SAMHSA
Web Policy Guide

A Life
in the
Community
for
Everyone

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov

Contents

SAMHSA, a public health agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the lead Federal agency for improving the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention, addiction treatment, and mental health services in the United States.

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Introduction

Revision History

Date	Notes	Version
Jun 2006	2nd Printing	2.0
Jun 2005	Revised Draft	1.5
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About This Guide

Web sites of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are aligned with the mission, goals, and objectives of the Department and are subject to appropriate management controls. This document provides guidance to promote best practices for the development and maintenance of Web sites and pages for the presentation of SAMHSA public information.

This Web Guidelines Manual is written for SAMHSA employees and contractors responsible for overseeing, developing, or maintaining SAMHSA-funded public Web sites. This manual applies to in-house and externally hosted public Web sites funded through contracts, not Web sites developed with funds from grants and cooperative agreements. SAMHSA is not responsible for Web sites developed with funds from grants and cooperative agreements.

Office of Communications Reference Series

This Web Policy Manual is one of six policy manuals developed by SAMHSA's Office of Communications (OC) to guide the dissemination of all SAMHSA programs and services. These manuals outline how SAMHSA communicates with its constituencies: consumers; families; providers and other health/social services professionals; organizations at the national, State, and local levels; the media; and the general public.

SAMHSA OC's six policy manuals include the following:

- Communications Planning and Clearance Process Guide

- Style Guide

- Identity Guide

- Web Policy Guide

- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Manual

- Exhibit Manual

Only the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (OASPA) has the Secretary's designated authority to approve communications products—including publications and audiovisual materials—for development and dissemination, whether developed by or under contract with SAMHSA, and whether disseminated at the request of SAMHSA or with specific SAMHSA approval through a contract. This includes materials developed not only through communications contracts, but also through requisition and purchase orders. Please refer to the Communications Planning and Clearance Process Guidelines to determine which formal requirements must be met regarding the project.

Inquiries

If you find that there are situations not addressed in this document, please contact the SAMHSA Office of Communications at 240-276-2130. These policy manuals are available to view and download from the SAMHSA Intranet at http://intranet.samhsa.gov.

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Part 1: Web Content Guidelines

Concept and Content Clearance

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) considers Federal agency public Web sites to be information dissemination products as defined in OMB Circular A-130, *Management of Federal Information Resources.* Information quality guidelines from both OMB and HHS are designed to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information and services provided to the public.

SAMHSA is responsible for maintaining an overview of all Agency information products regardless of their dissemination medium. Therefore, the *Communications Planning and Clearance Process Guidelines,* approved June 2003 for print publications, extends to the start-up of a Web site and major additions to the site map of that Web site.

 Concept clearance for start-up Web sites is achieved through form *HHS-524A, Audiovisual Clearance Request* (see Appendix C). This form must be approved by the Office of Communications prior to starting work on new Web sites.

The major distinctions between electronic and other media include:

- Web products must be maintained for currency, and
- Web product iterations must be managed on a continual basis.

Therefore, review of additions and significant changes in concepts or contents must be conducted independent of earlier clearance.

The Government Project Officer (GPO) is responsible to apply for content clearance for any new Web site content that meets the following criteria:

- All new Web sites with new URLs.

- Web sites that have deviated significantly from the original site map as listed in their concept 524A clearance.

- When putting up new materials that—
    o Are novel or controversial
    o Contain sensitive policy
    o Contain new data*
    o Has potential implications for budget or policy
    o Contain content that has significant interagency interest
    o Contain translations/adaptations in languages other than English

The GPO's supervisor must be fully informed of all material that is sent to the Office of Communications for clearance. New content for Matrix areas must be cleared through the appropriate Matrix Area Lead.

*Note: We are developing a policy for data clearance. This policy will address both restricted-access data and unrestricted-access data. It will apply to using data for performance management and measurement purposes, and purposes other than performance management and measurement.

Steps in New Web Site Clearance

These *general* steps describe the process for clearance of new Web sites.

- GPO schedules pre-development meeting with SAMHSA Office of Communications (OC), SAMHSA Webmaster, the GPO and appropriate technical contractor staff. Agenda items should include:
  - Concept & content and how it relates to SAMHSA's overall Web presence
  - Site Map
  - Development & implementation procedures
  - Technical standards, hosting, and deliverable standards
  - Maintenance, upkeep, and disposition of the Web site
- GPO completes form *HHS-524A, Audiovisual Clearance Request* (see Appendix C).
- Submit HHS-524A clearance to OC.
- After signed approval by the OC Associate Administrator, Web site development can begin.
- When the beta Web site is ready, OC and the SAMHSA Webmaster require a final review, prior to public release.
- After final approval, the Web site can be made public.

Avoiding Duplication

To minimize duplication and improve the public's ability to locate accurate information across the array of SAMHSA and Federal Web sites, all SAMHSA funded Web sites must link to existing SAMHSA or Federal sites whenever possible, rather than duplicating information or content.

Before creating new information, the content managers must determine if that same—or similar—information already exists within SAMHSA's Web presence or on another Federal Web site.

When content is the same or similar within agencies or across agencies, those agencies should consult with each other to find ways to share or coordinate content and to mitigate duplication.

Examples of Agency Information That Does NOT Require Content Clearance from OC (It Must Receive Content Clearance from the GPO)

- Agency products that have been cleared by SAMHSA's Office of Communications through the publication planning and clearance process (includes Form HHS-615 and SMA-120).

- Agency documents published in the Federal Register, such as grant announcements and program regulations.

- Official documents of the SAMHSA Administrator, the Center/Office Directors, and other Federal officials, including public representations (e.g., speeches), audiovisual materials, and biographical materials.

- Data collections of the Office of Applied Studies (OAS) or data systems approved by the Director of DMS/IT.

- Agency news releases, fact sheets, back grounders, and other media-oriented materials, including video- and audio-streaming of news conferences and of other Agency-sponsored events.

- Items from official SAMHSA outlets, such as the TIE Forum or SAMHSA News, all of which have previously been cleared.

- Campaign-related Web casts, Web chats, and materials identified in earlier clearances.

- Interagency-developed materials cleared through another government entity.

- Auxiliary public education and campaign-related materials, such as proclamations, letters of congratulations, support and testimonials, and constituency contributions.

- Updates of information/materials already posted on the Web: Cosmetic or grammatical updates; those updating obsolete references; and those that do not make substantive, policy-relevant changes.

- New content the GPO has informed the supervisor should be added to the Web site that is not new data, not controversial, and has no budget or policy implications (see p. 3 for further information).

Review Procedures

Because Web sites are dynamic and evolving, much new information will typically be developed after original site development and launch. The GPO, in conjunction with the Office of Communications clearance officials and other agency program officials, may wish to devise a review procedure to systematize the clearance of content that is regularly and/or frequently updated.

Web Site Maintenance

SAMHSA Web sites must be kept up-to-date, in accordance with OMB's Information Quality Act, and Web publishing and usability best practices.

Certification

The GPO must certify the public Web site on a yearly basis. The certification affirms that the information provided on the Web site:

- Is up to date
- Is reliable
- Is objective
- Is appropriate and useful
- Is scientifically accurate and defensible
- Is consonant with other agency and departmental efforts

To certify a Web site, GPOs must complete the SAMHSA Web Site Certification Form (provided in Appendix C), and submit or fax it to the Office of Communications by September 30 of each year. Web sites not updated and/or certified annually will be subject to review and removal at the discretion of the SAMHSA Office of Communications.

Final Disposition

In the event that a Web site is no longer going to be updated and/or funded, GPOs are responsible for working with their contractor and/or SAMHSA DMS/IT and SAMHSA OC to ensure the Web site is archived (if appropriate) and removed from the public domain.

Information Quality

SAMHSA Web sites are governed by OMB's *Information Quality Act*, *HHS Information Quality Guidelines*, and the *OMB Policies for Federal Agency Public Web Sites* to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information and services provided to the public. The guidance on "Information Quality" refers primarily to materials authored by SAMHSA and those which represent the agency's views, including:

- Scientific research papers, books, and journal articles.
- Official reports, brochures, documents, newsletters, and audiovisual products.
- Speeches, interviews, and expert opinions which officially represent SAMHSA.
- Statistical information and analyses, aggregated information, and funding information and histories.

