HUD's Web Publication Procedures and Style Guide

Section 1: Compliance with Laws

DigitalGov provides a [Checklist of Federal Web Requirements](#) that can help you ensure your web pages are compliant with laws and regulations. We cover the main areas of compliance here, but you can learn more about each at [DigitalGov](#).

A. **Accessibility:** All federal agencies are required by law to make their websites accessible to people with disabilities. HUD's standard templates have been designed to ensure that all federal accessibility requirements are met. Under no circumstances should templates be altered, since--in doing so--the pages may not be compliant with the accessibility requirements. Specific guidelines for keeping pages accessible are in *Appendix B*.

B. Privacy (Internet only): HUD is concerned about ensuring the privacy of individuals who visit our Internet websites.

> 1. Each page on HUD's website, including the front page of each web-based application, must include a link to HUD's [official privacy policy](#).
>
> 2. Use of "session cookies" (programming that retains information about a user only during that particular user session) is permissible.
>
> 3. Use of "persistent cookies" (programming that retains information about a specific user, from session to session) is prohibited. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to the Deputy Secretary, and a copy of the Deputy Secretary's written approval must be provided to the Departmental Web Managers and to the Chief Information Officer before persistent cookies are implemented.

C. Records Management: HUD has established a separate website, [archives.hud.gov](#) to serve as the official record of web content to be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration ([NARA](#)). [Read more about web records](#).

D. Copyrights and Attribution: As a rule, all content--including written materials and graphics--on HUD's Internet websites is in the public domain. Anyone can use or link to any material written or created for HUD's Internet websites.

> 1. Graphics, with the exception of the official emblem, used on the website should be owned by HUD and, therefore, in the public domain. If an organization purchases graphics for the website--and the purchase agreement specifies that the vendor retains the copyright--then that fact should be noted on the page and in the text box (alt tag).
>
> 2. If an organization publishes written materials reprinted from outside sources, the Web Manager must have written authorization from the holder of the copyright to publish the materials on HUD's website and the copyright must be noted on each page of the material.
>
> 3. With the exception of blogposts, personal attribution (e.g., names of individuals or groups of HUD employees, contractors, or grantees) is not permitted on HUD's web pages.

4. Photos and graphics developed by grantees or contractors for HUD become the property of the Department and, therefore, are in the public domain.

E. Paperwork Reduction and Paperwork Elimination

1. Official forms that are posted on HUD's website must display the official OMB clearance number and conform to all Department policies on design and approval of official forms.

2. Official forms must be posted in [HUDClips](#), HUD's compendium of handbooks and forms. The only exceptions to this rule are forms that are incorporated in an online submission application.

3. Whenever possible, forms should be provided in fillable format, to make it easy for customers to use.

F: Open Government Directive: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued the [Open Government Directive](#) (OGD) on December 8, 2009. The OGD required each federal agency to:
- ☐ Establish an open government page on their website
- ☐ Draft an open government plan and get citizen comments
- ☐ Incorporate those comments into their final plan by April 7, 2010

HUD uses [Switchboard](#) to gather citizen and employee feedback. Requests to launch a forum must be submitted to the Office of Strategic Planning and Management. Programs must commit to reviewing each idea that comes into the forum for potential implementation and to posting a response to each idea.

G. Plain Writing Act of 2010: [The Plain Writing Act of 2010](#) requires the federal government to write all new publications, forms, and publicly distributed documents in a "clear, concise, well-organized" manner. HUD is required to
- ☐ Create a plain writing section of its website
- ☐ Follow OMB–issued Guidance
- ☐ Follow the Federal Plain Language Guidelines.

H. No Fear Act: The [No Fear Act](#) requires that all federal public websites* comply with the existing No Fear Act Notification and Federal Employee Anti–Discrimination and Retaliation of 2002 (No Fear Act Public Law No. 107–174). Organizations should review the relevant law to ensure that their public websites meet the full range of requirements. HUD's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity publishes [No Fear Act Data](#) on the 10th day of each quarter.

Section 2: Compliance with Management Controls
A. Templates: HUD uses a standard template for all web pages, both Internet and intranet. The templates do a number of things for the Department:

1. They make the Department look like "one HUD."

2. They enable the Department to ensure that all web pages meet accessibility, privacy, and other requirements.

3. When the OPA Web Team needs to make changes to the templates, all pages are updated quickly and easily.

4. All HUD web pages -- both those on HUD servers and those housed on outside servers -- must follow the standard HUD templates.

B. Content Date: Content must be dated to help us ensure that it is current.
The date that the ***content was last updated*** must appear at the bottom of each page on HUD.gov and HUD@work, and all HUD microsites. This date must be changed every time a significant content change occurs.

C. Testing Web-Based Applications: Web-based applications must be cleared through the HUD Test Center before they are posted to production.

Section 3: Content Rules
A. Headquarters and Field Content Parameters: To ensure that HUD's websites are as concise and effective as possible, it is important to avoid duplication of effort.

1. Headquarters office content generally should be "generic" or "Department-wide" in nature.

2. Headquarters offices should post content only within their organizational purview.

3. Information and services -- including local information -- that can come from national systems must come from those systems if at all possible. It is the responsibility of the Headquarters offices to ensure that local information generated by systems is presented in a customer-friendly manner.

4. Field office content should be exclusively information and services that only can be gathered and presented by local offices.

5. Local program office information appearing on state pages must comply with standard program templates developed with the Headquarters program offices.

