INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STYLE GUIDE

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Introduction

This Style Guide is meant to set cohesive standards that ensure all outward-facing materials (brochures, ads, fliers, presentations, websites, email, etc.) are consistent and use the DHS brand appropriately. You may think the DHS brand is our logo, but it is so much more than that. Every interaction you have with clients and the general public sends a message about who we are as an agency. Simply put – our brand is our reputation.

As a state agency, we are held to a higher standard than most businesses by our legislature, clients, the media, and taxpayers. Our communications efforts should reflect the level of quality we strive to reach in our programs and services daily. The way to ensure we have high-quality communication materials is through accurate and consistent content and style. The rules in this guide will result in a more professional look and feel for all official DHS materials because they require each of us to focus on the details *before* releasing or publishing any materials.

The guide is not designed to be an authoritative or exhaustive source on grammar, writing, or design. Language is always changing, and often more than one accepted method or usage is acceptable. **Some of the guide's content may outline procedures differently than what you have learned, but as an organization, it is important to have a single standard.** This will ensure everyone we interact with gets a consistent impression of our organization, regardless of the department or individual developing the material or communicating information.

DHS Style 101

Quick glance at what's in this guide

Emails

Should contain standard signature block per DHS Style Guide:

FIRST & LAST NAME
DIVISION/OFFICE
TITLE

P: ***.***.****
F: ***.***.**** (if applicable)
Address
City, AR ZIP
Dhs.email@dhs.arkansas.gov

humanservices.arkansas.gov

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this email message and any attachment(s) is the property of the State of Arkansas and may be protected by state and federal laws governing disclosure of private information. It is intended solely for the use of the entity to which this email is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that reading, copying or distribution this transmission is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. The sender has not waived any applicable privilege by sending the accompanying transmission. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify the sender by return and delete the message and attachment(s) from your system.

Should **not** contain:

- A background color,
- Content that is religious or political in nature,
- Personal philosophies, quotes and/or slogans, or
- Links other than DHS, division, or program websites and DHS social media.

DHS style

- Use the Oxford (serial) comma: red, white, and blue.
- One space after a sentence.

- By state law, the possessive of Arkansas is Arkansas's.
- Website, homepage, and email: one word, no hyphens.
- Arkansas Department of Human Services and DHS; not Arkansas DHS and not the DHS.
- A comma comes after the day and year in textual sentences: January 3, 2018, was cold.
- Percentages should be written using the numeral and spelling out the word: 50 percent.
- Don't CAPITALIZE or underline for emphasis. Use **bold** or *italics*.
- Punctuating bullets: No ending punctuation (no commas or semicolons) unless they are all complete sentences (then end each sentence with a period).
- Avoid acronyms. If an acronym is required, be sure to spell out acronyms the first time used and repeatedly in separate sections and chapters of a long document.
- Be policy neutral. Avoid words like plummeted, skyrocketed, slashed, spiked, and huge.
- Use simple words: additionally → also; utilize → use; in order to → to; numerous → many.

Logos & Colors

- Only use high-definition version of DHS logos provided by Communications.
- All external communications, from DHS and its partner entities should feature the DHS logo or the DHS Division-Office logo.
- Follow DHS Style Guide for sizing, placement, and appropriate logo selection.

DHS Email Guidelines and Best Practices

Emails you send as an employee of DHS represent not only you but the agency as a whole. Therefore, the professionalism (or lack thereof) displayed in email communication also reflects on the agency and its professionalism in serving the people of Arkansas.

Email Signature Standards

In order to maintain a positive and consistent DHS brand and facilitate clear communication, all employees are **required** to adopt the following email signature:

FIRST & LAST NAME
DIVISION/OFFICE
TITLE

P: ***.***.****
F: ***.***.**** (if applicable)
Address
City, AR ZIP
Dhs.email@dhs.arkansas.gov

humanservices.arkansas.gov

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this email message and any attachment(s) is the property of the State of Arkansas and may be protected by state and federal laws governing disclosure of private information. It is intended solely for the use of the entity to which this email is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that reading, copying or distribution this transmission is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. The sender has not waived any applicable privilege by sending the accompanying transmission. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify the sender by return and delete the message and attachment(s) from your system.

Font for the signature: Garamond (12-point). Signature font color: Black.

Steps to Change Your Signature in Outlook

1. Click File in the top left-hand corner of your Outlook window.
2. Select the Options button in the left-hand blue selection bar.
3. A new pop-up window will open. Select the second option of Mail.
4. In the Mail window, under Compose Messages, you will see an option to Create or Modify Signatures. Click this button.
5. You can then create a new signature by clicking New and naming the signature.
6. You can then copy and paste the above default signature, customizing each line with your details.

DHS email and signatures should not contain:

- A background color,
- Content that is religious or political in nature,
- Personal philosophies, quotes and/or slogans, or
- Links other than DHS, division or program websites.

This signature format should be at the bottom of all DHS email accounts. **All users of the DHS email system must adhere to these standards**. Unless otherwise communicated by DHS administration, any modification of this signature requires written supervisor approval.

Additional Signature Elements

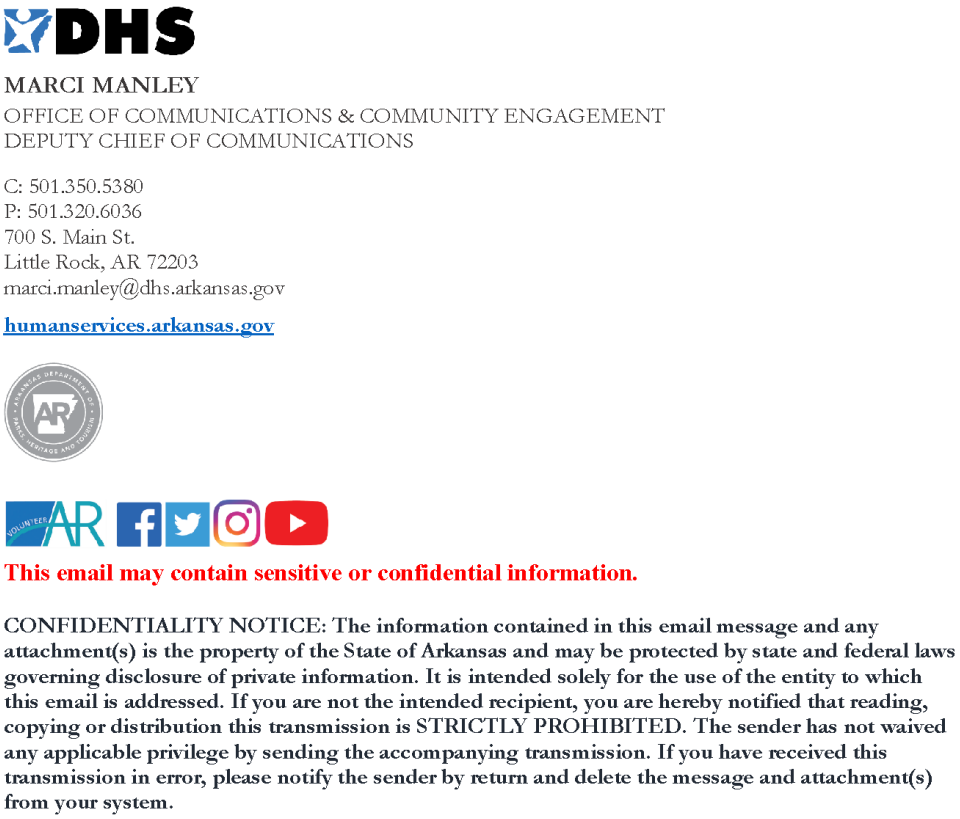
The below graphic featuring the DHS logo and accompanying DHS linked social media accounts may also be added, but is not required, at the bottom of the signature block.

NOTE – This email may contain sensitive or confidential information.

The following text should be added to the bottom of all email signatures and should not be deleted or altered in any way:

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this email message and any attachment(s) is the property of the State of Arkansas and may be protected by state and federal laws governing disclosure of private information. It is intended solely for the use of the entity to which this email is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that reading, copying or distribution this transmission is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. The sender has not waived any applicable privilege by sending the accompanying transmission. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify the sender by return and delete the message and attachment(s) from your system.

The resulting signature, featuring each of these elements, would look like this:



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DEPUTY CHIEF OF COMMUNICATIONS

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humanservices.arkansas.gov

This email may contain sensitive or confidential information.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this email message and any attachment(s) is the property of the State of Arkansas and may be protected by state and federal laws governing disclosure of private information. It is intended solely for the use of the entity to which this email is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that reading, copying or distribution this transmission is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. The sender has not waived any applicable privilege by sending the accompanying transmission. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify the sender by return and delete the message and attachment(s) from your system.

Email Format Standards

DHS email message fonts will adhere to the default settings of Calibri (body) or Arial font, size 11.

Outlook typically defaults the color of the font to Black for new messages and Blue for replies. Either font color is acceptable. However, font colors other than Black or Blue should be avoided.