SAMHSA documents and presentations containing text and summary data must be objective and scientifically sound. Sources should be referenced for the convenience and further information of the reader. Where appropriate, supporting data should have full, accurate, and transparent documentation. Potential error sources affecting data quality should be identified and disclosed to users. Disclaimers should be used to distinguish the status of information (e.g., based on preliminary data or partial data set).

Generally, release of such material requires approval of the Director, Office of Communications, as outlined in SAMHSA's *Communications Planning and Clearance Process Guidelines*. The Director of the originating Center or Office is responsible for determining that the data conforms to accepted scientific and quality standards and that the reported statistics are substantially reproducible.

For specific guidance on Information Quality and Data Limitations, refer to the HHS Information Quality Web Site:
http://aspe.hhs.gov/infoquality/Guidelines/index.shtml, and
Section J, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):
http://aspe.hhs.gov/infoquality/Guidelines/SAMHSAinfo2.shtml.

Links to External Sites

SAMHSA follows the linking policy established by OMB for Federal Web sites. Links to external Web sites will be avoided where possible. Links will be made from the SAMHSA Public Access Web site to other Web sites only when the information is appropriate and relevant to the mission of the Agency and its programs. Care must be taken regarding the types of Web sites to which SAMHSA links in order to avoid misrepresenting SAMHSA's policies, positions, or data, or giving the appearance of an Agency endorsement of a commercial product, service or partisan political position. The GPO must ensure proper controls are in place to manage and monitor external links. Links to .gov (government) and .mil (military) sites are generally acceptable.

Rules for External Links

- Reconsider whether the links are needed.

- Links must be to information that is directly related to SAMHSA's mission and programs.

- Where practical, links will be made directly to the page(s) containing the relevant information.

- When linking to a source or service provided by multiple vendors, avoid the appearance of favoritism – e.g., by linking to several vendors or providing disclaimers.

- Pages containing solicitations for funds will be avoided.

- Where appropriate, links will reflect a balanced, variety of views on issues.

- There will be no links to pages expressing partisan political views.

- Each GPO is encouraged to develop a rationale for establishing links from each of its Web sites. Before selecting links, the GPO should consider an appropriate range of views to which the site might refer, and alternative links that might be considered. The GPO's considerations should include how the selected link(s) supports SAMHSA's, and the office's or program's mission, why this particular link or set of links was selected, and the purpose and objective of that Web page within the context of the office's entire Web site.

- All links to non .gov sites (such as .org, .com, .net), require the use of a disclaimer message. (See *Exit Disclaimer* under *Web Site Development Standards*, p. 21)

- Links must be managed and maintained (see below, *Management of External Links*).

Management of External Links

The burden of monitoring links on the site must be considered before links are made. GPOs have responsibility for all content on their Web sites. This responsibility includes ensuring the objectivity, quality, integrity and continuing appropriateness of the linked-to sites through frequent checks, performed at least every two weeks. Exceptions to this policy may be granted on a case-by-case basis. The Office of Communications can provide assistance as needed.

Acknowledgements

All SAMHSA Web sites require an Acknowledgements page, which provides the following information:

- The SAMHSA center and office for which the Web site was developed
- The date the Web site was published (made live)
- If desired, the name and contact information of the GPO on the contract under which the Web site was developed.
- The name(s) of the company(s) responsible for the Web site development
- The names of any other contributing parties

An ideal location for a link to this page is on the "About Us" or "Contact Us" pages. Self-promotion of companies or organizations is not allowed on SAMHSA Web sites, except for a reference on the acknowledgements page. Advertising is prohibited on SAMHSA Web sites. Exceptions to this policy may include links to product Web sites for plug-ins or other software/hardware required to use the resources on the Web site (such as Adobe Acrobat Reader or Microsoft Internet Explorer).

SAMHSA Branding

The HHS/SAMHSA "bird plus words" logo for SAMHSA, its designated Center, or Supporting Office, must appear prominently on the home page of a program Web site, preferably at the top left-hand corner. The SAMHSA Symbol or a program icon may also appear on the home page. Contractors who create draft logos or Web site mastheads must submit them to their GPO for approval. Logos and mastheads must also be sent to the OC for review/approval. Requests for OC approval are normally submitted by the GPO.

If you have any technical questions about the use of these logos, please direct them to: webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov or read *SAMHSA's Identity Guide: Guidelines for the Use of HHS Logos, SAMHSA Symbols, and Program Icons (June 2005).* Copies can be obtained from the OC or on the SAMHSA Web site at http://www.samhsa.gov/it/.

FOIA Information

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a Federal access law that allows individuals to inspect public records held by government agencies. Originally passed by Congress in 1966 and later amended, the FOIA is a dynamic and evolving law and regulation that allows citizens to better understand Federal government operations. Because Web sites are public records, they fall within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act.

The administration of the FOIA by government agencies can be complex, and few "across-the-board" guidelines apply. SAMHSA provides responses to requests through the Office of Communications, a part of the Office of the Administrator.
Like all Federal agencies, SAMHSA is required under the FOIA to disclose records requested in writing by any person. However, SAMHSA cannot release information that falls within the nine exemptions and three exclusions contained in the statute and regulations. The FOIA applies only to Federal agencies and does not create a right of access to records held by Congress, the courts, or by state or local government agencies. Each state has its own public access laws that should be consulted for access to state and local records.

If you have any technical questions about FOIA, please direct them to: Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov or read *SAMHSA's FOIA Manual: Regulations for the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act (June 2005).* Copies can be obtained from the OC or on the SAMHSA Intranet at http://intranet.samhsa.gov.

For more information, visit http://www.hhs.gov/foia.

Records Management

SAMHSA GPOs are responsible for records management for their Web sites in accordance with the *Federal Records Act* and *Section 207 of the E-Government Act of 2002*. The *HHS Web Records Guidance & Schedule* requires that agency Web sites be archived every calendar year and whenever substantial changes occur (such as a redesign). Information to be archived includes all files needed to create the visual image normally displayed in a user's Web browser. It also includes user access log files and data stores (such as backend databases). For more detailed information, refer to the *HHS Web Records Guidance & Schedule*, still in draft as of this publication date.

Domain Names and E-Mail Addresses

Domain Name Requests

SAMHSA follows the HHS Policy for Internet Domain Names (HHS-WEB-2005-01). This policy is available at **http://www.hhs.gov/read/irmpolicy/index.html**.

Third-Level Domain Names

A third-level domain name, such as <program name>.samhsa.gov, is an acceptable URL under this policy. The procedure for obtaining a new third-level domain name is below.

- Third-level domain names can only be requested by the authorized Government Project Officer (GPO);

- The GPO must obtain prior approval from the SAMHSA Office of Communications (OC) and Division of Management Systems – IT (DMS-IT); and

- Once approved, the GPO must send an e-mail to the SAMHSA Webmaster via **Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov** requesting that the approved domain name be set up.

Second-Level Domain Names

SAMHSA may request second-level domain names from HHS. Examples of second-level domain names include drugfreeworkplace.gov and stopalcoholabuse.gov. Second-level domain names require OC and DMS-IT approval. An HHS Department waiver is also required. GPOs should submit their request and justification in writing to the SAMHSA Office of Communications. The *HHS Policy for Internet Domain Names* requires that second-level domain names be justified and reflect favorably on HHS and its agencies. Generally, second-level domain names are reserved for cross-agency initiatives such as stopalcoholabuse.gov.

NOTE: New .org, .net, or .com domain names are not permitted for new production Web sites. In addition, **SAMHSA staff and related Contractors are not permitted to register .org, .net, .edu or .com names that directly mirror any of the SAMHSA third-level domain names.** For example, if a SAMHSA Web site name is csat.samhsa.gov, employees of SAMHSA and/or its contractors are not permitted to separately register the name csat.org, or csat1.org, csat.com, or any other variation of that same name. Previously registered site names such as health.org have been grandfathered into this policy. Exceptions to this policy may be granted when the GPO and OC determine that an alternate domain name would be beneficial to enhance an existing .gov domain.

Web Site E-Mail Box Requests

E-mail addresses associated with SAMHSA Web sites must end in samhsa.gov. Below is the procedure for requesting a samhsa.hhs.gov e-mail box.

Web site mail box requests must be submitted by the GPO to the IT Service Center and a government staff member must designated to monitor and administer the e-mail box (e.g., coce@samhsa.hhs.gov). The procedure for requesting an e-mail box is outlined below:

- All e-mail accounts must be requested by the Web site GPO;

- The GPO must send an e-mail to the IT Service Center (HHS/OS) and requesting that a Resource E-mail box be setup and include the government representative that will be responsible for administering the e-mail box;

- A cc: of this e-mail must be sent to the DMS-IT via **Harvey.Karch@samhsa.hhs.gov**.

