

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL FEDERAL AGENCY CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS

FROM: Bill Lann Lee
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United States Department of Justice

SUBJECT: Electronic and Information Technology

Every two years, the Department of Justice is required to issue a status report to the Congress and the President on the federal government's progress in complying with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794d. All agencies are required by statute to cooperate with this effort. Id. To assist the Department in fulfilling this obligation, I am enclosing survey materials that your agency will use to evaluate the accessibility of your electronic and information technology to people with disabilities. The Department will use the data solicited by these materials to prepare a report to the President and to the Congress. The Department must complete its report by the statutory deadline of August 7, 2001. Therefore, it is essential that you submit your data to the Department by April 6, 2001.

The Department of Justice published its first section 508 report, Information Technology and People with Disabilities: The Current State of Federal Accessibility, in April 2000. This report was based on section 508 self-evaluations conducted by federal agencies throughout 1999 under the Department of Justice's guidance. A copy of the Executive Summary of this report is enclosed for your information.

In order to facilitate the development of the report, I ask each agency to designate someone to be the point-of-contact for the section 508 self-evaluation (Designated Agency Official or DAO). On the attached form, "Identification of Designated Agency Official," we have provided you with a website address that you can use to find out who has acted as your agency's Section 508 Coordinator for general interagency coordination purposes, if your agency has designated one. Use the attached form to indicate whether you wish to assign primary responsibility for your agency's 2001 survey to this person or to someone else. Either way, please complete the form and fax it back to the Department by February 1, 2001. Once you have identified your agency's 2001 DAO, we ask that you send copies of the attached materials to him or her.

As with the last survey, the Department of Justice has created a website to receive your information. Your agency should therefore submit its data on the Internet site developed for this purpose (<http://www.508.org>).

The Access Board (Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board) published standards implementing section 508 on December 21, 2000. Those standards are not enforceable until June 21, 2001. As the Department of Justice's report is due August 7, 2001, there is not enough time for agencies to conduct a comprehensive survey on all aspects of accessible technology. Accordingly, the Department of Justice has chosen the accessibility of federal agencies' web sites as the focus of this year's survey. This focus is consistent with a Presidential

Memorandum issued July 26, 2000, requiring all agencies to “make all programs offered on their Internet and Intranet sites accessible to people with disabilities by July 27, 2001, consistent with the requirements of [sections 501, 504, and 508 of] the Act and subject to the availability of appropriations and technology,” among other things. The Presidential Memorandum is available online (<http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/I2R?urn:pd:oma.eop.gov.us/2000/7/27/4.text.1>).

We have streamlined and improved our data-gathering techniques over those used on the last survey, based on many agencies’ recommendations:

- Designated Agency Officials ("DAO's") will have the ability to review and modify their agencies’ data before it is submitted to the Department of Justice.
- The survey topics are limited and the questions are simplified.
- We are providing detailed technical assistance to help those responsible for conducting the surveys.

In addition to the Executive Summary of the Attorney General’s report, enclosed in your package are:

- Form, “Identification of Designated Agency Official” (**to be returned by Feb. 1, 2001**);
- Questions and Answers for Designated Agency Officials;
- Section 508 Self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Designated Agency Officials; and
- Web Page Accessibility Questionnaire for Component Web Contacts.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Department of Justice’s Section 508 Coordinators

202-305-8304 (voice mail)
202-353-8944 (TTY mail)
sec508.questions@usdoj.gov (e-mail)

Thank you for your continued dedication to this important federal initiative. I am confident that our combined efforts are making the federal government more accessible to persons with disabilities.

Enclosures (5)