Any additions or changes to the local program office templates must be vetted through the Headquarters program managers. Once the Headquarters program office has approved an addition or change to the local program office templates, the Web Manager for that Headquarters organization will notify OPA.

6. Local versions of national (generic) content are appropriate only to highlight local exceptions.

B. Audience and Purpose: For every page on HUD's websites, the audience and purpose must be clear and unambiguous. In most cases, a brief introductory sentence or paragraph should be used to describe the purpose of the page. As a rule, a web page on our Internet websites should not attempt to address both "citizens" and "partners," since these two audiences have very different perspectives.

C. Writing and Organization: Every page on HUD's websites must meet HUD's Web Writing Standards, *Appendix C*. HUD uses plain language both for Internet and intranet content. Writing tips can be found at: www.plainlanguage.gov. View plain language training.

D. Tone and Voice: Web content should be conversational, as if you were speaking to the person.
1. Web content (sentences, paragraphs, link "teasers") should be written in second person (for example, "We'll show you how to use this page"). Segues between major content sections, too, should be conversational and in second person ("you").

2. Web content should be written in the active voice.

☐ Do: The web team wrote this document.
☐ Don't: This document was written by the web team.

3. Though it's not necessary to use complete sentences, it is essential to use correct grammar. Complete sentences should be ended with a period.

E. Spelling and Proofing: All web pages must be checked for spelling and grammatical errors before they are posted. All content should be reviewed manually, as well, since automated spellcheckers do not catch every mistake or problem.

F. State Pages (Internet Only): To ensure that citizens across the country have the opportunity to find the same high quality information and services, no matter where they live, the local information or "state pages" on HUD's Internet websites must follow a strict template, both in layout and in content. Specific guidelines for state pages can be found in *Appendix D*.

G. Good Stories (Internet Only): "Good Stories" are short write-ups about good things that are happening with HUD funds, programs, or initiatives and good things that are happening in communities, even if they aren't using HUD funds. They are an important feature on HUD's Internet websites, and can be used when linked from "learn more" on home page feature slides. Guidelines for developing and posting Good Stories can be found in *Appendix E*.

H. HUD@work Features "Features" are short paragraphs, normally used on the front page.

1. Features should serve as teasers, providing very brief descriptions of new initiatives, new developments, or updates of high interest.

2. Features should change often.

3. Features normally should be no more than 3-5 lines in length; and normally appear in the features section and should not exceed 25 lines in length.

4. Your features may contain a link to more information.

I. HUD.gov Featured News

1. Features should be no more and 1-2 lines.

2. Features may contain a link to more information such as a good story or news item.

3. There should be no more than 3 featured news items listed at a time.

J. HUD@work Highlights: Highlights are *one-line* links, normally used to bring attention to new or updated information or a "hot" topic or issue. Highlights should be no more than one line. Highlights should be changed frequently (at least monthly; more often, if possible).

K. HUD.gov In-Focus items may be 1 or two lines normally used to bring attention to new or updated information or a hot topic or issue. There should be no more than 5 items in the in-focus section.

L. Links and Teasers:

1. Links normally should be created as bullets underneath the narrative that explains them -- not within the text -- so they don't break up the text. For example:
HUD homes can be very good buys. Find out how you can buy a HUD home in your area.
How to buy a HUD home
HUD homes in your area

2. In most cases, links should be the same exact words as the page header of the linked page, for example:
Find lists of HUD homes for sale.

3. If additional information is needed to help the visitor understand why he/she would want to visit that link or how he/she can use the information found at the link, a "teaser" may follow the link title. Teasers should be short -- never more than 2 lines.

Example: The Housing Choice Voucher Program allows you to find your own place to rent, using the voucher to pay for all or part of the rent.

4. If you are listing more than 5 links, normally you should break them into groups under sub-headers.

M. Time Zones: For events (broadcasts, webcasts, meetings, conferences, conference calls, etc.) that span time zones, provide both the Eastern Time (ET) and the Pacific Time (PT).

That will help eliminate confusion for people living in other time zones.
Example: Webcast on SuperNOFA overview: 11:00 a.m. ET (8:00 a.m. PT).

N. Phone Numbers and addresses:
Phone numbers will be shown as follows:
Example: (555) 555-5555
If there is an extension, the phone number will appear like this:
Example: (555) 555-5555, ext. 55
Office addresses and main phone numbers should be created as a separate HTML item. The HTML item must be changed anytime that addressed is referenced, so that changes to the HTML item will carry across the website.

O. Translations (Internet Only): The most-used web content for citizens on HUD.gov is translated for espanol.HUD.gov.

1. OPA is not responsible for translating individual program office content that does not fall within established priorities.

2. Any translations not provided by OPA's web team will need to be reviewed by OPA before posting. If needed, translations will be edited in order to maintain the overall consistency HUD is striving for within its multilingual web content.

3. When new pages are developed, notify OPA, who will determine if they should be translated.

4. If content that has been translated is changed significantly -- updated or expanded--in English, notify OPA to review the updated translations for espanol.HUD.gov.

P. News Releases (Internet Only): News releases are posted only by Public Affairs, in Headquarters, or the officially designated Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) in the Regions.

1. Whenever possible, ***the national news release will serve as the only news release on a particular subject***. So, for example, if a news release announces grants, then the state pages will link to the national news release to showcase local grant recipients.

2. If Regional PAOs choose to alter a national news release to give it local emphasis, then they are responsible for ensuring that any subsequent changes to the national release are picked up in the local release.

3. On state pages, links to both local news releases and grant announcements will appear on a Newsroom page. The Newsroom link on the state home page will be the fourth link under Featured News, after the three news releases, and will link to a page that contains both news releases and grant announcements, which normally take a press release format.

