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Policies and Procedures

Title: Publishing (Print and Electronic Material)

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This P&P states the ARS procedures and responsibilities for publishing in both print and electronic format.

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1. Introduction

This document describes Agricultural Research Service (ARS) policies and procedures for publishing (print and electronic material). These policies are established to ensure published materials follow Agency, Departmental and Federal publishing and communication guidelines and regulations. Published materials (both print and electronic) should reflect the highest quality standards in communicating messages and information to the public.

ARS publishes print and electronic documents that—

- Contribute to scientific knowledge and report ARS research
- Contribute to technology transfer and other ARS missions
- Explain Agency programs to several different types of audiences

This P&P covers only those documents published in-house by ARS headquarters and/or field locations. For procedures on publishing documents through outside publishers—chiefly scientific/refereed journals—see ARS P&P 152.1, “Procedures for Publishing Manuscripts and Abstracts With Non-USDA Publishers (Outside Publishing).”

2. Statement of Policy

ARS will ensure each publication is produced and distributed according to Agency, Departmental and Federal policies and publishing guidelines; is cost effective; and meets appropriate quality standards.

Under Departmental regulations, most ARS-published content must be submitted by ARS Information Staff (IS) for review and clearance by the Department's Office of Communications. Exceptions are noted in this P&P.

The Information Staff (IS) Director’s approval is required for all in-house publishing projects, without exception. **Authors** must submit a proposal for each project. The IS Director reviews this proposal in consultation with the Chief, Information Products and Services Branch (IPSB), and where appropriate, with members of the ARS Office of National Programs (ONP). Once the proposal has been approved, IS will provide authors with instructions for preparing and submitting final projects for publishing.

3. Authorities

Title 44 U.S.C., Public Printing and Documents

Title 18 U.S.C., Part I, Ch. 93, Sec. 1913, Lobbying With Appropriated Moneys

Joint Committee on Printing (JCP), Congress of the United States, Government Printing and Binding Regulations

OMB Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources

Departmental Regulation 1410-001, Publications Review/Clearance Policy

Departmental Regulation 1420-001, Composition and Printing

Departmental Regulation 1470-001, Policy for Visual Communication Standards

4. What Is a Publication?

Official USDA Definition

A publication is “an **external** document or manuscript prepared in **finished form** and reproduced in multiple copies, including materials disseminated or made available electronically” (DR 1410-001). “**External**” means a publication intended for public distribution/access, which DR 1410-001 defines as “Dissemination to any persons or groups...who are not employees or official cooperators of the Federal government.” “**Finished form**” means the information has been internally reviewed and cleared, and is considered by the Agency to be ready for public access.

Print and **electronic publications** include not only scientific/technical monographs, but also reports, plans, manuals, instructions, conference proceedings, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets, programs, flyers, and some handouts—any document distributed to people other than Federal employees and official cooperators. The Department's Office of Communications has a fairly broad interpretation of the word “document,” and includes such materials as information cards (including tent cards, bookmarks, postcards, etc.) and any other printed material that contains text other than Agency name and contact information (URL, e-mail, phone, and address).

Internet/Web and Other On-Demand Publications

A document prepared in “finished form” and posted on the Internet, or similar public medium, for viewing online or downloading and printing is an external publication—even though a customer is “publishing” the material. The intent is mass distribution, and the form is “finished.” Even when the document is placed on an access-controlled site, it is still a publication if people who are not Federal employees or official cooperators are allowed access.

ARS Web pages in a markup language, such as html, intended largely for viewing online are subject to Department and Agency Web policies (see ARS P&P 265.0, “ARS World Wide Web Sites”) and other appropriate internal review and clearance. Since layout, typographic elements, and some content of these pages are dynamic, Web pages will generally be exempt from clearances and procedures described in this P&P. When in doubt, consult with IS.

Documents posted in a fixed document layout format (such as Adobe Acrobat pdf), or as a file created by a word-processing program (such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect), or a page layout program (such as Microsoft Publisher or Adobe InDesign), and intended for an external audience are subject to the policies and procedures described in this P&P.

Software and Databases

Software issued as a finished product with user and/or technical documentation is a publication. If the only documentation is installation instructions and a help file integrated into the software, the software is exempt from IS approval and review.

