**FAQ’s by Parent Centers About 508 Compliance**

**Q: Does my Parent Center website have to be 508 Compliant? What does that mean?**

**A:** Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires federal agencies to provide software and website accessibility to people with disabilities. When websites are 508 Compliant, they are accessible to all users. Since PTI’s and CPRC’s hold federal grants, PTIs and CPRCs do need to have a process in place to ensure 508 compliance. It’s not only the law, it’s the right thing to do! Ensuring equal access for people with disabilities also benefits people without disabilities- seniors, individuals with low literacy, individuals for whom English is a second language, etc.

**Q: Can you give some examples of what 508 compliance might look like?**

**A:** Sure! Some examples include:

* Images that convey content have a text equivalent
* Images that have a function (images with links, donation buttons, etc) have alternative text which describes the associated function
* Videos have synchronized captions or transcription
* When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form allows people using assistive technology to access the information and functionality required for completion and submission of the form
* Useful text in lieu of “click here” that describes what information user is being directed to.

**Q:** **Do I need to hire a consultant/web developer?**

**A:** No. A better approach is to create a process to address your 508 compliant issues in-house. A “go-to” person on staff that can handle 508 issues and requests from your constituents would be ideal. If you don’t have such a staff person at this time, a good place to start is by assessing the technology skills of your current staff members, and by creating a 508 plan. The **Staff Technology Skill Survey** is a great tool to assess your staff’s skills in this area. Recognize your site does not become accessible all at once. Compliance is an ongoing process that evolves over time. The important thing is to have a process established and put in to motion.

**Q: What would a 508 plan include?**

**A:** Think of a 508 plan as a slice of your organization’s technology plan. Things to consider:

* If you haven’t yet, create a technology team. The team should include leadership from your organization. If you do have a technology team, who would be a good choice to take the lead on 508 issues? Do you need to add new members? Who will be the person responsible for responding to 508 requests and concerns?
* What is your budget? Do you need to set aside money for staff training, closed-captioning, staff time, etc.?
* Evaluate your site and prioritize. What do you want to tackle first? Second? See the Section 508 checklist located in the resources section of this document for ideas.
* Set goals. What would you like to accomplish by the end of the year? By the end of the following year?

**Q: What are some ways to get started?**

**A:**

* Use an online tool to check site accessibility on an ongoing basis
* Add a statement to your website that states that your organization strives to have your site be accessible, and who to contact if a user has a problem accessing something on your site.

**Sample statement**: *We try to make our website as accessible as possible for parents and others with special accessibility needs.  Please let us know if you have any difficulty accessing our website information and resources and we will do our best to accommodate you!  Reach out to us at: (Provide contact at your Parent Center) Thanks, and happy browsing through our website!*

* Develop policies and procedures that ensure ongoing review/updating of site
* Involve people with disabilities in the review process
* Take it slow – educate yourself before expending funds on experts

**Q: What is** [**WAVE?**](http://wave.webaim.org/)[**http://wave.webaim.org/**](http://wave.webaim.org/)

**A:** WAVE is one of many web accessibility evaluation tools. You can type in your website and see an evaluation of your site and how you can make it more accessible.

**Q: What resources can I utilize in my community?**

**A:** All communities are different, but here are a few suggestions:

* Independent Living Centers
* Local Universities
* Local School Districts

**Q: What resources exist federally?**

**A:** Parent Centers have a 508 coordinator at the Department of Education, Don Barrett. His contact information: Phone: 202-453-7320, Email:  don.barrett@ed.gov.

**Q:** **Where can I go for more resources?**

* **A: Resources from the U.S. Department of Education**
	+ **[How the Office for Civil Rights Handles Complaints](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaints-how.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
	+ **[Testing for Web Accessibility Compliance Under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/assisttesting.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
* **[GSA Government-Wide Section 508 Accessibility Program](https://www.section508.gov/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
	+ **[Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.section508.gov/content/faq-final%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
* **Resources from [WebAIM](http://webaim.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
	+ **[Intro to Web Accessibility](http://webaim.org/intro/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
	+ **[WebAIM Resources](http://webaim.org/resources/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
	+ **[WebAIM WAVE Tool for Evaluating Website Accessibility](http://wave.webaim.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
	+ **[Section 508 Checklist](http://webaim.org/standards/508/checklist%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**
* **Americans with Disabilities Act:**
	+ Regional ADA centers; [https://adata.org/find-your-region](https://adata.org/find-your-region%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)