Best Practices for Email

It is good to remember that, in general, all DHS emails are public records and can be requested by the public under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). So think about how your email would sound or appear if featured on the front page of the newspaper, aired on the nightly news, shared on social media, or published in a community newsletter. Email rarely includes the context of previous conversations or tone that in-person communication provides. Therefore, follow the best practices below to guide your email communication:

- If the email requires more than one reply to have the complete conversation with a DHS internal recipient, consider having the conversation by phone or in-person to cover all details and follow the conversation with an email discussing what was decided to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the details.
- In general, if an email requires more than two paragraphs to adequately communicate the issue you may want to consider talking by phone or in-person to discuss the finer details, followed by an email confirming the discussion. This suggestion will depend on the purpose of the email and whether the recipient is an internal or external recipient.
    - You can ask yourself the following questions to determine if a longer email is appropriate for your situation:
        - Am I communicating about a topic where the complexity of the situation or issue would benefit from being reduced to writing, both for the agency and the recipient?
        - Would this communication be a record deemed necessary to retain under record retention requirements?
    - In general, it is good practice to send a "recap" email of high points or action items, if not deemed sensitive, to make sure everyone is on the same page following an in-person conversation or long email thread involving multiple individuals or topics.
    - Those recap emails should be sent within three hours of the initial conversation, as research indicates memories begin to fade, starting as soon as the two-hour mark.
- While we live in a society that uses "text talk" to communicate casually and informally, these types of acronyms should be avoided in professional communications, particularly with external recipients. Examples include but are not limited to:
    - BRB – be right back
    - BTW – by the way
    - LOL – laugh out loud

DHS Branding, Logos and Color Schemes

This section offers guidelines for you to follow when designing materials for internal and exeternal communications. When in doubt regarding the proper layout and style for design elements, division and office staff are encouraged to seek support from the Communications team to design, layout, and write materials that will be distributed to the public and clients.

To request Communications team support, simply fill out a Creative Services Request form on DHS Share with the required information, and a Communications team member will work directly with you and other staff to ensure your needs are met and the DHS Communications Style is followed.

DHS Colors

Color use depends on the nature of the communication. The DHS color scheme includes the primary "DHS blue" along with white, black, gray, and navy Hex codes as noted below for accents:

Blue

Pantone: PMS 285

Hex: #1A75CF

RGB: 26, 117, 207

CMKY: 82%, 52 %, 0%, 0%

Navy Blue

Hex: #263755

RGB: 38, 55, 85

CMKY: 91%, 78%, 42%, 34%

Black

Hex: #000000

RGB: 0, 0, 0

CMKY: 75%, 68%, 67%, 90%

White

Hex: #FFFFFF

RGB: 255, 255, 255

CMKY: 0%, 0%, 0%, 0%

Program Specific Colors

Some programs have their own color schemes to associate documents with one another and specific programs and services offered or administered by DHS divisions. One example is Arkansas Works. Those materials, while featuring the DHS logo, also include the program logo and color scheme.

Arkansas Works

Teal
Hex: #2C887D

RGB: 44,136,125,

CMKY: 80%, 27%, 55%, 7%

Tan
Hex: # C4BE9A,

RGB: 213,205,168

CMKY: 24%, 20%, 43%, 0%

Navy
Hex: #263755,

RGB: 38, 55, 85

CMKY: 91%, 78%, 42%, 34%

Volunteer AR

Blue

Hex: #2772b9,

RGB: 39,114, 185

CMKY: 84%, 53%, 0%, 0%

Teal

Hex: #00A0B7,

RGB: 0,160,183

CMKY: 78%, 18%, 25%, 0%

Typefaces

Typefaces should be consistent throughout DHS materials and as uniform as possible. Research has shown that readers of printed materials prefer a serif font, the fonts with the hashes on the end of letters like these. However, in the digital age, readers prefer digital-only materials to appear in sans serif fonts, without the hashes at the end of letters, like the headings used in this document.

The fonts selected by DHS are commonly available. These are the suggested font styles for DHS materials, unless a program-specific font style and color scheme has been adopted and widely used.

Body Text

The DHS typeface used for printed materials, reports, and typed forms for body paragraphs is Garamond, default size at 12 point unless layout dictates otherwise.

The DHS typeface used for digital-only body paragraph materials is Franklin Gothic Medium, default size at 12 point unless layout dictates otherwise.

Headers

Headers can effectively break information into smaller sections that are easier to understand. Headers in text also can help a reader navigate through important ideas and related concepts. Headers and typeface formatting also can serve as "road signs" or a "roadmap" for readers to follow. The header typefaces in both print and digital content are below:

Main header typeface for all materials is Franklin Gothic Medium, 16 pt. Font color: RGB (46,116,181).

Secondary header typeface for all materials is Franklin Gothic Medium Cond, 13 pt. Font color: RGB (46,116,181).

Third level header typeface is Franklin Gothic Demi Cond, 12 pt. Font color: RGB (31,77,120).

Fourth level header typeface is Franklin Gothic Medium, Italic, 12 pt. Font color: RGB (46,116,181).

This Style Guide serves as an example of using these headings, with main concepts (or headlines) in main header style with related content further broken down by its relationship to the main concept. Another example is on the next page as well.

Logos

We use illustrations (logos and graphics) across marketing materials to support a cohesive, clear, and consistent story of our agency. Illustrations are used to support text copy, indicating official and legitimate agency communications but should never distract or overshadow the key message.

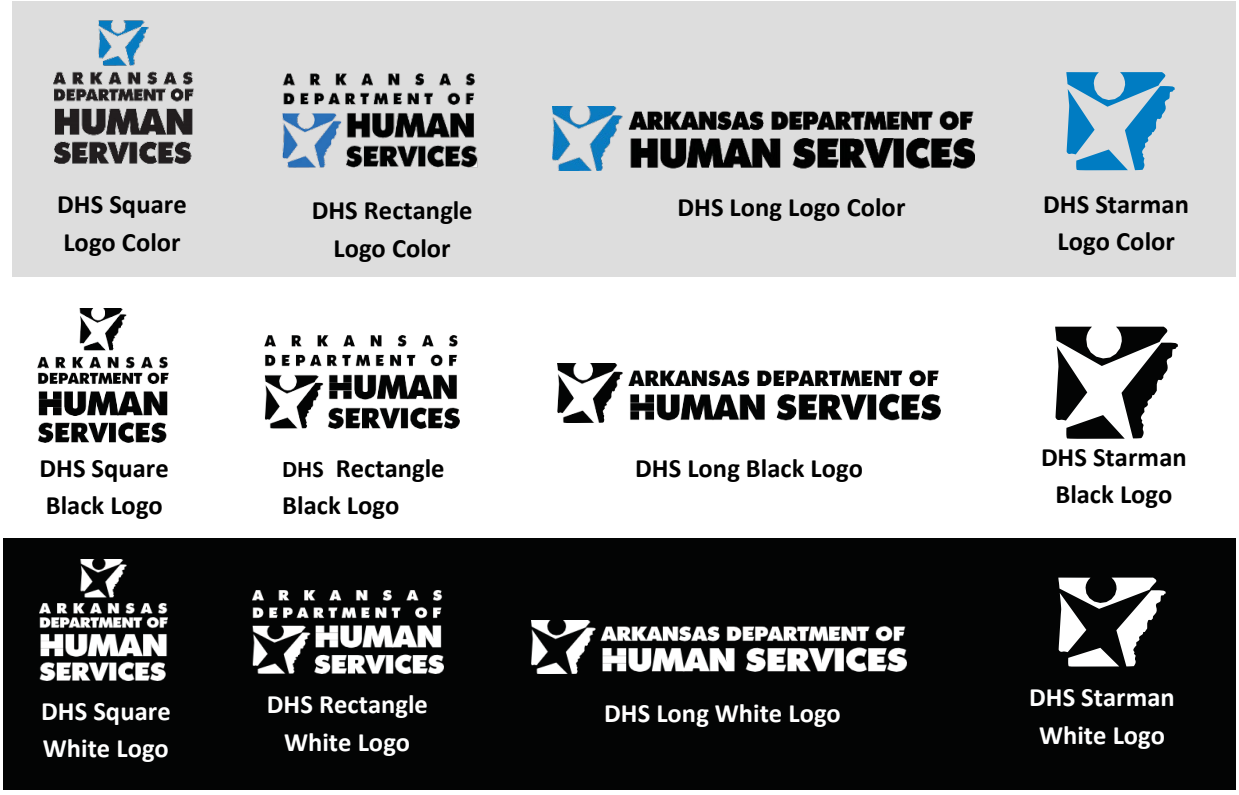
Use of Arkansas Department of Human Services Logo Family

There are four versions of the DHS Starman logo, which provide options to DHS users and increase the brand's recognition. These elements **should not be altered, stretched, or recreated in any way**. The DHS Office of Communications and Community Engagement must approve use of the logo on any external-facing materials.

The logos are available in full color, black, and white. Color logos are best used for color prints on a light to medium background. The black logo is best for black and white printing on a light background. The white logo should be used when placed on a dark background.

The only approved versions follow, and can be located at:

DHS Share: **http://dhsshare/DHS%20Graphics/Forms/AllItems.aspx**



DHS Division & Office Logos

DHS divisions/offices also are branded by adding the division/office name directly below and to the right of the DHS Starman logo. This builds consistency among and identifies the office responsible for the communication when the public or client is required to act.

These division and office logos should be featured on Fact Sheets, Program Applications, FAQ's, division web pages, and all other division-specific materials.

The logo cannot be altered. Refer to the official division and office logos below. This list is not exhaustive. Communications has produced these divisions/office branded logos in a variety of formats that coincide with the DHS logo family. The division logos can be found at **http://dhsshare/DHS%20Graphics/Forms/AllItems.aspx**. If your office needs a branded logo, please contact Communications.