Software issued as a work in progress, as a component or module, or as a working research tool is not a publication. Software developed for use by regulatory and action agencies is equivalent

to an administrative document because these are official cooperators who use the software to carry out their program responsibilities.

An online database that is regularly updated is not a publication, though database “snapshots” (in print or in electronic format) may be. Ask IS for guidance.

Directories

“A USDA agency may publish and issue a directory of its personnel for administrative purposes. Agencies must avoid including information of a personal nature about employees or their families in such documents. They must also avoid the appearance of self-aggrandizement in such directories, as in all USDA publications” (DR-1410-001). ARS does not require IS review and approval of directories. But locations should weigh cost and advisability of a printed directory when the Web-based alternative is readily available and easily updatable.

Publication Series

USDA has several publication series (Agriculture Handbook, Technical Bulletin, Miscellaneous Publication, and Program Aid among them). Department policy is that each agency may have only one agency-specific publication series. The ARS series is, literally, the ARS series (ARS-1, ARS-2, ARS-3, and so on). Because the National Agricultural Library, and certain units of the former Human Nutrition Information Service, had their own series at the time of their incorporation into ARS, their existing series continue. Neither the Department nor the Agency has authorized any other series. Establishment of a new series requires Department approval and must be requested by and through IS.

Administrative Documents

“Agencies may publish documents that are administrative if: (1) The audience is limited to USDA personnel and official cooperators who need the information to carry out their program responsibilities, and there is no planned distribution to an outside group. (2) The document falls into the category of one of the following: instruction manuals, directories, regulations or directives governing USDA employees, preliminary reports and drafts distributed for internal review purposes. The number of copies is normally low, generally under 1,000. Justification will be required for additional copies (DR 1410-001).

Agency staffs may publish such documents without IS involvement, but must obtain printing in accordance with Federal printing regulations. Also, such documents must be published at the lowest possible cost. If they require multicolor printing, heavier paper stock, separate cover (for documents 32 pages or under), or other higher cost specifications, the originating staff must obtain approval from the Department through IS.

Co-Publishing

ARS may co-publish documents with other USDA agencies. The lead agency will be responsible for editing, clearing, and producing the document. If ARS is the lead agency, the document will be handled like all comparable ARS-only publications, except that the other agency or agencies will be listed as co-publishers. Interagency clearance will be required, and is done through IS.

Since there are so many possible factors involved in co-publishing with non-USDA Federal agencies or with non-Federal institutions or firms, IS will provide guidance case by case.

The Department states that “contracts or cooperative agreements that may result in a Government publication or administrative document, or directive, shall stipulate that the Government shall enjoy a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, the materials in performing work for Government purposes.”

Review Drafts

Review drafts may be used to obtain feedback from an audience—typically, projected users—other than the customary handful who provide scientific peer review. It is possible to circulate a limited number of copies of a review draft of a scientific manuscript after the proposed final version has been reviewed and approved by the IS Director. Circulation of a review draft must be approved in advance by the IS Director who will grant such approval only when circumstances warrant. In extremely rare cases, the IS Director may grant approval to post a review draft on the Internet or similar public medium. Review drafts must be clearly marked as such, and must include a mechanism (contact information at least) for providing feedback to the author.

Note: There is no such thing as an “unofficial” or “informal” publication, only review drafts.

5. ARS Publications Subject to Approval and Review by ARS Information Staff

In-house publications requiring approval by the Director, IS, and editing, clearance, design, and production to varying degrees by IS fall into five main categories: primary scientific and technical publications (e.g. handbooks and monographs), secondary technical publications (e.g. conference/workshop proceedings and research progress reports), publications that explain ARS programs (e.g. strategic plans and **annual reports**), newsletters, and other periodicals and administrative publications. (See Exhibit 1, “Publication Categories” for specific information about publication types.)

Department Exclusions

DR 1410-001 states the following: “information materials [are] not considered publications. These include materials intended exclusively as (1) press, radio, photographic, and television releases when reproduced in finished form; (2) background statements for use by the media; (3) speeches and proclamations that receive limited distribution at time of presentation; (4) forms; (5) individual letters and memorandums used as correspondence; (6) administrative letters, circulars, records, and memorandums intended solely for internal use; (7) Department directives; (8) maps, posters, and charts without accompanying text matter; (9) visual instructions and lecture notes for filmstrips and slides; (10) letterheads; and (11) signs, symbols, tags, blotters, and similar items.” Note most of these materials are subject to other types of Department and Agency review and clearance.

