testing (UAT).

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### III. DEFINITIONS

**Assistive Technology:** Products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

**Electronic and Information Technology (EIT):** Includes computer hardware, ancillary equipment and any other product used to acquire, store, manipulate, or transmit information. This includes software applications and operating systems; web-based intranet and internet information and applications, telephones and other telecommunications products; information kiosks and transaction machines; video equipment and multimedia products such as photocopiers and fax machines and calculators.


**Reasonable Steps:** A process that would not impose undue financial or administrative hardship on an agency.

**Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998:** A section of the 1998 amended version of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which added provisions requiring federal agencies' electronic and information technology to be accessible to persons with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. This Section also assures that people with disabilities in the general public have equal access to federal government information.

While state governments are not directly subject to Section 508, [Section 504](#) of the same Act prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any federally funded programs or activities. It requires that programs receiving federal funds (nearly all DSS programs) must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Although Section 504 does not specifically address electronic and information technology accessibility issues, it is inferred that federally funded state programs have some responsibility to meet the requirements of Section 508.

**Undue Burden:** Significant difficulty or expense or an action that would substantially alter the intent of a program or service. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, an agency shall consider all agency resources available to the program or component for which the product is being developed, procured, maintained, or used.

**Web Accessibility Initiative; Priority 1 Requirements:** An initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) which, in coordination with organizations around the world, pursues accessibility of the Web through five primary areas of work: technology, guidelines, tools, education and outreach, and research and development. Priority 1 refers to a checkpoint which satisfies a basic requirement for certain groups with disabilities to be able to use Web documents.

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**World Wide Web Consortium (W3C):** An independent international computer industry group which works with member organizations and the public to develop Web standards, and to lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing protocols and guidelines that ensure long-term growth for the Web. Its commitment includes promoting a high degree of web usability for people with disabilities.


#### IV. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 508 STANDARDS

Compliance with [Section 508](#) impacts the design, development, procurement, and/or use of electronic and information technology. DSS employees involved in the procurement of products and technology should apply the requirements of Section 508 and all DSS Requests for Proposals (RFPs), Requests for Information (RFIs), and contracts must meet 508 standards, at the minimum W3C accessibility, unless it would impose an undue burden to do so. However, a DSS entity involved in the design, development, procurement, and/or use of EIT must consider and thoroughly document the difficulty and expense of compliance in relation to all agency resources available to the program or component for which the product is being acquired and must still provide users with disabilities access to the information or data through appropriate alternate means. All undue burden exceptions must be reviewed by the DSS Undersecretary to assure collaboration and agreement on the exception between Division of Information Services and Division of Planning and Budget.

##### A. Software Applications and Operating Systems

Most of the specifications for software pertain to usability for people with vision impairments. For example, one provision requires alternative keyboard navigation, which is essential for people with vision impairments who cannot rely on pointing devices, such as a mouse. Other provisions address animated displays, color and contrast settings, flash rate, and electronic forms, among others.

<b>DSS Software Applications and Operating Systems – Detailed Guidelines Accessibility Template</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	
a)	When software is designed to run on a system that has a keyboard, product functions shall be executable from a keyboard where the function itself or the result of performing a function can be discerned textually.
b)	Applications shall not disrupt or disable activated features of other products that are identified as accessibility features, where those features are developed and documented according to industry standards. Applications also shall not disrupt or disable activated features of any operating system that are identified as accessibility features where the application programming interface for those accessibility features has been documented by the manufacturer of the operating system and is available to the product developer.
c)	A well defined on-screen indication of the current focus shall be provided that moves among interactive interface elements as the input focus changes. The focus shall be programmatically exposed so that Assistive Technology can track focus and focus changes.
d)	Sufficient information about a user interface element including the identity, operation and state of the element shall be available to Assistive Technology. When an image represents a program element, the information conveyed by the image must also be available in text.

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(e) When bitmap images are used to identify controls, status indicators, or other programmatic elements, the meaning assigned to those images shall be consistent throughout an application's performance
(f) Textual information shall be provided through operating system functions for displaying text. The minimum information that shall be made available is text content, text input caret location, and text attributes.
(g) Applications shall not override user selected contrast and color selections and other individual display attributes.
(h) When animation is displayed, the information shall be displayable in at least one non-animated presentation mode at the option of the user.
(i) Color coding shall not be used as the only means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.
(j) When a product permits a user to adjust color and contrast settings, a variety of color selections capable of producing a range of contrast levels shall be provided.
(k) Software shall not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements having a flash or blink frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
(l) When electronic forms are used, the form shall allow people using Assistive Technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.

## B. Web-Based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications

The criteria for web-based technology and information are based on access guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium. Many of these provisions ensure access for people with vision impairments who rely on various assistive products to access computer-based information, such as screen readers which translate what is on a computer screen into automated audible output, and refreshable Braille displays. Certain conventions, such as verbal tags or identification of graphics and format devices, like frames, are necessary so that these devices can "read" them for the user in a sensible way. The standards do not prohibit the use of web site graphics or animation. Instead, the standards aim to ensure that such information is also available in an accessible format. Generally, this means use of text labels or descriptors for graphics and certain format elements. This section also addresses the usability of multimedia presentations, image maps, style sheets, scripting languages, applets and plug-ins, and electronic forms. Accessible sites offer significant advantages that go beyond access. For example, those with "text-only" options provide a faster downloading alternative and can facilitate transmission of web-based data to cell phones and personal digital assistants.


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### DSS Web-Based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications – Detailed World Wide Web Consortium Priority 1 Guidelines and Additions Accessibility Template

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Criteria
(a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).
(b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation
(c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
(d) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
(e) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.

