

ADA & Digital Accessibility Compliance Brief

How Vocalite supports organizational obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and current digital accessibility standards.

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PREPARED FOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP, PROGRAM TEAMS, AND COUNSEL

SECTION 01

Purpose of This Brief

Nonprofit and community-based organizations that receive federal funding, or that operate programs open to the public, carry federal accessibility obligations, and those obligations extend to the technology they select. This brief gives executive leadership, program teams, and counsel a clear account of the legal landscape that applies to organizations like yours and a plain statement of how Vocalite's platform is designed to support your compliance within it. It is intended to be read alongside our FERPA and family-privacy compliance brief as part of your vendor review.

SECTION 02

The Regulatory Landscape

2.1 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 prohibits any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of disability. For organizations administering Head Start, Early Head Start, state-funded preschool, workforce, or family-services programs, this is typically the primary obligation. It requires an equal opportunity to participate and to benefit, which includes communicating effectively with people with disabilities.

2.2 The ADA: which title applies

Which part of the ADA governs an organization depends on what it is, not on what it does:

- **Title III** covers private entities operating places of public accommodation. Private schools, child care and preschool centers, and social service establishments are named categories, so most community-based organizations fall here.
- **Title II** covers state and local government entities. An organization can be pulled toward Title II standards contractually, as a delegate agency, subrecipient, or contractor of a public entity, where the funder passes its own obligations down through the agreement.

2.3 The digital accessibility standard in practice

In April 2024 the Department of Justice issued a final rule adopting **WCAG 2.1 Level AA** as the enforceable technical standard for web content and mobile apps. That rule was issued under Title II and binds public entities directly, with compliance dates of April 26, 2027 and April 26, 2028 following a one-year extension in April 2026. It does not, by its terms, bind Title III entities.

In practice the distinction offers little shelter. The Department's longstanding position is that the ADA applies to the web, courts have applied it to entities covered by Title III, and WCAG 2.1 Level AA has become the standard that funders, public partners, and counsel expect. Organizations that hold public contracts are increasingly asked to meet it by agreement regardless of which title applies to them.

2.4 What this means when selecting a vendor

An organization cannot outsource its accessibility obligation by outsourcing the technology. Whichever framework applies, technology that families must use to reach your programs has to be usable by families with disabilities, and that expectation reaches the vendors who supply it. When a funder or public partner asks about accessibility, this is the question behind the question, and it is one Vocalite is built to answer.

SECTION 03

A Phone-First Layer Widens Access by Design

Most accessibility risk in program technology lives on screens. Vocalite's core channel is the telephone: the most universally available device a family owns. That architectural choice carries real accessibility weight before any feature is added.

- **No screen required:** families reach your organization from any phone, including landlines, with no website, app, account, password, or data plan involved. For blind and low-vision callers, the primary channel is already fully non-visual.
- **No navigation or literacy barrier:** callers state what they need in their own words instead of working through menus, forms, or portals. This serves callers with cognitive, learning, or motor disabilities, and callers with limited literacy.
- **Available 24/7:** callers who need more time, or who can only call outside business hours, are never met with a full voicemail box or a closing time.

- **Bilingual by default:** English and Spanish are live in every deployment, and the agent switches languages the moment the caller does.

Section 04 · Voice Channel Accessibility Commitments

The voice agent is built so that a caller's disability never becomes a dead end:

- **Relay service compatibility:** calls placed through Telecommunications Relay Services (711 / TRS), where an operator speaks or types on the caller's behalf, are handled like any other call and proceed at the operator's pace.
- **No forced timeouts:** the agent waits, repeats, and rephrases on request. Callers who speak slowly, use assistive speech devices, or simply need a moment are not cut off for silence.
- **Plain language throughout:** one question at a time, short sentences, no jargon, and confirmation before anything is logged.
- **A person is always reachable:** at any point, on request or when the agent detects difficulty, the call routes to your staff. Automation never stands between a caller and a human being.
- **Every request is captured:** if a caller cannot complete something in one call, the need is logged and routed so staff can follow up through the channel that works for that caller.

SECTION 05

Web Components Held to WCAG 2.1 Level AA

Where Vocalite does place content on a screen (the staff dashboard, and any web chat or web properties delivered under a partnership), development is held to WCAG 2.1 Level AA success criteria, the standard funders and public partners now expect:

- Full keyboard operability with visible focus indicators
- Semantic structure and labeling for screen reader compatibility
- Color contrast at AA ratios, with meaning never carried by color alone
- Resizable text and reflow without loss of content or function
- Captions or transcripts wherever audio or video content is delivered

Conformance is treated as an ongoing engineering practice as the product evolves, not a one-time exercise.

Documentation and Review Support

No government body issues an ADA certificate. Conformance is demonstrated through documentation and practice, and Vocalite supports your review and funder-reporting process accordingly:

- **Accessibility Conformance Report:** an ACR in the industry-standard VPAT format, prepared for your review upon request.
- **Contract language:** Vocalite accommodates WCAG 2.1 AA conformance requirements and accessibility provisions in service agreements, including terms passed down from public funders.
- **A named accessibility contact:** a single point of contact for accessibility questions, testing coordination, and issue reports.
- **Remediation commitment:** accessibility issues reported by your staff or by families are acknowledged, prioritized, and remediated on defined timelines.

The Bottom Line for Your Review

Vocalite is designed to strengthen your organization's accessibility posture, not strain it. The primary channel requires no screen at all, the voice experience is built around the duty to communicate effectively with people with disabilities, and everything we do place on a screen is held to WCAG 2.1 Level AA. We welcome accessibility review as part of your vendor process and will support your team, your counsel, and your funder reporting with documentation at every step.

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This brief is provided for informational purposes as part of vendor review and does not constitute legal advice. Organizations should consult their counsel regarding their specific obligations, funding-agreement terms, and procurement requirements.