

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 18, 2025

The Honorable Douglas Collins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

We write today to urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to improve its acquisitions process for technology that is accessible to veterans, their family members, and VA employees with disabilities. VA is required by law to ensure that its technology is accessible but has not always done so. While VA has made progress, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently analyzed 30 critical technology systems at VA and found that 26 were not accessible for people with disabilities. VA OIG's report highlighted shortcomings in the VA acquisition process that likely contributed to the failure to implement accessible technology.

As the United States ages, accessible technology at VA will be critical to safeguard access to the Department's information and services. Older adults are more likely to have a disability, and an estimated 89 million Americans will be age 65 or older in 2060 – an increase of over 50 percent compared to 2022.¹ Roughly one quarter of veterans have a service-connected disability, and post-9/11 veterans, who VA will serve for decades to come, have a higher rate of service-connected disabilities.² As VA serves an increasing number of Americans with disabilities, technology can help to facilitate equal access – if it is designed or procured with accessibility in mind.

Section 508 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* requires federal technology to be accessible for, and usable by, people with disabilities.³ Unfortunately, Congressional and independent oversight found failures by VA to make its technology accessible as required by law. A 2022 Senate Aging Committee Majority staff report found that VA failed to consistently make its technology accessible for people with disabilities, including veterans and VA employees.⁴ A 2024 VA OIG report detailed issues with VA's ability to track its websites and monitor them for disability

¹ "Disability and Health Data Now," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last updated April 8, 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/articles-documents/disability-and-health-data-now.html>; Administration for Community Living, *2023 Profile of Older Americans*, Washington, D.C., May 2024, at 5, https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/ACL_ProfileOlderAmericans2023_508.pdf.

² Census Bureau, *Those Who Served: America's Veterans From World War II to the War on Terror*, Suitland, MD, June 2020, at 8, 2, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/acs-43.pdf>.

³ 29 U.S.C. § 794d.

⁴ Senate Special Committee on Aging, *Unlocking the Virtual Front Door*, Washington, D.C., December 2022, at 23, https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/unlocking_the_virtual_front_door_-_full_report.pdf.

access.⁵ Testimony to Congress also discussed how inaccessible VA websites and kiosks place veterans with disabilities at a disadvantage when accessing VA services.⁶ In response, VA took important steps, such as reorganizing its technology access office and expanding its outreach to people with disabilities.⁷ But work remains to be done.

On July 1, 2025, VA OIG released a report highlighting how problems with VA's acquisition process can contribute to technology that is not fully accessible for people with disabilities.⁸ The report examined 30 critical information and communications technology (ICT) systems at VA and found that only four were accessible for people with disabilities.⁹ VA OIG examined the acquisition process for each ICT and reported that VA did not adequately prioritize accessibility. The problems identified by VA OIG include inadequate coordination between VA's Section 508 office and VA's acquisitions office and a lack of appropriate training for VA acquisition personnel.¹⁰ VA OIG issued four recommendations for VA to improve its acquisition process to safeguard the procurement of technology that is accessible for people with disabilities.¹¹

We are pleased that VA concurs with VA OIG's recommendations and plans to implement them.¹² We encourage VA to carry out VA OIG's recommendations as swiftly as possible. We also ask VA to respond to the following questions about its acquisition process and Section 508 no later than February 6, 2026.

1. In VA's response to the VA OIG report, VA stated that VA will "ensure that acquisition professionals are aware" of a Department requirement for training on Section 508.¹³
 - a. Please detail which VA acquisition professionals are required to take role-based Section 508 training.
 - b. Are there VA acquisition professionals who are not required to take role-based Section 508 training? If so, please list those positions and explain why they are not required to take role-based Section 508 training.
 - c. What steps will VA take to ensure that VA acquisition professionals who are required to take role-based Section 508 training successfully complete role-based Section 508 training?

⁵ Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, *VA Should Enhance Its Oversight to Improve the Accessibility of Websites and Information Technology Systems for Individuals with Disabilities*, Washington, D.C., January 2024, https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2024_va_oig_-_va_should_enhance_oversight_to_improve_web_accessibility.pdf.

⁶ Click Here: *Accessible Federal Technology for People with Disabilities, Older Americans, and Veterans, Before the Senate Special Committee on Aging*, 117th Congress, at 83-84 and 112, statements of James R. Vale and Ronald Biglin, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-117shrg49440/pdf/CHRG-117shrg49440.pdf>.

⁷ 170 Cong. Rec. S6424 daily ed. September 25, 2024, statement of Sen. Casey, <https://www.congress.gov/118/crec/2024/09/25/170/150/CREC-2024-09-25.pdf>.

⁸ Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, *VA Needs to Prioritize Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities When Procuring Information Technology Systems*, Washington, D.C., July 2025, https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025_va_oig_-_va_needs_to_prioritize_access_in_tech_systems.pdf.

⁹ *Id.*, at 8.

¹⁰ *Id.*, at 8-12.

¹¹ *Id.*, at 12-13.

¹² *Id.*, at 21-22.

¹³ *Id.*, at 21.

2. How does VA plan to evaluate VA acquisition professionals, on an ongoing basis, on their proficiency at acquiring ICT that is Section 508 compliant?
- a. Will VA include proficiency at acquiring Section 508 compliant technology as a component of annual performance evaluations for VA acquisition professionals? If so, how will VA evaluate the success of its acquisition professionals at acquiring Section 508 compliant technology?
 - b. If VA will not include proficiency at acquiring Section 508 compliant technology as a component of annual performance evaluations for VA acquisition professionals, please explain why.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please feel free to have your staff reach out to our staff.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Special
Committee on Aging



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress