

**TO:** Information Technology Executive Council (ITEC)

**FROM:** Anthony Fadale, State ADA Coordinator

**DATE:** January 24, 2008

**MEMO:** Information Technology Executive Council policy #1210 directs the State ADA Coordinator, in consultation with the Web Accessibility Subcommittee, to provide an annual report on the accessibility of state websites. The first report is attached.

## ITEC 2007 Annual Web Accessibility Report

Over the past several years the State of Kansas has been and remains committed to ensuring that our web based information is accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. The Information Technology Executive Council passed the first versions of policy 1210 in the year 2000. This council viewed and amended policy 1210 in October 2006 to accomplish three objectives.

1. Reaffirm the policy that web based information be accessible and usable to a person with a disability. The revised policy clarified that contractors who perform web development are covered under ITEC policy 1210.
2. Outline an appropriate procedure for agencies to apply for undue burden exception. Section 508 defines Undue Burden as a significant difficulty or expense in making the technology accessible and usable to individuals with disabilities.
3. The third objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of 1210.

In order to assist this council on the third objective I wanted to present a report with broad themes instead of reams of data. In October 2002 the then Secretary of Administration commissioned such a study of self evaluation by the agencies while it gave us a statistical snapshot in time it did not attempt to project trends or themes. In the spring of 2006 the (WAS) shared the outcomes of a ten month study requested to reinvigorate the web accessibility initiative in Kansas. The WAS made several recommendations from the Futures Document which could be summarized as follows:

1. The enterprise should invest in a tool to monitor compliance that could provide analysis to agencies about their websites. This tool could also give compliance officers a narrow or broad view if they're preparing a report or evaluating a complaint.
2. Staff should be hired to collaborate with the State ADA coordinator, in developing a plan to harmonize efforts in forming a training template to assist agencies with their efforts.

In September 2007, the Executive Branch CIO provided the Web Accessibility Committee with a status update and commitment to hire a web coordinator and house them within the Division of Information Systems and Communications (DISC). In December 2007, it was announced that a highly skilled and qualified person had been hired as the first Director of Statewide Web/IT Accessibility in fulfillment of that commitment. This person will work with a soon to be formed Board and the State ADA Coordinator to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that web and IT assistive technology are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This strategy is linked to ensuring there are web based services that are customer friendly and consistent with the themes developed in the new SIM plan.

## Brown Study

Brown University conducted an overall study of the State and Federal government(s) e-government. Attached is a five year summary of the State of Kansas' effort, the committee worked diligently to create the chart. An important observation to make about the study is the states' agency websites were chosen randomly.

## Compliance Activities

The State ADA Coordinator and other members of the WAS have been working with several agencies and contractors in order to ensure that web pages are compliant.

Members of the WAS provided Emporia State University web designers and contributors with accessibility training in November 2007.

The Department of Administration is designing their website and services to be more customer friendly.

The State Treasurer's Office redesigned their website and collaborated with the State School for the Blind to test the new site.

KPER's is in the process of redesigning their website in order to become more customer friendly to our retirees.

A major contractor (Career Builder.com) has established a companywide accessibility group. The company is assisting the State of Kansas with its employment efforts. They have agreed that the web pages designed for the State of Kansas will be accessible. This contract impacts all state Human Resource Management.

The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) is designing the website to be more accessible to our customers. SRS is also striving to make the online training modules accessible.

The Department of Agriculture has incorporated accessibility and usability of information technology into their own internal policies (see attached).

## Observations

The State of Kansas appears to be making progress on this initiative. Though it cannot be directly verified or interpreted without the use of appropriate equipment and staff. It is important to reiterate that the agencies appear to be committed in wanting to serve their customers. Other observations include:

1. Many agencies are using contracted services. The level of understanding about web accessibility and the use of assistive technology are not consistent with the agencies appropriate vendors who know about accessibility. In some cases the state ended up with firms that didn't understand the concept well.

2. We must be cognizant of emerging issues such as emergency preparedness and continuity of operations to ensure that an appropriate level of accessibility could be developed in order to maintain a level of service(s) to our customers.
3. I have not received any undue burden request(s) under the new policy.

### Conclusion

The State of Kansas is committed to ensuring not only web accessibility but technology as well. We must continue to work to build partnerships as we tackle this more important issue for the citizens of Kansas. The virtual curb ramp is possible and by moving step by step we can achieve access to the information superhighway which is expanding by the second. After all, our customers deserve nothing less.