Agency Exclusions

Certain materials produced at the local level for one-time use, and only for a specific event are excluded from IS approval and review. These include items containing program agendas and related program information, program announcements and flyers, and similar materials that have limited textual and graphical content. Locations must still produce these materials in accordance with Department and Agency printing guidelines and Federal printing regulations. This exclusion does **not** extend to lab and location brochures. (Contact IS or visit the ARS IS “Services” Website (www.ars.usda.gov/is/services) for a current copy of “Publishing Brochures in ARS.”)

6. Author Responsibilities and Procedures

Request Approval To Publish

For all primary scientific and technical publications, and all multicolor publications, the author must submit a “Prospectus to Publish” to the Director, IS, through the Chief, IPSB, IS for review and approval. For all other publications, the author must submit a “Justification for Publishing.”

Request a prospectus kit or justification template and instructions from IS or download it from the IS Services Website (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/services/>).

Authors must submit prospectuses and justifications through appropriate clearance levels—Research Leader or equivalent, Lab/Institute/Center Director or equivalent, Area Director or equivalent—for review and approval. The Area office or equivalent then forwards approved proposals to IS for final review and approval.

Prepare the Manuscript

Once the Director, IS, has approved a publication proposal, IS will provide the author with relevant instructions and guidelines appropriate to the publication type.

- Preparing Manuscripts for Editing and Production by the ARS Information Staff
- Preparing Camera-Ready Copy for Production by the ARS Information Staff
- Preparing Final Copy for Publication
- Guidelines for Self-Published Lab and Location Brochures and Other Information Materials

These instructions not only give general format specifications and content guidelines, but also include descriptions of author responsibilities for obtaining permissions to reprint, copyright releases (when some contributors to the publication are not Federal employees), interagency clearances where needed, and other requirements. You may also download these documents from the IS Services Website or contact IS.

Obtain Internal Review and Clearance

Authors are responsible for ensuring the scientific/technical accuracy of their content and for obtaining proper clearances and review prior to submitting the final project to IS. For

manuscripts with original (not previously published) scientific content, follow Agency/Area policies for peer review (see P&P 152.1) before submission. Authors should keep reviewer comments and author responses on file for at least a year after the publication is off press. Do not include these materials as part of the manuscript submission to IS.

For Information Staff (IS)-Produced Publications—

Submit manuscript for editing and production

Author submits publication according to instructions provided by IS. When a publication is submitted more than 2 years after approval of the proposal, IS may require re-approval to ensure that publication by ARS is still appropriate.

Review edited publication and respond to IS requests

After IS returns edited manuscript for review, author responds in a timely manner to editorial queries and suggestions and provides any additional material requested.

Design and layout

After final editing approval, IS handles publication design and layout. IS is responsible for obtaining appropriate Department-level clearances. IS services are free to ARS locations and staffs.

For Field-Produced Publications—

Comply With Federal, Department, and Agency Regulations

Author must ensure that—

- A manuscript interpreting USDA policies or dealing with highly visible subject matter of any USDA program is reviewed by the IS Director, who will decide whether to forward the manuscript to the Department for further review.
- The publication will contain no pleas for funding, explicit or implicit, or other content that appears to lobby Congress or encourages the reader to do so.
- The publication adheres to Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) regulations concerning illustrations and photographs and ARS dress guidelines for photographs.
- Publication content demonstrates diversity in text and graphics.
- No content aggrandizes or gives unnecessary information about an ARS employee.
- Printing is obtained according to JCP/GPO regulations and posting to the Internet is done in compliance with ARS Web policies.

See “Ensure That All Field-Produced Publications Comply With Federal, Department, and Agency Regulations” under “Area Offices/Equivalent Responsibilities and Procedures” for more details.

Follow Provided Editorial and Design Instructions

Author must follow instructions provided by IS for editorial content, including required statements and disclaimers, and for design and layout.

Make Required Distributions

For publications produced in the field, author must submit two printed copies of each printed publication or one electronic copy of those that are published only electronically. After the publication proposal has been approved, IS provides instructions describing other distribution requirements, including those of the Federal Depository Library Program, the National Technical Information Service and the National Agricultural Library.