Size Guidelines for DHS Starman Logo

DHS Starman logos are produced in high-quality image formats. However, there is a limit as to how small you can make the logos before they become so small that someone cannot read them. Follow the size guidelines below, and do not go smaller than the size indicated for each logo.

Print: 1in x 1in
Web: 72px x 72px

Print: 1.5in x 1in
Web: 103px x 65px

Print: 0.6in x 0.7in
Web: 51px x 45px

Print: 2.78in x .42in
Web: 200px x 30px

Print: 2.8in x .6in
Web: 202px x 43px

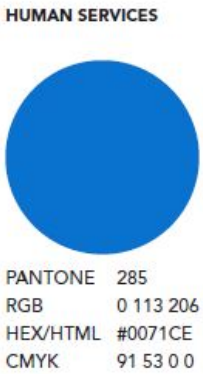
White Space Guidelines for DHS Starman Logo Use

To ensure that DHS logos are not crowded by text, a buffer of white space should always accompany DHS logos. The white space buffer should be equivalent to an uppercase R in 12-point font. For visual purposes, the white space buffer would create the following appearance:

Arkansas State Department Round Logos

As part of Governor Hutchinson's transformation efforts throughout state government, the Department of Transformation Services has developed a series of logos, one for each state department, that replaces the use of the state seal on department materials.

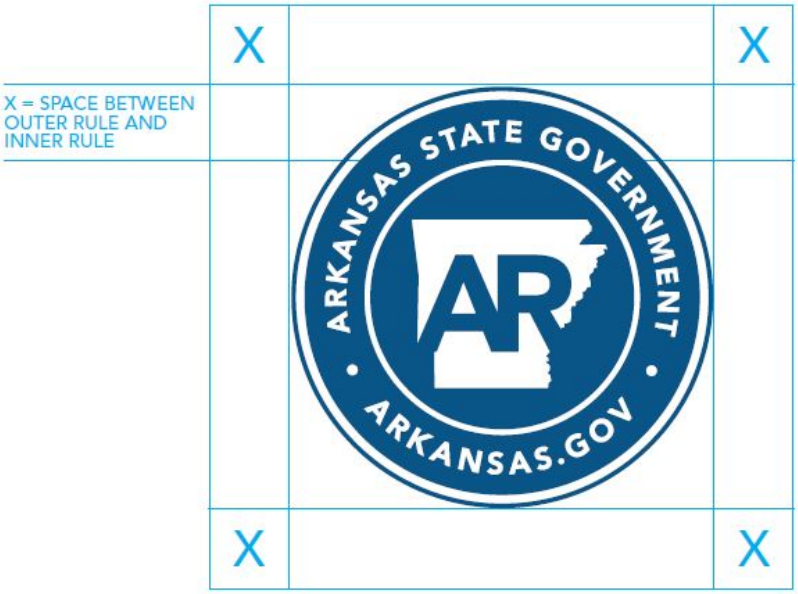
The DHS department logo below compliments the Starman logo on agency materials. You will notice that the color for the logo remains consistent with the "DHS blue" of the Starman logo.



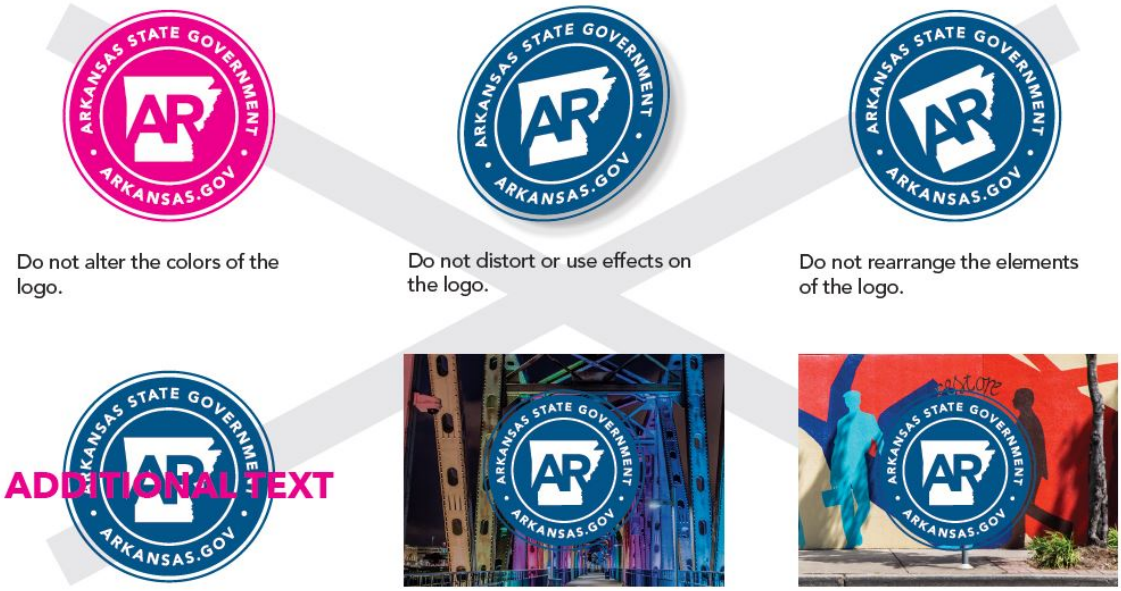
Department Stationary and Business Cards

The DHS round logo will be used with the DHS Starman logo on department letterhead and business cards as replacement materials need to be ordered for divisions and offices. Templates are available on Share. In the example below -the Arkansas State Parks logo would be replaced with the Starman logo for DHS.

Spacing and Minimum Size



Improper Use of DHS Round Logo



Do not alter the colors of the logo.

Do not distort or use effects on the logo.

Do not rearrange the elements of the logo.

Do not add additional text over the logo.

Do not use the logo on backgrounds with colors or values similar to the logo.

Do not use the logo on backgrounds that are busy.

Co-branding with DHS Logo

Building a recognizable brand is an important priority for DHS. When co-branding a service or program with DHS, it is important to maintain the DHS brand elements as much as possible. DHS brand elements (logos) must be incorporated into all co-branded materials and follow guidelines and conditions of DHS name and logo usage. The preferred placement for DHS branding is at the bottom right corner or top left corner of a document.

Materials with DHS Partners

Co-branded materials should always share a proportional relationship, using partner logos and the DHS logo with equal distribution. In other words, both logos should be the same size. Both logos should be placed on the same page and in the same location on the page. For example, if a contractor completes an annual report for your division or with your division and places the contractor's logo on the front page, the DHS logo also should be on the front page.

DHS Materials with program-, facility-, and service-specific branding

DHS programs may co-brand materials using the DHS logo. The program icon can be no more than twice the size of the DHS logo, which must meet minimum requirements set forth in the logo section of this guide. When two or more logos are side-by-side, the logos should be separated by a 0.5-point vertical line as a buffer of white space, using the ruler tool in your software. Program logos should be placed at the top, preferably with the division or DHS logo at the bottom right.

DHS Divisions and Offices Branding

Some DHS divisions/offices have their own visual logos the public has come to recognize (example: Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education below). Programs and divisions may brand their materials featuring division specific graphic logos that have received approval. If a division or office has an approved logo, it must be used in with the DHS logo. It cannot be used alone.

Request Support from Communications Team

When in doubt regarding the proper layout and style for design elements, division and office staff are encouraged to seek support from the Communications team to design, layout, and write materials that will be distributed to the public and clients.

To request Communications team support, simply fill out a Creative Services Request form on DHS Share with the required information, and a Communications team member will work directly with you and other staff to ensure your needs are met and the DHS Communications Style is followed.

Note: All external-facing marketing, education, and outreach materials (posters, fliers, brochures, banners, etc.) must go through the Creative Services Request process.

The Communications team will work closely with you to ensure the materials convey the information you wish to communicate, and the Communications team will give final approval of any materials before there are used.

Writing Style

Purpose

The DHS Style Guide is designed to save you time and help improve the overall professional look and feel of your reports, documents, and other materials. Have you ever wondered or worried about which was correct:

- Periods or no punctuation for bullets?
- Which or that?
- % sign or percent?
- Healthcare or health care?

You can quickly find answers to these questions and many more in this section of the Style Guide.

Are these hard-and-fast rules?

This is a Style Guide—not a rule book. Unlike grammar, which has specific rules that should not be broken, many style issues are preferences, such as how and when to write out numbers, whether to use the Oxford comma, or when to use ending punctuation for bullets. Writers and editors may differ. Famous style guides differ. Our goal is to provide guidance on style issues, so DHS content has uniformity that conveys professionalism. Examples labeled **preferred** mean preferred by DHS.

Style consistency enhances our credibility. Inconsistencies in style or misused words cause users of our information to question the accuracy of our data and the professionalism of our workforce. A uniform style tells the public that DHS has high quality standards for our words, our data, and our employees.

Where can I get more guidance on editorial style?

We've addressed the most common style issues that DHS writers face. If you have a question that isn't covered in this guide or if there is a topic you'd like to know more about, consult these online references:

- The AP Style Guide, what Communications staff uses to guide most writing.
- The Chicago Manual of Style.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, DHS' preferred dictionary.

Please contact the Office of Communications and Community Engagement with any questions, comments, or suggestions about writing or about the Style Guide.

Writing well at DHS

Use short sentences

Short sentences are easier to read. Aim for a maximum of 20 to 30 words. Consider breaking a long sentence into two shorter sentences or eliminating unnecessary words. When writing something for clients, this is especially important. We should aim to write at a sixth grade level.

