

SSA Guide to Completing the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template 2.1 (or later)

1.0 Purpose

This document will provide Vendors with instructions as to how they are expected to complete the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template 2.1 (VPAT 2.1 or later) for the Social Security Administration (SSA).

2.0 Background

In 2001, the Information Technology Industry Council partnered with the General Services Administration to create a tool that would assist Federal contracting and procurement officials in fulfilling the market research requirements specified in Section 508. The result of their collaboration was the VPAT – a simple, web-based checklist that allows Vendors to document how their product did or did not meet the various Section 508 Requirements. Vendors are required to supply detailed information on how their proposed products, services, subscription agreements, and solutions address the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (revised).

3.0 Where to obtain a blank VPAT 2.1

The VPAT 2.1 template can be obtained at the Information Technology Industry Council’s (ITIC) website:

<https://www.itic.org/dotAsset/db71ce67-c44a-4925-8d46-f8a76c3a1db2.doc>

4.0 How to complete the VPAT 2.1

In each VPAT 2.1 the vendor shall include the name of the product, service, subscription service, or solution and the vendor shall disclose the method used to validate conformance claims (i.e., expert review, manual testing, automated testing, no method used, other - please describe), and who validated conformance (offeror, third party [name], none).

The vendor shall include in its product documentation both the Section 508 Standards Report and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Report. The vendor shall complete the Functional Performance Criteria even when a deliverable meets all applicable technical requirements in 36 CFR Part 1194 Chapter 2 (i.e., WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA Success Criteria for electronic content), Chapter 4, and Chapter 5.

The report tables contain detailed subparagraphs of the Section 508 standards, WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA Success Criteria, and WCAG 2.0 Conformance Requirements. It is within these tables the vendor shall define in detail how its product either did or did not conform with each individual standard.

Use the following information to understand how to use the columns in the VPAT 2.1’s tables:

4.1 VPAT 2.1 (2018) Section 508 Report Tables

Column Name	Use
Criteria:	Describes a specific guideline a Chapter is composed of.

Column Name	Use
Conformance Level:	To enter information summarizing a product’s “level-of-support” for a specific guideline.
Remarks and Explanations:	To enter detailed information on how the product did or did not support a specific guideline.

4.2 Completing the Conformance Level Column (second column)

The vendor shall complete the *Conformance Level* column in the VPAT 2.1 and document exactly how a product conforms or does not conform to each of the individual Section 508 standards applied in the solicitation. To promote consistency in vendor responses, the vendor shall complete the columns in the following manner:

Language	Description
Supports	The functionality of the product has at least one method that meets the criterion without known defects or meets with equivalent facilitation.
Supports with Exceptions	Some functionality of the product does not meet the criterion.
Does not Support	The majority of product functionality does not meet the criterion.
Not Applicable	The criterion is not relevant to the product.
Not Evaluated	The product has not been evaluated against the criterion.

4.3 Completing the Remarks and Explanations Column (third column)

The vendor shall complete the *Remarks and Explanations* column in the VPAT 2.1 and document exactly how a product does or does not conform to each of the individual Section 508 standards applied in the solicitation. To promote consistency in vendor responses, the vendor shall complete the columns in the following manner:

If Conformance Level states...	Then...
Supports	List exactly what features of the product do meet the Criterion and describe how they support the Criterion. For some Criterion, failure to describe how the product supports the Criterion may result in the evaluation process reducing the Conformance Level to Supports with Exceptions. If the product supports through an equivalent facilitation, list exactly what other methods exist in the product and describe how they are used to support the Criterion.

If Conformance Level states...	Then...
Supports with Exceptions	<p>List exactly what features of the product do meet the Criterion and describe how they are used to support the Criterion.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>List exactly what parts of the product do not meet the Criterion and describe how they fail to support the Criterion.</p>
Does not Support	Describe exactly how the product does not support the Criterion.
Not Applicable (N/A)	Describe exactly why the criterion is not applicable to the product.
Not Evaluated	List exactly what features of the product were not evaluated against the Criterion and the reason for their exclusion.