4. **Rotating Slide Show (HUD.gov):** The dimensions of the slideshow images are 400X225. Captions should be as follows:
a. Add descriptive text to the left of the image.
b. Header in larger font
c. Descriptive caption text in smaller font
d. Learn more button (alt text for button must be descriptive: Learn more about…)

Q. Photo Galleries: "Photo Galleries" are slide shows that showcase the many ways HUD funds help communities. They are photo essays with short captions. The goal is to do a photo gallery for every state. In some cases, a state may have several photo galleries, organized by city or region. Photo galleries also are appropriate for Headquarters pages.

1. The technical support contractor must resize photos for photo galleries for state pages. Regional Web Managers should submit the photo in full size (whatever format was used by the digital camera, preferably 1024 X 768) and allow the contractor to resize them.

2. Well-written captions are extremely important. Write at an elementary reading level. Avoid citing specific HUD programs by name or number, since program names and numbers are not meaningful to the audience.

3. Captions should be no more than 250 characters.

4. Captions must contain both the city and state name.

5. Photo galleries normally should be 5-10 photos.

6. Each photo in a photo gallery must have alt tags that describe the photo.

7. Choose a selection of photos that, when grouped together in the photo gallery, are interesting and show the breadth of HUD's programs. Avoid a series of photos of

buildings. "Before and after" shots are a good way to show buildings. Photos with people in front of buildings or playing at community centers, etc. are good.

8. They will reside normally on the local "library" pages.

R. Print Publications: Print publications must be posted in PDF format or reformatted so they are web-friendly. Print publications must follow the same approval processes of any other web document. If you have questions about making a PDF accessible, contact your Web Manager.

S. Newsletters: Print materials do not read well on computer screens. If a HUD office prints and distributes a hard copy newsletter and, as a secondary way of distributing it, wants to post that newsletter on the website, we will post it in PDF format. The office must provide an electronic copy of the newsletter to post. If the office wants to publish a newsletter on the web as the only or primary way of distributing it, then it must go into the HUD template and be published as a web page. Again, information contained in PDF files also must be posted in a text file, to ensure it is accessible.

1. Newsletters and anything in PDF (or Publisher, etc.) should have a text alternative for 508 compliance for people with disabilities. You must provide a text alternative version also. To comply, you may post two versions--a simple word document can be used as the text alternative version and the print version (PDF) can include graphics and photos.

Section 4: Web Page Design Rules
A. Functionality:
1. **Internet:** All HUD Internet web pages -- including web-based applications -- should work across all platforms. Specifically, they must function in Internet Explorer 4.x and later, Google Chrome, Firefox, and text browsers. They also must function in PC, Macintosh, and Linux platforms.

2. Intranet: Intranet pages must be accessible in the Department's standard browser.

3. Both HUD.gov and HUD@work templates have been designed to meet this standard; so as long as you don't try to alter them in any way, you will be compliant.

B. Web-Based Applications: Applications (interactive systems and services) that appear on HUD's websites must follow all of the rules and style standards in this document, as well as all application development standards issued by the OCIO. Any deviations from these standards must obtain prior approval from the Web Management Officer and his/her designee.

1. When developing a web-based application, be sure to coordinate with the organization Web Manager and the OPA Web Team. They can provide guidance to ensure that your application will work properly on HUD's website, and they'll be ready to link to your application in all the appropriate places on the site.

2. If the application is designed to use "persistent cookies," the application owner must obtain permission from the Deputy Secretary to use that technology. Copies of the Deputy Secretary's approval must be provided to the Departmental Web managers and the OCIO.

3. On the first screen of an Internet application, include a link to HUD's Internet home page and espanol.HUD.gov. On the first screen of an intranet application, include a link to HUD@work's home page.

4. Web-based applications should include a mail-to link or post a telephone number that users can use to ask questions and report problems.

5. Web-based applications must include standard metadata on the front page of the application.

C. Standard Colors: HUD uses a palette of standard colors to ensure the common look and feel of its websites. For HUD@work:

1. Always use a white page background and black text (R:0 G:0 B:0, #000000).

2. For graphics and other color features, use: red (R: 153 G:0 B:0, #990000); teal (R:0 G: 102 B: 102, #006666), gold (R: 255 G: 153 B:0, #FF9900), blue (R: 51 G:0 B:0, #330066), and green (R: 51 G: 102 B:0, #336600).

3. Use approved background color (R:255, G:245, B:220, #FFF5dc) for table cells. To improve readability alternate with a white background on every other row.

For HUD.gov, please see the HUD.gov Style and HTML Guide.

D. Standard Fonts: For HUD@work, the standard font and size used for all basic text is Verdana size 2. The Verdana font was designed specifically for on-screen display, and it is rendered identically across all platforms and web-browsers. For the greatest cross-platform consistency, always use the following family of fonts: Verdana, Geneva, Arial, Helvetica, sans serif. (The HUD.gov template displays slideshow text in Times New Roman)

1. By default, all text entered into the content section of HUD's templates is automatically displayed in size 2.

2. Size 1 text should be used for all text in tables, lists, content boxes, and captions.

For HUD.gov, please see the HUD.gov Style and HTML Guide.

E. Standard Headings: Headings can be used to help organize information. For HUD@work the three predefined heading formats that may be used are:
☐ Heading 2 (for document subheadings),
☐ Heading 3 (for section headings) and
☐ Heading 4 (for section subheadings).

For HUD.gov, please see the HUD.gov Style and HTML Guide.