- Once the e-mail address (coce@samhsa.hhs.gov) is setup by the IT Service Center it can then be used on the Web site.

Web Usability

All SAMHSA Web sites must be designed around **HHS Research-Based Web Design and Usability Guidelines** (available online at **http://usability.gov/pdfs/guidelines.html**), a set of proven guidelines designed to improve the quality of a user's experience with Web sites. Basic usability guidelines covered include:

- Sound design and evaluation processes
- Clear and consistent branding
- Consistent and effective navigation
- Use of plain language (see **www.plainlanguage.gov**)
- Minimizing page download time
- Compliance with accessibility standards
- Proven layout guidance
- Writing and organizing good Web content

- Effective and efficient use of links
- Building an effective search tool

The HHS Research-Based Web Design and Usability Guidelines can be found online at http://usability.gov/pdfs/guidelines.html.

Web Accessibility

SAMHSA is committed to making every document on its World Wide Web server accessible to the widest possible audience. SAMHSA works with HHS's accessibility specialists and with other Federal Agencies and Federal Web consortia to ensure that documents are, to the maximum extent feasible, accessible to persons using special screen reading software and hardware. SAMHSA also encourages its grantees to use the Web to disseminate information about their work, and to create World Wide Web pages that are generally accessible for persons using screen reading devices. More information about accessible Web design is available at www.section508.gov.

SAMHSA is committed to providing appropriate access for people with limited English proficiency, in accordance with the Department of Justice guidance for Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for People with Limited English Proficiency*. GPOs and/or responsible content owners must determine whether content on Web sites requires translation or adaptation prior to contract award, and are responsible for ensuring that any translation work is written into the contract. The information being presented is of primary importance, therefore work should focus primarily on key documents and information and the Web elements providing access to the documents and information (navigation, menus, links, etc.). The preferred method is to provide a button or link which points customers to a page (or pages) providing foreign-language content and appropriate links. Software-based and literal/word-for-word translations should be avoided.

Instead, translations and adaptations should convey the meaning and spirit of the original content, and:

- Be easily understood in the native language
- Be fluent and smooth in the native language
- Be idiomatic
- Be culturally sensitive
- Make explicit what is implicit (such as abbreviations, allusions to sayings, songs, etc.)

Information that is translated or adapted requires clearance by the SAMHSA Office of Communications.

For more information on Web accessibility, or Section 508 compliance standards, pleaser refer to the *Web Technical Guidelines* Section of this document (p. 14), or contact the SAMHSA Webmaster at **Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov**.

HHS's Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (OEOP) is responsible for coordinating the Agency's compliance with sections 501 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. For more information, please contact Carlos O'Kieffe, OEOP, by telephone at 301-443-2112 or e-mail **carlos.o'kieffe@samhsa.hhs.gov**.

The Notification and Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation Act (No Fear Act)

SAMHSA complies with the President's No Fear Act, an initiative to increase Federal agencies accountability regarding employment discrimination complaints. This Act requires the posting of related statistical information on Federal agency Web sites. SAMHSA provides a link to this statistical information on its primary Web site, **www.samhsa.gov**. The statistical information is hosted on the program Support Center Web site, located at **http://www.psc.gov/hrs/eeo/nofearact/samhsa/**.

Right of Removal

Web sites developed under contract with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) are owned by SAMHSA, and are subject to SAMHSA, HHS, and Federal policy and guidance. (This does not apply to Web sites developed by grants and cooperative agreements with SAMHSA funds, for which SAMHSA is not responsible.)

At the discretion of the Office of Communications and the Office of the Administrator, Web sites may be removed from the public domain at any time for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to comply with this policy
- Failure to comply with HHS, OMB, or other governing policy or guidance
- Failure to maintain up-to-date content (see p. 6, *Certification*)
- Web sites for programs no longer funded
- A change in Agency, Departmental, or Federal priorities or emphasis
- Any other reason

Part 2: SAMHSA Web Standards
DMS-IT Technical Guidelines for GPOs and Web site Contractor Technical Staff

Last Revised April 2006

Approval and Update Procedures

Pre-Development Meeting

A meeting with the SAMHSA Webmaster, the Office of Communications (OC), the Government Project Officer (GPO) and Technical Contractor Staff must be held prior to any Web site development. This meeting is held for a general debriefing of the Web site concept, development and implementation procedures and expected deliverable standards to be followed. The SAMHSA Web Guidelines and the SAMHSA Checklist for New/Migrated Web sites are provided to the GPO and their Technical Contractor Staff at this meeting. Once the Checklist has been completely filled out, it must be submitted to **Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov**. The official HHS/SAMHSA Clearance Form 524A must be submitted and approved by OC before any Web site development begins.

Any technical specifications of the Web site setup and design (including software packages to be used, programming languages to be used, client requirements, etc.) must be submitted to the SAMHSA Webmaster at this time.

In addition, functional requirements need to be discussed to determine if specific policies, procedures and regulations need to be followed.

NOTE: Any changes to the functional requirements discussed in this meeting, prior to deployment, must be communicated to the SAMHSA Webmaster. An e-mail detailing the changes (i.e., new forms, new databases, personal information collection, product sales, new coding styles,) needs to be sent to **Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov**.

Web Site Hosting

Web sites developed for SAMHSA are required to be housed on SAMHSA's servers, once development has been completed. Exceptions to this rule may be given, based on a projects scope and other factors, by the SAMHSA Webmaster.

Web Site Approval Process

Web site design and layout (including the site map) must be approved by SAMHSA once a prototype of the Web site has been completed. This prototype is typically placed on a SAMHSA Beta Server or on the Contractor's Development Server if hosted offsite.

In order to request a prototype approval, the Contractor will send an e-mail to the Government Project Officer (GPO) and the SAMHSA Webmaster making them aware that the prototype is ready for review.

Once the Web site development has been completed, the GPO must request a formal and final review of the Web site. This review is conducted by SAMHSA's OC before the official launch.

FILE FORMATS for HTML CONVERSION: When submitting source files to SAMHSA DMS-IT staff for conversion to HTML, files in Microsoft Office formats (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) are strongly preferred. Other formats may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but may not be acceptable due to level of effort required for conversion.

Web Site Post/Update Procedures—SAMHSA Hosted Sites

New content must be submitted to the Webmaster via e-mail for posting to SAMHSA's Beta Server for review by the Government Project Officer (GPO). Any content which falls under the categories listed in "Concept and Content Clearance" in Part 1: Web Content Guidelines on Page 3 of this Policy will require OC approval before being posted live. Once the GPO and OC have approved the new content, the SAMHSA Web Team will migrate the changes to the live Web site. All e-mails to Webmaster must include:

- A zip file containing only the files that need to be posted to the site,
  - o Files appropriately small in number and/or in size do not need to be zipped
- A description of the content or database being added to the site,
- A cc: sent to the GPO, and
- A cc: sent to the OC via **rich.morey@samhsa.hhs.gov**.

Updated content must be submitted to the Webmaster via e-mail for posting to SAMHSA's Beta Server for review by SAMHSA GPO. Once the GPO has approved the updates, the SAMHSA Web Team will migrate the changes to the live Web site. All e-mails to Webmaster must include:

- A zip file containing only the files that need to be posted to the site,
- A description of the content or database code updates being made, and
- A cc: sent to the GPO.

All communications, including update procedures, are conducted with SAMHSA support staff via the "**Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov**" e-mail account.

All proposed postings (whether new or updates) must be submitted by the GPO (not the Contractor) to the SAMHSA Webmaster; otherwise they will not be posted.

Post and Update Procedures for Third Party Hosted Sites

New content* must be posted to the Contractor's Development Server for review and approval by the GPO <u>BEFORE</u> posting to the live public site. Any content listed under "Concept and Content Clearance" in Page 3 of this Policy requires OC clearance prior to public release, and DMS-IT staff will not post it until clearance is granted. Once the GPO has approved the updates via written communication, the Contractor may migrate the changes to the live Web site.

Contractors must send all communications regarding updates via e-mail to the GPO and include:

- A description of the content or database code updates being made,
- The URL where the beta site can be viewed,
- A cc: sent to the SAMHSA Webmaster at **Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov**, and
- A cc: sent to the OC via **rich.morey@samhsa.hhs.gov** for content clearance (if required).

