

Vendor negotiation strategies

Build partnerships

Reach out to other library departments or campus offices involved in the procurement of accessible IT products and services, such as Procurement Services, Technology Services, the Compliance Office or Disability Services. They may be able to share existing policies or negotiation strategies and support the library in vendor negotiations.

Include accessibility in your Licensing Principles

Affirm the library's commitment to accessibility in the library's Licensing Principles and/or Collection Development Policy. These principles can provide guidance during negotiations and support productive communication with vendors.

Accessibility in Licensing Principles (examples)

- [UW Libraries' Principles in Licensing Scholarly Resources](#)
- [Principles guiding negotiations with journal vendors at Oregon State University](#)
- [Licensing Principles](#) (download link), from Washington State University
- [Licensing Principles for Electronic Resources at the University of Pittsburgh Library](#)

Accessibility testing

Developing an in-house accessibility testing process allows you to vet vendor accessibility and assess the accuracy of a vendor's accessibility documentation. Use accessibility testing results as part of the library's criteria when negotiating contract renewals or new subscription contracts.

Accessibility testing methods

- [The 6 Simplest Web Accessibility Tests Anyone Can Do](#), from Karl Groves
- [Testing for Digital Accessibility](#), from Orbis Cascade Alliance
- [Web Accessibility Testing](#), from Western Washington University
- [Library Accessibility Toolkit](#), from the Library Accessibility Alliance

You can also use accessibility testing results from other libraries and library organizations.

E-resource accessibility testing results

- [Testing](#), from the Library Accessibility Alliance
- [Databases with Accessibility Issues](#), from The Open University
- [Library E-Resource Accessibility Testing](#), from University of Washington
- [Screen Reading and Library Resources: A Guide for ADA Accessibility: Major Vendors' Accessible Databases](#), from SUNY Suffolk Community College

Ask questions

Open a dialogue about accessibility at the beginning of the negotiation process by asking questions about product accessibility and the vendor's commitment to accessibility.

Sample questions

Product accessibility

- Which accessibility standards does your product meet (for example, WCAG 2.2AA)?
- Can users perform all functions without a mouse?
- Does your product rely on activating a special "accessibility mode," a "lite version," or accessing an alternate interface for accessibility purposes?
- Can you provide live or pre-recorded demonstrations of the accessibility of your product?
 - For an example, see the CSU Accessible Technology Initiative's requirements for accessibility demonstrations: [Vendor Requirements: Accessibility Demonstration](#)
- What are the details of any areas where the product or service does not meet one of the above-referenced standards?
 - Are there any available workarounds for this issue?
 - What are your plans for improving accessibility and do you have a timeline?

Evaluation methods

- Has the tool, product, or site been tested using assistive technologies?
 - Which assistive technologies were used in testing?
 - Which browsers and operating systems were used in testing? (For web-based products)
- Is accessibility testing conducted internally or do you hire an outside consultant?
 - If testing is conducted internally, who did the testing?
 - What training or certifications are in-house testers required to complete?

Accessibility documentation

- Can you provide supporting evidence of the testing process used to evaluate your product's accessibility?
- Can you provide an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR)?

- Does your company have a published accessibility policy or statement?
- Do you have a documented and implemented process for reporting and tracking accessibility issues?

Personnel

- Who in your company is responsible for electronic accessibility policy and compliance?
- Do you have an accessibility team responsible for technical development? Describe its role in your organization.
- Ask for the name, title, and contact information for the most appropriate accessibility contact for the product under consideration.

Document vendor responses

Establish a system for tracking responses from vendors who will not commit to improving accessibility, do not provide documentation and/or will not agree to the inclusion of license language protecting the library from risk.

Even if the library does not plan to cancel the resource, continue using the negotiation process to encourage the vendor to commit to complying with federal ADA accessibility requirements.

Vendor negotiation email templates

Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) request

If there is no accessibility documentation available on the vendor's website or the website states that accessibility documentation is only available upon request, contact the vendor to request a copy of their ACR and/or other documentation.

Email template: Website states ACRs/VPATs are available upon request

I am the **JOB TITLE** at **INSTITUTION**. I am collecting ACRs for our electronic resources and I read here [**LINK**] that the ACR for **PRODUCT** is available upon request. Could you please send me a copy for **INSTITUTION**'s records?

Email template: Website does not mention accessibility documentation

I am the **JOB TITLE** at **INSTITUTION**. As part of our annual subscription renewal procedure, we collect Accessibility Conformance Reports (ACRs) for our electronic resources. Could you provide us with an ACR for **PRODUCT**?

Vendor is not able to provide an ACR

If a vendor is not able to provide an ACR, request additional information about the product's accessibility and the vendor's plans to improve accessibility (see [Questions for vendors](#) section). Consider requesting the addition of language that protects the library from potential risk to the license agreement.

Email template: No ACR available

Thank you for looking into this. Can you provide other documentation or additional details about the accessibility of **PRODUCT**? **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**.

Additionally, would it be possible to add this language to our agreement?:

Licensee may alter or modify the Licensed Materials as necessary to provide an equivalent level of access to Authorized Users with disabilities. Licensor shall indemnify, defend, and hold **INSTITUTION, STATE [for public institutions]**, and their respective Trustees, Employees, agents, and servants harmless for any fines, penalties, expenses, or awards related to any claims related to failure to maintain ADA compliance, including attorneys' fees, and requests for accommodations.

Accessibility issues

If a vendor has identified any accessibility issues in their documentation, or if the product fails the library's in-house accessibility evaluation, notify the vendor of the library's Licensing Principles (see [Licensing Principles](#) section) and request an Accessibility Roadmap if one has not been provided. The roadmap should include a description of each major accessibility issue and its current status, a remediation timeline, and available workarounds.

Email template: Informing vendor of accessibility issue

We have discovered / Our patrons have reported **ISSUE**. Are there any available workarounds for this issue? Do you have a timeline for addressing this issue that you could share? If not, would you be willing to create a roadmap for accessibility? A roadmap template is available here **LINK TO TEMPLATE**.

Additionally, would it be possible to add this language to our agreement?:

Licensee may alter or modify the Licensed Materials as necessary to provide an equivalent level of access to Authorized Users with disabilities. Licensor shall indemnify, defend, and hold **INSTITUTION, STATE [for public institutions]**, and their respective Trustees, Employees, agents, and servants harmless for any fines, penalties, expenses, or awards related to any claims related to failure to maintain ADA compliance, including attorneys' fees, and requests for accommodations.