F. Case:

1. Topics and headings (page headings, sub-headings, and section dividers) should be in title case. In title case, the first word and all principal words are capitalized, e.g. HUD Homes for Sale. Title case applies to:
   a. Document titles (in the <TITLE> tag)
   b. Page headings (in <H1> tag)
   c. Page subheadings (in <H2> tag)
   d. Section headings (in <H3> tag)
   e. Section subheadings (in <H4> tag)
   f. Inline headings (in <B> tag)

g. Content box titles
h. Content item titles (but not delta links)
i. Topics

2. Highlights and other links should be in sentence case. In sentence case, the first word of a sentence and all proper nouns in the sentence are capitalized, e.g., HUD homes for sale. Sentence case applies to:

a. List items
b. Links
c. Table headings
d.Button text

G. Italics: As a rule, HUD does not use italics for headers, sub-headers, links, or captions. In rare cases, italics may be used to add emphasis to a word within narrative.

H. Page Headers: Page headers (not to be confused with the "page title" that appears up in the blue bar at the top of the screen) are extremely important features of each web page. They should communicate-–at a glance—the subject of the page. They also will serve as the text for any links to that page. So choose the wording of your page headers carefully.

1. Page headers should be short-–normally no more than 3-5 words.

2. Page headers should be no more than one line.

3. Page headers should use words that the target audience would be sure to understand.

I. Text: Break text into short segments. Use headers or section dividers to help people get to the sections they want, quickly. Allow white space (blank areas) on your pages. White space provides eye relief, makes items easier to find, and creates a more attractive page. Put your most important information at the top of your page.

J. Front Page: The front page of a section or "home page" should be short and to the point (no more than 2 screens). For the most part, you should use it to highlight current or important developments and to help people get to other parts of the section.

K. Page Length:

1. Front pages, topic level pages, and other pages that serve primarily as navigation (i.e., links to other pages) normally should be no more than two screens.

2. Document level pages may be longer; but should not exceed 5 screens.

L. Topics: Topics should be chosen carefully, with all due consideration for the audience being served.

1. When possible, choose words that are--or could be--common across federal websites.
2. Words used to describe topics must be easily understood by the audience and should not be ambiguous.
3. Topics for each major component of the websites--whether state pages, Headquarters office pages, or organization pages on HUD@work will be carried through the entire section.

4. Generally, each section should have no more than 6-10 topics. To the extent possible, all your topics should show in the first screen.

5. Topic titles should be short and punchy--normally no more than 3 words. Topic titles should fit on one line, if possible.

6. When possible, Headquarters offices should use the same wording for common topics (such as "about us").

7. Normally, a section should be no more than 4 layers deep. This means you need to think hard about how you aggregate information into topics and sub-topics. Your audience will appreciate your efforts.

M. Content Boxes: Use "content boxes" to guide users to related links, to highlight important information, or to provide additional facts. Standard boxes appear on the front page of or [HUD.gov](HUD.gov) to highlight Secretarial priorities and each program (alternately). Program offices may request customized boxes for their own front pages. Customized boxes should contain evergreen content that changes infrequently.

N. Anchor Tags Or "Jump To's:" In some cases, anchor tags--which allow the user to "jump" farther down on the page--can be a good design practice. However, remember that if someone hits "print," they'll print the whole page--not just the section they jumped to. A better practice is to create a series of related web pages. This may be easier for the user to handle and enable a user to print out specific pieces of content instead of a large volume of information that they do not want or need.

O. Highlighting "New" Items (Internet Only): We will not use a "new" icon to highlight information on HUD's Internet or Intranet sites.

P. Standard Links (Internet Only): Only the social media icons prescribed in the [HUD.gov](HUD.gov) template icons will appear on each document level page on HUD's Internet sites.

Q. Page Title: The "page title" appears in the title bar of the visitor's browser, as the label in bookmarks to the page, and in search results lists and statistics reports. A page title should be concise and meaningful to the audience.

R. Tables: Tables are useful to create concise layouts and to create multi-column lists efficiently.

1. Tables should be used to display tabular data and lists in an organized manner.

2. Define tables with headings and with column and row labels to facilitate navigation for people with disabilities.

2. Do not use borders on tables, since borders may display differently in different browsers and platforms.

4. When possible, use the approved background colors to enhance readability.

5. Do not use tables to isolate or highlight text on a page. Use content boxes and other template features to highlight important content.

S. Frames: HUD does not use frames on any pages of its websites. Frames add unnecessary weight to a web page, making it more difficult for people with slow modems to access the page.

T. Crumb trails: Crumb trails will appear below the top navigation bar. The text for the crumb trail should describe the existing page. The trail will be determined by where the page is located within the Universal Content Management System (on HUD.gov).

Section 5: File Rules
A. HTML (HyperText Markup Language) Coding: HUD's templates are designed to handle a wide range of web page design requirements. In rare cases, you may need to work with the HTML code of a web page in order to display the content cleanly and correctly. If you work with the HTML code, the page must continue to meet all standards and requirements in this document, with particular emphasis on the accessibility (Section 508) requirements.

B. JAVA and JavaScript: If JAVA and JavaScript are used, the page must remain Section 508 compliant and work across all platforms and web browsers. In addition, the web page must be coded in such a way that it will still function even if a visitor has disabled JAVA and JavaScript on the web browser.

C. File Names: All web page files should have short, meaningful names. In Web Center, file names cannot be longer than 30 characters, including the file extension.

> 1. Long titles should be abbreviated. For example, the "local homeless assistance agencies" web page has a file name of hmlsagens.cfm.

