



# **Need a Sign Program?**

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- **How to Know**
- **Getting Help**
- **Project Process**



### Need a New Sign Program?

Every building needs a sign program.

That common understanding starts with the fact that today's building codes require certain life safety signs for building occupancy. Added to that are basic signs that are needed for basic operational purposes, such as restroom signs.

Next, comes the need for labeling rooms. This allows for people to find rooms, its occupants and services, have things delivered and get repairs made. When a building has more the one straight corridor the need for directional signs now becomes apparent. Add another floor(s) and now you need additional types of life safety signs and floor level designations.

So clearly every building needs signs. New buildings are easy because they can start with a fresh new sign program tailored to the initial occupancy of the building and to the requirements of the first users.

Older buildings, on the other hand, have existing signs, however, unless the sign program has been regularly updated with every building remodel, modification and occupant usage, that sign program may be in need of replacement or at minimum updating for code compliance.

Every site needs a sign program.

Today's building codes require certain exterior signs for building occupancy like the identification of handicapped entrances and parking. Also, VA directives require certain signs be posted at the entry to the site.

Next, comes the need for identifying buildings and entrances. This allows for people to find occupants and services and have things delivered. When a site has more than one building, then directional signs becomes necessary. Add even more buildings, parking lots and roads and directional information to drivers and pedestrians becomes critically important for people to find the destination.

It is clearly evident that every site needs exterior signs. New sites can start with a fresh new sign program, but this is not typically common.

Most sites have been in use and have added and removed buildings over the years, relocated building entrances and moved services from one building to another. Unless the exterior sign program has been regularly updated, that sign program may be in need of replacement.

### How do you know if your facility needs a new exterior sign program?

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Following are some tell tale indicators that your site and facility need a new exterior sign program. Generally, the more of these that apply, the more pressing the need.

- Is your exterior sign program older than 10 years?
- Do your exterior signs have rust showing through the paint?
- Is the name on your main site identification sign correct?
- Does your exterior sign program contain signs that are leaning or falling over?
- Have you made changes to your parking lots? (use and location)
- Have you closed or changed the use of buildings on campus?
- Is the paint or lettering peeling off your signs?
- Have your signs been vandalized and not repaired, or repaired poorly?

### How do you know if your facility needs a new exterior sign program? (Continued)

- Does your exterior sign program refer to buildings that are closed?
- Are your exterior signs faded and streaked?
- Do you have plywood or temporary signs serving as directional or identification signs?
- Are your exterior signs covered or hidden by landscaping or trees?
- Do the exterior signs refer to departments, entrances or services that are no longer available or current?

### How does age affect your exterior sign program?

If your sign program is 3 to 5 years old and you have maintained and created or updated the necessary directional signs every time a department or service is moved, your sign program can be considered reasonably current and will function for many years to come.

If your sign program is 5 to 10 years old, more than likely the directional wayfinding program has mistakes, missing information and misleading directional information. During the 5 to 10 year period the paint finish on the signs is starting to show the affect of weather aging.

Also, over a 10-year period there has probably been a few remodeling or new construction projects that may have created orphaned signs or signs that are incorrectly labeling buildings or services. Parking location and usage

has also probably changed. And, sign programs that are 10 years old have also probably had several people working to maintain them over the span of years.

At 15 years a sign program has now past the threshold of still being usable. Rust, corrosion, peeling and severely faded paint mean your signs have now reached point where they should be replaced like any other worn out or obsolete piece of equipment

Exterior sign programs that are over 20 years old are past the point of usefulness. The physical condition of the signs is usually so bad they are actually “junk”. Other aspects with a sign program at this age is that the information conveyed is probably so out of date that it actually provides little if any help to patients and visitors.

### How do you know if your facility needs a new interior sign program?

Following are some tell tale indicators that your facility needs a new interior sign program. Generally, the more of these that apply to your buildings, the more pressing the need for a replacement sign program.

- Is your sign program older than 15 years?
- Does staff constantly get asked for directions from confused or lost patients and visitors?
- Is your information counter over whelmed with requests for directions?
- Have your code and life safety signs been upgraded in the last 5 years?
- Do you have home made or paper signs identifying rooms or functioning as directional signs?
- Are your directional signs and graphics still directing people to departments that no longer exist or have moved?
- Are your interior signs in different colors at the same door or different types?

### **How do you know if your facility needs a new interior sign program? (Continued)**

- At the same door, are your interior signs different types, colors or material?
- Are your room number signs mounted on the door or on the door frame above the door?
- Are your signs mounted in the correct location?
- Are your interior signs tapped to the wall?
- Has remodeling or new construction changed the circulation routes in the building?
- Do you have color stripes in the floor or on the wall that no longer lead to designated departments?
- Has the use of the rooms in building changed?
- Is your room numbering system confusing and are numbers being used out of sequence?
- Has there been a major relocation of services within the medical center?
- Do you receive repeated requests for wayfinding signs?
- At department entrances do you have 3 or 4 signs describing the occupant?