Updated content which does not require OC clearance must be posted to the Contractor's Development Server for review and approval by the GPO <u>BEFORE</u> posting to the live public site. Once the GPO has approved the updates via written communication, the Contractor may migrate the changes to the live Web site.

* **NOTE:** New content is defined as stated in this Policy under Part I, Concept and Content Clearance, plus any additional Web pages (files) that have been added to the site and were not previously present on that site.

Completing the HHS-524A Audiovisual Clearance Request Form

The HHS-524A is a Departmental form provided for detailing a *proposal* for an audiovisual product (videotape, audiotape, or Web site). The HHS-524A form is available in PDF form that you can fill out online and print from the SAMHSA Intranet at **http://intranet.samhsa.gov/Formflow/SAMHSAForms.aspx**.

> *Before preparing the HHS-524A, the Project Officer already should have conceptualized a) justifications for developing the products—required to be placed on the PCMS; b) distribution and dissemination plans; c) marketing and promotion plans; d) printing specifications; and e) estimated development, production, printing and mailing costs.*

Overview of Items To Be Completed on the HHS-524a Form

Items 1-2: Title; Administrative Information

- Item 1—Choose the shortest title that accurately describes your product. Keep in mind how the words will look on the publication cover. Short, punchy titles that stay in the reader's memory are best.

- Item 2—Fill out the administrative information completely; include both the name and telephone number of program staff and of the Center/Office Publications Coordinator.

Items 3-4: Type and Category of Product (including specifications)

- Item 3—Choose the category that most accurately describes the specifications for your audiovisual products (e.g., audiotape, videotape, or Web site).

- Item 4—Choose one of the following to describe "Category of Product:" public information, education, training, public affairs, news, PSA, research, documentary, or specify other. Describe the specifications related to your product, checking all that apply; describe the methods of production (contracted out, internal); and explain the anticipated shelf life of the product.

Item 5: Purpose and Justification

- Attach this justification for the audiovisual product(s) separately as "Attachment A to the HHS-524A.

Item 6: Intended Audiences

- "Audiences" are the people you want to reach and influence with information and messages. By narrowing the product's target audience, you can develop and provide a more relevant and useful product and disseminate it in the most cost-effective manner. The "general public" is an acceptable description of an audience only on rare occasions.

- Both a primary and a secondary audience should be identified and substantiated throughout the HHS-524A. If other audiences are identified in addition to the primary and secondary audiences, the HHS-524A should substantiate them as well.

Item 7: Translation

- SAMHSA prefers *adaptations* to translations. If you intend to adapt the proposed audiovisual products into languages other than English, check "*Yes"* and specify the languages.

Item 8: Distribution Methods

- Delineate how the product will be delivered to the intended audience. Direct distribution channels include mail, electronic, meetings, exhibits, publications racks, etc. Indirect distribution uses an intermediary to reaching the targeted audience (e.g., journal publication, distribution by State substance abuse/mental health Agencies, behavioral health care companies.

- The more precisely the audience is defined, the more precisely a distribution method can be identified and successfully used to reach the intended audience.

- If you have more than one product in the HHS-524A, consider whether separate distribution plans are needed for each. A "Distribution Plan" should be attached to the HHS-524A.

Item 9: Number of Copies/Prints

- Self-explanatory.

Item 10: NAC Title Search Required

- Indicate "No."

Item 11: Methods of Evaluation

- Indicate methods through which the reach, awareness, and utilization of the product will be realized, if any evaluation methodologies are to be undertaken.

Item 12: Schedule

- Do *not* specify precise dates. Instead, specify as follows:

  Development: From date of approval to x days following approval
  Production: From x days following approval to y days following approval
  Distribution: From y days following approval, ongoing
  Promotion: Ongoing from y days following approval.

Item 13: Production Cost Estimates

- If a product has been written in-house, estimate costs of staff time and list on first line under in-house.

- Be sure to specify all parts of the production costs FOR EACH PRODUCT in the subject HHS-615/524A. Failure to do so has caused delays at OASPA.

- Remember to specify the source of funds and note "FY 20XX, pending funding availability."

Details for Writing Item 5: Purpose and Justification

- ***Background****:* While not a required part of the justification, a brief background section describing the genesis of the concept can place the proposed product into context for the reviewer.

- ***Statement of Purpose*****:** Begin with "the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) [Center/Office] proposes to develop and disseminate…[name the products] for [name audience(s)…." Keeping the audience in mind, describe the ultimate purposes of the product(s). For what purpose is it being proposed for the target audience (e.g., raise awareness, educate, change practices, take action)? [For example, "SAMHSA's Office of Communications proposes to develop and disseminate a backgrounder for SAMHSA's professional and lay constituencies that explains and educates them about the Agency's matrix of priority programs, its mission, and the vision for the Agency.] Outcomes will be different for different type of publications. If multiple products are included, describe each using brief bulleted items including specificity of target audience and ultimate purpose of product.

  If you are completing the HHS-524A form for a Web site, you must include a hard copy of the site map for your Web site in Attachment A to the HHS-524A.

- ***Evidence of Need:*** Be sure to delineate the evidence of need; do not just *state* the fact that there is a need. Do not assume that you know what a potential audience wants or that no comparable products exist from other public/private organizations. Do the research. Cite the sources that informed you that you need this specific product.

- ***Statement of How the Product Will Be Used and by Whom:*** Provide a clear description of the intended audience and the distribution plan; and the evidence of capabilities for getting the product into the hands of the specific target audience.

- ***Evidence of Non-Duplication of Product:*** While establishing clear "Evidence of Need," you should have conducted an informal survey of other Government Agencies and public-sector organizations that may have produced similar products. Describe the efforts made (e.g., databases used for literature searches, products reviewed) to ensure that the proposed product does not duplicate other communication efforts. If the Center/Office is the sole source of information on which the product is based, it is not sufficient to state only, "The publication does not exist anywhere else and thus makes a unique contribution to the subject area." You must provide evidence that supports such a statement.

Infrastructure Standards

Hardware Requirements

Any unique or specific hardware requirements beyond the norm for a Web site (e.g., proprietary hardware, large volumes of hard drive space, extra server(s)), require the prior approval from DMS-IT.

Software Requirements

The following is a list of software that SAMHSA currently supports for Web site development. Prior approval from DMS-IT is required if software, other than what is listed below, is to be used for Web site development.

- **Web Server Operating Systems**: Windows 2000, IIS 5+
- **Database Technologies**: SQL Server 2000, Oracle 8+
- **Browser Technologies**: MS Internet Explorer (IE) 6+, Netscape Navigator 7+
- **Server Technologies**: ASP, ASP.NET, Oracle 9i Application Server, Cold Fusion 7 – (For existing systems only)

Prohibited/Restricted Web Technologies

Unless prior written approval is obtained from the SAMHSA Webmaster, Web site and applications developed by SAMHSA contractors (on or offsite) are prohibited from using the following:

- Lotus Notes "Domino" Web sites
- Cold Fusion Web sites (Require Special Approval from DMS-IT. Existing Cold Fusion systems are "grandfathered" until such time as they can be migrated to a new platform at minimal cost and interruption.)
- Microsoft FrontPage Extensions
- 'Forums' or 'Bulletin Board' areas on public SAMHSA Web sites (pages where users can directly upload content to SAMHSA Web pages; if allowed, content posted must be held pending approval by a content expert)
- Real-time Web chat and Instant Messenger
- List Servs
- RealAudio/Video

These restrictions apply to any technology that cannot be implemented using the software indicated in above.

New Web Technologies are constantly emerging. It is not DMS-IT's intent to be restrictive about these technologies. Rather, the intent is to provide sensible solutions to the needs of each site. By the same token, SAMHSA cannot possibly offer or support every Web application or component on the market. If DMS-IT does not currently offer a technology you would like to use, a decision may be made to do so based on joint needs, capabilities, and other factors. It is essential, however, that the Government Project Officer (GPO) ensures that the Web sites meet DMS-IT requirements before development work begins.

SAMHSA Beta Server Access

SAMHSA's Beta Servers are for internal staff use only, and can only be accessed from the SAMHSA Network, which is inside the SAMHSA firewall. If Contractors wish to view their site on SAMHSA's Beta Server, they must come into the SAMHSA building to do so.

