# FAQs - Policy-Driven Adoption for Accessibility (PDAA)

## For companies/vendors

### What is PDAA?

Policy-driven Adoption for Accessibility (PDAA) is a tool that vendors can use to demonstrate the extent to which their organization has implemented accessibility best practices within operations. The PDAA concept is based on the following principles:

* Integrating accessibility policies and practices into their business and culture enables organizations to drive themselves towards the creation of accessible offerings over the long term.
* Enabling products for accessibility requires integrating accessibility criteria into all phases of a product life cycle, and other business processes where accessibility plays a role.
* Many state and federal agencies are required by law to procure or develop accessible offerings based on technical standards. Gaps in vendor internal governance systems and leadership commitment inhibit their ability to meet these standards.
* Agency procurement organizations need assurances that vendors have the ability to produce accessible offerings and continue to improve them over time.

### Why are buying organizations requesting information on company accessibility policy?

Making an organization’s information and communications technology (ICT) offerings accessible to people with disabilities requires commitment in many areas of that organization. PDAA data helps buying organizations understand a vendor’s accessibility policy, progress and commitment to accessibility holistically.

A mature accessibility policy implementation signals that the vendor is fully aware of the implications of accessibility requirements and is prepared to resolve any issues in a timely manner with minimal friction. It also makes it more likely that the vendor understands that accessibility is more than meeting a set of technical guidelines or standards, and that usability will be a factor in how they go about meeting the technical requirements. Accessibility that is planned, designed, and built in from the beginning consistently results in a friendlier product for all users, including those with disabilities.

### Why is PDAA information important to the buying organization?

The requested information provides insight into vendors’ ability to develop accessible commercial off the shelf (COTS) and non-COTS offerings, which can increase the procuring organizations’ confidence in the accuracy of vendor’s accessibility documentation.

Current ICT accessibility reporting formats such as VPATs (Voluntary Product Assessment Templates) only apply to COTS products and services. In many cases, vendor VPATs lack credibility due to limited knowledge about their offerings’ accessibility. Additionally, there is no standard reporting format for non-COTS offerings such as development services for websites, web applications, system software, etc.

### How will this information be used?

The initial completed form will establish a baseline for where a vendor stands with regard to its ICT accessibility policy. The baseline illustrates the depth and maturity of the vendor’s support for accessibility policy and practices as illustrated via the PDAA maturity matrix.

The questionnaire may also be included in future solicitations so that progress can be assessed. The vendor responses from the questionnaire may be considered as an element in vendor selection; however, this would be determined by the procuring organization.

Additionally, vendor companies can use the results as a roadmap for implementing their organization-wide ICT accessibility initiatives, which will help ensure that programs and processes are in place to facilitate the development of future accessible offerings.

### We already submit VPATs as part of solicitation responses. Is that adequate?

No. VPATs (Voluntary Product Assessment Templates) are product-specific. PDAA is a holistic presentation of the organization’s approach to accessibility. The expectation is that organizations with mature approaches to PDAA will greatly improve the levels of accessibility in products. It should also result in well documented, accurate VPATs, improving their value in product-level assessments

### What is the PDAA Maturity Model?

Based on the Capability Maturity Model (CMM) concept, the [PDAA Maturity Model](http://publishingext.dir.texas.gov/portal/internal/resources/DocumentLibrary/PDAA%20Maturity%20Matrix.pptx) provides buying organizations and vendors with a simple dashboard or matrix to track and demonstrate vendors’ progress toward full system-wide support of accessibility.

### Where can I obtain more information on Accessibility Policy implementation for my organization?

Additional information can be found on the PDAA web pages.

## For government organizations/agencies

### What is PDAA?

Policy-driven Adoption for Accessibility (PDAA) is a tool that vendors can use to demonstrate the extent to which their organization has implemented accessibility best practices within operations. The PDAA concept is based on the following principles:

* Integrating accessibility policies and practices into their business and culture enables organizations to drive themselves towards the creation of accessible offerings over the long term.
* Enabling products for accessibility requires the integration of accessibility criteria in all phases of a product life cycle, and other business process where accessibility plays a role.
* Many state and federal agencies are required by law to procure or develop accessible offerings based on technical standards, but gaps in internal governance and commitment by industry inhibits the adoption and implementation of these standards.
* Agency procurement organizations need assurances that vendors have the ability to produce accessible offerings and continue to improve them over time.

### Does the PDAA replace VPATs?

No. VPATs (Voluntary Product Assessment Templates) are product-specific. PDAA is a holistic presentation of the organization’s approach to accessibility. VPATs are still a valuable tool at the product level, and the expectation is that vendors with mature approaches to PDAA will have accurate and informative VPATs.

### Why a “maturity model” of evaluation?

Successfully enabling an organization for ICT accessibility requires implementation within various areas of an organization. As with any organization-wide initiative, implementation cannot occur all at once. The PDAA Maturity Model is used to gauge progress towards the complete implementation of PDAA core criteria.

### Why should we support vendors who have mature PDAA practices?

A mature accessibility policy implementation signals that the vendor is fully aware of the implications of accessibility requirements and is prepared to resolve any issues in a timely manner with minimal friction. It also makes it more likely that the vendor understands that accessibility is more than meeting a set of technical guidelines or standards, and that usability will be a factor in how they go about meeting the technical requirements. Accessibility that is planned, designed, and built in from the beginning consistently results in a friendlier product for all users, including those with disabilities.

### How should we score PDAA information?

In general, the PDAA questionnaire is meant to ensure that the same information is collected from all bidders, and how the agency uses that information will depend on circumstances.

While scoring has not yet been established for PDAA, the responses from the questionnaire may be used as criteria in selecting offerings or vendors.

PDAA evaluation is an area that will need some practical experience, and we hope that organizations will share what they learn.

### Where does the PDAA information fit within the procurement process?

Using consistent information in evaluating bids is a key element of open and competitive public procurements. The information given in a PDAA report can help you better judge the ability of a vendor to: complete a VPAT correctly, produce accessible custom ICT offerings (web sites, web applications, software, etc.), resolve accessibility defects when discovered, and otherwise be a partner in helping you meet your compliance obligations. The specific role of PDAA responses may be determined in part by the procurement laws, policies and practices for your organization.

### What happens if the vendor claims the information is confidential or a trade secret?

Vendors often claim this for information required in procurements. Your organization’s procurement laws, policies, or practices may already address how you handle such claims.

### What other states are using the PDAA model?

The PDAA model is in its early stages. A coalition of states is working with several national associations to harmonize the criteria for this model, and for obtaining and evaluating PDAA information. The goal is for more states and other government entities to adopt the PDAA model in their procurement processes.

### Where can I obtain more information on Accessibility Policy implementation for my organization?

More information, tools, and resources on accessibility policy implementation can be found on the [DIR Accessibility webpage.](http://dir.texas.gov/View-Resources/Pages/Content.aspx?id=36)