Use short paragraphs

Avoid long paragraphs or large blocks of text. Long paragraphs are daunting and difficult for readers to scan. Try to write paragraphs of four or five sentences, or approximately 100–125 words. Paragraphs as short as one sentence are fine. Use bullets to list points.

Use person-first language

Using people-first language simply puts the person before the disability or label that has brought that person to our attention.

- **Correct:** Children in foster care do better in family settings.
- **Incorrect:** Foster children do better in family settings.
- **Correct:** People who are blind can get help with adaptive technologies through DHS.
- **Incorrect:** Blind people can get help with adaptive technologies through DHS.
- **Correct:** There are programs that help people with disabilities find meaningful employment.
- **Incorrect:** There are programs that help disabled people find meaningful employment.

Avoid jargon

Jargon, including acronyms, may be appropriate when writing exclusively for experts. But DHS' documents are accessible to a wide range of readers, from experts on your topic to clients. Always assume you are writing for people who know nothing about the topic you are writing about. As much as possible, choose nontechnical terms so readers can understand what you've written. If you must use jargon or technical language, be sure to explain the term in simple language. To make the concept clear to the layperson, you can provide an example or an analogy.

If you have the option to use a word or phrase rather than an acronym, use the word or phrase. Most people do not know what all of our acronyms means.

Be consistent

Good writing is built on patterns, so be consistent within your content.

- Consistent terminology: Don't call people "clients" in some instances and "customers" or "beneficiaries" in others. DHS's preferred term is "client."
- Consistent abbreviations: If you use DHS, don't use ARDHS later or any other abbreviation for that reference.

- Consistent punctuation: For example, always use the Oxford (or serial) comma. (The flag is red, white, and blue.)

Consider your audience

The best writers anticipate, and answer, their readers' questions. Identify your intended readers before you begin writing. Think about what they may already know and what they will want to know about your topic. While planning and drafting your content, consider their level of technical expertise, their depth of interest, and the tasks they will be performing with the information you provide. Whenever possible answer these questions: who, what, where, and when.

Have a message

Whether you are writing a report, a presentation, a social media post, or a speech for an internal meeting; what you are writing must have a purpose or goal. And to achieve that goal, you must develop key messages, usually no more than three messages. These are the basic nuggets of information that you want people to remember.

Editorial Voice

Your writing speaks to your readers; it has a voice. At DHS, we want our writing voice to be professional, clear, and concise. This section covers some of the ways to create that agency voice.

Use an inverted pyramid format to structure your writing

Put your main message first, so your readers can quickly get the most important information and then decide if they want to read more. Organize your content, so the information appears in order of importance, from the highest level to supporting details.

Choose active or passive voice

- Use active voice most of the time.
    - In active-voice sentences, the subject is doing the action of the verb.
    - In passive-voice sentences, the target of the action is moved to the subject position. Passive-voice sentences often leave out person or group responsible for the action.

        - **Active voice**: DHS proposed new regulations.
        - **Passive voice**: New regulations were proposed by DHS.

        - **Active voice**: DHS projects that revenue streams will increase.
        - **Passive voice**: It is projected by DHS that revenue streams will increase.

- Use active voice to write concisely, as active-voice sentences are normally shorter.

    - Use passive voice sparingly. Passive voice can be used occasionally for these purposes:
        - To emphasize the object of the action, not the doer.
            - **Example**: Stringent qualification guidelines were issued by the Arkansas Department of Human Services in 2016.

- When the subject of the sentence (the doer) is unimportant or unknown.
    - **Example**: Stringent qualification guidelines were issued in 2016.
- To structure a headline, blurb, or lead sentence, place key words at the beginning.
    - **Example**: New Qualification Guidelines Are Adopted by Legislature

Maintain consistent verb tenses

- Maintain consistent verb tenses to clearly establish the timing of the action.
    - **Consistent verb tense**: The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services **believes** individuals and their families should have choices when selecting the appropriate services in their local community. This **allows** each individual to maximize his or her abilities while enjoying a quality of life that matches those abilities.

Using present tense consistently conveys the action is happening at the same time and is ongoing.

- **Inconsistent verb tense**: The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services **believes** individuals and their families should have choices when selecting the appropriate services in their local community. This **will allow** each individual to maximize his or her abilities while enjoying a quality of life that matches those abilities.

The shift in verb tense from present (believes) to future (will allow) is confusing to the reader. It implies that the individuals were not allowed to maximize their abilities previously.

- Do not change verb tenses unless you want to indicate a clear shift in time.
    - **Change indicates time**: The regulations **were adopted** in 2000. The regulations **will be reviewed** in 2015.

The first sentence uses the past tense (were adopted) to indicate action that happened in the past. The second sentence uses the future tense (will be reviewed) to indicate future action.

Keep a consistent point of view

In your writing, you can choose to use one of three different points of view: first person, second person, or third person. Each point of view expresses a different relationship to the reader. Generally, third person is most appropriate for DHS writing.

First person is when the person or object is speaking: We can produce steam several ways.

Second person is when the person is spoken to: You can produce steam several ways.

Third person is when the object is spoken about: It can produce steam several ways.

- Do not shift point of view within an article or report. The point of view you choose will depend on your audience and the product you are writing.

- **Shifting point of view**: Most commercially available electricity is generated by turbines that convert steam into electricity. You can produce steam in several ways.

This paragraph shifts from third person to second person (you).

- **Consistent point of view**: Most electricity is generated by turbines that convert steam into electricity. Steam can be produced in several ways.

This paragraph maintains the third person throughout.

Emphasize content correctly

- DHS prefers **bold text** for emphasis. Italics *can* be used to emphasize a word or phrase, rarely a whole sentence or paragraph. If used too frequently, italics or bold for emphasis lose their power.
- **Never** underline for emphasis.
- **Never** use capital letters for emphasis because some people may interpret that as "yelling" through written words.
  - **Correct emphasis**: Your comments must be sent by **mail**—not email.
  - **Incorrect emphasis**: Your comment must be sent by MAIL—NOT EMAIL.
  - **Incorrect emphasis**: Your comments must be sent by <u>mail</u>—<u>not email</u>.

Format paragraphs

Separate paragraphs with a blank line. The first line of a paragraph should be flush left, not indented.

Policy-Neutral Writing

Sometimes writing may seem repetitive, always saying increased or decreased, rose or fell. Using different words to vary the text may seem like a good idea, but often the new verbs or adverbs have subtle or not so subtle connotations, either positive or negative.

Use policy-neutral words

Quantify statements where possible, but avoid these words and phrases. A 50 percent increase may seem to be surging or skyrocketing, but let the reader make the quantifying judgment.

- Appropriate action
- Effective policy
- Enormous
- Jumped
- Huge
- Massive
- Obvious solution
- Skyrocketed
- Slashed
- Soared
- Spiked
- Surging

  - **Neutral**: The number of participants fell.
  - **Not neutral**: Participation plummeted.

  - **Neutral**: Enrollment decreased, enrollment dropped.
  - **Not neutral**: Enrollment was slashed.

This or that

A common but somewhat confusing style choice in some DHS writing is the use of sentences beginning with *this* or *that* where the subject is not stated.

- **Clear**: Early education enrollment is rising. This rise in enrollment is the result of…

- **Unclear**: Enrollment is rising because demand is up and resources are low. This is the result of… (This what? Enrollment rising? Demand up? Don't make reader guess.)

Writing the possessive form

- **Correct** (by law) and preferred DHS style for Arkansas is Arkansas's.
  - Arkansas's early education programs have improved during the past decade.
- Generally, when singular subject does not end in "s," add an apostrophe "s" for possession:
  - The child's foster home closed, but there is another family willing to help.
- Generally, when the plural subject does not end in "s" the same rule applies:
  - The children's foster home closed, but there is another family willing to help.
- Generally, when the singular or plural subject ends in "s" add an apostrophe to the end.
  - Caseloads can create challenges, but the priority is always the child's safety.

Grammar

None is or none are, either…or, and neither…nor

Deciding whether **neither, none, everyone, no one**, and **some** takes a singular or plural verb can be tricky. When these indefinite pronouns are the subject of a verb, they are usually singular.

- **Correct**: None of the proposals was accepted. (Not one was accepted.)
- **Correct**: Neither answer was sufficient.
- **Correct**: Everyone wants children to be fed. However, some want to do something about it.

When comparing two items, you must say "either...or" or "neither...nor."

- **Correct**: Neither my officemate nor I was planning to attend the conference.
- **Correct**: Either my officemate or my boss was the last person to leave.

Using compound subjects

All examples below are correct.

- Colleen's and Melinda's foster siblings (some siblings of Colleen and some of Melinda)
- Colleen and Melinda's foster family (foster family of both Colleen and Melinda)
- My aunt's and uncle's houses (each person has a house)
- My aunt and uncle's house (only one house).
- The guest speaker and new author, Mr. Smith, will be at our meeting.
- Ham and Swiss is the only sandwich left on the plate.

Fewer and less

Fewer and **less** mean the same thing, but you use them in different circumstances. Use **less** for mass nouns (things you can't count individually) and **fewer** for count nouns (things you can count).

- **Mass nouns**—less salt, less tired, less money, less time
  - **Note**: You can't make mass nouns plural.
- **Count nouns**—fewer apples, fewer partners, fewer dollars, fewer hours.

Note: Use numbers only for items that have a sequence (step by step), an intended order (top 10 oil-producing states), or where the number is important to make sense of the list. Otherwise, use bullets.

.

Using capitals in DHS office names and titles

Capitalize names of specific divisions, offices, and teams. Do not capitalize organization names in generic, nonspecific references.

- **Correct:** Office of Communications and Community Engagement
- **Correct:** The Division of Medical Services is analyzing data to identify trends.
- **Correct:** Meet with your office director.

Tips for proofreading your writing

- **Read your work slowly out loud**—This method forces you to read every word individually and increases the odds you will find a typo, missing word, or writing mistake.
- **Use spell check**—Microsoft Word and Microsoft Outlook include spell check, which catches more than misspelled words. Review each squiggly underlined spot to determine what the mistake might be.
- **Proof a printed version**—Many people find it easier to proofread on paper rather than on a computer screen.
- **Ask a colleague to help**—Four eyes are better than two.

Spellcheck in Microsoft Word is a great copyeditor

Spell check looks at more than spelling. Spell check gives you three colors of squiggly underlines in your content:

Red = spelling error

Green = possible grammatical error

Blue = possible contextual error such as homonyms or similar words

These squiggles indicate possible mistakes. Don't ignore them. But remember, spell check doesn't catch every mistake, and some possible errors flagged by spell check may actually be correct. You still need to proof your writing carefully. Sometimes the autocorrect feature in Microsoft Word can introduce errors such as capitalizing words you meant to be lower case.

Photography and Videography

With all communications materials, quality should always win out over our quantity. Our products should reflect the professionalism we expect of services and programs DHS provides.

Communications materials, both internal and external, should always maintain a higher quality of photos and graphics than what private individuals may share. When someone sees a DHS video, photograph, social media post, website, or informational product, we want to keep them coming back for legitimate, professional, and relevant content. If their first experience with DHS is negative, it makes it more difficult to communicate and help them in the future.

Though the Communications team is responsible for taking many photos of events and individuals, DHS employees, especially those out in the field, may submit or may be asked to submit photos for use by the agency. For that reason, here are some things you should know about photography.

Confidentiality and Image Protection

It is ultimately DHS' responsibility to ensure that nothing we publish violates client confidentiality or reveals any personal health information. DHS staff must always ask: "Do we have, or need a photo release on this person?" These issues are of particular importance when we are visiting campuses of our Human Development Centers, Arkansas State Hospital, juvenile treatment facilities, events involving children in foster care, or partner provider locations. Please also see below the notes on watching your background as relevant to this topic.

For each non-DHS employee being featured, the person (his or her parent/guardian if a minor or person deemed legally incompetent) must sign a DHS image use release form.

Also, we need to protect our images and video to assure that they are not used inappropriately. Some see the Internet as a place to steal images for whatever use they need, but our images are property of DHS and the Arkansas taxpayer. While those images and videos are public records, we must do what we can to inform the public of the intended use of the images and let individuals and partners know that we will only use the images in a way that is consistent with the mission of DHS.

Embedded in every photo the Communications Team posts or releases, the following disclaimer is included:

> "Images, photographs, or video contained or attached herewith are being shared under agreement with the Arkansas Department of Human Services. These items are the property of the Arkansas Department of Human Services and the State of Arkansas. Said items shall not be used in any form or fashion for any political, campaign, entertainment, or commercial purposes. Further, items contained and attached herewith shall not be manipulated, altered, or transformed in any fashion which alters the reality of the image. The Arkansas Department of Human Services reserves the right to revoke its permission to utilize said images, photographs, or video."

General Photography Tips

Use a Real Camera if Possible

Phones are great cameras because we always have them with us, we know when they are charged, and we can send photographs quickly. However, a good digital camera, if you are comfortable with it, will almost always beat the cell phone quality.

A main advantage to a camera is the use of the zoom lens to blur a background. This will always lead to a more pleasing portrait. The zoom lens also allows you to reach out to better frame the action, capture a limited field of vision, and control what is captured.

Watch the Background

Images can often be improved if you keep an eye out for distracting elements in the background of your photo. The photo, at left, has distracting white lines of a stairwell and a person in the background. Is he an HDC resident with no photo release? That's the danger that we want to avoid.

As a photographer you can solve both problems by taking a few steps to the left, thus getting rid of the lines and the on-looker. You also get the benefit of a neutral wall as the backdrop.

Embrace Natural Light

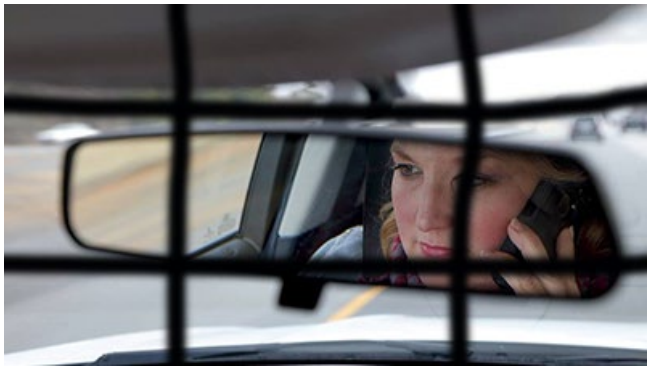
Often we are stuck in office space under florescent lights or in a dark ballroom. But somewhere is a nice, open window to the outside world. Especially when you need a nice portrait, place your subject so that they face toward a window or out of a shaded area. This can give you soft light falling gently on their face (as a bonus, it often smooths wrinkles!). The above portraits were taken with natural light coming through a large window.

Be Mindful of Composition and Follow the "Rule of Thirds"

Rules are meant to be broken in some cases, but some rules can be a guide to capturing better photos. The Rule of Thirds states that a photo is more visually pleasing when elements (people and faces) fall on or at the intersection of "thirds."

This is illustrated by dividing an image into thirds both horizontally and vertically (as shown by the black lines on the photos). If major elements fall along those lines, especially at intersections, then you are capturing a photo that is more visually pleasing, in most cases.

This is only a guide, of course. There are many great photos that break the rule. However, being aware of the rule can train a photographer to monitor composition of photographs and be aware of subject placement in the image.



Don't Crowd the Frame

Another concept to keep in mind when composing a photo is to always give your subject room to "look" or to complete his action. The idea is to not crowd the frame by making it feel like your subject is up against a wall or going out of the frame.

Both of the photos follow the Rule of Thirds. However, the photograph on the left has an issue. By pushing the performer against the left side of the image, the person does not have room to "move" within the photo. In the photo on the right, however, the performer and his action have breathing room. That leaves him, and the viewer, feeling less crowded. Always allow room in your photos for your subject to look and act.

Avoid Exposure Problems

When photographing a subject against something extremely bright **or** extremely dark, your camera will always be confused because it's trying to make everything gray. A classic example is photographing a speaker lit by a spotlight at a podium with a black background. The speaker will be too bright because your camera is trying to "lighten" up that black background. The opposite example is a subject against a white wall, with your camera trying to "darken" down that white.

Wait for the Magic Moments, Find Emotion in Your Images

Part of being a good photographer is anticipating when and where the good photos are hiding.

This is one of our favorite photos by Kev Moye. He knew the award was happening and knew he would get the standard posed photo at the end. The photo we prefer is the "action shot." So, Kev positioned himself to capture the look on the employee's face as she approached the podium. As a big bonus, he captured five smiling faces of coworkers applauding her in the same photo. Many people have the shot of the employee holding the award, but only we have this photo.

Tips for Creating Videos

Short and simple.
Attention spans are decreasing so videos should be short and should convey a simple, clear message. The best videos are those limited to two minutes or less.

Clear audio is almost more important than the visual.
"Watch your background" also applies to the audio when you conduct an interview or record something. Just because you meet your subject in a lunchroom or ballroom doesn't mean you have to interview there. Pull your subject to a quiet room elsewhere. If our viewers can't understand what is being said in the first five seconds, they're going to stop watching. Plus, your subject may feel less nervous if you pull him/her out of earshot of other people. It's a win-win. That's not to say you don't ever want to have background noise, but if you may not be able to speak with the person again, better safe than sorry.

Shoot in landscape mode (horizontally).
To maximize the screen usage with smart phones and tablets, always shoot in landscape. Television sets are horizontal; movie theater screens are horizontal. This will avoid your video playing really small with black boxes on both sides.

Use simple clear language.
When interviewing someone remind them not to use acronyms or overly complex terms. We are speaking to the public who likely does not know DHS terminology. If a subject still makes it too wordy, at the end of the interview ask him or her for an "elevator pitch" of four or five sentences to describe what is happening. Or ask, "Why should I care about this?"

Let your subjects do the moving.
Try to think of yourself as a human tripod. Stand still even when your subject is moving. When you, as the photographer, move and the subject moves it can be jarring or even cause motion sickness for the person watching.

Social Media

This section is meant as a compliment, but does not supplant, the DHS policy regarding social media use. Rather, this section is meant to provide guidance on effectively using social media to communicate with the public and create informative, engaging posts on DHS social media platforms. People of all ages actively use social media. As an agency, and employee of DHS, you should be aware that posts made on social media represent you and your employer.

In general, posts with photos, videos, or other visual elements perform better than other posts. Short posts followed by engaging content are better than posts with too many words.

Note: No program, office or division shall create any social media channel without prior approval from the Office of Communications and Community Engagement.

Facebook

DHS presence on Facebook is established through its "Arkansas Department of Human Services" profile.

