APPENDIX C

CSU Guide to Completing the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT)

Purpose:

This document will provide Vendors with instructions as to how they are expected to complete the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) for the California State University.

Background:

In 2001, the Information Technology Industry Council partnered with the General Services Administration to create a tool that would assist Federal contracting and procurement officials in fulfilling the market research requirements specified in Section 508. The result of their collaboration was the 508 Evaluation Template – a simple, web-based checklist that allows Vendors to document how their product **did** or **did not** meet the various Section 508 Requirements.

How the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) is organized:

The Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) consists of a long series of tables. The initial one, the **Summary Table**, is used to provide a sense of your product's **overall** "level-of-compliance" with the Section 508 Standards. Subsequently, the **Section 1194.xx Tables** contain the detailed subparagraphs of each section of the Standards. It is within these **Section 1194.xx Tables** that you will define in detail how your product **did** or **did not** comply with a specific requirement.

Understanding the columns

Use the following to understand the use of the three columns in both the Summary Table and the individual Section 1194.xx Table:

Summary Table	
Column Name	**Use**
Criteria:	Describes Subparts B, C, and D of the Section 508 Standards.
Supporting Features:	To **Enter** information summarizing a product's overall "level-of support" for the corresponding Subpart or, when appropriate, to specify **Not Applicable**.
Remarks/Explanations:	To **Enter** general comments regarding a product's overall "level-of-compliance" with the **Applicable** Subpart.

Section 1194.xx Table	
Column Name	**Use**
Criteria:	Describes a specific guideline that a Subpart is composed of.
Supporting Features:	To **Enter** information summarizing a product's "level-of-support" for a specific guideline.
Remarks/Explanations:	To **Enter** detailed information on how the product **did** or **did not** support a specific guideline.

What information do I enter in columns 2 and 3?

The **Supporting Features** and **Remarks/Explanations** columns are used to document exactly how a product **did** or **did not** meet the Section 508 Standards. In order to promote consistency in Vendor responses, which will ensure a quicker review process by CSU's contracting and procurement officials, we encourage you to answer these columns in the following manner:

Supporting Features (second column on 508 Evaluation Template)	
Language	**Description**
Supports	Product **FULLY meets** the letter and intent of the Criteria.
Supports with Exceptions	Product **does not ENTIRELY** meet the letter and intent of the Criteria, but does provides some level of access.
Supports through Equivalent Facilitation	Product provides *alternative* methods to **meet** the intent of the Criteria.
Does not Support	Product **does not** meet the letter or intent of the Criteria.
Not Applicable	The Criteria **does not** apply to the product.

Remarks & Explanations (third column on 508 Evaluation Template)	
If 2nd column states…	**Then…**
Supports	List exactly **what** features of the product **do** meet and describe **how** they are used to support the Criteria.
Supports with Exceptions	List exactly **what** features of the product **do** meet and describe **how** they are used to support the Criteria. **AND** List exactly **what** parts of the product **do not** meet and describe **how** they fail to support the Criteria.
Supports through Equivalent Facilitation	List exactly **what** *other* methods exist in the product and describe **how** they are used to support the Criteria.
Supports when combined with Compatible Assistive Technology	Use this language when you determine the product fully meets the letter and intent of the Criteria when used in combination with Compatible Assistive Technology. For example, many software programs can provide speech output when combined with a compatible screen reader (commonly used assistive technology for people who are blind).

Does not Support	Describe exactly **how** the product **does not** support the Criteria.
Not Applicable	Describe exactly **why** the criteria is not applicable to the product.
Not Applicable -- Fundamental Alteration Exception Supplies	Use this language when you determine a Fundamental Alteration to the product would be required to meet the Criteria (see the Access Board standards for the definition of "fundamental alteration").

Typical Scenario for Completing a Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT):

To begin the process of completing the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT), you should enlist the services of your company's technical specialist for the product being sought for purchase. The reason for this is because CSU requires a measure of technical detail in your responses. Once you've enlisted their assistance:

1) Determine which sections of the **Technical Standards (Subpart B-1194.21-26)** apply to your product.***** In some cases more than one set of Technical Standards will apply.

2) Keep in mind that you must **always** complete the **Information, Documentation, and Support (Subpart D – 1194.41)** sections of the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT).

3) Fill out the **Functional Performance Criteria (Subpart C – 1194.31)** if you are claiming Equivalent Facilitation. Equivalent Facilitation must yield equal or greater access.

4) For each section that applies, determine if your product does or does not meet the specific Criteria elements.

5) Using the information found in the How the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) is organized section, document in the **Section 1194.xx Tables** exactly **how** your product **did** or **did not** meet the applicable standard.

   - If your product **supports** the standard, provide detailed examples of **what** accessibility features exist and **how** they are used to support the standard.

   - If your product **does not support** the standard, remember that Section 508 allows for products to meet the Access Board Standards in innovative, non-traditional ways. Your product can meet the standard by providing an innovative solution, as long as the feature performs in the same manner as it does for any other user.

   - If your product **does not** possess an *innovative, non-traditional way* of access to the standard, provide detailed examples of exactly **how** the product **did not** meet the standard.

6) Once you've documented in the **Section 1194.xx Tables** exactly how your product **did** or **did not** meet the standard, return to the **Summary Table** and document the product's overall "level-of-conformance" in each of the applicable sections.

7) Post your final Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) on your company's web site. Please keep in mind that it is the Vendor's responsibility to maintain the integrity of the data on the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT). The information provided on your Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) is considered to be a self-representation unless expressly affirmed otherwise.

8) When responding to any CSU request for proposals, the Vendor must submit a completed and up-to-date Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) with the submission. Proposals without an attached completed Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) may be disqualified from competition.

* Please Note: Any **WEB** application being purchased by CSU **requires** the Vendor to complete **Section 1194.21** of the Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT) in addition to **Sections 1194.22**, **1194.31** and **1194.41**.