### **How does age affect your interior sign program?**

If your sign program is 5 years old and you have maintained and created the necessary directional signs every time a department is moved, your sign program can be considered reasonably current and will function for many years to come.

If your sign program is 10 years old, more than likely the directional wayfinding program has mistakes, missing information and misleading directional information. Also, over a 10-year period there has probably been a few remodeling projects that may have created orphaned signs or signs that are incorrectly labeling rooms or services.

Sign programs that are 10 years old have also probably had several people working to maintain them over the span of years. The resulting effects are

such that each individual has added or deleted items that may or may not have been considered by the previous individual maintaining the sign program. The results being a sign program that can be confusing.

At 15 years a sign program has now past the threshold of still being usable.

So many factors have multiplied themselves that the original sign program is very likely so disconnected from what was originally implemented that there is no common thread of communication, look, finishes, placement or information.

Sign programs that are over 20 years old are totally broken, dysfunctional and should be replaced like any other obsolete piece of equipment.

### **Does your facility need to do room renumbering?**

Following are some tell tale indicators that a building needs to have the rooms renumbered and implement a new interior room identification sign program.

- Is your sign program older than 15 years?
- Has there been major remodeling with in the building?
- Do you have duplicate room numbers within the building?
- Has there been additions added to the building and were the new building room numbers coordinated with the existing building room numbers?
- Have you had to add an lot of letters after a single room number to accommodate new rooms?
- Has the use of the rooms in building changed?
- Has there been a major relocation of services within the building?
- If a patient or visitor is given a room number to go to, can they find it without asking someone for directions?

In a complete facility replacement sign project, it is important that improved patient wayfinding is not hindered by keeping an outdated and broken room renumbering systems due to the desire to maintain current facility management systems like VISTA. There are now various ways to address new room numbering in facility management systems that maintain the database with current room renumbering.

Refer to the Room Renumbering section of this Guide for additional information.

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### **What does a new sign program bring to a facility?**

Implementing a new sign program is project has a positive impact on every individual that uses your facility, patients, visitors and employees.

These are just a few of the things achieved.

- Improved patient satisfaction.
- Improved image of the VA to the patients and visitors.
- Improved employee moral.
- Improved professional image in the medical community.
- Reduced staff time in providing directions to patients and visitors.
- Modernized appearance to older buildings.

**Getting Help**

It is recommended that an Environmental Graphic Design firm be engaged for the development of large-scale interior and exterior sign programs. The contractual options are: (1) Include services as a part of an overall A/E contract; (2) Utilize existing "Open-Ended A/E" contracts and engage the firm as a subcontractor; (3) Hire an Environmental Graphic Design firm like any other A/E firm.

The following documentation describes a typical scope of work for engaging environmental graphic design programming services for a project. This outline can be used as a template. Also following are samples of evaluation criteria and questions that can be used as an aid in the selection process for a qualified Environmental Graphic Design firm.

**Sample:****Statement of Work**

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**STATEMENT OF WORK**

VAMC \_\_\_\_\_

**ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHIC PLANNING SERVICES**

This statement of work is to provide environmental graphic design services.

The project will plan, design and program an interior and exterior sign and graphics program for the VAMC \_\_\_\_\_ and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) located in the \_\_\_\_\_ area. The exterior sign program will identify buildings and provide directional wayfinding. The interior sign program will develop a new room numbering system, provide for new life safety signs, new room identification and a directional way-finding sign program.

During the course of the development of the directional way-finding sign program for the interior, coordination will be conducted with the facility to identify architectural, interior design and communication issues at the facility that can be improved to provide better circulation and communication of services for patients and visitors. In the development of the directional way-finding sign program for the exterior, coordination will be conducted to identify site circulation issues for both vehicles and pedestrians that can be improved to provide better circulation and parking for patients and visitors.

The sign program "design look" will be developed to coordinate with the VA Sign & Graphic Design Guide utilizing a component base sign system.

**A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCOPE OF WORK**

The Environmental Graphic Design firm shall have experience in providing design services specifically for the development of interior and exterior signage for health care facilities. The environmental graphic designer's activities and experience requirements are:

1. Primary business activity (70%) is in the field of Environmental Graphic Design performing the work of sign programming and design.
2. Project Manager assigned to signage planning, way finding and programming must have extensive experience with programming the room and informational signing for the interior and exterior of large medical centers. Included are the development of a wayfinding (directional) sign programs, room number and life safety signing, the development of pedestrian and vehicle way-finding sign programs, building and entrance identification and traffic/regulatory signing. Extensive experience refers to having worked on and managed multiple large sized (250+bed) medical centers as well as psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes and outpatient clinics.
3. Ability to provide sign location plans in AutoCAD (if AutoCAD files are available from the VA for the buildings and sites involved).
4. Professional member of the Society for Environmental Graphic Design.

**Sample:****Statement of Work  
(Continued)**

5. Thorough familiarity with the VA's Sign & Graphic Design Guide.
6. Knowledge of medical terminology and operational characteristics of hospitals and clinics.
7. Selected firm will be excluded from bidding the sign product and installation.
8. Project manager assigned to the project must have experience in developing new room numbering systems for medical centers.

**B. PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK****1. INTERIOR TASKS**

- a. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will review the existing room numbering system and advise the medical center if it needs to be replaced. If the existing room numbering system is "broken", the Environmental Graphic Design firm will develop a new room numbering system for all rooms and all floors of the selected medical center/clinic. This room numbering system is one that is to be directed toward visitors and staff. Proposed options for new room numbering system will be reviewed with facility Engineering and Interior Design.
- b. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will design and program an interior room identification sign program. This will involve programming and sign location plans being prepared for all of the room identification signs throughout the selected medical center/ facility. This will include a complete sign message schedule identifying each sign, its message and its type. Sign location plans will be prepared showing the placement/location of the signs.
- c. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will design and program a life safety, code and regulatory sign program. This will involve programming and sign location plans being prepared for all of the regulatory, code and life safety signs throughout the selected medical center/facility. This will include a complete sign message schedule identifying each sign, its message and its type. Sign location plans will be prepared showing the placement/location of regulatory, code and life safety signs.
- d. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will design and program a directional wayfinding sign program. This will involve programming and sign location plans being prepared for all of the directional signs throughout the selected medical center/facility. This will include a complete sign message schedule identifying each sign, its message and its type. Sign location plans will be prepared showing the placement/location of directional signs.
- e. The Environmental Graphic Design Specialist will develop a report identifying architectural, interior design and communication problems at the facilities that need to be changed and improved to provide better identification, circulation and communication of services for patients and visitors.
- f. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will develop the design scheme for the "look" of the interior sign program. The design will generally define the various types of signs that will be used throughout the project along with issues of image, materials and finishes, type style and layout, and color. Terminology, names and titles, flexibility of the system, form and scale, and legibility will also be considerations in developing the design scheme. The design documents will identify material finishes, trims, sign construction, installation and other design details. The documents will include elevation drawing of each sign type with applicable size and layout dimensions and any necessary side, top and back views.



**Sample:****Statement of Work  
(Continued)**

- g. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare complete specifications for the product being specified for the project.
  - h. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare suitable documentation necessary for the VA to obtain pricing/quotations for the demolition of existing signs and the installation of new signs. The Environmental Graphics Design firm will be required to prepare any of the VA's bidding documentation, excluding VA's standard forms.
  - i. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare a pre-construction budget for product, demolition and installation.
  - j. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will provide construction implementation services which include reviewing submittal and shop drawings submissions and perform a pre-installation walk thru with contractor. At completion of installation, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will make a final inspection walk through and prepare a "punch list" report noting deficiencies and corrections necessary for the contractor to complete the project.
  - k. The interior signs will be designed with consideration given to the ATBCB's guideline for accessible signage related to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
  - l. Examples of the types of interior signs that will be included in the scope of work are: Primary room/department identification signs; Patient room signs; Secondary room identification signs; Informational signs; Wall and ceiling mounted directional signs; Entrance lobby signs; Network identification signage; Regulatory, life safety code and restrictive signs.
2. EXTERIOR TASKS
- a. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will design and program an exterior wayfinding/ directional sign program. This will involve programming and sign location plans being prepared showing the placement of the signs and their respective messages. This will include a complete sign message schedule identifying each sign, its message and its type. Sign location plans and photographs will be prepared showing the exact placement/location of the directional signs.
  - b. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will design and program an exterior building identification sign program. This will involve programming and sign location plans being prepared showing the placement of the signs and their respective messages. This will include a complete sign message schedule identifying each sign, its message and its type. Sign location plans and photographs will be prepared showing the exact placement/location of the building identification signs. The signs on the building may be augmented with freestanding signs as necessary to assist in identifying buildings.
  - c. The Environmental Graphic Design Specialist will develop a report identifying site circulation issues for both vehicles and pedestrians that can be improved to provide better access, circulation and parking for patients and visitors.
  - d. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will develop the design scheme for the "look" of the exterior sign program. The design will generally define the various types of signs that will be used throughout the project along with issues of image, materials, finishes, type style and layout, and color. Terminology, names and titles, flexibility of the system, form and scale, and legibility will also be considerations in developing the design scheme. The design documents will identify material finishes, trims, sign construction, installation and other design details.

**Sample:****Statement of Work  
(Continued)**

The documents will include elevation drawing of each sign type with applicable size and layout dimensions and any necessary side, top and back views.

- e. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare complete specifications for the product being specified for the project.
- f. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare suitable documentation necessary for the VA to obtain pricing/quotations for the demolition of existing signs and the installation of new signs. The design firm will not be required to prepare any of the VA's bidding documentation.
- g. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will provide construction implementation services which include reviewing submittal and shop drawings submissions and perform a pre-installation walk thru with contractor. At completion of installation, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will make a final inspection walk through and prepare a "punch list" report noting deficiencies and corrections necessary for the contractor to complete the project.
- h. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare a pre-construction budget for product, demolition and installation.
- i. Examples of the types of exterior signs that will be included in the scope of work are: Freestanding, wall or building mounted identification signs; Freestanding, wall or building mounted directional signs; Parking lot identification & parking stall signs; Traffic signs; Site identification signs.

**3. AREA OF WORK**

- a. The interior sign area of work at VAMC \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as the interior of the medical center complex and \_\_\_\_\_ community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs).
- b. The exterior sign area of work at VAMC \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as the traffic and parking lot signs and building identification signage.

**4. PHASES OF WORK****a. Phase 1 - PLANNING**

Project begins with an initial meeting with the Environmental Graphic Design firm, the network planner, the medical center/facility project coordinator, and appropriate VAMC staff. It begins by defining and refining the scope of the project in greater detail and reviewing the responsibilities of the Environmental Graphic Design firm and facility staff regarding input, design, documentation, coordination, direction and approvals. A project schedule will be established which relates to the project's sequence of events and priorities of importance. Functional relationships will be discussed regarding design character, implementation phasing, document submissions and purchasing/bidding procedures.

Deliverables: 3 hard copies and 1 electronic file (PDF format); A project schedule.

**b. Phase 2 - NEW ROOM NUMBER PROGRAMMING**

The Environmental Graphic Design firm will survey and review the selected medical center/facility buildings and develop a new room numbering system. The room numbering scheme will be presented to the Facility Director and appropriate staff for their review and comment.

**Sample:****Statement of Work  
(Continued)**

Deliverables: 3 hard copies and 1 electronic file (PDF & DWG format). Drawings illustrating the proposed room numbering scheme. A conversion table listing new and old room numbers.

c. Phase 3 - PRELIMINARY PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

The Environmental Graphic Design firm will revise the new room numbering system based upon comments received from the facility. When the room numbering revisions are complete, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will issue the final documentation to the facility project coordinator that will consist of floor plans, which list both the new and the old number. This documentation will be incorporated into the new room identification sign program.

The Environmental Graphic Design firm will survey and review the project for sign locations, text and placements. With the exterior signs, evaluations will be made regarding sign illumination requirements. For the exterior directional signs, evaluations will involve analyzing public, employee and vehicular circulation and traffic flow patterns around the project site. On the basis of information gathered in these activities and in the Planning Phase, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will develop the schematic design scheme for the "look" of the sign program. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will identify finishes, trims, types of signs and other design details. This will all be based upon a component based sign system as identified in the VA Sign & Graphic design Guide, created for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Emphasis will be placed on developing a sign program that provides the facility with a progressive professional look, coordinated with the building's interior design and architecture, re-cycle element of the existing exterior sign program, if possible, and address the facility's maintenance requirements. For both the interior of the buildings and the exterior signs for the campus, a preliminary sign location plan will be prepared along with a preliminary sign message schedule.

The schematic design scheme, preliminary sign location plan and preliminary message schedule will be presented to Facility Management, coordinated by the facility project manager, for their review and comment. The Environmental Graphic Design Specialist will assist the facility in the review of the documents and the assembly of the facilities review comments.

Deliverables: 3 hard copies and 1 electronic file (PDF); Drawings illustrating the proposed look, color, trim, etc. of the interior and exterior sign program; Preliminary sign location plan and message schedule.

d. Phase 4 - FINAL PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

After the schematic design of the sign program and the preliminary sign location plan and message schedule has been reviewed and approved by the medical center/facility, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will proceed to develop the draft of the sign project documents involving the sign type drawings and specifications.

These documents will show preliminary illustrations of all interior and exterior sign types in the sign program. A preliminary draft of the specifications and budget will be developed that will define the cost of implementing the program. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will revise the sign location plan and message schedule. These documents will be presented to appropriate facility staff for review and comment.

Deliverables: 3 hard copies and 1 electronic file (PDF); Preliminary version of the sign project manual showing all of the sign types, revised sign location plans and message schedule; Preliminary specifications and budget.

**Sample:****Statement of Work  
(Continued)**

## e. Phase 5 - CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

In this phase, the Environmental Graphic Design firm refines and finalizes the physical design of the signs, based upon client input from design development documents. The facility project coordinator will return the design development sign type drawings, sign location plan and message schedule to the Environmental Graphic Design firm with final comments and final revisions. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will prepare the final sign project manual. The sign project manual will follow the general format of detailed sign type drawings, defining all of the signs in the hierarchy of the sign program, selected sign construction details, sign installation details and specifications. The sign type drawings will include elevation drawings of each sign type with applicable size and layout dimensions and any necessary side, top and back views. It will also contain the interior and exterior sign message schedule, which defines the wording of each sign, referenced to the particular sign type and location. Final specifications will be provided for both the interior and exterior signs. Final sign location plans, in the form of AUTOCAD files will be provided for both the interior and exterior sign locations. A pre-construction budget estimate will be developed for implementing the program.

Deliverables: 3 hard copies and 1 electronic file (PDF & DWG format); Sign Project Manual/Document containing – Specifications, Sign Type Elevation, Layout, Detail and Mounting Drawings, Sign Message Schedule and Sign Location Drawings, pre-construction budget.

## f. Phase 6 - CONSTRUCTION / IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The Environmental Graphic Design firm is to assist the facility project coordinator with the following services.

- 1) The Environmental Graphic Design firm will provide advice and direction to the VA in matters related to the contractors and suppliers during the course of the implementation of the project. The Environmental Graphic Design firm will have no direct or indirect affiliation with any of the contractors or suppliers involved with the implementation of the project.
- 2) Review all design submissions at the medical center with VAMC project coordinator and other appropriate staff.
- 3) Review the fabricator/sign contractors' submittals, shop drawings and samples to insure compliance with the Bid/Project Design Documents. The review could consist of one complete submittal and one revised submittal.
- 4) The Environmental Graphic Design firm will visit the project site with the facility project coordinator and the sign contractor and perform a pre-installation walk through for both the interior and exterior sign project.
- 5) At the completion of all fabrication and installation, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will make a final inspection walk through of the project and prepare a report noting deficiencies and corrections necessary for the sign contractor to complete both the interior and the exterior sign projects.
- 6) At the completion of final inspection corrections, the Environmental Graphic Design firm will make a final inspection walk through of the project and prepare a report noting if there are still any outstanding deficiencies and corrections necessary for the sign contractor to complete both the interior and the exterior sign projects.

**Sample:****Statement of Work  
(Continued)**

## 5. PRELIMINARY PROJECT SCHEDULE

Phase 1: \_\_\_\_ weeks; Phase 2: \_\_\_\_ weeks; Phase 3: \_\_\_\_ weeks;  
Phase 4: \_\_\_\_ weeks; Phase 5: \_\_\_\_ weeks

## 6. EXCLUSIONS

The fabrication and installation of signs, site electrical and the engineering within signs is by others. Interior signs not included in the scope of work are: illuminated fire safety exit signs, signs related to or on equipment or fixtures, and signs relating to employee operational matters. Exterior signs not included in the scope of work are: parking stall identification, signs related to or on equipment or fixtures and striping and pavement markings.

7. PROJECT COORDINATOR  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTE**

This statement of work is a general guide to assist in the development of a scope for a project and facility. Close coordination with a Contacting Officer will help tailor the document to meet current Contracting requirements and procedures.

**Sample:****Federal Business  
Opportunity Ad**

DESCRIPTION: IDENTIFINITE DELIVERY CONTRACT (OPEN-END) FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAMMING SERVICES

The project will provide professional services necessary for various environmental graphic design services for VA medical centers located in the VA Integrated Service Network (VISN) \_\_\_\_\_. The VISN \_\_\_\_\_ facilities will include VAMC \_\_\_\_\_. Also included will be various Community Based Outpatient Clinics in the VISN \_\_\_\_ catchment area. Services include design and program of interior and exterior signage, directional wayfinding signage, new room numbering system directed towards visitors and staff, life safety, code and regulatory signage, traffic regulatory signs. This will involve programming and sign location plans for all signs throughout the medical center/facility. Area of consideration is within the continental United States. The environmental graphic design firm shall perform work on an indefinite quantity (Open-Ended) basis. When services are required, a work order will be issued. Work orders will be issued by the Contracting Officer and will detail the scope of work. The environmental graphic designer and Contracting Officer will review the scope of work and negotiate the amount of hours required and the completion schedule. VA intends to award an open-ended Environmental Graphic Design contract. The Government is uncertain as to the number of task orders that will be placed against the contract during the term of the contract. Award of individual task orders is contingent upon project funding. Selection criteria will be based on: (1) Primary business activity (70%) is in the field of Environmental Graphic Design performing the work of signage programming and design. (2) Project Manager assigned signage programming must have extensive experience with programming the room and informational signing for the interior of large medical centers including the development of a way-finding (directional) sign program and life safety signing. Extensive experience refers to having worked on and managed multiple large sized (250+ bed) medical centers as well as psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, and outpatient clinics. (3) Project Manager assigned signage programming must have extensive experience with programming the signing for the exterior of large medical centers. This includes the development of pedestrian and vehicle way-finding (directional) signs program, building and entrance identification and traffic/regulatory signing. Extensive experience refers to having worked on exterior sign programs for multiple medical centers in rural, suburban, and urban locations. (4) Ability to provide sign location plans in AutoCAD (if AutoCAD files are available from the VA for the buildings and sites involved). (5) Professional member of the Society for Environmental Graphic Design. (6) Thorough familiarity with the VA's Environmental Graphic Design Program Guide. (7) Knowledge of medical terminology and operational characteristics of hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, and outpatient clinics. (8) Selected firm will be excluded from bidding the sign product, demolition and installation. (9) Project manager assigned to the project must have experience in developing new room numbering systems for medical centers. Environmental Graphic Design firms that meet the requirements listed in this announcement are invited to submit two (2) copies of the completed Standard Forms (SF) 254 and 255 by \_\_\_\_\_. SIC code 8711 applies. No bid packages are available. This is not a Request for Proposal (RFP).

