



**Information
Technology Division**

**Massachusetts
Office on Disability**

**Office of Access
and Opportunity**

Executive Office for Administration and Finance

A ROADMAP TO ACHIEVE ACCESSIBILITY IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION, DEPLOYMENT AND UTILIZATION

MARCH 2012

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INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth is legally obligated under multiple federal laws, its own Constitution, state statute and Governor-issued Executive Orders to ensure non-discrimination and equal access to state services on the part of persons with a disability and reasonable accommodations to state employees with a disability. A brief overview of some of these requirements include:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 states that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under" any program or activity that either receives Federal financial assistance or is conducted by any Executive agency or the United States Postal Service.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications.

Title II of the ADA covers all activities of state and local governments regardless of the government entity's size or receipt of Federal funding. Title II requires that State and local governments give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities (e.g. public education, employment, transportation, recreation, health care, social services, courts, voting, and town meetings).

Telecommunications Act

Section 255 and Section 251(a)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, require manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and providers of telecommunications services to ensure that such equipment and services are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, if readily achievable.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Constitution

Article CXIV of the Constitution states that "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity within the Commonwealth."

Executive Order 348

Executive Order 348 requires that all state agencies develop procedures for identifying electronic equipment and telecommunications access needs of present and potential employees and consumers and for providing electronic equipment and telecommunications access as needed; and that all purchasing divisions develop procurement policies and other related documents that incorporate language relating to bid selection criteria for blanket contracts that will provide for equal access electronic equipment and information technology by focusing on functional performance rather than specific brands and manufacturers.

Executive Order 526

Section 2 of Executive Order 526 establishes that non-discrimination, diversity, and equal opportunity shall be the policy of the Executive Branch of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in all aspects of state employment, programs, services, activities, and decisions. Each executive officer and agency head serving under the Governor, and all state employees, shall take immediate, affirmative steps to ensure compliance with this policy and with applicable federal and state laws in connection with both the internal operations of state government as well as their external relations with the public, including those persons and organizations doing business with the Commonwealth. Each agency, in discharging its duties, shall consider the likely effects that its decisions, programs, services, and activities will have on achieving non-discrimination, diversity, and equal opportunity.

It is in the spirit of each of these requirements and a collective commitment to ensure accessibility in information technology to all individuals, that the Information Technology Division, the Massachusetts Office on Disability and the Office of Access and Opportunity have come together to produce this draft "Roadmap to Achieve Accessibility in Information Technology Deployment and Utilization.

**PRIOR EFFORTS TO
ADVANCE
ACCESSIBILITY IN
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY**

In 2006, the Massachusetts Office on Disability, the Information Technology Division and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services brought forward and signed a Memorandum of Understanding that established a framework for addressing information technology and accessibility issues. Matters covered by the Memorandum of Understanding included, among others, the following:

- Mandatory accessibility language to be included in solicitations for IT solutions (systems) under the solutions provider contract (then ITS23, now ITS43). Language designed to ensure adherence to ITD's Enterprise Information Technology Accessibility Standards and Web Accessibility Standards as well as requirements for third party testing relative to accessibility.
- Enforcement of ITD Web Accessibility Standards
- Systems vendors who contracted to provide training about their technology required to coordinate with agency personnel to identify employees requiring an accommodation, collaboration with agencies in their efforts to provide an accommodation, and provide accessible training material
- Requirements that software developed post MOU meet various benchmarks to ensure accessibility. Requirements included: (a) processes by which vendor and project management team were assembled to review standards and discuss impacts, (b) vendor testing every deliverable against ITD standards and the Supplemental Web Accessibility Testing Criteria and the AT/IT Environment List, and (c) ITD Accessibility Lab to test or coordinate procuring agency hiring of another third party tester. Solutions providers required to provide accessible technical and user documentation.

Much positive activity has taken place as a result of this Memorandum of Understanding; however, we can do more and do better. Additionally, much has changed within the Executive Branch since 2006 and our future efforts should take into account these organizational changes. For example, Governor Patrick has mandated greater alignment among various administrative functions via Executive Orders 517 (coordination, standardization and automation of Executive Department human resources units), 532 (coordinating and centralizing the management and operation of the Executive Department information technology systems), and 533 (improved coordination, centralization and implementation of best practices at the secretariat-level of state agency procurements and the oversight and aggregation by the Operational Services Division of all procurement).

It is in this spirit that the Information Technology Division, the Massachusetts Office on Disability and the Office of Access and Opportunity have come together to develop the roadmap contained herein that will supersede the 2006 MOU.

2011-2012 WORKING GROUP

In 2011, the Office of Access and Opportunity convened a working group consisting of representatives of the Information Technology Division and the Massachusetts Office on Disability for the purpose of: (1) reviewing the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding and developing a roadmap to achieve enhanced accessibility in information technology deployment and utilization.

Those participating in the initial meeting included the following:

- John Letchford, ITD
- Maureen Chew, ITD
- Linda Hamel, ITD
- Sarah Bourne, ITD
- Myra Berloff, MOD
- Barbara Lybarger, MOD
- Ron Marlow, OAO
- Maria D. Gonzalez, OAO

Over the ensuing months, the working group continued to meet to identify (a) the elements that would need to be incorporated in the roadmap, (b) who would be responsible for taking the lead on said elements, (c) a timeframe for moving forward, and (d) whether funding would be needed to achieve the elements.

After further discussion and refinement, the Office of Access and Opportunity, on behalf of the three agencies, is pleased to submit this Report and the recommendations contained herein.

THE ACCESSIBILITY IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP

To achieve maximum accessibility in the development and deployment of information technology, we (the Information Technology Division, the Massachusetts Office on Disability and the Office of Access and Opportunity) are pleased to bring forward this roadmap. The roadmap, consistent with other coordination efforts accepts that no single agency can “own” responsibility for achieving the objectives of this effort; each Executive Branch agency must share ownership with identified lead agencies on some matters.

1. Governance/ Coordination – Executive Orders

Create bridges between the consolidation executive orders (procurement, IT, HR) through the issuance of either an administrative bulletin or other policy guidance.

The Administration has issued multiple executive orders consolidating state operations. Specifically, Executive Orders 517, 532, and 533. Additionally, the Office of Access and Opportunity, established pursuant to Executive Order 527 has a specific responsibility relative to ensuring the Administration’s adherence to the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity. In order to fulfill this task, the OAO will work with ITD, MOD, OSD and HRD to identify concrete steps related to ensuring that these executive orders to enhance accessibility. This task will involve identifying and capitalizing on the synergies between organizational consolidation and enhanced accessibility. The outcome will be the creation of specific policy guidance, in the form of an ANF Administrative Bulletin or other policy prescriptive document, relative to maximizing these coordinated efforts and other executive branch actions in the area of accessibility in information technology.

Responsible Party: Ron Marlow

Persons or Groups to Involve: ANF, ITD, OSD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY12

Funding Required: No

2. Governance/ Compliance – Safeguard Whistle Blowers

Establish channels through which agency personnel who feel coerced into implementing non-accessible changes to IT systems can anonymously seek help from ITD.

Occasionally, state employees or contractors may become aware of the state’s purchase or implementation or planned purchase or implementation of inaccessible or untested information technology. Some employees and contractors are reluctant to “blow the whistle” in such circumstances for fear of

adversely impacting their relationship with their managers. Under this task, a secure, anonymous online “IT Accessibility Hotline,” through which whistleblowers can anonymously provide information to ITD and MOD about accessibility issues, will be implemented.

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: HRD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY12/FY13

Funding required: No

**3. Governance/
Coordination –
Staffing**

Create a new position: MOD IT Accessibility Specialist.

A new position would be created to have direct engagement in accessibility and information technology issues. The MOD IT Accessibility Specialist would coordinate work of accessibility advisory committees assigned to large scale IT projects, keep abreast of and provide training on changes in law pertaining to access to information technology, and meet related needs. This position would exist in MOD. There is precedent for this approach in this Administration. The Executive Offices of Education, Housing and Economic Development and Labor and Workforce Development have implemented this approach in at least one position that has policy/program responsibilities that relate to each executive office.