- Keep Facebook posts between 40 and 80 characters.
- If you must go longer, try not to exceed 120 characters, especially when posing a question.
- Questions perform well on Facebook; they prompt discussion among your audience.
- Hashtags don't do anything for engagement Facebook. Keep them to a minimum.
- Add an image or video to your post to see up to twice the engagement.
- Clickbait or engagement-bait language, like "Share this post," penalized in the News Feed. Pose question to encourage interaction instead.
- Ideal video length for Facebook is two minutes or less.
- Ideal image size for Facebook posts is 1200 x 900 pixels.
- When posting a group of photos, upload your best four photos first, as those will be predominantly displayed on Facebook when posting four or more photos.

Twitter

DHS presence on Facebook is established through its ARHumanServices profile.

- Ideal tweet length is 120-130 characters.
- Max tweet length is 280 characters.
- Max video length is 2:20 minutes.
- Upload image size: 1024 x 512 pixels.
- Mention (@Twitterhandle) to increase probability of retweet to larger audience.
- Tweets with 1-2 hashtags receive 21 percent higher engagement than those with 3 or more.
- Be sure you understand meaning of hashtag, its cultural import, and how others are using it.
- Avoid question marks and exclamation points.

YouTube

DHS presence on YouTube is established through its ARHumanServices channel.

- Ideal video length 16 seconds – 2:00 minutes
- Ideal title length: 70 characters
- Ideal description length: 1,200 – 1,300 characters (most important information first)
- Write keyword-rich video titles and descriptions that include URL(s) to website and social media channels. Link to subscribe.
- Post during peak viewership times:
    - Monday-Wednesday (1 p.m. – 3 p.m.)
    - Thursday & Friday (11 a.m. – 2 p.m.) – these are the best days for most viewership
    - Saturday & Sunday (8 a.m. – 10 a.m.)
- Make videos mobile-friendly (40 percent of videos viewed on mobile)
- Face thumbnails more effective than inanimate objects.

Restrictions on Comments

As a government agency, restrictions on individuals' posts to the official DHS Facebook page should be the least restrictive possible while maintaining an atmosphere of civil discourse. Citizens are free to provide feedback, both positive and negative, without fear of being blocked or otherwise restrained from interacting with DHS via social media.

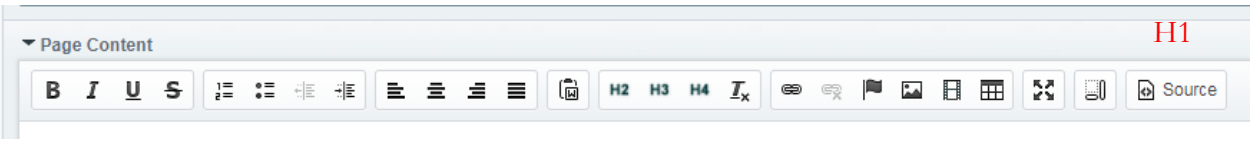
The official communications policy regarding social media posts follows:

> **Posts with harassment, threats, explicit language, obscene or graphic imagery, political endorsements or allegations with names are prohibited and could lead to poster being blocked.**

Arkansas DHS Website Style Guide

The DHS website is created and edited through a Content Management System (CMS) platform called Expression Engine. All pages are designed from pre-existing templates, so there are set parameters that a user can choose. Color is predetermined within the theme.

Headers



A page's top main header should be an **H1** header (this will need to be changed in the HTML source). An **H1** header has a Helvetica font at 18 points in burgundy [Hex color #741623 (Red: 116 Green: 22 Blue: 35)].

Example:

Division of Children and Family Services

A secondary header should be an **H2** header. An **H2** header has a Helvetica font at 14 points in blue [Hex color 014586 (Red: 1 Green: 69 Blue: 134)] with a horizontal line automatically paired underneath.

Example:

Overview

An **H3** or **H4** header can be used at webmaster discretion to add emphasis to a paragraph or table. An **H3** header has a Helvetica font at 12 points in blue [Hex color 014586 (Red: 1 Green: 69 Blue: 134)]. An **H4** header has a Helvetica font at 11 points in burgundy [Hex color 741623 (Red: 116 Green: 22 Blue: 35)].

Examples:

This is an H3 Header

This is an H4 Header

Appendix A

Quick Tips—Style, Writing, and Grammar

DHS style

- Use the Oxford (serial) comma: red, white, and blue.
- One space after a sentence.
- Percentages should be written using the numeral and spelling out the word: 50 percent.
- Website, homepage, and email: one word, no hyphens.
- Arkansas Department of Human Services and DHS; not Arkansas DHS and not the DHS.
- Don't use postal codes except in addresses and bibliographies: Bryant, Arkansas, not Bryant, AR (except for Washington, D.C., where the postal code is part of the city name).
- Writing dates:
    - **Correct**: January 2012; Jan. 5.; January 5, 2018.
    - **Incorrect**: Jan 2012; January, 2012; January '12; January 5th; January of 2012; the month of January.
- Write 1990s, not 1990's.
- Don't CAPITALIZE or underline for emphasis. Use **bold** or *italics*.
- Punctuating bullets: No ending punctuation (no commas or semicolons) unless they are all complete sentences (then end each sentence with a period).
- Don't put a full link in a document. Instead, hyperlink the subject of the sentence. For example, link the words "full report" in the following sentence. See the full report and register now.
- Write the past 10 years, not the last 10 years.

Writing

- Use title case capitalization for titles and main headings in documents: Foster Care Caseloads Decrease
- Use sentence case for second level headings, graph titles, and table titles: Foster care caseloads increase.
- Avoid acronyms. If an acronym is required, be sure to spell out acronyms the first time used and repeatedly in separate sections and chapters of a long document.
- Avoid overuse of due to—try because, as a result of, or following.
- Use since with time (Since 2014, program participation has grown.) and because when you want to show cause (Because it was raining, we got wet.).
- Be policy neutral. Avoid words like plummeted, skyrocketed, slashed, spiked, and huge.
- Use simple words: additionally → also; utilize → use; in order to → to; numerous → many.
- Don't use impact as a verb: The weather affected (not impacted) demand for services
- Don't begin a sentence with a numeral or a year. Incorrect: 2016 enrollees are increasing.
    - **Correct**: Enrollees in 2016 are increasing.
    - **Also correct**: The year 2016 shows increasing number of enrollees.

Grammar

- Which or that? Which nearly always has a comma before it. If you can use that, use that.
    - These two words are not interchangeable. Which is not a more formal word for that.
- Make bullets consistent: start with verb, verb, verb; noun, noun, noun; adjective, adjective, adjective.
    - **Correct**:
        - Beginning bullets with nouns:
            - Child care providers must follow licensing guidelines.
            - Licensing inspectors may visit a facility at any time.
            - Licensing violations may require a corrective action plan.
        - Beginning bullets with verbs:
            - Apply for Medicaid coverage online or by paper form.
            - Submit the application online or by mail.
            - Update DHS with any life changes within 10 days.
- Use parallel structure (similar format) for items in a numbered or bulleted list and in a list of items in a sentence.
    - **Parallel structure**: The project director is a strong leader, a skillful communicator, and an effective manager.
    - **Not parallel structure**: The project director is a strong leader, skillfully communicates, and he mana**ges** effectively.
- A person is a **who**, and a thing (including a company) is a **that**.
    - **Correct**: He is the person who said yes.
    - **Incorrect**: He is the person that said yes.

- Use an en dash (–) to mean through or to. Use the word **minus** in an arithmetic phrase. An en dash is slightly wider than the hyphen (-) but narrower than the em dash (—).
    - **Correct**: The temperature was 70–80 degrees.
    - **Incorrect**: The temperature was 70-80 degrees.
    - **Correct**: Net imports = imports minus exports.
    - **Incorrect**: Net imports = imports-exports.
- An em dash is the length of two hyphens (—). It's used to show emphasis or a break in thought and is almost always used in pairs. It is created in most word processors by typing two hyphens (-) and pressing enter.
    - **Correct**: My sister Amy—who is two years younger than I am—graduated from college before I did.
- Hyphens (-) are often used with adjectives but not generally with nouns.
    - **Correct**: short-term forecast, end-use technology.
    - **Incorrect**: in the short term, three end uses.
- i.e. and e.g. must be followed by a comma. It is better to write out i.e.→ in other words and e.g. → for example.
- "Punctuation goes inside the quote marks."

