

SUBJECT:

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY CERTIFICATION

REFERENCES:

Government Code Sections § 7405, 11135 and 11546.7

State Administrative Manual (SAM) Sections 4833, 4833.1, 4833.2 and 4833.3

State Information Management Manual (SIMM) Section 25B

BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill 434 (Chapter 780, Statutes of 2017) amended Government Code Section § 11546.7 to require, before July 1, 2019 and biennially thereafter, the Director and Chief Information Officer of each Agency/state entity to post on the home page of the Agency/state entity's internet website a signed certification that the Agency/state entity's internet website is in compliance with specified accessibility standards. This section also requires the California Department of Technology (CDT) to create a standard form that each Agency/state entity's Chief Information Officer shall use to determine whether the Agency/entity's internet website is in compliance with those accessibility standards.

The internet is an essential resource for many aspects of people's lives including education, employment, government, commerce, health care, recreation, social interaction, and more. The internet provides an opportunity for unprecedented access to information for people with disabilities, helping overcome barriers to print, audio, and visual media. According to a 2014 Bureau of State Audits report on state government internet website accessibility, 47% of Californians report using the internet to access government services, yet despite the high levels of usage, state websites were not fully accessible.

Similar to laws that govern physical accessibility (e.g. restrooms, parking spaces and signage), current law requires websites to be accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible websites provide greater access to state government, enhancing the ability to search for services, file forms or access content. When information is available in an accessible format, it is significantly easier for people with disabilities to access essential information— in some cases, where there was no access to it before. This policy is intended to increase Agency/state entity compliance with state and federal requirements and provide Agency/state entities with tools and guidelines to help bring their websites in compliance. It is essential that the internet be fully accessible to everyone, providing equal access and equal opportunity to all Californians.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Technology Letter (TL) is to announce:

- Before July 1, 2019 and biannually thereafter, each Agency/state entity shall comply with the Website Accessibility Certification Policy.
- New SAM Section 4833.2, outlines the requirements for website accessibility certification.
- New SIMM Section 25B, includes a certification form that Agencies/state entities may use to certify compliance with website accessibility requirements. This certification form is optional; Agencies/state entities have the discretion to develop their own certification to meet specified website accessibility requirements.