Responsible Party: Ron Marlow and Myra Berloff

Persons or Groups to Involve: ANF, ITD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY12/FY13

Funding required: Yes, for one FTE

**4. Standards -
Waivers**

Revise waiver language, standard language, and accessibility contract language to better communicate to vendors and agencies the waiver process.

In 2006, ITD issued standard accessibility contract and waiver language, and supporting explanatory documents. Over the six years in which such language and documents have been in use, agencies and vendors have identified problems in and suggested improvements to these texts. In this task, ITD and MOD would revise such texts to reflect lessons learned over the

past six years, with an emphasis on improving clarity and efficiency.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: MOD, HHS, Others

FY in which item will be addressed: FY12/FY13

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

**5. Governance/
Coordination –
Staffing II**

Clarify the role of the Secretariat/Agency ADA Coordinator Role in the Technology space, so that they coordinate with Secretariat CIOs and new MOD ITD Specialist.

The Secretariat ADA Coordinator role would be enhanced in order to meet the full range of responsibilities relative to ADA/accessibility matters. Currently, at the secretariat level, ADA coordinators are often individuals within the human resources office who may lack in depth expertise in the obligations of ensuring accessible technology or in the provision of assistive technology. Secretariat and agency CIOs and other technologists may lack awareness of the identity and rights of, and challenges faced by, people with disabilities. These differing skill sets are not surprising given the historic development of the fields of human resources and information technology. Secretariat ADA Coordinators would be trained to assume this enhanced role.

Additionally, specific roles and responsibilities will be assigned to Secretariat/Agency ADA Coordinators, including (a) the review of all technology solicitations and contracts involving a threshold amount of funding (for example \$1,000,000) to ensure accessibility language where appropriate; (b) coordination of agency mitigation letters with ITD; (c) provision of ongoing training for secretariat and agency technology staff regarding the rights of people with disabilities and the inclusion of accessibility requirements in procurements; and (d) assessment and coordinated resolution of secretariat/agency IT accessibility problems, including acting as an IT accessibility ombudsman for employees and the public.

Responsible Party: Ron Marlow and Myra Berloff

Persons or Groups to Involve: ANF, ITD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: No

- 6. Contracts – Access Funding**
- Require that large capital funded IT Projects are sufficiently funded for accessibility.**
- For IT projects that involve acquisition or creation of end user technology, and are funded out of the IT capital bond, we will work to identify the most appropriate mechanism(s) to ensure that the projects are accessible. Any such effort must be coordinated carefully with ITD IT procurement specialists and project managers to ensure that the sizing mechanism chosen is appropriate for IT projects.
- Responsible Party: ANF, ITD
Persons or Groups to Involve: ANF, ITD, OSD, MOD
FY in which item will be addressed: FY13
Funding required: Yes
- 7. Contracts - Tools**
- Create statewide contract for procurement of accessibility tools and related services, replacing current agency contracts.**
- State and municipal agencies procure assistive technology tools. At present, these procurements happen on an agency or municipality basis. The objective is to work with OSD to implement a statewide contract for the procurement of assistive technology and related services. This contract can either be managed by OSD or by ITD via delegated authority from OSD. This action will provide the opportunity for reducing pricing and improving quality.
- Responsible Party: Ron Marlow, Myra Berloff
Persons or Groups to Involve: ITD, OSD
FY in which item will be addressed: FY13
Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place
- 8. Contracts – 3rd Party Tester Activity**
- Renew the existing ITS34 outside accessibility tester contract; in next contract, include consulting, remediation, and training.**
- In February of 2009, ITD, under delegated authority from OSD and working closely with MOD, launched statewide contract ITS34. Under this contract, executive department agencies can procure the services of qualified accessibility testers who can test commercial off the shelf and custom made software and websites that state agencies seek to put into production and identify the existence and

severity of accessibility problems, and possible solutions to such problems. This contract has been highly successful in providing a convenient, cost effective method of achieving the services of such vendors on relatively short notice. This contract is set to expire June 2012. Under this task, ITD, again under OSD delegated authority, with MOD would go out to bid ahead of contract expiration to initiate a replacement contract. This new contract would be expanded to cover not only existing accessibility testing services but also general accessibility related consulting services and training.