External contractors, with the exception of the DMS-IT contract staff, are not authorized to perform work on any server hosted at SAMHSA. On occasion, HTTP access may be granted to external Contractors for the purposes of viewing the Beta Site using a Web Browser. Such access is rare. Permission must be obtained via the SAMHSA Webmaster.

Administration Tools

IIS Web-based Administration tools are disabled on SAMHSA public Web servers. Management is accomplished by the Webmaster or designated through the Microsoft Management Console (MMC).

In addition, the Cold Fusion (CF) Administrator will not be installed on any virtual sites that are available to the Public. CF Administrator is available on its own virtual site which has been firewall restricted to only SAMHSA staff.

Web Site Development Standards

General Web Site Development Standards

Unless decided otherwise by the SAMHSA Webmaster (with input from the OC), new sites will be posted as a new virtual Web, facilitating:

- ease of management/reporting,
- limited 'bloating' under www directories, and
- separation of processes for monitoring and troubleshooting.

New Virtual Webs are hosted using an IP address versus Host Headers, unless decided otherwise by the SAMHSA Webmaster. No duplication of files is allowed. Links must be used instead.

Browser Requirements

All Web sites must be designed for 800x600 screen resolution and must function properly in both Netscape Navigator 7 (or greater) and MS Internet Explorer 6 (or greater).

Web Site Cookies

SAMHSA follows the HHS IRM Policy for Usage of Persistent Cookies (HHS-IRM-2000-0009). This policy is available at **www.hhs.gov/read/irmpolicy/index.html** and states:

"Persistent" Web cookies shall not be used on HHS Web sites, or by contractors when operating Web sites on behalf of HHS agencies, unless the following conditions are met:

- The site gives clear and conspicuous notice;

- There is a compelling need to gather the data on the site;

- Appropriate and publicly disclosed privacy safeguards exist for handling any information derived from the cookies; and

- The HHS Secretary gives personal <u>prior</u> approval for the use.

"Persistent" Web cookies are defined as Web cookies that can track "the activities of users over time and across different Web sites."

"Session" Web cookies do not fall within the scope of this policy. Exempted cookies include those that retain information only during the session or for the purpose of completing a particular online transaction, without any capacity to track users over time and across different Web sites. (Examples: for using shopping carts to purchase a number of items online or for filling out applications that require accessing multiple Web pages.)

508 Compliancy

All government funded Web sites must comply with the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d). Section 508 requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology (EIT), Federal employees with disabilities have comparable access to and use of information and data as Federal employees who have no disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. Section 508 also requires that individuals with disabilities, who are members of the public seeking information or services from a Federal agency, have comparable access to and use of information and data as the public without disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. For more detailed information, go to **http://www.Section508.gov**.

508-compliance is the responsibility of each Web site's development staff. The official software used by HHS and SAMHSA to check for 508 compliance is WatchFire WebXM. (This is provided for information purposes only. Contractors are neither required nor expected to purchase the WebXM product).

In general, the following must be adhered to:

- All sites developed must function properly in both Netscape Navigator 7 (or greater) and MS Internet Explorer 6 (or greater).

- If third-party browser plug-ins for Netscape or Internet Explorer are needed, prior testing and approval of the plug-ins by DMS-IT is required. Requests should be sent to the SAMHSA Webmaster at **Webmaster@samhsa.hhs.gov**.

- Linking to external Web sites, which do not comply with Section 508 Accessibility regulations, is allowed provided that an Exit Disclaimer is used. (See Exit Disclaimer Section of this document for exit disclaimer language).

- If a PDF file is used on a Web site, a text equivalent must also be provided. (A Section 508 accessible HTML version qualifies as a text equivalent version.) If this is not possible, users who require it must be given another way to get the information they seek (such as ability to order and receive a printed copy).

- Reminder: All graphic files that directly relate to the context of a document must have a text equivalent available. This includes graphics which reside in MS PowerPoint slides.

208 Compliancy

All Web sites developed must comply with the E-Government Act of 2002, Section 208. As of June 2005, SAMHSA translated all of their Human-Readable Privacy Policies into a standardized Machine-Readable format. During this process, SAMHSA was able to identify 1 master human-readable privacy policy (P3P) for all SAMHSA-hosted Web sites. It is the responsibility of the Web site Developers to make sure that the Web site being developed complies with these policies.

In order to collect data the following needs to be taken into consideration:

- OMB Clearance is required for any form, survey or database designed to collect information from Web site users.

- Section 208 Compliancy must be adhered to for all forms, surveys, and databases used for the purpose of collecting information. They also must be reviewed and approved by the SAMHSA Webmaster before going live.

- The SAMHSA Human-Readable Privacy Policies can be found at **http://www.samhsa.gov/privacy.aspx**.

Security and Restricted Access

Internet Security is a broad-based and complex topic. Therefore, this policy does not include significant guidelines on that subject. For any Internet Security issues, SAMHSA follows the HHS IT Service Center's Policy on Internet Security.

A password-restricted Web site or section of a Web site is allowed with approval from the Office of Communications and the Division of Management Systems—Information Technology. User ID's and passwords for this secured area are created by the IT Service Center. A meeting with the OC and DMS-IT will need to be conducted to work out all of the details of the requirement.

Exit Disclaimer

All links that point to non-government/military sites (.ORG, .COM, .NET, .EDU, .TV etc.) must have an **Exit Disclaimer** that appears in the user Web browser before being redirected to the new Web page. The text on the disclaimer message should say:

"You are about to leave the SAMHSA Web site. SAMHSA provides links to other Internet sites as a service to its users, and is not responsible for the availability or content of these external sites. SAMHSA, its employees, and contractors do not endorse, warrant, or guarantee the products, services, or information described or offered at these other Internet sites. Any reference to a commercial product, process, or service is not an endorsement or recommendation by the SAMHSA, its employees, or contractors. For documents available from this server, the U.S. Government does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed."

NOTE: Linking to external .gov and .mil Web sites is allowed without a disclaimer.

Required Footer Links

All SAMHSA Web sites must link to the following pages in the footer of every page:

- Home Page – the site home page
- Contact Us – a list of contacts for the program and the Web site
- Accessibility -- **http://www.samhsa.gov/about/508.aspx**
- Privacy Policy -- **http://www.samhsa.gov/privacy.aspx**
- FOIA -- **http://alt.samhsa.gov/foia/content/foia_main.html**
- Disclaimers -- **http://www.samhsa.gov/about/Disclaimer.aspx**
- SAMHSA -- **http://www.samhsa.gov/**
- HHS – **http://www.hhs.gov**
- FirstGov -- **http://www.firstgov.gov/**

Web Site Directory Structures (Onsite Hosting)

SAMHSA's Web site Directory Structures are managed by using the following Directory Structure layouts:

- Sites hosted on SAMHSA servers are placed under D:\Webs\<projectname> (no spaces).

- All databases used by Webs (where possible) are pulled from shared Web directories and placed in D:\databases.

- All images and other multimedia files must be stored in the /IMAGES folder located off the root directory of the Web site. Sub folders should be created topically (e.g., FLAGS) so that content creators can easily find images when creating a page.

- All Web log files will be pointed to D:\IISLogs. A text file will be placed in each subfolder, with the name of the corresponding Web.

- User-friendly folder and filenames are encouraged because they ultimately become the URL structure.

Naming Conventions for Web Site Files

Web page URL's are a direct reflection of the Web site's file and folder names (e.g., **http://intranet.samhsa.gov/budget/fy2005.aspx**). Having plain language folder names helps site visitors navigate the site, and relocate a previous page if they somehow get lost on the site, or have "jumped" to a location deep inside the Web site from a search engine or other source.

The naming conventions used for the SAMHSA Web site Files are as follows:

- No Spaces will be used in directory or filenames on public Web sites. Existing cases may remain at the discretion of the Webmaster.

- No more than one 'period' (.) may be used in a Web directory or filename (for example, about.us.html is not allowed. aboutus.html is OK). Files with more than one period are denied by **URLSCAN*** for security reasons.

- No files with the following extensions are permitted on SAMHSA public Web sites: (.exe, .com, .bat, .cmd, .ini, .log, .pol, .dat, .htw, .ida, .idq, .htr, .idc, .shtm, .shtml, .stm, .printer)

  1. **NOTE**: .shtm file includes should be renamed with an .html extension.