**Sample:****Rating Factors**

Following are some rating factors that can be used in the selection process for an Environmental Graphic Design firm.

1. Primary business activity (70%) is in the field of Environmental Graphic Design performing the work of signage programming and design.
2. Project Manager assigned signage programming must have extensive experience with programming the room and informational signing for the interior of large medical centers including the development of a way-finding (directional) sign program and life safety signing. Extensive experience refers to having worked on and managed multiple large sized (250+ bed) medical centers as well as psychiatric hospitals nursing homes, and outpatient clinics.
3. Project Manager assigned signage programming must have extensive experience with programming the signing for the exterior of large medical centers. This includes the development of pedestrian and vehicle way-finding (directional) signs program, building and entrance identification and traffic/regulatory signing. Extensive experience refers to having worked on exterior sign programs for multiple medical centers in rural, suburban, and urban locations.
4. Ability to provide sign location plans in AutoCAD (if AutoCAD files are available from the VA for the buildings and sites involved).
5. Professional member of the Society for Environmental Graphic Design.
6. Thorough familiarity with the VA's Sign & Graphic Design Guide.
7. Knowledge of medical terminology and operational characteristics of hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, and outpatient clinics.
8. Selected firm will be excluded from bidding the sign product, demolition and installation.
9. Project manager assigned to the project must have experience in developing new room numbering systems for medical centers.
10. Provide 5 client references (past projects) that can be contacted for background and performance information on the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

**Sample:****Questions for  
Environmental Graphic  
Design Firm During  
Interview**

Following are some interview questions that can be used in the selection process for evaluating an Environmental Graphic Design firm.

1. What type of firm is \_\_\_\_\_?
2. How long has the firm been in business?
3. Is your firm affiliated with, or a division of, another firm or sign company?
4. Does your firm sell signs or any other manufactured product?
5. How long has the firm been designing sign programs for medical centers?
6. How many sign programs has the firm designed for medical centers?
7. What is the largest hospital that your firm has designed a sign program for?
8. How many VA Medical Centers has your firm design and programmed a sign ?
9. Does the firm have any VA projects currently underway?
10. What comprises the firm's staff and what is their experience in the field of Environmental Graphic Design?
11. What is the educational background of the staff?
12. How many people typically work on a project?
13. Who works on the Design Phase of a project and then who works on the Construction Phase?
14. What are the 5 most recent projects bid?
15. What are the 5 most recent projects completed? (fabricated and installed)
16. What are the 5 most recent hospital and medical facility projects?
17. What are 5 projects currently in design at your firm?
18. Has your firm received any awards for design excellence?
19. Has your firm had any litigation involvement in the last 5 years?
20. Is your firm a Veteran owned firm?



### The Project Process

The process to develop a new sign program for a medical center, a site or a building, can take several months or even a year to complete.

Programming the signage requirements for a facility first requires a definition of the project to be undertaken.

Interior sign programs are generally best undertaken along with along projects that involve remodeling, repainting or refurbishing. When an old sign program is removed there is generally considerable refurbishment needed to walls. A new interior sign program will generally have less than two thirds of the signs that are removed replaced, so there is considerable patching, repairs and painting involved.

An exterior sign program may require repairs to landscaping, running electrical circuits and repairing walks, walls and paving surfaces. So it is best to undertake an exterior sign program for an entire medical campus rather than attempting to do it on a piecemeal basis. Doing just a portion of a campus will lead to confusion on the part of patients and visitors because when they see new signs they will not be sure that the information on old signs is correct.

The following is a sign program project template that outlines the various tasks, documentation and events in a sign project for a building or a site. This overview can also function as a “project road map” to keep a sign project on track for milestones and deliverables.

### Engaging an Environmental Graphic Design firm

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Selection of a qualified firm to provide sign programming and design services

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Submitting profile and qualifications

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- GSA Form 330

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Coordination of the review and approval process with Contracting.
- Assembly of the personnel that will be involved in the selection review process.

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- Coordinated by Contracting

#### Time

What is the time required.

- 8 to 16 weeks

### Establishing the Project Team

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Development of project milestones.
- Development of the review and approval process.
- Assembly of the personnel that will be involved in the project.