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: OSD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY12

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

**9. Governance/
Compliance -
Large
Procurements**

Secretariat CIO in conjunction with Secretariat ADA Coordinator should review IT procurements involving user interfaces when procurement meets certain criteria (to be set by ITD and MOD, and based on factors such as number of end users, whether system is public or internally facing, dollar amount of project, etc.) and be co-responsible with procuring agency for determining that accessibility questions are asked in solicitation, responses reviewed, waiver sought if necessary, and accessibility issues identified and addressed.

See Governance/ Coordination – Universal Access Committee

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: Secretariat CIOs, Secretariat ADA Coordinators, ITD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

**10. Industry
Compliance**

Become an active participant in user groups for major software vendors, and articulate accessibility needs, and learn about accessibility solutions, through those forums.

Software publishers and open source groups have established user communities who meet in cyberspace or real space to share ideas, information, problems and solutions related to specific technologies. Through this task, ITD or MOD would devote resources to becoming an active member (i.e. frequently reviewing social media posts regarding the product and contributing comments when relevant) and use social media to point out specific accessibility problems and attempt to elicit a fix from the community or the software publisher. As this effort involves a substantial investment of subject matter expert time, this task would best be approached through a focus on a limited number of vendors. The MOD IT Accessibility Specialist could fulfill this role.

Responsible Party: ITD and./or MOD

Persons or Groups to Involve: CIO Cabinet

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: Yes. Funding for the MOD IT Accessibility Specialist or for ITD resource to participate in the user group.

**11. Resources –
Training –
Procurement
Officers**

Train Secretariat and Agency procurement officers in accessible procurement.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: Ron Marlow

Persons or Groups to Involve: ITD, MOD and OSD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: No

**12. Resources –
Training – Web
Staff**

Train agency web staff in the accessibility tools built into new ITD content management system.

ITD facilitates a Portal Users Group and could use the group to identify best practices and communicate these to all agency web staff in the use of such practices.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: Portal User Group, MOD, Mass.gov

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

**13. Resources –
Training –
Agency Counsel**

Brief agency counsel on changes in disability rights law related to technology and telecommunication.

MOD will conduct an annual training session for agency counsel on this topic.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: MOD

Persons or Groups to Involve: ITD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: See section relative to MOD IT Specialist

**14. Standards –
Telecomm**

Explore the price differential between accessible and inaccessible telecommunications products and determine if time is ripe for requiring accessibility in all or most such products on statewide contract.

Through this task, the parties would research the current delta between the cost of and features included in accessible and inaccessible telecommunications devices, and make a determination as to whether the time is ripe for requiring all telecommunications devices sold through OSD's contracts and used by end users to be accessible. If so, OSD, ITD and MOD would work on phasing this requirement into the OSD statewide telecommunications contracts. This project should be conducted by OSD with input from ITD and MOD. As an alternative, we may want to consider continuing to include both accessible and inaccessible products on OSD statewide contracts in cases where price differentials are high or entities outside of the executive department want to use the products. Contracts should clearly state that accessible alternative are available and that agencies are obligated to acquire accessible products when needed to provide an accommodation.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: Universal Access Committee

Persons or Groups to Involve: ITD, MOD, OSD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

15. Ensure CommPASS postings address accessibility

CommPASS Postings.

ITD and MOD have developed strong accessibility contract language for IT projects, but they are not always included in projects. Under this task, MOD and ITD would work with OSD to audit CommPASS postings to ensure that the accessibility contract language is included. MOD and ITD to work OSD on the issuance of policy guidance to CommPASS users regarding postings.

Responsible Party: ITD, MOD

Persons or Groups to Involve: OSD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13

Funding required: See section on MOD IT Specialist.

16. Resources – Tools

Obtain a license for self-testing tools installed at ITD that agencies can use to test web content and systems.

ITD can often obtain enterprise licenses for software at a significant discount over the cost of individual agency purchases. Under this task, ITD, working with MOD, would develop requirements for and competitively procure an enterprise license for a tool that agencies can use to automate testing of web content and systems. Implementation would include outlining the benefits and deficiencies of an automated approach. Monitoring and tracking the accessibility status of online content and applications will enable the state to identify and minimize risks, including formal and informal complaints.

