



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

August 11, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICERS AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS

FROM:

David H. Safavian
Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy

Karen S. Evans
Administrator, Office of E-Government and Information Technology

SUBJECT:

Buying Accessible Electronic and Information Technology and Complying with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) requires federal agencies to ensure that their electronic and information technology (EIT) allows employees and members of the public with disabilities to have access to and use of government information and data. Implementation of this important legislation requires a coordinated effort among federal agencies. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate the importance of this requirement and to identify the information and resources available to your agencies as you continue your efforts to make government accessible to all citizens.

Whenever an agency procures, maintains, develops, or uses EIT, it must follow the Federal Acquisition Regulation requirements for implementing section 508, include the appropriate provisions of the Access Board's standards for accessibility in solicitations for EIT, and evaluate proposed solutions for conformance with the applicable standards. The General Services Administration (GSA), as part of its statutory responsibility to provide technical assistance for section 508 implementation, has developed the 'Buy Accessible Wizard' to guide requiring officials and acquisition professionals in their efforts to comply with the requirements of section 508 and ensure that our government is accessible to all citizens.

The Wizard can assist the information technology and acquisition communities in determining if section 508 applies to an EIT acquisition, identifying which specific standards apply to the products or services being acquired, developing solicitation language, initiating market research, and documenting the acquisition to ensure compliance. Additionally, the Wizard provides assistance to government purchase cardholders to ensure that micropurchases, which are no longer exempt from the section 508 requirements, include the appropriate accessibility considerations. The Wizard, which was recently awarded an authority to operate after completing a thorough certification and accreditation process, is available for use by all

federal agencies and is designed to be installed within an agency's own environment. The Wizard is available at www.buyaccessible.gov.

GSA provides additional information on www.section508.gov including best practices, free training on various 508-related subjects, such as micropurchase training, frequently asked questions, and other information that agencies will find useful. The Access Board, which developed the accessibility standards, provides further information and training on www.access-board.gov.

Making the federal government accessible will require continued coordination among agencies, the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, and our industry partners. We look forward to working with you to meet the needs of all citizens. Please contact Terry Weaver, Director, Information Technology Accessibility and Workforce Division at GSA on (202) 501-4906 for more information regarding the Wizard and other section 508 resources. Please contact Lesley Field at the Office of Federal Procurement Policy on (202) 395-4761 for other information.