  2. All will be denied by **URLSCAN*** for security reasons.

  3. Executables as downloads may be made available in .zip format.

  4. Exceptions may be allowed in the future at the discretion of the Webmaster.

- None of the following URL sequences (i.e., sequence of characters typed into a browser address line) are permitted (all denied by **URLSCAN**):

              ..,   ./   \   :   %   &

NOTE: *URLSCAN is a Microsoft tool that sits at IIS's "front door" and examines HTTP requests to Web Servers, allowing or denying them based on a rule set. The rule set denies most common hacker scripts from reaching the Web Server and consuming valuable IIS resources.

NOTE: '&' has been allowed due to existing cases, but future sites must adhere to naming conventions set forth.

Permissible Browser Requests

The following are permissible 'HTTP Methods' (browser requests):

- GET, HEAD, POST, DEBUG, TRACE

WEBDAV extended HTTP Methods such as the following are denied by **URLSCAN**:

- PROPFIND, PROPPATCH, MKCOL, DELETE, PUT, COPY, MOVE, LOCK, UNLOCK, OPTIONS, SEARCH

Web Pages Must Link Back to the Home Page

To improve Web site usability, every Federal Web page must link back to its home page.

Implementation Guidance: Many people do not recognize that an agency's logo links to the home page. If an agency uses only a graphical link, it must contain text indicating that it links to the home page.

Page Flow

Maintaining a consistent page flow is an important way to optimize a Web site or Web-based application for search engines and optimize information dissemination for users.

Implementation Guidance: Good page flow can be achieved by following some simple rules—

- **Page Headings:** First, use <H1><H2><H3><H4> (heading) tags to denote headings. The higher the number, the smaller the page heading. Much like Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, some spiders rip pages apart while indexing them and create their own table of contents for the document, and use heading tags to pick out major chapters and start/stop points.

- **Site Architecture:** Page flow also refers to the architecture of the site, and how other pages are linked within. If the navigation is straight forward and clean, chances are good that spiders will have an easy time indexing the site and documents, and all of the pages desired will be followed by the spider.

Search Engine Usage

SAMHSA Web sites are not required to use a search engine. However if a Search Engine is to be implemented as a feature for a particular Web site (such as large sites, or sites where a search feature would significantly enhance the user experience), that site must point to the SAMHSA search engine located on **www.samhsa.gov** unless there is a compelling reason to build a separate customized search engine.

Customized search engines must obtain approval from the Government Project Officer and the SAMHSA Webmaster before development can begin.

An alternative approach to a search feature for smaller sites (though not required) is a Site Map, a clickable, text-based display of a Web site's hierarchy.

Search Engine Optimization

SAMHSA's Internet sites must be optimized for crawling by standard Internet search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Open Source directories. SAMHSA's Internet sites must read and implement the two sub-sections below:

Using a Robots.txt File
DOCTYPE, Character Sets, and META Tag

Using a Robots.txt File

All Internet Sites, and any other internal Web site that is to be included in the SAMHSA search engine, shall have a Robots.txt file stored in the top level (root) directory of the Web site.

The Robots.txt file optimizes Web application or Web sites for search engine crawls. By following the instructions in this file, search engines can be instructed to ignore archived files or obsolete information on the Web site. Developers can also include development files and related directories as part of the robots file if the robots.txt file indicates those files and folder should be ignored.

Implementation Guidance: Here is an example of a basic robots.txt file—

Figure 1 - Example robots.txt file

```
1    # /robots.txt f
2    # mail webmaste
3
4    User-agent: web
5    Disallow:
6
7    User-agent: lyc
8    Disallow: /
9
10   User-agent: *
11   Disallow: /tmp
12   Disallow: /logs
```

How to Disallow Folders or Files From Being Crawled

The robots.txt file above was built specifically to inform robots and spiders that there are certain directories on this server that the webmaster does not want parsed or indexed.

- The first two lines, starting with '#', specify a comment

- The first paragraph specifies that the robot called 'WebCrawler' has nothing disallowed: it may go anywhere.

- The second paragraph indicates that the robot called 'lycra' has all relative URLs starting with '/' disallowed. Because all relative URL's on a server start with '/', this means the entire site is closed off.

- The third paragraph indicates that all other robots should not visit URLs starting with /tmp or /log. Note the '*' is a special token, meaning "any other User-agent"; wildcard patterns or regular expressions cannot be used in either User-agent or Disallow lines.

How to Disallow A Specific Web Page from Being Crawled

To prevent a spider from indexing or caching a certain page, add the following line of code to the <HEAD> of the document:

<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX">

Additionally, to not have the links on that page followed (and then indexed) by the spider, add the following META tag to the <HEAD> of the document:

<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOFOLLOW">

DOCTYPE, Character Sets, and META tags

Another important thing to remember when building applications and Web sites that are going to be indexed in search engines is that the HTML needs to be well-formed, and also needs to include some basic tags & attributes. The term "well-formed" means that the HTML is valid (according to w3 standards), and contains no errors. See Figure 2 for an example of a perfect HTML 4.01 Transitional source (no content).

Figure 2 - Basic HTML layout

```
1    <!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC                                              >
2
3    <html lang="en">
4    <head>
5        <title>Page Title</title>
6        <meta http-equiv=                    content=                  >
7        <meta http-equiv=          content=          >
8        <meta name="descr        content=  >
9        <meta name="keyw        content=  >
10   </head>
11
12   <body>
13
14
15
16   </body>
17   </html>
```

- On line 1 of the source code above is the DOCTYPE declaration. This is *extremely* important to include on **ALL** Web pages and application pages. A DOCTYPE informs browsers and validators what version of HTML (or XML, or XHTML) is being used, and must always appear as the very first line of code on the page.

- DOCTYPE declarations are essential to the proper rendering and functionality of Web documents and applications in standards compliant browsers, such as IE 6, Safari, Firefox, Mozilla, and Opera.

- Using an incomplete or outdated DOCTYPE – or no DOCTYPE at all – throws browsers into what is commonly called "Quirks" mode, where the browser assumes there is invalid or deprecated markup. In this setting, the browser will attempt to parse the page in backward-compatible fashion, rendering the styles as they might look in IE 4.0, reverting to a proprietary, browser-specific DOM. While some people may feel this is a good thing, it is actually a very bad thing. After all, one of the goals as a developer or designer is to make the content usable in as many formats as possible. To build an application or Web site that only works in IE, is cutting off the growing number of users who have switched to Firefox or Opera, or are using a different OS, such as Mac OS X or Linux.

- Without having the correct DOCTYPE declaration, it is very possible that this page will be ignored or incorrectly indexed by search engines, especially Google.

- On line 3 of the code above, the standard <HTML> tag has the lang="en" attribute attached to it. What this does is to declare to the browser that this page is in English, and should therefore be parsed in:

    - Only English-language fonts, and

    - Should be translated into English by text-readers and other browser add-ons.

- On line 5 is the <TITLE> tag. It is ESSENTIAL for search engine optimization that EVERY PAGE has a UNIQUE title. The <TITLE> tag is used by search engines on the results page. It is used to hyperlink to the page, and is the first thing the user sees when they parse the results. If the <TITLE> tag is not descriptive, or is the same for every page, the search results will be confusing.

- Another essential tag that should be on ALL pages is the <META> content-type declaration, which tells the browser which character set it should use to parse the pages. This is found on line 6 of the example above.

- SAMHSA uses the UTF-8 character set because it is the most universally recognized, and works very well with legacy systems. This exact tag should appear, as is, on all Web pages.

- On line 7 of the example, there is another <META> tag called the "Pragma" tag. This tag, while not essential, serves a very important function. It tells browsers and spiders NOT to cache the page in their history, so that every time they visit the site, they will get the newest content. Again, this tag is not essential, but it is very helpful in preventing people from caching data.

- Lines 8 and 9 are the basic META Description and Keyword tags. Much like the <TITLE> tag, each page needs to have a UNIQUE description and keywords, so that it can be indexed properly. The description should always be a quick summary of what that page shows, as well as keywords that are related to the content within the page.