> 2. Known acronyms can be utilized in the name.

> 3. When selecting a name, consider how the name may be perceived. People do look at URLs and may misinterpret the meaning or intent of a file name.

> 4. All file and folder names should be alphanumeric.

> 5. Spaces cannot be used in a name, and you should **not** use underscores or hyphens. (It is difficult to see underscores when they appear as a link in an email or in print.)

> 6. **Case:** When you are entering a web page address in a browser, enter the address in the correct case (lower case, upper case or a combination). To avoid any confusion or problems, all file names and folder names on HUD's Internet and intranet sites are in **lower case**.
> ☐ **Do use:** /morereleases
> ☐ **Don't use**: /MoreReleases

> 7. **Updating/Replacing Files:** When a Document file or Image file is to be updated or replaced by changing the name, you must expire or delete the original document to avoid customers being able to access obsolete content.

D. File Name Extensions:
E. Folder Names: To add folders to your area of the content management system, submit a request through your account liaison. Use clear and concise names to label the folders in which the web page files are stored.

☐ **Do use:** volunteering
☐ **Don't use:** federalvolunteerprograms

F. File Types:
>   1. Internet:
>>   a. HUD strives to make its website accessible to the broadest possible audience; thus, only common web formats should be used on HUD's Internet website.
>>   Acceptable formats for the Internet site include .jpg, .gif, .pdf, and .txt.
>>   b. When communicating and sharing files with business partners, the .doc, .xls,
>>   .zip, and .exe formats also are acceptable; however, add a link to the free reader, where available.
>   2. **Intranet:** For HUD@work any file type specified for the Internet or any file types supported by standard HUD desktop software are acceptable.
>
>   3. **PowerPoint:** In general, you should not post PowerPoint files. You may consider using a PowerPoint if you want to allow the audience to download it and use it for their own presentations. But even then, consider your audience carefully. PowerPoint files have a number of issues: it is very difficult to ensure that they are accessible, they use proprietary software, and they tend to be very large files for downloading.
>
>   The accessibility issues are compelling. The free PowerPoint reader is not accessible, so if the visitor does not have PowerPoint software on his/her computer, he/she will not be able to use the file. If you do post PowerPoint files, you must make them compliant with 508 requirements. That means they must have alt tags on every page, providing both the text and description of the images.
>
>   Another factor to consider is that PowerPoint presentations normally are used with a presenter in the room to explain the bullets and charts. When people look at a PowerPoint presentation on the web, they don't have the benefit of that live person to give them the context and meaning of the bullets on the presentation.
>
>   4. If you want to use a file type that is not specified here, contact the OPA Web Team before using it.

G. Audio and Video Files: HUD's standard media format for audio and video files is Windows Media. The current HUD standard for audio files is mp3. HUD's media files are "streamed" from dedicated media servers, not downloaded from the Internet or intranet web servers themselves. Contact the OPA Web Team if you need to publish rich media to the Internet or intranet.

H. Virus Protection: All executable files (for example, .exe, .bat or .com extensions) **must** be scanned for viruses using the most recent version of HUD-standard virus-scanning software before being posted to the website.

I. File Size: To keep HUD's websites as accessible as possible, we try to limit the size of each page.
☐ **Internet:** For the portal, do not load files greater than 2MB. Consult with the OPA Web Team for exceptions.
☐ **Intranet:** For Intranet pages, do not exceed a total page weight - including images, scripts, linked and included files, and dynamic content --of 200 Kbytes.

J. Redirects: When you need to move an existing web page file to another address, or delete a file, you may be creating a broken link in the website. Redirects are **discouraged**

because they result in hundreds or thousands of extra pages on the website. Instead, use broken link reports monthly to identify orphan pages and broken links for your web pages and then delete references to the broken links where they appear.

K. Aliases: While aliases (shortened URLs that redirect to a permanent page on the website) are punchier and easier to remember when you want to market a page on the website, they are **discouraged** on HUD.gov because the alias itself is unreliable and can break without warning or cause. A more reliable solution is to request from your web liaison a long-term (though not permanent) link under the In Focus section. Then, refer users to In Focus section on HUD.gov. Please consult your web liaison for guidance on using short URLs for social media.

- **On HUD@work**, you can safely create different URLs for the same page. Consult Oracle Sites Basic guide on HUD@work for instructions for creating an alternate URL on HUD@work.

Section 6: Link Rules
A. Linking Policy: Be sure you're familiar with HUD's linking policy...and follow it (see HUD's Web Management Organization and Policies).

B. Intercepts (Internet):
1. You *must* include an "intercept":
☐ to meet legal and regulatory requirements.
☐ when linking to a non-federal government website,
☐ when linking to an email form or mailto link on HUD.gov or espanol.HUD.gov, or
☐ when the intercept inserts an intermediate page that provides information needed.
☐ You do NOT use an intercept when linking to a website with a .gov or .mil domain.

C. Defining A Link: The words that are underlined, leading to a link, should describe what the user would find at the linked page. Software that "reads" the link to a person with visual problems literally reads the words that are underlined.

☐ **Do use**: Visit our listings of homes for sale.
☐ **Don't Use**: Click here for listings of homes for sale.

D. Listing Links:
1. Lists of links should appear in "sentence case" (first letter of first word capitalized and no other capitalization except for proper nouns, acronyms, abbreviations).
Do use: Visit our listings of homes for sale.
Don't use: Visit Our Listings Of Homes For Sale.

