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## VPAT Guidance for Creators of RFPs

### Overview

All electronic and information technology (IET) that the State purchases must be accessible as specified by the state [accessibility standard](#). One tool the State uses to determine a product or service's accessibility is a vendor self-assessment tool called a Voluntary Product Assessment Template or VPAT.

The State provides two VPAT forms; each references one of the two sets of requirements that make up the MN Accessibility Standard: [Section 508](#) (of the Rehabilitation Act) and [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#).

### Components of the Standard

Section 508 is a broad standard, covering all aspects of EIT, including hardware, telecommunications products, multimedia, kiosks, and applications. WCAG 2.0 is much narrower, as it is focused on web interfaces, but a visitor to the guideline's website can spend days exploring the depth of its detail. So while there is some overlap, we require vendors to complete the full VPAT for each respective set of requirements.<sup>1</sup>

### How to assign VPATs

Vendors can download copies of the VPAT documents from the IT Procurement subsection of the [Accessibility](#) section of the MN.IT website.

For the most part, we want the vendors to complete both VPATs. Our expectation is that the vendor will assign technical personnel who understand accessibility to the task. If a component of a VPAT does not apply, it is up to the vendor to make that notation and explain why in the "Comments" column. The notation can be as simple as "Not a telecommunications product."

Many large vendors may have Section 508 VPATs on file and may ask if that is sufficient. It is not; they are required to submit both VPATs.

### *Complex situations*

Requiring the vendor to submit Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 VPAT documents is a simple enough request for a single product. But what about more complex examples, such as an entire integrated system with multiple interfaces?

As a general rule, ask the vendor to complete separate VPATs for any sort of multiple instance. In the case of user interfaces, whether via an application or browser, the vendor

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<sup>1</sup> Section 508 is undergoing a "refresh," expected to be official by early 2014. When this occurs, it will map to WCAG when referencing websites and applications and there will be only one VPAT document.

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should use the WCAG VPAT for each instance. In all other cases, the vendor should complete the appropriate section of the Section 508 VPAT. Here are some examples:

- An RFP for more than one “self-contained system” such as kiosks or hand held systems: ask the vendor to complete section 1194.24 (“self-contained, closed products”) of Section 508 for each product.
- An RFP for an integrated system containing an administrator interface, consumer interface, and provider interface: ask the vendor to complete a WCAG 2.0 VPAT for each interface.

### **Incorporating VPATs into requirements criteria**

ADM’s P/T Services Contract Manual contains a section on Accessibility which includes a decision matrix on how to incorporate accessibility requirements into an RFP. When appropriate, please reference this manual when drafting your RFP. For purposes of this document, here is a very high-level summary:

There are two general ways to incorporate accessibility requirements into the RFP: as a pass/fail and percentage scoring. For relatively simple products and those which are in “mature” markets, pass-fail may be a viable approach. Most RFPs, however, will use percentage scoring.

Percentage scoring is necessarily subjective, especially since it is based on vendor self-evaluation. However, it should be made clear to the vendor that clarity and accuracy is critical, as the VPATs will most likely be part of the final contract, outlining offering requirements and delivery expectations.

### **Vendor Guidance**

Please direct vendors to the [“VPAT Guidance for Vendors”](#) document. It provides recommendations on how to complete the VPATs.

### **Reviewer Guidance**

Please direct reviewers to the [“VPAT – Scoring Guidance”](#) document.