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: MOD, CIO Cabinet

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13/FY14

Funding required: Yes, TBD

**17. Standards:
(1) Combine Web and General;
(2) Create safe harbor for vendors meeting WCAG2 AA standard**

Combine ITD Web and General Accessibility Standards.

Currently, ITD maintains and publishes two separate accessibility standards, one for website accessibility and one for other types of information technology. Under this task, ITD, working with MOD and through ITD's standard development process, would merge the two standards. However, if MOD and ITD determine that there is a better way to enable people to find what they need to know quickly and definitely that pathway should be pursued instead.

Create safe harbor in ITD standards.

ITD would establish safe harbor standards for vendors who meet the World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines 2 (WCAG2) AA standard. The WCAG2 AA standard is as rigorous as the ITD standards.

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: MOD, CIO Cabinet

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13/FY14

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

18. Upgrades, Expansions and Migrations

Raise consciousness among secretariat LAN teams, through training, of impact that upgrades and new systems can have on pre-existing accessible applications and accessibility in general.

Through consolidation, secretariats are rolling out applications currently used by a limited number of users to a broader number of users. On occasion, these legacy systems have significant accessibility problems, and pushing them out to more users only exacerbates and existing compliance issue. Through this initiative, ITD and MOD would train secretariat LAN teams to work with vendors and third party accessibility testers to test legacy applications before they are pushed out to additional users, and to resolve accessibility issues identified through that testing.

Require Secretariats expanding legacy systems to new users to do accessibility review and plan accordingly for access.

Provide training on the process.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: CIO Cabinet, MOD, and Secretariat LAN teams

FY in which item will be addressed: FY13/FY14

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

19. Governance/Compliance – Large Procurements II

Create a Large Project Accessibility Advisory Board, comprised of newly funded position for MOD and/or the HHS disability agencies that will represent each of the major disability group perspectives and provide advisory services with respect to all large IT Projects (i.e. those over a particular dollar threshold, such as \$1,000,000).

This Board, which can be comprised of either “fixed” or “floating” representation, will be assigned to large-scale IT projects. There is precedent for this action. ITD has successfully introduced Accessibility Advisory Boards into a number of very large IT projects. These boards, comprised of representatives of multiple disability advocacy groups, have been critical in creating a credible two-way communication channel between large IT projects and the community of persons with disabilities; reviewing and prioritizing accessibility problems identified by third party accessibility testers; and assisting agencies and vendors in their mitigation efforts. This board could be coordinated either via the Universal Access Committee created pursuant to ANF Administrative Bulletin #19 or by the new MOD IT Specialist, referenced above. Even if coordinated via the UAC, the MOD IT Specialist could play a leading role. However, funding for the position is critical to the success of this item.

Responsible Party: Ron Marlow

Persons or Groups to Involve: ANF, MOD, EOHHS, ITD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY14

Funding required: Yes, funding for the MOD IT Accessibility Specialist

20. Resources – Training – Developers

Identify and train Executive Department’s internal developers.

This is a carry-over requirement from the original 2006 MOU. Under this task ITD, working with the SCIOs, would identify and

train or provide funding for training, for all developers employed within the Executive Department. ITD would identify a core set of accessible development skills that all developers should have, assess current developer skill levels in these areas, and match new training to existing skill levels. As new developers join the Executive Department periodically these would be ongoing tasks. Such training would be provided through ITD's online learning tool, LearnIT, through UMASS, or other cost effective vendors of accessible development training. The MOD IT Accessibility Specialist would work with ITD on this activity.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: HRD, CIO Cabinet, ITD LearnIT manager

FY in which item will be addressed: FY14

Funding required: TBD

21. COTS Procurements

Define intermediate sized IT procurements and pure COTS procurements, and develop an appropriately scaled accessibility related procurement process for them.