7. Area Offices/Equivalent Responsibilities and Procedures

Review and Approve Publication Proposals

The Area Director or equivalent (AD) reviews prospectuses and justifications for publishing by considering necessity, appropriateness, and available personnel and budgetary resources.

For field-produced desktop-printed brochures **only**, AD may permanently waive Area office review of justifications for publishing, so authors may submit the justification memo directly to IS. Each AD must notify IS of this general waiver in writing.

Review and Approve Manuscripts for Scientific/Technical Publications

When approving a publication proposal, AD informs author if AD wants to review manuscript; if so, author must submit manuscript to AD for review before sending it to IS for editing and production, or before publishing it if IS has waived editorial review, as happens with some field-produced publications.

Ensure That All Field-Produced Publications Comply With Appropriate Regulations

USDA Policies and Program Information

“If the material treats a subject that interprets the policies of the USDA or deals with sensitive areas of any USDA program, the originating agency's information head must first submit the material to OC for review and clearance” (DR 1410-001). Generally, publication proposals should identify such manuscripts in advance, and require submission to IS for editing and production. Area offices/equivalent must ensure any manuscript authorized for field production that interprets USDA policy or deals with USDA sensitive programs is sent to the Director, IS, for review. The Director, IS, will determine whether the manuscript should be submitted to the Department for review.

Lobbying

“No USDA publication with an intended audience outside the Federal Government shall contain any article or editorial which can be construed as advocating the audience to lobby Congress concerning increased appropriations or specific legislation or to influence any political campaign” (DR 1410-001).

Area offices/equivalent must ensure that no publication includes pleas for funding,

explicit or implicit, of specific programs or locations whether the audience is directly Congressional or not. Any employee found guilty of violating the antilobbying law can be fired, fined and/or imprisoned. When in doubt, consult the USDA, Office of Ethics, Science Ethics Branch (Title 18 U.S.C., Part I, Ch. 93, Sec. 1913).

Illustrations

Area offices/equivalent must ensure that each publication complies with JCP regulations on illustrations. Under these regulations, there is seldom justification for the following content in photographs:

- Self-portraits and group portraits.
- People at a desk or otherwise in a generic work environment. Even if they're working, the photo probably isn't really needed to explain something in the text.
- People shaking hands (“grip and grins”).

Photos used should not give unnecessary prominence to—

- Decorative objects and any other irrelevancies.
- Tradenames.

ARS employees in photographs should be dressed appropriately as per ARS photography guidelines.

Diversity in Text and Graphics

Area offices/equivalent must ensure that all publications (including administrative ones) are inclusive and mirror America's diverse society.

Interagency Clearances and Copyright Releases

Area offices/equivalent must ensure that authors have obtained the necessary interagency clearances and copyright releases.

Aggrandizement of Individual Employees and Restrictions on Personal Information

Area offices/equivalent must ensure that no publication content focuses on an individual employee in a manner that promotes the individual rather than conveying program information and research methods and results. Exceptions include materials to recognize or accompany major awards. Also, no publication may contain personal information about an individual employee, except where the information is necessary to establish professional credentials.

Printing and Web Posting

Area offices/equivalent must ensure that each printed publication complies with Federal law requiring all printing to be procured through the Government Printing Office (GPO), unless GPO provides a written waiver for a specific publication; GPO is allowed to provide this waiver only under limited circumstances (a non-repeating publication costing less than \$1,000 to print), and it is GPO's decision to make. Also, ARS employees must obtain all nonadministrative printing through IS unless IS has exempted a specific job or series. Area offices/equivalent must also ensure that publications posted to the Internet or

similar public medium comply not only with ARS publishing policies but also with the Agency's Web policies.

8. Information Staff Responsibilities and Procedures

Review and Approve Publication Proposals

The Chief, Information Products & Services Branch (IPSB), reviews all publication proposals; when the proposal is for a primary scientific publication, the IPSB Chief includes in the review national program leader(s) who oversee(s) the research program(s), and other experts as appropriate. The IPSB Chief considers several factors, including—

- Should the proposed manuscript be published at all?
- Is ARS the most appropriate publisher?
- Are the proposed content and organization appropriate? If not, what modifications should be suggested?
- Is the number of proposed copies and proposed method of dissemination appropriate?