For instance, if the page you are working on is for CMHS and relates to the latest grant information for psychiatric institutions, here's the description and keywords to use:

```
<META name="description" content="2005 CMHS grant information for mental health institutions">
<META name="keywords" content="samhsa, 2005, grant, mental, health, psychiatric, information">
```

- The Meta elements "description" and "keyword" are part of the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (version 1.1 as of 2/1/2005). The Dublin Core (as it is referred to in shorthand) are a set of Meta elements used to uniquely identify a document, its content, its creator(s), its format, and many other elements. There are a total of 15 elements in the Dublin Core. Those elements (and their definitions) are:

Element Name	Description/Purpose
Title	The name given to the document.
Creator	Author or person who maintains the document.
Subject or Keywords	Topic's and relevant keywords related to the document.
Description	Short summary of the contents of the document.
Publisher	Name of the person who is responsible for making the document publicly viewable.
Contributor	A person or people who contributed to the creation of or the content within the document.
Date	Typically used for the date of last update to the document or its contents.
Resource Type	General category, genre, or aggregation level of the content.
Format	MIME type of the document (for Web – text/html commonly).
Resource Identifier	Typically indicates the URL (Universal Resource Locator), URI (Uniform Resource Identifier), or other unique string of characters/integers used to identify the document. ISBN is also an example.
Source	Similar to Resource Identifier. Typically used to identify the original source of the information contained within the document.
Language	Language which the document is published in. It is suggested that RFC 3066 (**http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc3066.txt**) should be used to code this element.
Relation	Reference information to a related resource
Coverage	Extent or scope of the content of the document, such as a time period, location, jurisdiction, or other similar identity.
Rights Management	Information about whether the document is covered by copyright or other intellectual property data.

- Typically, only a few of the Dublin Core elements are used for Web pages and applications. The most common are keyword, description, title, date, and publisher. Usage of these core elements should be determined on an organizational or departmental level.

Appendix A: References

HHS Web Records Guidance & Schedule, *in draft as of this writing*

HHS Policy for Internet Domain Names,
http://www.hhs.gov/policies/webpolicies/200501.html (HHS-WEB-2005-01),
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http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-04.pdf,
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HHS Information Quality Web Site, Section J, Substance Abuse and Mental Health
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http://aspe.hhs.gov/infoquality/Guidelines/SAMHSAinfo2.shtml, November 2003

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http://usability.gov/pdfs/guidelines.html, September 2003

SAMHSA's Communications Planning and Clearance Process Guidelines, *not available
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Section 207 of the E-Government Act of 2002,
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http://www.archives.gov/about/regulations/subchapter/b.html, May 2002

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OMB Memorandum M-00-13, Privacy Policies and Data Collection on Federal Web Sites, **http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/m00-13.html**, June 22, 2000

OMB Memorandum M-99-18, Privacy Policies Federal Web Sites, **http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/m99-18.html** (and Attachment: Guidance and Model Language for Federal Web Site Privacy Policies, **http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/m99-18attach.html**), June 2, 1999

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d), **www.section508.gov**, 1998

OMB Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources, **http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a130/a130trans4.html**, revised February 2, 1996

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, **http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/laws/paperwork-reduction/**, amended in 1995

Sections 501 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, **http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=15**, 1973

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is SAMHSA's Web Content Management Policy?

Several content management systems are being evaluated by the Division of Management Systems – Information Technology (DMS-IT) Team.

Does this policy apply to all SAMHSA Web sites?

This policy only applies to SAMHSA-funded public Web sites. This includes in-house and externally hosted public Web sites funded through contracts, but does not include Web sites developed with funds from grants and cooperative agreements.

Are there any exceptions to this policy?

No. The SAMHSA Web policy applies to all SAMHSA components and Contractors providing public information via the official SAMHSA Web site. While the Agency recognizes the use of the Internet for many other functions besides dissemination of public information, this policy is limited to the Agency's information dissemination (or "publication") activities.

When does this policy take effect?

June 2006.

Why is this policy important?

SAMHSA Web pages are viewed by the public and employees as being the official position of the agency and have a high degree of visibility. It is imperative that Web content be overseen by management to ensure its quality, relevance to the agency's mission, and that it is delivered in a usable and accessible format.

Who is ultimately responsible for Web content?

The head of each SAMHSA organizational component is ultimately responsible for their content on the Agency's Web site and for its delivery. Therefore, all SAMHSA managers must adhere to the guidance and criteria established by the Office of Communications (OC) for the review and approval of Web content and its delivery.

Appendix C: Forms

HHS-524A

SAMHSA Web Site Certification Form

SAMHSA New Web Site Checklist

SAMHSA Checklist for Migrating Existing Web Sites to SAMHSA Servers

SAMHSA 508 Checklist for Developers and Contractors

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AUDIOVISUAL CLEARANCE REQUEST
SEE THE BACK OF THIS FORM FOR INSTRUCTIONS

PROJECT ID NO. _____   CSD REC'D // _____

1. TITLE/SUBJECT _____

2. AGENCY _____ PROGRAM/CONTACT _____

CONTACT PERSON _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADMINISTRATIVE CODE: _____

3. TYPE OF PRODUCT _____

4. A. CATEGORY OF PRODUCT _____

    B. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS *(Check Applicable):*

- ☐ SOUND
- ☐ ANIMATION
- ☐ LOCATION
- ☐ LENGTH

- ☐ COLOR
- ☐ NARRATION
- ☐ STUDIO
- ☐ B&W

- ☐ FILM SIZE
- ☐ TAPE SIZE
- ☐ LIVE
- ☐ SOUND EFFECTS

- ☐ MUSIC ORIGINAL
- ☐ MUSIC CANNED
- ☐ STOCK FOOTAGE *(Off Shelf)*

    FOR EXHIBITS ONLY:

- ☐ TYPE ONLY
- ☐ AUDIO COMPONENT

- ☐ ART/PHOTO DISPLAY AND TYPE
- ☐ VIDEO COMPONENT

    C. METHOD OF PRODUCTION *(Check):*

- ☐ WHOLLY IN HOUSE
- ☐ WHOLLY UNDER CONTRACT
- ☐ MODIFIED IN HOUSE *(If this is checked, please specify what is to be produced under contract and what is to be developed internally)* _____

    D. ESTIMATED LIFE OF PRODUCT _____

5. PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION _____

6. INTENDED AUDIENCES _____

7. TRANSLATION: ☐ YES   ☐ NO   LANGUAGE _____

8. METHOD(S) OF DISTRIBUTION _____

9. NUMBER OF COPIES _____ PRINTS _____

10. NAC TITLES SEARCH REQUIRED: ☐ YES   ☐ NO *(If yes, attach completed NAC 202)*

11. METHOD (s) of EVALUATION _____

12. SCHEDULE:

DEVELOPMENT	FROM // _____	TO // _____
PRODUCTION	FROM // _____	TO // _____
DISTRIBUTION	FROM // _____	TO // _____
PROMOTION	FROM // _____	TO // _____

HHS-524A (E) (Rev. 3/84), CDC Adobe Acrobat 4.0 Electronic Version, 3/2000

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AUDIOVISUAL CLEARANCE REQUEST

13. PRODUCTION COST ESTIMATES:

	IN-HOUSE	PROCURED
A. RESEARCH & WRITING	$	$
B. PRODUCTION		
C. RELEASE PRINTS		
D. DISTRIBUTION		
E. PROMOTION		
F. OTHER *(Specify)*		
TOTAL	$ 0.00	$ 0.00
GRAND TOTAL	$ 0.00	

SOURCE OF FUNDS

CONTRACTED PROCUREMENT: ☐ YES ☐ NO   *(If yes, attach approved Form 524)*

APPROVALS:

	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
AGENCY			//
OPDIV			//
OASPA			//

CDC Adobe Acrobat 4.0 Electronic Version, 3/2000

Save Data   Print   Email Form

SAMHSA Web Site Certification

SAMHSA's Web Policy requires every Government Project Officer (GPO) responsible for a SAMHSA public Web site to certify the Web site on a yearly basis. By signing this certification the GPO affirms that the Web site is current, accurate, and useful (see the Web Policy for more information). Complete and submit or fax this form by September 30 to the SAMHSA Office of Communications (OC), ATTN: Rich Morey, Room 8-1026, fax 240-276-2135.

Name of Program: ☐

Web Site URL: ☐
      (e.g., www.samhsa.gov)

Alternate URL (if any): ☐

Brief Description of Web Site: ☐

Date Web Site was Last Updated:

Sponsoring Center (or Office)/Division/Branch: ☐

GPO Name & Phone Number: ☐

Federal Web Site Contact Name & Phone Number (if different from GPO): ☐

Name of Contract Company Responsible for Web Site: ☐

Contract Termination Date:

_____   _____
Government Project Officer   *Date*

New Web Site Checklist
(Client)

Purpose

The purpose of this checklist is to identify client requirements for the development of a new Web Site.

