

NVA Procurement Guidance

For Procurement Officers



Confirm the Type of Procurement (RFP 4.3.3)

Does the procurement include any of the following: electronic documents, web-based content, mobile apps, software, or a standalone system such as a kiosk?

If Yes, include the Non Visual Access Clause and standards in the Request for Proposal.

Develop Specifications, Scope, and Terms (RFP 2.3.10 H)

The Non Visual Access Clause references both Section 508 and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. These cover any and all digital content and have specifications for the 5 categories from the previous step.

Refer to the next page for which specifications are notable for each category.

Evaluate Vendor Responses (RFP Deliverables; RFP appendix)

Ensure that the bidding vendors have addressed the Non Visual Access clause in some manner. The preferred method is to submit a report detailing which guidelines are supported. The Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is the best example of such a report.

If a vendor request a waiver, contact the MDOD IT Access Initiative for consultation.

Review the Solutions (RFP 5.3.2.10 C; 6.2.5)

The main aspects to look for in the vendor's report are:

1. Did they address each major area of disability (vision, hearing, physical, cognitive)?
2. Did they reference the WCA guidelines or Section 508?
3. Has the vendor stated the methods of testing? Does it include a screen reader, keyboard-only use, and different operating systems?
4. Has the vendor indicated if they have incorporated accessibility into their design process? Are they intending to improve the feature over time?

More detailed review recommendations are listed on the next page

Maintain & Monitor

DoIT is implementing methods of reporting continued compliance. Be on the lookout for this information to pass along to both your corresponding agency and contracted vendors.

Specifications Required by Law (MD NVA / Section 508)

Telecommunications

1. There must be no loss of information during signal compression or transformation
2. There should be a mechanical interface with tactile, visual, and audio cues
3. Product should be captioned text-to-speech capable, and have high quality audio capable of being understood by the average listener

Web-Based Content

1. There is a logical reading order with headings and landmarks
2. All images have alt text describing them or their destination if they are links
3. All links state their destination
4. All content works with keyboard-only navigation and/or a screen reader
5. Any video or audio has captioning and a text description

Desktop & Portable Computers

1. Any input method (keyboard, touch screen, etc) should have some method of providing tactile and audio feedback
2. If some form of ocular interaction is used, there must be an alternative method provided for those lacking specific ocular characteristics
3. The product should provide commonly-used connectors and ports

Video & Multimedia

1. All TVs must be able to display captions
2. All video and audio content must have either open or closed captions
3. All video and multimedia that contains visual information necessary for comprehension shall be audio described.

Kiosk (Standalone System)

1. A screen reader and audio jack should be incorporated
2. Users should have options to magnify content and change color contrasts
3. Color and audio should not be sole indicators of information
4. Any non-text content should have a text equivalent
5. A option for a physical keyboard that is high-contrast and has Braille markings should be provided

Software & Apps

1. All features must be compatible with common screen readers and keyboard-only navigation
2. Should accept input from native accessibility components (contrast settings, magnification)
3. There should be a visible indicator of focus, links, and color should not be the only method of conveying information
4. No element should use flashes within a frequency of 2 - 55 Hz (3 times per 1 second)
5. All non-text elements should have a text equivalent

Additional Accessibility Standards and Review Considerations

Mobile Apps

1. ARIA and/or programming script is used to assign proper roles, names, and values to all elements
2. All elements are controllable via common touch gestures or instructions are provided for custom gestures
3. The app must accept native phone settings for color contrast, magnification, font size, and a screen reader

Electronic Documents

1. Tagged for Accessibility
2. Proper reading order with headings
3. All non-text content has a text equivalent
4. Any hyperlinks communicate their destination
5. Tables and data presentations should have text explanations provided
6. Animated content should have a non-animated equivalent

Software

1. All features must be compatible with common screen readers and with other physical input controls systems (stylus, voice-command, etc)
2. Should accept input from native accessibility components (contrast settings, magnification)
3. Accessibility should be addressed in a help section, especially for more complex programs

Additional Review Considerations

Red Flags to look for:

1. There is no explanation of why a guideline is not supported
2. There is a statement of intention to incorporate accessibility features with no indication of a timeline
3. There are guidelines marked as “not applicable” within the specific category
4. There are no stated testing methods or commonly used tools for accessibility
5. Compliance is achieved via a separate platform that must be maintained in addition to the original product
6. Compliance is achieved via an in-house or third-party software, overlay, or app

RFP Template Notes

4.33 - There is now an explanation of when to include the NVA clause and additional items in the template, which are listed below:

2.3.10 Product Requirements - H: this item provides a list of common accessibility standards - can be expanded with the items on this sheet

5.3.2.10 C & 6.2.5 - Requires the satisfactory completion of an accessibility report

Deliverable - potential request for a product demo

Also consider the following if no compliantly-accessible solutions are presented

1. Time and cost of remediation
2. Willingness of vendor to work on accessibility
3. Public-facing or internal use by few individuals
4. Situational necessities

Additional Accessibility Standards and Review Considerations

Vendors should provide detailed information about the accessibility of their product or services, either through the recognized Voluntary Product Accessibility Template report or through a known third-party accessibility consultancy agency. Some examples of third-party agencies:

1. Level Access - <https://www.levelaccess.com/>
2. DeQue Systems - <https://www.deque.com/>
3. Converge Accessibility - <https://convergeaccessibility.com/>
4. iBeta www.ibeta.com

Contact MDOD for recommendations and/or verification of other agencies, if needed.

The information the vendor provides should provide a good starting point for a thorough discussion about accessibility of vendors' products, particularly for those whose products are selected as finalists. If any doubt exists about the veracity of a product's accessibility please contact MDOD Statewide Accessibility Initiative team at MDODNVA@maryland.gov.

If you are unfamiliar with the VPAT, please note that the document has an explanation in the opening pages. Additionally, we and other organizations offer training in understanding the document.

If a demonstration of the product is provided, it should be encouraged for the vendor to also include an accessibility demonstration during this time period. If your agency is unable to be present for such a demonstration, MDOD is willing to function as a designee.

For any further information, questions, or concerns, please contact us at MDODNVA@maryland.gov or use our concern form: <http://mdod.maryland.gov/news/Pages/complaint.aspx>.