2. When using a list of links, list them in alphabetical order unless:
- Links intentionally follow chronological order or
- Links intentionally lead the user through a logical sequence, e.g.,
☐ Housing counseling
☐ Homes for sale
☐ HUD-approved lenders

E. Case: Links are case sensitive; so the case of the folders, file names and extensions must match the case of the URL of the web page to which you're linking.

F. Testing Links: Be sure to test all links on a web page to ensure that the URL is current and that the information in the linked page loads in a reasonable amount of time. In

consideration of our audience members who use slow modems, we do **not** use links to sites with long load times.

G. Links to Commercial Sites: You may link to a commercial for-profit web page or website if it is clear that the primary purpose of the page or site is to provide free information or services. As a rule, links may not promote specific for-profit products or services.

It is permissible to link to the home pages and/or email addresses of a category of private for-profit HUD partners (for example, HUD approved lenders) when it will promote HUD's program and customer service objectives.

> o A complete list of the vendors in that category must be posted (both those with and those without websites/ email).
> o All vendors in that category must be notified that HUD will be creating links to the websites/email addresses of those that have them, before any links are posted.
> o Links must include the interceptor page with HUD's disclaimer.

H. Required Links:
> 1. **USA.gov:** Every page on HUD's Internet websites must link to the federal government's web portal, USA.gov. The link will be built into the templates for HUD's web pages. The USA.gov link also should be built into any online applications.
> 2. **White House:** A link to the White House will be incorporated in the front page of HUD.gov and espanol.HUD.gov.

Section 7: Graphics Rules

A. Photos and Graphics: Be judicious in the use of photos and graphics. Remember that we want to keep the weight of each page to a minimum so that people using slow modems can access the website. Be sure to follow guidance on total page weight.

> 1. Make sure photos and graphics add value to the content. Every image and graphic should have a reason to be on the page.

> 2. Keep graphics simple.

B. The Website "Brand": To ensure that HUD's websites are easily recognizable, each has a standard "brand" that is used. The brand must be carried out throughout the website on each page.
> 1. On HUD.gov, espanol.HUD.gov, archives.HUD.gov and all microsites, the HUD Seal, flag, dated, website name and Secretary's name must appear on each page as created in the template. In addition, the HUD seal must appear on the page, along with the Headquarters address and link to the addresses of the HUD Field Offices.

> 2. As a rule, no other branding should appear on HUD's websites, with the exception of icons or logos established by the Office of Public Affairs to promote specific Secretarial initiatives or efforts.

C. Image and Graphic Types:

> 1. The two primary image formats used are .gif (Graphic Interchange Format) and .jpg (Joint Photographic Experts Group). For best results, save all drawings, graphs, etc., in the .gif format; and save all photographs in the .jpg format.

2. Any images or graphics that were created in another format (e.g., .tif) must be converted to either .gif or .jpg prior to posting on a web page. **Note** that when you convert an image or graphic, certain aspects such as color or fonts may be affected.

3. Other forms of image and graphics files may be acceptable, as long as they work with most web browsers. Before you use another format, however, you should check with the OPA Web Team.

4. If you are creating images or graphics that will be posted on the website for the audience to download and use in print publications, then use the .tif format.

These images should be saved at a minimum of 300dpi. Note: .tif formatted files will not display on the web page. You should link to the file using the <a href> tag so the user can download the file.

D. Image and Graphic Specifications: If you are offered different "save" options for the .gif format, save the graphics as "89a Non-Interlaced .gif files."
If you are offered "compression" options for the .jpg format, experiment with different compression levels to determine the best balance between image quality and file size.

The quality of a .jpg image degrades every time the image is edited and saved. If you need to edit an image, you should always go back to the original source file, edit it, and then save it as a separate .jpg file.

E. Thumbnails: When it is advantageous to put more than one photo on a page—for example, if you are showing photos of homes for sale—then use thumbnail versions of the photos, to keep the page size within reason.

1. All **horizontal** images should be 100 x 75, and all vertical images should be 75 x 100.
2. HUD@work images can be 115 pixels wide.

F. Colors: Images and graphics should use at least 256 colors and a color depth equal to or greater than 8 bits.

G. Sizes: The recommended size of an image (in pixels) is 200 x 133. The maximum recommended size of any image or graphic is 240 x 160. Remember that all images and graphics should be designed to work within at least the 640 x 480 monitor resolution.

H. Cropping: Minimize any extraneous background space in an image by "cropping" the image. This will help focus attention on the subject of the photo and reduce the overall size of the image.

I. Borders: Photographs and some graphics (e.g., street maps) should have a 1-pixel border (border="1"), with the default (i.e., undefined) border color. Graphics, such as logos, icons, and graphical text should **not** have a border (border="0").

J. Height and width: The height and width of all images and graphics should be indicated (e.g., height="133" width="200"). **Note** that the height and width **must** be the exact 12/22/2011 17 height and width of the image or graphic. If you use different values in an attempt to "force" an image or graphic into a desired space, you will distort the image or graphic.

If you need to resize an image or graphic, it is best to do this with HUD-approved graphics software. Save the resized image or graphic and then include it on the web page in the desired height and width.

K. Vertical Space And Horizontal Space: Vertical space (Vspace) and horizontal space (Hspace) is the space around an image or graphic on a web page. The Vspace and Hspace should always be "0."

L. Text Labels: Every image or graphic **must** have a text box or text label (the <alt> tag). This text label describes the picture or graphic to people using a text-based browser and people with disabilities using a text reader. The text label must describe the photo or image for those who cannot see it.