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Project manager and design team staff finalized.
- Prepare a project time line

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Project time line

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Develop the core committee that will function as the project lead
- Develop a process for reviewing the project documentation

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- Prepare a project document review time line
- Develop the channel of approvals that will be utilized for the project

#### Time

What is the time required.

- 2 to 4 weeks

### Programming

Defining the scope of the project, the criteria for the design and any special requirements.

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Defining the project.
- Defining the influences.
- Identifying the coordinating elements.

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Determine where signs are needed.
- Develop a preliminary message schedule of text for the signs.
- Determine the types of signs required.
- Determine the circulation system and decision points.
- Identify specific site and/or architectural conditions.
- Define special requirements for lighting, installation, maintenance.
- Identify coordination issues with architect, landscape architect and interior designer.
- Establish budget objectives.

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Sign message schedule and location plan.

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Review the sign message schedule and location plan providing comment and revisions.
- Provide input & direction on budgets.

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

#### Time

What is the time required.

- Depending on the overall size of the project, this can take 2 to 12 weeks.

### Design Development

Creating the design look of the sign and graphics program and resolving issues.

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Defining the look, image and design character.
- Applying the image and design character to the needs defined in the Programming Phase.

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Define the various types of signs that will be used.
- Define issues of image, finishes, layout, and color.
- Define terminology, names and titles.
- Drawings of all the interior and exterior sign types that will be included in the sign program.
- Revise the sign location plan and message schedule.
- Develop preliminary budget.
- Coordinate with other design consultants.

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Presentation drawings of the proposed design look.
- Drawings showing all sign types.
- Revised sign location plans and message schedule.
- Preliminary budget.

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Review design concepts and drawings and provide comments.
- Review sign message schedule and location plan providing comment and revision.

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- VA approval of Design Development documents.

#### Time

What is the time required.

- Starting during Programming, this phase will take 5 to 10 weeks.

### Final Design

Preparation of documentation for the manufacturing and installation of the sign and graphics program.

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Final documentation for purchasing implementation

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Prepare final sign location plans and message schedule.
- Prepare final sign type drawings, text layout, construction details.
- Prepare installation and mounting details.
- Prepare specifications.
- Develop pre-construction budget.
- Provide list of pre-qualified GSA sign manufacturers.

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Drawings showing all sign types, details, mounting and layouts.
- Final sign messages schedule and location plan.
- Pre-construction budget
- Specifications.

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Review the final sign location plan, message schedule, sign type drawings and specifications.

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- VA approval of Final Design documents.

#### Time

What is the time required.

- This phase will take 6 to 8 weeks.

### Purchasing

Bidding and entering into a contract for manufacturing and installation.

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Engage a qualified manufacturer and installer

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Assist in the pricing process by answering questions and providing clarifications

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Form 90-2237
- Statement of Work
- Estimate

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Contracting Officer conducts the purchasing process.

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- Pricing Abstract
- Technical Team
- Contractor Qualifications
- Grade Review

#### Time

What is the time required.

- This phase will take 4 to 10 weeks.

### Demolition

Removal of existing sign program

#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Defining what work is to be accomplished regarding removal of existing signs

#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Develop documentation

#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Documentation describing the scope of demolition work. This can consist of photographs, description of work and plans not location of signs to be removed

#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Provide direction on the scope of demolition to be addressed.
- Review demolition documentation.
- Review sign removal schedule and plan providing comment and revisions.

#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- VA approval of demolition documents

#### Time

What is the time required.

- 2 to 4 weeks

### Implementation

Manufacturing and installation

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#### Objective

What is looking to be accomplished.

- Install and complete the project

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#### Environmental Graphic Design Firm Tasks

What is being done by the Environmental Graphic Design firm.

- Review of shop drawings.
- Review of materials, finishes, colors and samples.
- Develop change orders.
- Perform pre-installation walk through.
- Perform punch list inspection.
- Prepare punch list report.

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#### Documentation

What is being delivered.

- Reviewed shop drawings.
- Reviewed materials, finishes, colors and samples.
- Punch list inspection report.

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#### VA Project Management Tasks

What is being done by the VA.

- Review shop drawings.
- Review materials, finishes, colors and samples.
- Review punch list inspection report.
- Provide access to the building and site.
- Coordination with facility staff.

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#### Approvals

What approvals need to be achieved.

- Acceptance of installed project.
- Receiving Report

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#### Time

What is the time required.

- Generally projects take from 12 to 20 weeks, depending on their size and scope.

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### Getting Help for a Small Project

While this information will provide guidance for all projects, much of what has been discussed relates to large scale sign programs. The approach for small projects will be similar whether design/programming services are engaged or the work is done "in house".

Specifying environmental graphic design and programming services as a part of a sign order for a small sign project is an option that can be considered. However, be careful in retaining control and defining the qualification of the programmer/designer that will be doing the work.

There is an inherent conflict of interests with the programmer/designer working for the manufacturer and not the ultimate client (you), with a tendency to over specify the quantity of sign products needed or the types of signs being provided. Make sure the scope of work being provided by a manufacturer is also clearly spelled out, in detail, relating to the exact type of programming services that is going to be provided.