Appendix B

Words and Phrases to Avoid

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
accordingly	so
afford an opportunity	allow, let
aforementioned	as mentioned earlier
a great number of	many
all-time record high	record, record level
a number of	many, several, a few
additionally	also, in addition, and
approximately	about
as to whether	whether
at the lowest levels	lowest
at the present time, at this point in time	now
at the time that	when
burgeoning	growing, increasing
by means of	with, in, by
capability	ability, can
close proximity	nearby, near
come to an agreement on	agree
commence	start, begin
completely destroyed	destroyed
consequently	so
currently	now
demonstrate a preference for	prefer
due to the fact that	because
during the course of	during
endeavor to	try to
equally as	equally
equivalent	equal
facilitate	help
finalize	finish
for the most part	mostly
for the purpose of	for, to
furthermore	also, in addition
give approval for	approve
identical	same
impacted by	affected by
in accordance with	by, following, under
incentivizing	promoting, encouraging
including, but not limited to	including
indices	indexes
initial	first
in order to	to

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
in order to eliminate	to eliminate
in spite of the fact that	although, despite
in the event that	if
in the month of January	in January
in the near future	soon
in the spring of 2013	spring 2013
in the vicinity of	near
in violation of	violates
is able to	can
it is felt that	(omit)
kind of	rather
leverage	make use of, take advantage of
like	such as
limited number	few, some
magnitude	size
majority of	most
make a choice	choose
make a decision	decide
multiple	many
myriad	many
new record	record
no later than	by, for
not strong	weak
not well suited	unfit, poorly suited
numerous	many
of the opinion that	think
on a monthly basis	monthly
on or before December 2	by December 2
on the basis of	based on
on the part of	by
optimum	best
originally began	began
preeminent	primary, major
presents a summary of	summarizes
prior to	before
prior estimate	previous estimate
record high level	record level, highest level
regarding	about, of, on
relative to	compared to, compared with
retain	keep
since the time when	since
subsequent	next
subsequent to	after
sufficient	enough
sunset	end

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
terminate	end, stop
the question as to whether	whether
therefore	so
the reason why is that	because
the table is a list of	the table shows
time frame	time or period
time period	time or period
to perform an analysis	to analyze
underutilized	underused
until such time as	until
usage of	use of
utilize	use
whether or not	whether
with regard to	about
with the exception of	except
would appear that	appears

Appendix C

Glossary: DHS Terms & Acronyms

How to Use DHS Terms & Acronyms

Generally, acronyms should be avoided. That's hard at DHS because we love our acronyms (see, we used one in this sentence!). Here are a few simple ways to avoid using acronyms:

- Look for words or phrases you can use instead. For example, instead of "DCFS," you could say "the division."
- Ask yourself if the acronym is necessary in the context of what you are writing, especially when the larger word or phrase you have turned into an acronym is only mentioned once.. For example, do you need the acronym "EIDT" in the following sentence? The Department of Human Services is launching a new program called the Early Intervention Day Treatment program (EIDT). This program helps pre-school age children.
- If you are creating a new program and want to shorten the title into an acronym, make sure the acronym is easy to understand before finalizing the program name.

Glossary of DHS terms and acronyms.

We've included a glossary of acronyms and terms, plus recommendations on how to use them. This is done to provide you information – not to encourage you to use all of these acronyms.

A

- **Acronyms**: DHS is an acronym of the **D**epartment of **H**uman **S**ervices. DYS is an **acronym** of the **D**ivision of **Y**outh **S**ervices. Always attempt to limit the use of acronyms and abbreviations, aside from the subsequent references to the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS). If you're making only one reference to the division, department, or office only **do not** list the acronym as that first reference.
- **A/N**: Abuse/Neglect; used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **A/O**: Alleged Offender; used by the Division of Children and Family Services
- **A/V**: Alleged Victim; used by the Division of Children and Family Services
- **AAA:** Area Agency on Aging. These regional offices provide services such as "Meals on Wheels," Senior Centers, In-Home Personal Care Services, etc.
- **AABD**: Aid to the Aged, Blind, or Disabled.
- **AAFP**: American Academy of Family Physicians.

- **AAIMHA**R: Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **AAL**: Attorney Ad Litem.
- **AAMC**: Association of American Medical Colleges, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **AAP**: American Academy of Pediatrics, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **ABC**: Arkansas Better Chance program.
- **ABCD III**: Assuring Better Child Health Development III.
- **ABCSS**: Arkansas Better Chance for School Success.
- **ACA**: Affordable Care Act.
- **ACCPA**: Arkansas child Care Providers Association, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **ACE**: Always Committed to Excellence award given to Division of Children and Family Services Central Office staff for on the job performance.
- **ACEs**: Adverse Childhood Experiences, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services
- **ACF**: Administration for Children and Families.
- **ACH**: Arkansas Children's Hospital.
- **ACPAC:** Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **ADA**: Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **ADJ**: Adjudication or Adjudication hearing as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **AECA**: Arkansas Early Childhood Association.
- **AFCARS**: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System
- **AFMC:** Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care is a nonprofit organization that the DHS often partners and contracts with to provide outreach, education, and analysis services for clients in agency programs.
- **ALF**: Assisted Living Facilities are a Home and Community-based Service that provides assisted living services in a residential setting to aged, blind, and disabled individuals 21 years of age and older.
- **ANSWER**: computer program, used in conjunction with the ACES/FACTS to store public assistance case information.
- **API:** Arkansas Health Care Payment Improvement Initiative
- **APN**: Advanced Practice Nurse.
- **APPLA**: Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement, as using by the Division of Children and Family Services
- **ARChoices**: A Home and Community-Based waiver program providing non-institutional long term care services to individuals as an alternative to institutionalization. Recipients must be age 21 and over, have a physical disability.

- **ARKids First** (1st): Arkansas Kids First (State Child Health Insurance Program)
- **AS**: Adoption Specialist; used in Division of Children and Family Services
- **ASFA**: Adoption and Safe Families Act
- **ASH**: Arkansas State Hospital.
- **ASP**: Arkansas State Police
- **Arkansas Department of Human Services (first instance)**: It's okay to use Department of Human Services, especially for internal documents or information going to an in-state person, business or group. **Subsequent**: DHS or the Department.
- **Arkansas possessive**: By law the possessive form of Arkansas is Arkansas's.
- **Arkansas abbreviation**: Always use **Ark**. If you're abbreviating Arkansas in text, aside from a mailing address, which then becomes **AR**.
- **African American vs. black**: Use African American.
- **Among vs. between**:
    - **Between** introduces two items (You don't have to choose between being a foster parent and being a mentor*)*.
    - **Among** introduces more than two items. (Your volunteer hours can be divided between non-profit, education, and faith-based efforts.)
- **Attorney, lawyer**: An attorney is someone who is empowered to act for another. A lawyer is a licensed person admitted to practice in a court system. You can also use the term counsel.

B

- **BB:** Better Beginnings.
- **Because vs. since**: use **because** to denote a specific cause-effect relationship. (You qualify for the assistance because of your income level.) Use **since** when the first event in a sequence led logically to the second but was not the direct cause. (They chose to become foster parents, since they had seen the special television program.)
- **Bi-monthly**: Means every other month. The term semi-monthly means twice a month.
- **Bi-weekly**: Means every other week. Semi-weekly means twice a week.
- **Buy-in**: Refers to premium paid by insured Medicare individuals for Part B Medicare. The Division of Medical Services pays for this premium through a "buy-in" agreement with Social Security for most Medicaid-eligible individuals.

C

- **CA:** County Administrator
- **CAC:** Child Advocacy Center
- **CACD:** Crimes Against Children Division.
- **CACFP**: Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- **CANS/FAST:** Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths/Family Advocacy and Support Tool

- **CAPTA:** Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.
- **CASA:** Court Appointed Special Advocate
- **Capital**: The city where the headquarters of state or national government offices are located.
- **Capitol**: A building where the offices and meeting rooms of high-ranking government officials are located.
- **CCDBG**: Child Care and Development Block Grant, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **CCDF**: Child Care and Development Fund, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **CDA**: Child Development Associate Certificate, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **COPA**: Child Outcome Planning and Administration, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **CFSR:** Child and Family Service Review.
- **CHIP**: Children's Health Innovation Program; as used by Division of Medical Services, County Operations. These are some of our ARKids A, and all of our ARKids B categories under Arkansas Medicaid.
- **CHRIS:** Children's Reporting Information System; as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **CMHC:** Community Mental Health Center.
- **CMS**: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.
- **CNA**: Certified Nurse Aide.
- **CME:** Continuing medical expenses**.** May also refer to VA reimbursements for those expenses when used in the Division of County Operations context (E-451 #9).
- **CoC**: Change of Circumstances, a change that occurs in a person's life or situation that could affect their Medicaid eligibility or eligibility for other government programs. Examples include change of job, change of residence, or a change in people living in the household.
- **COLA**: Cost of Living Adjustment, refers to the annual increase in Social Security benefits given in December of each year.
- **COR:** Compliance Outcome Report.
- **CPCI**: Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative.
- **CQI**: Continuous Quality Improvement.
- **CSR**: Cost-sharing Reductions, a discount that lowers the amount you have to pay out-of-pocket for deductibles, coinsurance/copayments. You can get this reduction if you get health insurance through the federal marketplace. As used by the Division of County Operations.
- **Commissioner**: Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when used as a formal title.
- **Committee**: Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when part of a formal name.
- **Court names:** Capitalize the full proper names of courts at all levels. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas, Arkansas Supreme Court, Little Rock District Court.

D

- **D/N:** Dependency/Neglect, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services
- **Division**: sub-unit of the Department of Human Services. There are seven divisions. Each division is known within the agency by their acronyms; however, preferred second use is to avoid the acronym and use division instead or another work around as included in the entries below.
- **DAABHS**: Acronym for the Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services. Preferred second using is division. However, may write around acronym by referring to staff, units, or describing programs.
    - **Correct**: The Division of Aging, Adult and Behavioral Health (DAABHS) serves thousands of Arkansans across the state.
    - **Correct**: The division's programs for older Arkansans can help them live in their communities longer.
    - **Correct**: Aging and Adult programs are focused on improving quality of life.
    - **Correct**: Behavioral Health staff has been revising the regulations to better serve Arkansans.
- **DCCECE**: Acronym for the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Acronym should never be used on first instance and should always be introduced in parentheses following the full division name. Preferred second use is division. However, may write around referring to staff, or units.
    - **Correct**: The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) made the policy change over the summer.
    - **Correct**: Early Childhood Education staff focuses on children's educational needs at different states.
    - **Correct**: The division's licensing unit regularly checks for violations.
- **DCFS**: Acronym for the Division of Children and Family Services. Acronym should never be used on the first instance and should always be introduced in parentheses following the full division name. Preferred second use is division. However, may write around by referring to staff or units.
    - **Correct**: The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) views reunification of children with their parents a priority when the result would be safe and appropriate for the child.
    - **Correct**: Children and Family Services staff is expected to place a child's safety and well-being first among priorities.