Under this task, ITD and MOD would develop guidelines for agencies to use in order to take accessibility into account when making small or intermediate sized COTS procurements. Provide training on the resulting process.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: MOD, OSD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY14

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing in Place

22. Appropriated Budget Assessment

Require ITD and ANF to perform a high level assessment of ongoing appropriated IT budgets (across 8 secretariats and ITD) to adequately support IT accessibility needs.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: ANF

Persons or Groups to Involve: ITD, MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY14

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

23. Educate Agencies About how to Address Accessibility for Homegrown solutions

Address Home Grown Solutions.

Agencies occasionally, rather than relying on a procurement, will “home grow” a solution, patching together desktop or other COTS tools such as Access, Excel, etc. There is currently no process in place to “gate” these solutions for accessibility. Under this task, MOD and ITD would develop some out of the box training tools and deliver training to secretariat and agency IT groups to explain steps they can take to ensure that home grown systems are as accessible as possible.

Responsible Party: ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: MOD

FY in which item will be addressed: FY14

Funding required: No direct new funding. Internal Staffing Already in Place

24. Additional Items Identified in Initial Vetting Session

Work with Agencies to ensure that they deploy most up-to-date software.

Some executive branch agencies utilize older operating systems and/or older software packages, including older versions of accessibility packages. Up-to-date versions of software often have better accessibility than older versions. Under this objective, we would work to identify the universe of users of different software that would benefit from up to date software and develop a plan of action to transition users accordingly.

Responsible Party: TBD

Persons or Groups to Involve: MOD, ITD, SCIOs

FY in which item will be addressed: TBD

Funding required: Administrative funds or RACRA funds.

Consider and Identify possible Public/Private Approaches to address accessibility issues.

This is an idea that requires further fleshing out and exploration.

Responsible Party: OAO, MOD, ITD

Persons or Groups to Involve: OSD

FY in which item will be addressed: TBD

Funding required: N/A

Provide each Executive Branch Agency Head IT Accessibility Awareness Training.

Incorporate under Governance/Coordination/Executive Orders approach

Responsible Party: MOD

Persons or Groups to Involve: ITD

FY in which item will be addressed: TBD

Funding required: See section relative to MOD IT Specialist

ANCILLARY EFFORT

As we bring forward this Roadmap, there is one element, which appears and is connected to our broader efforts. As it serves as a bridge between all that we seek to do, it bears special mention. Pursuant to Executive Order 526, and its predecessor Executive Order 478, the Executive Branch benefits from the placement of Section 504/ADA Coordinators in each agency and each secretariat. While the individuals who serve in this role serve nobly, we must confront and admit the fact that for too long, we have asked them to fulfill but a portion of the responsibilities associated with meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The nearly sole focus on issues related to human resources creates a void in the concurrent obligations to work towards ensuring access to buildings, programs and services. In recognition of the voids, the Universal Access Committee has developed a model ADA Coordinator job description, one which reflects the totality of our responsibilities. The road to adopting the model job description will present new challenges; however, if we fail to adopt and implement a model job description, we run the risk of reaching far but grasping short.

THE ROADMAP IN CONTEXT

The development of this Roadmap needs to be considered in a broader, Administration context in which we are working to achieve enhance the coordination of efforts to achieve accessibility not just in the information technology arena but across all of state government, both physical barrier removal as well as the removal of barriers to programs and services administered by state government. In 2011, the Office of Access and Opportunity, working with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, the Division of Capital Asset Management, the Massachusetts Office on Disability, brought forward ANF Administrative Bulletin #19. This Administrative Bulletin outlined an important policy and programmatic framework by which we will work to eliminate barriers to accessing public buildings, programs and services. As we move forward with defining a way forward on these fronts, it is equally important that we move forward on the front of information technology accessibility.

CONCLUSION

This Roadmap is designed to plot a path forward on our collective responsibility to achieve accessibility in the acquisition, deployment and utilization of information technology.

The Roadmap cannot anticipate, let alone answer, every question or every issue that will likely arise as we move forward. However, the test cannot nor should not be can we answer every question or can we anticipate every matter today. The test has to be how we commit ourselves to moving forward to ensure that all individuals have access to the information technology that is deployed and utilized.

If we keep in mind the principles on non-discrimination and equal opportunity as they are expressed in Executive Order 526, we will continue to make progress until we realize the day when no one is denied access to the information technology upon which we rely.