After considering the proposal and weighing reviewer input, the IPSB Chief recommends to the IS Director whether the proposal should be approved.

To ensure timely consideration of publication proposals, committee deliberations are usually conducted through informal meetings, e-mails, and phone calls. Formal meetings are needed only in unusual circumstances.

The goal for approval of prospectuses (primary scientific publications and some secondary technical publications) is 2 months from receipt of the prospectus.

The goal for approval of justifications for publishing (all other publications) is 1 week from receipt of the justification memo.

Provide Guidance to Authors

After the IS Director approves a publication proposal, IS determines whether the publication must be edited, cleared, and designed/produced through IS or is suitable for field review and production, and then provides author with appropriate instructions. IS updates these instructions as needed and posts current versions on the IS Services Website.

Publications Control Officer

By Department mandate (DR1410-001), the IS Director is the ARS publications control officer. As such, the IS Director provides oversight of all ARS in-house publishing and provides reports to the Administrator; to the Research, Education and Economics Under Secretary; to the Department; and to Congress as requested. The IS Director ensures that “only those publications filling a definite need and necessary to the official business of the agency and the USDA are prepared and issued.”

Edit, Clear, Design and Produce Publications

IS must edit, clear, design, and produce publications to meet professional standards of quality, to be cost-effective, and to communicate program information and research accomplishments to target audiences clearly and effectively.

Ensure That All Publications Comply With Federal, Department, and Agency Regulations

IS must ensure that each publication—

- Contains no pleas for funding, explicit or implicit, or other content that appears to lobby Congress or encourage the reader to do so.
- Adheres to JCP regulations concerning illustrations and ARS dress guidelines for photographs.
- Demonstrates diversity in text and graphics.
- Does not aggrandize or give unnecessary information about an ARS employee.
- Contains all required statements and disclaimers.
- Has received all required interagency clearances and copyright permissions.
- Is edited and designed in accordance with GPO and Department requirements.
- Is printed according to JCP/GPO regulations and posted on the Internet in compliance with ARS Web policies.
- Includes a cost-effective distribution plan, including required distributions to the Federal Depository Library Program, the National Technical Information Service, and the National Agricultural Library.

9. Glossary

Annual report. Annual reports as required by law have a specific statutory origin. USDA does not consider reports of research progress “annual reports” since they don’t report an Agency’s complete activities. It is highly recommended that authors avoid using the term “annual report” to refer to anything other than one required by law.

Author. Writer, content editor, or other ARS employee or group of employees who initiate and serve as contact points for a publication. May be used loosely to refer to a field location or staff.

Electronic publication. Material distributed as a finished product in a digital format, including CD-ROM, magnetic tape, floppy disk, electronically readable/viewable/transmittable files (via the Internet or other telecommunications media), and so on, is considered a publication if it would be considered a publication in print. Software and digital databases (including simulation models and expert systems) distributed as products with user and/or technical documentation or other user aids such as tutorials are regarded as publications. Online databases that are frequently updated are not publications.

IPSB. Information Products and Services Branch (formerly Publications Branch).

Joint Committee on Printing (JCP). Joint committee of the House and Senate that oversees the Government Printing Office and general printing procedures of the Federal Government. JCP authority derives from Title 44 of the U.S. Code.

Lab and location brochure. Describes the mission and programs of an individual laboratory, location, research center, or their functional equivalent such as the National Agricultural Library and its information centers. These are usually published as 4-inch by 9-inch 6- or 8-panel brochures, though for locations with many labs, larger sizes may be appropriate.

Manuscript. Traditional typescript or electronic equivalent.

Periodical. A publication issued annually or more often with a consistent format, content, and purpose. Includes annual reports and newsletters.

Publication. The issuance of information in printed or electronic form or (for patent purposes only) a formal presentation attended by people other than USDA employees or cooperators involved in the research.

/s/

Sandy Miller Hays
Director, Information Staff
Agricultural Research Service

Exhibit 1

Publication Categories

In-house publications fall into five general categories:

Primary scientific and technical publications, including handbooks, taxonomic monographs, how-to manuals, annotated bibliographies, software issued as a finished product with user and/or technical documentation.

