



Accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

OVERVIEW

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Sections 503, 504, and 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the Communications Act all guide federal and state agencies to avoid discriminating against people with disabilities when using information and communication technology. Oklahoma has its own law and standards, the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility (EITA) statute passed in 2004 and effective since 2005.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a critical link between agencies, affiliates, and institutions and their constituents. Every day, more information and services are provided through websites and software. It is vital that entities make sure that the ICT they provide will work for everyone, including people with disabilities.

What is ICT Accessibility?

Accessible Information and Communication Technology is technology that can be used by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It incorporates the principles of universal design. Each user is able to interact with the technology in ways that work best for him or her. Accessible technology is either directly accessible - in other words, it is usable without assistive technology - or it is compatible with standard assistive technology. Just as buildings that have ramps and elevators are

accessible to wheelchair users, products that adhere to accessible design principles are usable by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.

Examples of accessible ICT include:

- Accessible software applications and websites that are compatible with a wide array of assistive technologies and incorporate universal design.
- Accessible multimedia products, such as videotapes, CDs, DVDs, or web-based multimedia that include synchronized text captions for spoken information and other audio content as well as synchronized audio descriptions for visual content.
- Accessible copy machines that can be operated in more than one way using keypads, touch screens, or voice recognition. Height and position can be adjusted so that controls are within reach and the display can be viewed easily.

Several statutes emphasize the need for state agencies, affiliates, and institutions to provide fair and equal access to programs and services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Sections 503 and 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and others are very clear that every aspect of programs and services must be accessible. Information and communication technology resources are not exempted from this requirement.

Federal Law

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are all general anti-discrimination laws that require program and architectural accessibility. The U.S. Department of Justice has been clear in saying that several of these laws protect access to digital environments as well as built environments.

Section 508 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and it requires electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the Federal Government to be accessible to people with disabilities. On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which includes the Rehabilitation Act of 1998. The 1998 amendments significantly expanded and strengthened the technology access requirements in Section 508. The U.S. Access Board, an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities, issued new standards for electronic and information technology effective as of June 21, 2001. Federal departments and agencies must comply with Section 508. It does not regulate the private sector and does not apply directly to recipients of Federal funds. However, it does serve as the basis for several state statutes around ICT accessibility, including Oklahoma's.

States that receive federal funds under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 are required by that Act to provide an assurance of compliance with Section 508. Currently, all states and territories receive Assistive Technology Act dollars and all have some form of Section 508 assurance.

Federal Technical Assistance

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section - NYA
Washington, D.C. 20530
800.514.0301 or 800.514.0383 (V/TTY)
<http://www.ada.gov>

Access Board

1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
202.272.5434 or 202.272.5449 (V/TTY)
800.872.2253 or 800.993.2822 (V/TTY)
www.access-board.gov

Oklahoma Law

Oklahoma's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility law, or EITA, was passed in 2004. It echoes Federal Section 508 and applies to state agencies, post-secondary institutions, and CareerTech centers. Agencies should refer to Oklahoma's standards and rules documents (Oklahoma Administrative Code Titles 260 and 580). Oversight for Oklahoma's EITA law is provided by the Office of Management and Enterprise Services. Oklahoma EITA law includes an administrative complaint process (OAC 260:15-1-6).
www.accessibility.ok.gov

Oklahoma Technical Assistance

Oklahoma ABLE Tech
1514 W. Hall of Fame
Stillwater, OK 74078
405.744.9748 or 888.885.558 (V/TTY)
www.okabletech.okstate.edu



AT Law Spotlight is provided courtesy of:

Oklahoma ABLE Tech at Oklahoma State University

www.okabletech.okstate.edu | abletech@okstate.edu