Checklist

Website Name: _____   **Due Date:**_____

Project Officer: _____

1. Definition of Topic (Purpose):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Expectations (Web Favorites):

_____
_____
_____

3. Target Audience:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Timeline: _____

5. Site Features (e.g., Forms, Applications, Searches, Database):

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. URL Name:

_____

7. Site Size and format:

_____
_____

New Web Site Checklist
(Client)

8. Logos, graphics:

_____
_____

9. E-commerce. Listserv, Newsletter, etc:

_____
_____
_____

10. Clearinghouse, Chat Room:

_____
_____

Web Site Migration Checklist
(Client)

Purpose
The purpose of this checklist is to identify client requirements for the migration of a Web Site.

Checklist

Website Name: _____   **Due Date:**_____

Project Officer: _____

1. **Purpose of the Website:**
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. **Software Requirements:**
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. **Server Requirements:**
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. **Code used for the Site:**
   _____

5. **Does any Application Code exist?**
   _____

6. **Database Used:**
   _____

7. **Points of Contact:**
   _____
   _____

Web Site Migration Checklist
(Client)

8. Who will maintain the site?

_____
_____

9. Where will the site be hosted?

_____
_____

10. When will the site need to be live?

_____

SAMHSA 508 Checklist for Developers and Contractors

Purpose

This checklist was created to allow designers, developers, and other personnel to evaluate all websites and web-based applications for compliance with *Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, §1194.22*, which requires all Federal website to be equally as accessible to people with disabilities as they are to people without disabilities.

This checklist follows the most common best practices for Section 508 validation, based on the commonly-used model from WebAIM (www.webAIM.org), a highly-rated website about accessibility issues in website design and development.

Checklist

Website / App. Name:	
URL:	
Date Tested:	

Section 508 Rule	To Pass	To Fail	P/F?
(a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). [See Note 1]	Every image, Java applet, Flash file, video file, audio file, plug-in, etc. has an *alt* description.	A non-text element has no *alt* description.	
	Complex graphics (graphs, charts, etc.) are accompanied by detailed text descriptions.	Complex graphics have no alternative text, or the alternative does not fully convey the meaning of the graphic.	
	The *alt* descriptions succinctly describe the *purpose* of the objects, without being too verbose (for simple objects) or too vague (for complex objects).	*Alt* descriptions are verbose, vague, misleading, inaccurate or redundant to the context (e.g. the alt text is the same as the text immediately preceding or following it in the document).	
	Alt descriptions for images used as links are descriptive of the link destination.	*Alt* descriptions for images used as links are not descriptive of the link destination.	
	Decorative graphics with no other function have *empty* alt descriptions (alt= ""), but they never have *missing* alt descriptions.	Purely decorative graphics have *alt* descriptions that say "spacer", "decorative graphic," or other titles that only increase the time that it takes to listen to a page when using a	

Section 508 Checklist

Section 508 Rule	To Pass	To Fail	P/F?
		screen reader.	
(b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.	Multimedia files have _synchronized_ captions.	Multimedia files do not have captions, or captions which are not synchronized.	
(c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.	If color is used to convey important information, an alternative indicator is used, such as an asterisk (*) or other symbol.	The use of a color monitor is required.	
	Contrast is good.	Contrast is poor.	
(d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.	Style sheets may be used for color, indentation and other presentation effects, but the document is still understandable (even if less visually appealing) when the style sheet is turned off.	The document is confusing or information is missing when the style sheet is turned off.	
(e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.	Separate text links are provided outside of the server-side image map to access the same content that the image map hot spots access.	The only way to access the links of a server-side image map is through the image map hot spots, which usually means that a mouse is required and that the links are unavailable to assistive technologies.	
(f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.	Standard HTML client-side image maps are used, and appropriate alt text is provided for the image as well as the hot spots.	Server-side image maps are used when a client-side image map would suffice.	
(g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.	Data tables have the column and row headers appropriately identified (using the <th> tag)	Data tables have no header rows or columns.	

Section 508 Checklist

Section 508 Rule	To Pass	To Fail	P/F?
	Tables used strictly for <u>layout purposes</u> do NOT have header rows or columns.	Tables used for layout use the header attribute when there is no true header.	
(h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.	Table cells are associated with the appropriate headers (e.g. with the *id*, *headers*, *scope* and/or *axis* HTML attributes).	Columns and rows are not associated with column and row headers, or they are associated incorrectly.	
(i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.	Each frame is given a title that helps the user understand the frame's purpose.	Frames have no titles, or titles that are not descriptive of the frame's purpose.	
(j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.	No elements on the page flicker at a rate of 2 to 55 cycles per second, thus reducing the risk of optically-induced seizures.	One or more elements on the page flicker at a rate of 2 to 55 cycles per second, increasing the risk of optically-induced seizures.	
(k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes. [See Note 2]	A text-only version is created only when there is no other way to make the content accessible, or when it offers significant advantages over the "main" version for certain disability types.	A text-only version is provided only as an excuse not to make the "main" version fully accessible.	
	The text-only version is up-to-date with the "main" version.	The text-only version is not up-to-date with the "main" version.	
	The text-only version provides the functionality equivalent to that of the "main" version.	The text-only version is an unequal, lesser version of the "main" version.	
	An alternative is provided for components (e.g. plug-ins, scripts) that are not directly accessible.	No alternative is provided for components that are not directly accessible.	
(l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be	Information within the scripts is text-based, or a text alternative is provided within the script itself, in accordance with (a) in these standards.	Scripts include graphics-as-text with no true text alternative.	

Section 508 Checklist

Section 508 Rule	To Pass	To Fail	P/F?
identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology. [See Note 3]	All scripts (e.g. Javascript pop-up menus) are either directly accessible to assistive technologies (keyboard accessibility is a good measure of this), or an alternative method of accessing equivalent functionality is provided (e.g. a standard HTML link).	Scripts only work with a mouse, and there is no keyboard-accessible alternative either within or outside of the script.	
(m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l). [See Notes 4, 5, and 6]	A link is provided to a disability-accessible page where the plug-in can be downloaded.	No link is provided to a page where the plug-in can be downloaded and/or the download page is not disability-accessible.	
	All Java applets, scripts and plug-ins (including Acrobat PDF files and PowerPoint files, etc.) and the content within them are accessible to assistive technologies, or else an alternative means of accessing equivalent content is provided.	Plugins, scripts and other elements are used indiscriminately, without alternatives for those who cannot access them.	
(n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.	All form controls have text labels adjacent to them.	Form controls have no labels, or the labels are not adjacent to the controls.	
	Form elements have labels associated with them in the markup (i.e. the *id* and *for*, HTML elements).	There is no linking of the form element and its label in the HTML.	
	Dynamic HTML scripting of the form does not interfere with assistive technologies.	Dynamic HTML scripting makes parts of the form unavailable to assistive technologies.	
(o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.	A link is provided to skip over lists of navigational menus or other lengthy lists of links.	There is no way to skip over lists of links.	

Section 508 Checklist

Section 508 Rule	To Pass	To Fail	P/F?
(p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.	The user has control over the timing of content changes.	The user is required to react quickly, within limited time restraints.	

(See Notes Below)

Notes
<u>Notes</u>

Note 1: Until the *longdesc* tag is better supported, it is impractical to use.

Note 2: "Text-only" and "accessible" are NOT synonymous. Text-only sites may help people with certain types of visual disabilities, but are not always helpful to those with cognitive, motor or hearing disabilities.

Note 3: At this time, many elements of Dynamic HTML (client-side scripted HTML, which is usually accomplished with Javascript) cannot be made directly accessible to assistive technologies and keyboards, especially when the onMouseover command is used. If an onMouseover (or similar) element does not contain any important information (e.g. the script causes a button to "glow"), then there is no consequence for accessibility. If this scripted event reveals important information, then a keyboard-accessible alternative is required.

Note 4: When embedded into web pages, few plug-ins are currently directly accessible. Some of them e.g. RealPlayer) are more accessible as standalone products. It may be better to invoke the whole program rather than embed movies into pages at this point, although this may change in the future.

Note 5: Acrobat Reader 5.0 allows screen readers to access PDF documents. However, not all users have this version installed, and not all PDF documents are text-based (some are scanned in as graphics), which renders them useless to many assistive technologies. It is recommended that an accessible HTML version be made available as an alternative to PDF.

Note 6: PowerPoint files are currently not directly accessible unless the user has a full version of the PowerPoint program on the client computer (and not just the PowerPoint viewer). It is recommended that an accessible HTML version be provided as well.