- **Correct**: The division's investigators will interview parents, reporters, and children to determine if the home poses a safety risk for the child.

- **DCO**: Acronym for the Division of County Operations. Preferred second use is the division. However, may write around by referring to staff or units.
  - **Correct**: The Division of County Operations (DCO) is responsible for administration of local county offices across the state.
  - **Correct**: County Operations staff is compiling the data from the Medicaid program.
  - **Correct**: The division is responsible for handling Medicaid eligibility determinations.
- **DD**: developmental delay.
- **DDS**: Acronym for the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. Preferred second use is division. However, may write around acronym by referring to staff, units, or programs.
  - **Correct**: The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) encourages employers to consider hiring individuals with intellectual disabilities.
  - **Correct**: The division encourages families to consider whether applying for the developmental disabilities Medicaid waiver might be in their child's best interest.
  - **Correct**: Developmental Disabilities Services staff are proud to support employment opportunities for those in the community and living on the campuses of Human Development Centers across the state.
- **DMS:** Acronym for the Division of Medical Services. Preferred second use is division. However, may write around acronym by referring to staff, units, or programs.
  - **Correct**: The Division of Medical Services (DMS) monitors data regarding access to healthcare for Medicaid clients.
  - **Correct**: The division encourages families to consider whether ARKids First might be a resource for their children.
  - **Correct**: Medical Services staff encourages parents to check their children's immunizations, which are covered by ARKids First.
- **DR**: Differential Response, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **DPSQA:** Acronym for the Division of Provider Services & Quality Assurance. Preferred second use is division. However, may write around acronym by referring to staff, units, or programs.
  - **Correct**: The Division of Provider Services & Quality Assurance (DPSQA) is the regulatory arm of Medicaid programs within DHS.
  - **Correct**: The division can conduct enhanced monitoring of providers and programs to ensure integrity in operations.

- **Correct**: Provider Services staff coordinate with providers to ensure Medicaid regulations are being followed within each program.

- **DSB:** Acronym for the Division of Services for the Blind. Preferred second use is division. However, may write around acronym by referring to staff, units, or programs.
- **DV**: Domestic violence, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.

E

- **EEF –** Eligibility and Enrollment Framework as used by the Division of County Operations. **Should not be used in communications materials.**
- **EHS:** Early Head Start, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **EIS:** Early Intervention Services, as used by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.
- **EITC:** Earned Income Tax Credit, as used by the Division of County Operations.
- **EPSDT:** Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.

F

- **FINS:** Family in Need of Services, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **Fiscal year**: The 12-month period that a corporation or governmental body uses for bookkeeping purposes.
- **FMA**: Family Member Allowance, the amount of income an institutionalized spouse can give to a dependent family member other than the community spouse (see CS above). As used by the Division of County Operations.
- **FSW**: Family service worker, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **Full time, full-time**: Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier. FOR EXAMPLE: He works full time. She has a full-time job.

G

- **GAL: Guardian Ad Litem, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.**
- **GED**: A trademark abbreviation for General Education Development. GED should be used as an adjective, not as a noun.
- **GEM:** Going the Extra Mile award, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services, is awarded to field staff who are nominated by supervisors and peers throughout the state.
- **General assembly**: Capitalize when it is the formal name for the ruling or consultative body of an organization. We prefer to use term legislature.
- **Governor**: Capitalize and abbreviate as Gov. or Govs. When used as a formal title before one or more names.

H

- **Handicapped**: This word is not preferred. Use developmental disability, developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, or physical disabilities, depending on the nature of the disability.
- **HCBS**: Home and Community-Based Services; includes ARChoices, Assisted Living Facilities and Developmental Disabilities waiver services.
- **HZA: Hornby Zeller Associates**

I.

- **ICF/IID:** Intermediate Care Facilities for Individual with Intellectual Disabilities.
- **ICPC:** Interstate Compact on Placement of Children, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **Infant**: Applicable to children through 12 months old.
- **irregardless**: This is a double negative. It's not a real word. Never use the term. Regardless is the term to use.
- **IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Federal law that sets standards for educational requirements, rights for students with disabilities.
- **IEP**: Individualized Education Plan. An education plan that is updated annually for students with developmental/intellectual/physical disabilities that incorporates their reasonable accommodations, education goals, and transitional plans. Requires team decision-making that often incorporates.
- **IFS**: Intensive Family Services, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services

J

- **Juvenile delinquent**: This term is not preferred. Court-ordered youth, teen, or student preferred.
- **JDC**: Juvenile detention center. These are maintained by counties not the State of Arkansas.
- **Juvenile correctional facility:** The Division of Youth Services manages and oversees one such facility in Dermott. This facility is for older youth who have been court-ordered into the division's custody. It is a secure facility, where youth receive treatment and education in a more restricted, secure environment.
- **Juvenile Treatment Center**: Within the Division of Youth Services, juveniles who are ordered into the division's custody by the courts reside at Juvenile Treatment Centers for therapy and rehabilitation. There are six such facilities across the state.

L

- **Legislative titles**: Use Rep., Reps., Sen. and Sens. as formal titles before one or more names. Spell out and lowercase representative and senator in other uses.

- **Legislature**: Capitalize when preceded by the name of a state: **Example**: the Arkansas Legislature. Retain capitalization when the state name is dropped.
- **Lieutenant Governor**: Capitalize and abbreviate as Lt. Gov. or Lt. Govs.

M

- **MAGI:** Modified Adjust Gross Income, this income calculation is one of the ways that new Medicaid categories (resulting from the Affordable Care Act) are distinguished from Traditional Medicaid categories. As used most commonly by Division of County Operations.
- **MDT:** Multi-Disciplinary Team, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **Medicaid**: A federal-state program that helps pay for health care for the needy, aged, blind, and disabled, and for low-income families with children. DHS oversees this program for the State.
- **Medicare**: The federal health care insurance program for people aged 65 and over and for the disabled. Eligibility is based mainly on eligibility for Social Security. DHS does not oversee this program.
- **MMIS**: Medicaid Management Information System
- **MRT**: Medical Review Team, a unit of the Division of County Operations, which determines disability for programs where disability is an eligibility factor.

N

- **Numerals**: In general, spell out the numbers one through nine. After that, use the number.

O

- **OCC:** Office of Chief Counsel.
- **OCCE:** Office of Communications and Community Engagement.
- **OLTC**: Office of Long Term Care.

P

- **PASSE:** Provider-Led Arkansas Shared Savings Entity
- **PC:** Probable Cause or Probable Cause Hearing, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **PCP**: Primary Care Physician/Provider, the doctor the client has chosen to provide the general medical care for everyone on a Medicaid case. As used by the Divisions of County Operations and Medical Services.
- **PCMH:** Patient Centered Medical Home, as used by the Division of Medical Services.
- **PERS:** Personal Emergency Response System.
- **PIP**: Program Improvement Plan, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **PMPM:** Per Member Per Month, as used by the Division of Medical Services.
- **PRT:** Permanency Round Tables, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services**.**

Q

- **QA**: Quality assurance. Can be a process or a group of reviews who check a statistically valid sample of households, individuals, currently participating in a specific program and of those participants whose participation was denied or terminated. The objectives of quality assurance reviews are to provide a basis for determining error rates; timely, continuous flow of information to inform corrective action needs; a basis for establishing state's liability for errors that exceed national standards; and basis for establishing eligibility for enhanced funding.

R

- **RSPMI:** Rehabilitative Services for Persons with Mental Illness. Previously a program to provide mental health services to Medicaid clients. This program was discontinued on June 30, 2017.

S

- **SAMHSA:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- **Senior citizen**: Use the term sparingly. As an alternative, use older Arkansan or aging adult or Arkansas senior.
- **SIDS:** Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- **SMP:** Senior Medicare Patrol
- **SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- **SSI:** Supplemental Security Income, financial assistance authorized under Title VXI for aged, blind, and disabled persons, including disabled children. The program is administered by the Social Security Administration. Recipients are considered public assistance recipients and are automatically eligible for Medicaid and some services under Title XX.
- **SSN:** Social Security Number.
- **SUIDS:** Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome

T

- **TANF:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- **TEA:** Temporary Employment Assistance.
- **TEFRA:** Tax Equity and Financial Responsibility Act program, as used by the Division of Medical Services.
- **TFC:** Therapeutic Foster Care, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **TF-CBT:** Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.
- **Title XIX**: Refers to the Medicaid program, which is authorized under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

- **TPL**: Third Party Liability, refers to health insurance and other funds that defray the cost of medical services as used by the Division of County Operations.
- **TPR:** Termination of Parental Rights, as used by the Division of Children and Family Services.

U

- **USDA**: United States Department of Agriculture.

V

- **VA:** Veterans Affairs/Veterans Administration, federal office**.**

W

- **WIC:** Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. Administered by the Department of Health.

Y

- **Youth**: If possible, avoid using the term. Instead use, kids, child, children, young people, teen, student. However, with the Division of Youth Services (court-ordered into custody) youth is acceptable, given the context.

Z