Be suspect if the manufacturer does not identify the true cost for programming services and "buries" it in the product cost. Programming services are never free.

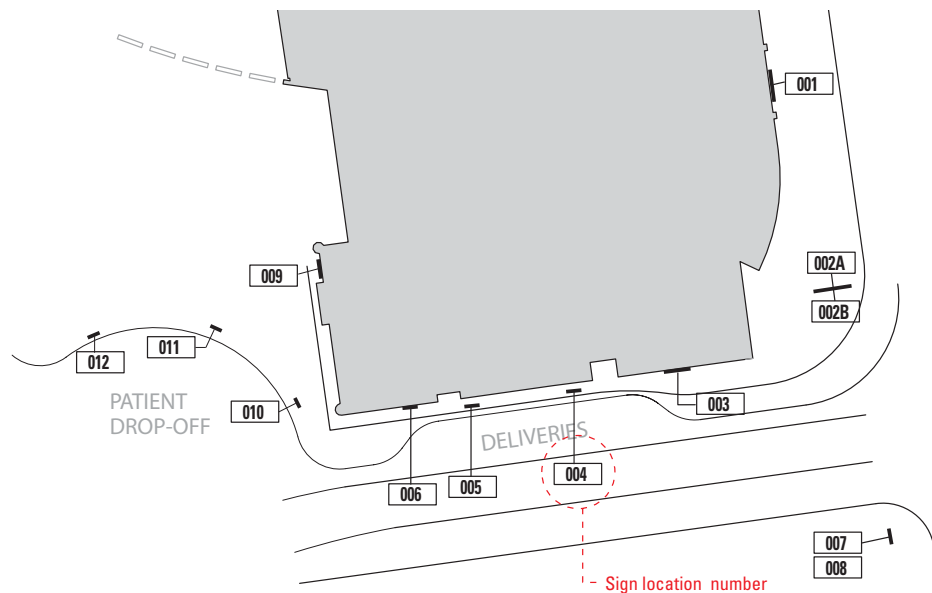
**Exterior Programming**

The intent of this page is to illustrate how the message schedule (Figure 1) correlates to it's respective sign location plan (Figure 2). The message schedule calls out typical signs used in programming the exterior site. For more information regarding the general location and installation of these signs, please see the construction and installation details.

**Figure 1**

Exterior Message Schedule							
Building Name							
	Location	Sign Type	Sign Text	Side	Quantity	Notes	Revised Date
	The location number references the number on the sign location plan	The sign type links a specific sign to this location.	The sign text displays the copy exactly as it will read on the sign. The line breaks, abbreviations and logos etc. should all be included in this column the way in which it will read on the sign. If the sign is double-sided, both sides should be listed.		The quantity lists the number of signs required at this location.	The notes column is for any additional special requests or notations about the sign	00/04
	002	EN03.02	← Exit  ----- → Visitor Parking Patient Drop Off	A  B	1		
	001	EN09.07	Medical Center (logo) (underscore)		1		
	003	EN09.03	2151 N. Harbor Blvd.		1		
	004	EN05.03	Service Vehicles Only		1		
	007	EN10.03	YIELD		1		

**Figure 2**



Interior Programming

The intent of this page is to illustrate how the message schedule (Figure 3) correlates to it's respective sign location plan (Figure 4). The message schedule calls out typical signs used in programming the interior of a building. For more information regarding the location of restroom and stairwell signs, please see the construction and installation details.

Figure 3

Interior Message Schedule									
Building Name									
Floor	Location	Sign Type	Sign Text	Side	Quantity	Layout/Symbol	Notes	Glass Backer	Revised Date
Listing the floor number aids in sorting and organizing the files.	The location number references the number on the sign location plan.	The sign type links the appropriate sign to this location.	The sign text displays the copy exactly as it will read on the sign. The line breaks, arrows, abbreviations and logos etc., should all be included in this column the way in which it will read on the sign. If the sign is double-sided, both sides should be listed.		The quantity lists the number of signs at this location.	This column calls out specific symbols used on the signs.	The notes column is for additional requests or notations about the sign.	Signs mounted to glass should have a backer panel to conceal adhesive tape.	Date the document was revised.
2	201	IN14.01	← Clinic E Main Lobby ----- → Therapy Services Radiation Therapy		1				
2	203	IN19.01	Pharmacy		1		Mount to sidelight	yes	
2	207	IN01.22	CAUTION BIOHAZARD (symbol)		1	Biohaz. symbol	Mount to door		
2	206	IN03.01 IN04.02	1359 Soiled Utility		1				
2	205	IN09.01	(men symbol)		1	Men symbol			
2	202	IN03.01	1360		1				
2	200	IN16.02	↑ Main Lobby ----- ← Physical Therapy	A B	1				

Figure 4