Secondary technical publications, including symposium proceedings, workshop reports, unannotated bibliographies and finding aids, directories, and lab or location research progress reports, are produced in small quantities in standardized formats on a quick turnaround for limited distribution. Provided that authors follow general guidelines furnished by IS, and that ADs review and approve the final publication version, the publication will not need to be reviewed, edited, and designed/produced by IS. The author is responsible for fulfilling requirements described under “Author Responsibilities and Procedures.”

Publications that explain ARS programs by program or location, including policy documents such as the ARS Strategic Plan, national research program overviews, ARS accomplishments, laboratory and location brochures, and similar documents. This category includes annual reports required by law and distributed outside USDA. It also includes annual reports that cannot reasonably be described as research progress reports. Audiences are generally broad and may include policymakers, private industry members, students, news media, and other information multipliers such as teachers and extension agents, scientists and the general public. IS oversight and participation is required in varying degrees for these publications to ensure high-quality and cost-effective production and distribution. However, today's technology makes it possible to print small quantities of lab and location brochures using desktop publishing software and equipment and colorful preprinted paper in so-called brochure-mailer formats at a cheaper per-copy cost than required for traditional multicolor printing. Provision is made for labs and locations to publish such brochures on their own as long as certain standards for content, design, layout, quantity, and cost containment are met. The “Guidelines for Self-Published Lab and Location Brochures and Other Information Materials” are available from IS and can be downloaded from the IS Services Website.

Newsletters and other periodicals distributed to non-USDA audiences. Federal regulations mandate that establishment of newsletters and other periodicals for non-USDA audiences require Department approval, which must be obtained through IS. Contact IS for guidance on publishing newsletters and other periodicals.

Administrative publications for use within USDA and by official cooperators. Administrative publications are for internal use only. They are printed at the expense of the originating location or staff. They do not require IS approval or participation. They should be produced at the lowest possible cost. For some of these publications, special treatment may be desirable. IS is available to assist with writing, editing, design, and printing on request.

Revised 10/03/09

Exhibit 2

Content Guidelines

Required statements and disclaimers

All printed publications and those created for on-demand printing (posted on the Internet or e-mailed) must include the USDA nondiscrimination statement and, where applicable, tradename and pesticide use disclaimers (see below). Such statements do not need to be included in standard Web pages because they are included on the ARS statements and disclaimers page.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

[Check for the latest version at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/disclaim.html>]

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Trade name disclaimer

[If proprietary products or commercial firms are mentioned anywhere in the publication, include the following tradename disclaimer.]

Mention of trade names or commercial products in this report is solely for the purpose of providing specific information and does not imply recommendation or endorsement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Pesticide disclaimer

[If research involving pesticides is mentioned anywhere in the publication, include the following pesticide disclaimer. Any **recommendations** for specific pesticide use must be cleared through Information Staff and be accompanied by an expanded disclaimer to be furnished by Information Staff.]

This publication reports research involving pesticides. It does not contain recommendations for their use nor does it imply that uses discussed here have been registered. All uses of pesticides must be registered by appropriate State and/or Federal agencies before they can be recommended.

Inappropriate Content

Content should focus on the program/Agency/Department mission. The guidelines in this section are aimed at the kind of content that helped lead to the OMB crackdown on newsletters and other periodicals published by Federal agencies.

- Limit personal information about employees.
- Do not include social information such as births, marriages, and staff parties.
- Notifications of deaths and retirements should simply state the bare facts.
- Limit individual information about employee training and other activities to what the audience needs to know.
- Do not include copy and photographs that can be perceived as aggrandizing individuals rather than illustrating research or other mission-related activities.

Write nothing that might be perceived as lobbying for funding (see Title 18, Part I, Chapter 93, Sec. 1913, “Lobbying with appropriated moneys”).

Copyright

Under U.S. copyright law, the work of Federal employees done as part of their duties cannot be copyrighted. This includes writing, photography, illustrations (drawings, graphs, and charts), videos, and other creative work. So you cannot copyright any of the contents. You must also obtain permission to include any material that is itself under copyright. Be especially wary of photos and clipart found on the Internet. The fact that they don't carry a copyright notice doesn't mean they aren't under copyright. Also, read carefully the license agreement that comes with collections of electronic clipart and photographs. Quite often, the license allows limited use in noncommercial print media, but use in electronic media is restricted.