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(f) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
(g) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
(h) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
(i) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
(j) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.
(k) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by Assistive Technology.
(l) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with 1194.21(a) through (i).
(m) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using Assistive Technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
(n) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
(o) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

### C. Telecommunications Products

The [Office of Telecommunications Management](#) (OTM) is responsible for management of telecommunications within the executive branch of state government. This includes the planning, procurement, provision and administration of both goods and services statewide.

### D. Video or Multimedia Products

Multimedia products involve more than one media and include, but are not limited to, video programs, narrated slide production, and computer generated presentations. Provisions address caption decoder circuitry (for any system with a screen larger than 13 inches) and secondary audio channels for television tuners, including tuner cards for use in computers. The standards also require captioning and audio description for certain training and informational multimedia productions. The standards also provide that viewers be able to turn captioning or video description features on or off.


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#### DSS Video or Multimedia – Detailed Guidelines Accessibility Template

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Criteria
a) All analog television displays 13 inches and larger, and computer equipment that includes analog television receiver or display circuitry, shall be equipped with caption decoder circuitry which appropriately receives, decodes, and displays closed captions from broadcast, cable, videotape, and DVD signals. As soon as practicable, but not later than July 1, 2002, widescreen digital television (DTV) displays measuring at least 7.8 inches vertically, DTV sets with conventional displays measuring at least 13 inches vertically, and stand-alone DTV tuners, whether or not they are marketed with display screens, and computer equipment that includes DTV receiver or display circuitry, shall be equipped with caption decoder circuitry which appropriately receives, decodes, and displays closed captions from broadcast, cable, videotape, and DVD signals.



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(b) Television tuners, including tuner cards for use in computers, shall be equipped with secondary audio program playback circuitry.
(c) All training and informational video and multimedia productions which support the agency's mission, regardless of format, that contain speech or other audio information necessary for the comprehension of the content, shall be open or closed captioned.
(d) All training and informational video and multimedia productions that support the agency's mission, regardless of format, that contain visual information necessary for the comprehension of the content, shall be audio described.
(e) Display or presentation of alternate text presentation or audio descriptions shall be user-selectable unless permanent.
<b>*(f) All web video shall contain closed captioning and file compression. File size should be 10mg or less. Quicktime, Windows Media Player, and Real Player are acceptable media container formats.**</b>

**E. Self-Contained, Closed Products**

This section covers products that generally have imbedded software but are often designed in such a way that a user cannot easily attach or install assistive technology. Examples include information kiosks, information transaction machines, copiers, printers, calculators, fax machines, and similar types of products. The standards require that access features be built into the system so users do not have to attach an assistive device to it. Other specifications address mechanisms for private listening (handset or a standard headphone jack), touch screens, auditory output and adjustable volume controls, and location of controls in accessible reach ranges.

**F. Desktop and Portable Computers**


This section focuses on keyboards and other mechanically operated controls, touch screens, use of biometric form of identification, and ports and connectors.

**V. COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS AND CLEARANCES**

Web accessibility compliance questions, issues/concerns or problems can be addressed by contacting the DSS webmaster. Issues or concerns involving assistive products, devices or equipment should be referred to the Bureau of Civil Rights. Informal resolution of such concerns or issues will be strongly encouraged.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has established the following procedure for addressing issues and problems arising under [Section 508](#). For purposes of this procedure, the DSS Bureau of Civil Rights is responsible for the following with regard to Section 508 non-compliance issues:

1. Accepting, tracking and referring for resolution accessibility issues/problems presented by employees or the public alleging a failure of DSS to comply with [Section 508](#) and;

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2. Providing technical assistance to DSS regarding the resolution of [Section 508](#) non-compliance issues and complaints.

## VI. FEEDBACK AND PROBLEM RESOLUTION


DSS employees and members of the public with disabilities may provide DSS electronic or written feedback if they believe electronic and information technology in use by DSS, is not in compliance with [Section 508](#) accessibility standards and as a result they are denied access to and use of information or data comparable to that of non-disabled individuals. The type of issue/problem will determine the subsequent steps or action to be taken.

Feedback, issues and problems may be forwarded to the DSS Bureau of Civil Rights at: [DCFS.BureauofCivilRights@LA.GOV](mailto:DCFS.BureauofCivilRights@LA.GOV)

All written correspondence should be submitted on the DSS Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Compliance Feedback Form ( [Adobe/ Word format](#)) to: Department of Social Services, Bureau of Civil Rights, 627 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Electronic or written feedback should contain the following information:

- A. Name, address, and telephone number of the user. If feedback is filed on someone's behalf, the person authorized to complete the form should include his or her name, address, telephone number, and a statement of relationship to the respondent, e.g., spouse, attorney, friend, etc.;
- B. An indication that the issue/problem is related to [Section 508](#) and that it concerns electronic and information technology procured by DSS;
- C. A description of the nature of the issue/problem (when did it occur; how was access denied?);
- D. Identification or description of the electronic and information technology that respondent believes is not accessible (web site address; location of system or equipment; type of system or equipment; and the accessibility standard(s) which has not been met, if known; and
- E. Any other relevant information or supporting documentation.

Upon receipt of a [Section 508](#) issue/problem, the DSS webmaster or the Bureau of Civil Rights will provide a notice acknowledging receipt of the communication. [Section 508](#) issues/problems may be forwarded to the appropriate DSS personnel for further processing. If such a referral is made, the notice will include the name and address of the personnel within DSS.

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The Bureau of Civil Rights will ensure that the [Section 508](#) issue/problem will be appropriately recorded and tracked until final resolution.