

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 1470-001
SUBJECT: Policy for Visual Communication Standards	DATE: February 7, 2003	
	OPI: Office of Communications, Visual Communications Center	

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1 **PURPOSE**

This regulation prescribes the policies and procedures for visual communication activities (graphic design in print media, exhibitions, events, and electronic production) for all agencies and staff offices of the USDA. The purpose is to provide cost savings through visual management, least cost principles, and economy of scale. This regulation takes precedence over any agency regulations that are in conflict with the policies and procedures described herein.

2 **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CANCELLATIONS**

This regulation supersedes DR-1470-001, Graphic and Exhibit Design.

3 **POLICY**

The policy of USDA is to apply graphic communication standards to convey programs and activities of the Department for print, dimensional and electronic media in the broadest sense.

a Authority

The Director, Office of Communications, establishes this Departmental Regulation pursuant to the authority delegated at 7 CFR 2.36.

b Application

These regulations apply to all information materials developed for communication through publishing by print and/or electronic media, materials for presentations to the public including national/international distribution, educational/advertising campaigns, and all dimensional media regardless of production technology.

c Guides

OC will perform work in accordance with the Department's Visual Management Manual, AD-792 and Visual Management Guides for the USDA symbol, Service Center signs, stationery, and other guidance issued by OC.

d Cost

All visual communications materials will be acquired utilizing the principle of least cost to the taxpayer when all costs are considered regardless of funding means and operational procedures. "All cost" includes personnel, material and equipment as well as electronic work stations and related overhead expenses as defined by the working capital fund (WCF) operation. The Design Center will recapture such operational costs for hours worked on product development and production as defined by the WCF operation.

e History, Art, Research

USDA graphic and exhibit productions dealing in history and art should be for the purpose of educating and informing, not for the promotion of the USDA's role in those subjects. Material produced about the USDA's research should be for the purpose of educating and informing and should not be used to promote the agency or agency personnel.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

a Authority for this policy is delegated to the Director, Office of

Communications at CFR 2.36. The Design Center is assigned authority by the Director to carry out this policy for the material defined in these regulations.

- b The responsibility for visual production is designated by category of audience type and/or level of distribution. The general audience categories are administration, scientific and technical, and consumer (see mandatory definitions in the Visual Management Manual and see graphic design items 5, 6, and 7).
- c In the scope of visual production, USDA agencies are responsible for:
 - (1) Organizing information content per information product, planning for adequate scheduling and production time to reduce costs to the taxpayer.
 - (2) Providing the Design Center with fully edited and cleared manuscripts from Office of Communication's Editorial and Review Center prior to production.
 - (3) Providing the Design Center with cleared and approved photography from Office of Communication's Photography Center prior to production.
 - (4) Reviewing for the accuracy of all text in camera ready artwork provided by the Design Center, maintaining production schedules for final delivery as outlined in estimates/proposals, incurring additional charges for change orders, including schedule changes, authors alterations, and modifications to contracts previously established.
 - (5) Providing sufficient funding and adequate production time per information product to ensure final product meets all applicable access requirements (including Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards; Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board guidelines; and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 508: Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards; and other access laws, standards, or guidelines).
 - (6) Ensuring fiscal responsibility for all ordered regardless of fiscal year in accordance with the Working Capital Fund authorities and policies.

5 DESIGN FOR PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MATERIAL

- a All material for national/international distribution, regardless of audience

category, shall be produced by the Design Center. This includes ads, publications, posters, symbols, reports, decals, illustrations, typographic systems, stationery systems, and any electronic display product not including video.

- b Administrative, scientific and technical category material for internal or regional distribution, may be produced by the originating agency provided the agency can produce the material on the least cost principle, and that the Visual Management Manual standards developed by the Design Center are followed.
- c No additional personnel or equipment may be obtained for this purpose without approval of the OC Director.
- d All materials produced by the Design Center shall meet all applicable access requirements. (See Section 4c: Responsibilities)

6 DESIGN FOR STATIC AND INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION MATERIAL

- a Agencies shall be allowed to produce, under Visual Management Manual standards and guides, slides, vu-graphs, presentation boards, and electronic interactive presentations, (not including videos), for internal and administrative audience category only, providing the agency can produce these materials on the least cost principle.
- b Materials designated for national/international distribution shall be produced by the OC Design Center or approved by OC Design Center prior to production. Materials including interactive presentation are exhibits, kiosks and web sites (see item 8, Planning and Submission of Material and Cost).
- c No additional personnel or equipment may be obtained for the production of static and interactive presentations without approval of the OC Director.
- d All materials produced or approved by the Design Center shall meet all applicable access requirements. (See Section 4c: Responsibilities)

7 DESIGN FOR EXHIBITS AND DIMENSIONAL MATERIAL

- a All signage and exhibits (national, international and regional) that are temporary, traveling or permanent, (i.e., visitor centers) must be designed or design-approved by OC Design Center or a regional unit designated by the OC Design Center.
- b Contract evaluation boards for visitor center or similar scope exhibit design and/or fabrication including signage must include an OC Design Center member or appointee.

- c National contracts for large-scale and visitor-center exhibit design and fabrication must be identified as separate entities and separate from building construction contractor or architectural contracts.
- d All materials designed or design-approved by the Design Center or a designated regional unit shall meet all applicable access requirements. (See Section 4c: Responsibilities)

8 PLANNING AND SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL AND COST

- a The agency Information Director/Public Affairs Officer is charged with presenting a strategic communication plan or phase thereof for each fiscal year. The Information Director shall meet with the OC Design Center Director in the last quarter of a fiscal year and review projected services required for the coming fiscal year. Agencies must submit an AD-652 form (Request for Visual Services), for work requested of the Design Center.
- b Most visual services are rendered under Working Capital Fund (WCF) operations for which agencies must assume the cost at established rates.
- c When estimating costs under the “least cost” formula, agencies are to use the Design Center’s established WCF hourly rate for personnel.

9 RESTRICTIONS

- a Endorsements, Commercial References, and Use of Brand Names. USDA policy is to avoid wherever possible endorsements, directly or indirectly, of any commercial enterprise or product. Occasions may arise when mention of specific commercial enterprise or product is in the public interest, or is difficult to avoid. These occasions shall be fully justified.
- b Purpose of Visual Information. USDA visual information products should be for the purpose of educating and informing, not for the promotion of USDA personnel or the Department’s role in the subjects that are communicated.

10 EXCEPTIONS

Any exceptions or variation to the USDA Visual Management Manual or these regulations covering visual communication standards and related products, including electronic products, must be approved in writing by the Director of the Design Center, prior to project initiation.

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