☐ **Do:** Describe a photo of the Secretary meeting volunteers as: "photo1: the Secretary meets volunteer workers who are providing meals and drinks at a shelter in New York City."
☐ **Don't:** Describe a photo of the Secretary meeting volunteers as: "Secretary meets volunteers."

Be sure to enclose the text message in brackets to enable it to stand-alone and separate it from other text messages. If the graphic is all text, then the alternative text message should duplicate that text. For example, the message for a graphic that states "Homeless Assistance" would simply be "[Homeless assistance]."

M. Text Alternatives: Where image maps and other graphic navigational aids are used, alternate text-only links must be available for users who use text-based browsers. This includes information displayed on mapping applications.

N. Animated Graphics: HUD does not use animated graphics on its websites. Animated graphics add significant weight to a page, and they don't work with all web browsers. Furthermore, they may present problems for people with disabilities. If you want to use an animated graphic, you must get permission from the Public Affairs Web Team first.

O. Storage: For HUD@work, if a graphic or image is only used on one web page, the graphic or image file should be stored in the same folder as that web page. If the graphic or image is used on multiple web pages, the graphic or image file should be stored in the most appropriate "images" folder. For HUD.gov, images are stored in an images directory.

P. HUD.gov Photo Rotator: Captions appear to the left of the image with a header and description. Limit the header to four lines and the description to six lines (i.e., lines not sentences). Photo credit appears on the bottom right. A "Learn more" button should be included if linking to additional information. The alt text for the "learn more" button should be descriptive, i.e. "learn more about…"

Section 8: Posting Rules
A. Posting Rights: The OPA Web Team assigns posting rights. Policies for managing posting rights are defined in HUD's Web Management Operating Procedures.

B. Storage and Testing: All web pages and their associated images and graphics associated with them are stored in the development area. Files may not be posted to the "live" production server—where they can be viewed by the public—until they have been reviewed and tested to ensure they meet all technical requirements and until the content has been approved by all appropriate authorities within the organization.

1. As a reminder, any content of a political or policy nature must be approved by the Office of Public Affairs, before posting.

2. All web pages should be reviewed and tested within a web browser to ensure that they display properly, all links work, etc.

3. Regardless of the format, all executable files that are to be posted to the website **must** be scanned for viruses using the most recent version of HUD-standard virus-scanning software.

C. Removing Files: Web content must be reviewed at least quarterly to ensure that it is current and accurate. Files that are obsolete should be evaluated to determine if they should be moved to archives.HUD.gov or removed from the production server immediately.

As a rule, you should maintain a copy of the file, in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act or in a legal action. Remember that as long as a file exists on the production server, both HUD's search engine and outside search engines can find it.

Section 9: Archiving Rules

Archives.HUD.gov: contains HUD's historical documents, data, and other information that may have value to researchers and the public. It separates historical documentation from current information. Archives.HUD.gov ensures citizens can access information about past programs, administrations, initiatives, and activities of the Department. Contact your web liaison for archiving guidance.

Section 10: Rules Concerning Email Lists, Discussions, Real- Time Chats, Calendars, and Webcasts.

A. Email Lists: (sometimes called "listservs") are a great way to let website visitors subscribe to get updates about a particular subject or to help managers generate mass emailings to a routine set of customers. Mailing lists can handle thousands of email addresses.

1. **Requesting an email list:** Requests for mailing lists must come through the organization's Web Manager. The Web Manager must request the mailing list via email to the OPA Web Team. The request must include 4 pieces of information:

a. Name of the mailing list (e.g., HUD lenders)
b. Name of the HUD staff person who will manage the mailing list
c. Whether you want the list to be "open" (anyone can sign up for it) or "closed" (only the list owner can decide who goes on the list).
d. A short (less than 30 words) description of the purpose of your list. Once the mailing list is established, the OPA Web Team will let the list manager know how to proceed.

2. **Internal email lists:** Mailing lists are typically for communicating with people outside of HUD. If you want to set up a mailing list for HUD staff, you have three choices:

a. If the list is small (fewer than 75 people), use the "group" function of your personal Address Book within Outlook to create these mailing lists.
b. If the list contains between 50 and 500 HUD staff, submit a request for a mailing list to Outlook, through your Office's Technical Coordinator. They will create the list for your use.
c. If the list contains more than 75 HUD staff, the OPA Web Team will set up a mailing list for you. Follow the procedures above. You will need to provide the

Internet email address of each HUD staff person to be added to the list in a text file, with each name on a separate line.

3. **Mailing List Configuration:** All Internet-based mailing lists will be configured by default as

a. "Announcement only"—the list owner will be the only one who can send an email to the list. Members of the list will only be able to respond to the list owner. Exceptions to the announcement's only requirement, to allow for discussions among the list participants, may be requested from the OPA Web Team and will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

b. "Confirmation required"—the email will not be sent to the list until the list owner responds to a confirmation message sent from the server.

c. Instructions on how to be removed from the list must appear in the message notifying members that they have subscribed.

4. **Advertising Mailing Lists:** Public mailing lists will be listed on HUD's Internet website (and their availability will appear in Internet searches), unless the list owner specifically asks for the list to remain "confidential." Mailing lists of HUD staff will automatically be set as "confidential."

5. **Approvals:** The Assistant Secretary or his/her designee, in Headquarters, and the Regional Administrator, Deputy Regional Administrator, Field Office Director or their designees, in the Field, must approve the mailing list before the Web manager submits the request to create the list.

