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To: All Agency Staff with Authority for Local Purchasing  
From: Kent Allin, Assistant Commissioner  
Re: New purchasing requirements for non-visual access to technology

During the 1998 legislative session, Minn. Stat. 16B.104 related to non-visual access to technology was enacted into law. The law specifies minimum non-visual access standards to be used by state agencies when purchasing all information technology, including hardware, software and software upgrades. The law's effective date was January 1, 1999.

While many common computer systems and applications comply with the new standards, some do not. The Department of Administration has been working with the Office of Technology, State Services for the Blind, hardware and software manufacturers, and visually impaired stakeholders to identify and resolve potential problems associated with implementation of the new standards. It is Admin's intent to address exceptions to the standards on a case-by-case basis.

When purchasing information technology products and services, agencies should include the attached standards in the "Special Terms and Conditions" section of the solicitation document. For your convenience, the standards are included in MAPS as a buyer message, coded AMPZNV. In addition, we have included language with this memo that should be used in the line item summary of the solicitation document used for technology purchases. The information provided in the line-item section will help Admin catalogue specific issues related to purchasing compliant goods and services.

Attached is a list of software that complies or partially complies with the mandates of the 1998 legislation pertaining to non-visual access to technology. This list is not all-inclusive. It is not an endorsement by the State Services for the Blind or the State of Minnesota of any product, but rather, is to serve as a basis for discussions with software providers regarding accessibility. If you have questions about the products listed or products that do not appear on the list, please contact David Andrews, State Services for the Blind, at 651.642.0500, or TTY, 651.642.0506.

If you have questions about the standards or about a specific purchase please contact Tom Trant (651.297.4354) or Brenda Willard (651.296.9075), or the appropriate Acquisition Management Specialist.

The Materials Management Division now provides automatic electronic updates on purchasing issues to agency staff by use of an e-mail list. If you recieved this on paper, you have not yet subscribed to the list. Please send an e-mail message to:

majordomo@state.mn.us

Leave the subject line empty. In the body of the message type:

subscribe mmdalpcert

## BUYER MESSAGE AMPZNV

### \* NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS:

NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS REQUIRE THAT THE EFFECTIVE INTERACTIVE CONTROL AND USE OF THE TECHNOLOGY INCLUDING THE OPERATING SYSTEM, APPLICATIONS, PROGRAMS, PROMPTS, AND FORMAT OF THE DATA PRESENTED ARE READILY ACHIEVABLE BY NON-VISUAL MEANS;

THAT THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS TECHNOLOGY MUST BE COMPATIBLE WITH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USED BY OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH WHOM THE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL INTERACTS;

THAT THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS TECHNOLOGY MUST BE INTEGRATED INTO NETWORKS USED TO SHARE COMMUNICATIONS AMONG EMPLOYEES, PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, AND THE PUBLIC AND;

THAT THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS TECHNOLOGY MUST HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PROVIDING EQUIVALENT SERVICES USED BY PERSONS WHO ARE NOT BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED.

(NOTE: IT IS THE INTENT OF THE COMMISSIONER TO AWARD THIS SOLICITATION TO THE RESPONSE WHICH COMPLIES WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS WHENEVER PRACTICABLE. WHEN DETERMINING PRACTICABILITY THE COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION MAY EVALUATE, IN ADDITION TO OTHER FACTORS, THE PRICE, AVAILABILITY, AND QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT OFFERED.)

Materials Management Division Staff and state agency staff with delegated authority to purchase will be required to use the following language when purchasing information technology beginning January 1, 1999.

USE THIS LANGUAGE FOR SOLICITATIONS WITH ONLY ONE LINE ITEM:

IN RESPONDING TO THIS SECTION, VENDORS SHOULD REFER TO THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS AS SHOWN IN THE SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS. VENDORS ARE REQUESTED TO QUOTE SEPARATE PRICES FOR THIS LINE ITEM IN THE SPACES PROVIDED. PRICING IS TO INCLUDE ALL SPECIFICATIONS LISTED FOR THE LINE ITEM AND ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION.

IT IS THE INTENT OF THE COMMISSIONER TO AWARD THIS LINE ITEM TO THE RESPONSE WHICH COMPLIES WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS WHENEVER PRACTICABLE. WHEN DETERMINING PRACTICABILITY, THE COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION MAY, IN ADDITION TO OTHER FACTORS, EVALUATE PRICE, AVAILABILITY, AND QUALITY.

A. MANUFACTURER AND MODEL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
(THIS ITEM COMPLIES WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS.)

PRICE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
DELIVERY: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS A.R.O.

B. MANUFACTURER AND MODEL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
(THIS ITEM THAT DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS.)

PRICE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
DELIVERY: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS A.R.O.

VENDORS ARE TO INCLUDE DESCRIPTIVE SPECIFICATIONS FOR BOTH MODELS BEING OFFERED.

Materials Management Division Staff and state agency staff with delegated authority to purchase will be required to use the following language when purchasing information technology beginning January 1, 1999.

USE THIS LANGUAGE FOR SOLICITATIONS WITH SEVERAL LINE ITEMS:

IN RESPONDING TO THIS SECTION, VENDORS SHOULD REFER TO THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS AS SHOWN IN THE SPECIAL TERMS & CONDITIONS. VENDORS ARE REQUESTED TO QUOTE SEPARATE PRICES FOR EACH LINE ITEM IN THIS SOLICITATION IN THE SPACES PROVIDED. PRICING IS TO INCLUDE ALL SPECIFICATIONS LISTED FOR THE LINE ITEM AND ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION.

IT IS THE INTENT OF THE COMMISSIONER TO AWARD EACH LINE ITEM IN THIS SOLICITATION TO THE RESPONSE WHICH COMPLIES WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS WHENEVER PRACTICABLE. WHEN DETERMINING PRACTICABILITY, THE COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION MAY EVALUATE, IN ADDITION TO OTHER FACTORS, THE PRICE, AVAILABILITY, AND QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT OFFERED.

A. MANUFACTURER AND MODEL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
(THIS ITEM THAT COMPLIES WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS.)

PRICE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
DELIVERY: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS A.R.O.

B. MANUFACTURER AND MODEL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
(THIS ITEM THAT DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THE NON-VISUAL ACCESS STANDARDS.)

PRICE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
DELIVERY: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS A.R.O.

VENDORS ARE TO INCLUDE DESCRIPTIVE SPECIFICATIONS FOR ALL MODELS BEING OFFERED.