6. **List Membership:** Mailing lists should include only email addresses of people who have specifically requested to be added. Email addresses for people who want to be on a HUD mailing list will be maintained only for the purpose of that mailing list. They will not be used for any other purpose within the Department nor will they be provided to anyone outside the Department. (Refer to HUD's Privacy Policy).

7. **Monitoring Mailing Lists:** Web managers are responsible for monitoring the mailing lists in their organizations and trouble-shooting problems. You must contact your mailing list owners at least quarterly to ensure that the list is still being used.

B. Discussions (Chat Rooms):

1. Discussions are for official purposes only (no "water cooler" type discussions).

2. Discussion rooms that entertain questions or comments requiring interpretation of HUD or federal laws or policies, must have a moderator who is a HUD employee or a HUD employee must respond to those questions. Policy interpretation can be done by HUD employees only.

3. Moderators must review discussions routinely to make sure that the discussion is on track.

4. Web managers should review the need for their discussion rooms as part of the quarterly certification process.

C. Webcasts: Webcasts or live streaming, offers an excellent means of providing training and information for employees, business partners, and consumers.

1. Webcasts may be used only for official mission-related purposes.

2. Webcasts must include captioning for the hearing-impaired. In specific cases, your organization may have to pay for the captioning. An example: If you arrange your own recording or hire a contractor to record your event or show and you intend to provide the final recording for webcasting, you must be sure to include the captioning in the recording process.

3. To schedule a webcast, contact the Office of Broadcast to arrange the recording, live broadcast, and webcast, and archiving of your program.

- **For live or recorded webcasts available to the public through HUD.gov,** the OPA Web Team coordinates the schedule with Broadcasting and posts the title, date, time and links for webcasts on the HUD.gov webcast schedule page. OPA also maintains a listserv to alert subscribers to upcoming webcasts. The webcast is placed in the HUD.gov YouTube channel for viewing at a later date.

- **Live or recorded webcasts for an internal audience through HUD@work**, appear on the webcast portal. The streaming and posting are handled exclusively by Broadcasting. Employees viewing from outside the HUD network (at home or offsite must log out if VPN and HUD Mobile and point the browser from your home computer to webcast.HUD.gov and log in using your LAN ID and password. Employees who have technical trouble viewing a webcast should call in a Service Desk ticket.

4. If you have a DVD or electronic file of an event that has already occurred, the Office of Broadcast can webcast it, but your program Office may be asked to arrange Closed Captioning (cc) as it is required by 508 compliance.

5. Webinars using virtual meeting software are handled through the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

D. Writing Blog Posts

Blogging is another way for us to educate the public and accomplish HUD's mission; it's not like a personal blog, which is simply a place for you to express your opinions about whatever grabs your interest. Like a personal blog, however, the tone is personal, images liven things up and add another way of delivering information, and short biographies help readers get to know the writers.

For each post, consider the following questions:
☐ What is the nature of the problem you are working on?
☐ How does your personal or work history relate to the problem?
☐ What are you doing to come up with a solution? What are the benefits to the reader? Why should the reader care?
☐ What progress has already been made?
You should:
☐ Write at least 200-400 words for each entry
☐ **No ghostwriting.** Write your own posts.
☐ Submit or suggest at least one image, graphic, video, or other non-text item **to include in your post**. HQ Public Affairs can help you find appropriate materials if necessary, and will ensure that posts are accessible to people with disabilities.
☐ Use personal experiences and perspective to engage the reader. Sharing your own interests and background lets readers see you as someone with issues and concerns similar to theirs, connecting them to HUD's mission.

☐ Write expressively about how you personally are involved with HUD's **efforts**. Don't focus on your job title or position, but rather share stories of your work. Help people understand why HUD's efforts matter.

☐ **Write in an informal, personal tone**. Think party conversation, not news release or fact sheet. If you want, HQ Public Affairs can help you work on this.

☐ **Ask questions of your readers**. This helps to foster a more open exchange of information and dialogue. Some examples you might use are "What do you think?" or "Tell me your thoughts."

☐ Create a title for each post.

☐ Include at least one Web address on HUD's site where the reader can go for more information about your topic. More links are better. You may also use links from other .Gov websites.

You should not:

☐ Simply repeat HUD Web content or use your entry as a new HUD Web page.

☐ Announce program activities or opportunities unless you are coordinating with a news release or other mechanism.

☐ Overwhelm the reader with facts and figures. Keep it simple and link to more details.

☐ Violate the cautionary areas discussed below.

Cautionary Areas

HUD blog content is federal content and thus, public domain. Therefore, use only images that are also public domain. Photographs and video taken by HUD staff as part of their jobs meet this requirement. If you have questions about copyright, please contact HQ Public Affairs.

HUD blogging is a privilege, not a right. Because of federal and legal responsibilities, HUD management reserves the right to review blog content or to un-invite anyone to blog. However, the content of any one blog post will generally be reviewed in whole to keep or remove, not edited piecemeal beyond grammar and spelling.

Blog postings must not violate any federal laws. For example, they may not:

- reveal information about ongoing investigations
- discuss deliberative materials
- violate the regulatory process
- circumvent FOIA or other "process"
- violate privacy or copyright
- violate other legal issues that may apply

Blog entries must not outright contradict or encourage misuse of HUD directions, guidance or other official information.

Bloggers will not recommend or criticize specific companies, brands or products with personal opinions. Government facts about recalls, data, etc. are fine to use. Consider citing or linking to the source if it could be questioned.

Bloggers will not give specific advice (e.g., medical, financial) unless citing previously published government material.

To Submit Your Posts and For Further Information

Other questions or concerns you may have – please contact the HQ Office of Public Affairs.