

## Administrative Policy No. 2.07

<b>Subject:</b>	Visual Communications Policy
<b>Related policies:</b>	<a href="#">AP 2-08, Media Relations</a> ; <a href="#">AP 2-11, Plain Talk</a> ; <a href="#">AP 2-12, Photography and Video Imaging at DSHS facilities</a> ; <a href="#">AP 15-24, Social Media</a> ; <a href="#">AP 15-18-1, Content and Visual Design Standards for Internet Websites and Public-Facing Web Applications</a>
<b>Information Contact:</b>	Senior Director, Office of Communications MS 45100 (360) 902-8007
<b>Authorizing Source:</b>	Office of Communications, Office of the Secretary
<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 1, 1989
<b>Revised:</b>	November 15, 2019
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Original signed by Lori Melchiori</b> Senior Director, Office of Policy and Rules

---

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- A. To establish and maintain editorial, design, branding, technical, and printing standards for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) printed and electronic publications and other visual communications products (video, podcast, public service announcements, etc.) that comply with federal and state laws and department rules, policies, and procedures.
- B. To ensure all DSHS external communications products meet agency branding standards, as defined below, are written in plain talk, and align with the agency's mission, vision, values, and priorities.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- All department staff in all administrations, divisions and programs that develop

visual communications products for distribution to all external audiences.

- Work done by outside parties, including contractors and vendors, with whom we partner to produce visual communications products.

## Definitions

- **Branding standards** are found in the [DSHS Branding Standards and Style Guide](#) and include the use of the DSHS logo, approved fonts for agency publications, templates, and related materials.
- **Design standards** are principles of graphic design and communication design used to visually and conceptually express and communicate information contained in DSHS visual communications products and other informational or public awareness material. Design standards include principles of effective communication such as page layout, typography, color, photography, illustrative techniques, page formatting, branding, technical printing requirements, and language translation requirements. Design standards also include the use and format of the DSHS logo.
- **DSHS employees** are full- or part-time department employees but not vendors, contractors or clients.
- **The DSHS Publications Library** is the list of available publications posted on the [department's website](#). DSHS publications may or may not have an assigned publications number. Publications are listed in the DSHS Publications Library at the request of the authorizing program. If you cannot locate a publication you think should be in the library, please contact the Visual Communications Unit.
- **Editorial standards** are practices adopted by the Office of Communications and used to develop clear, concise, and consistent written content for DSHS publications. Editorial standards include the DSHS Branding Standards and [Style Guide](#), current principles of grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, reading level, and plain talk as defined by [Executive Order 05-03](#).
- **External audiences** include the Governor's Office, tribal governments, legislators and legislative staff, state agencies other than DSHS, local governments, DSHS clients, vendors, and contractors that do business with DSHS, community groups, and members of the general public.
- **Letters, forms, and memoranda are not visual communications products under this policy.** Note: DSHS forms are not produced by the Office of Communications. Contact [DSHS Forms and Records Management](#) at (360) 664-6048.
- **Media relations staff** is responsible for dissemination of information about the department and its administrations and programs to the news media, through social media, through the department website and for facilitating media access to public events sponsored by the department and its administrations.
- **Office of Communications**, for the purposes of this policy, consists of Media Relations, the Visual Communications Unit and the Web Services Unit.
- **Printing standards** are adopted by the Office of Communications and are compatible cost-effective techniques used to produce professional-quality publications without compromising the design or content.

- **Social Media** is any web-based technology that enables and facilitates rapid communication or networking through the internet or cellular networks for mobile devices. Examples of social media include but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The department has a detailed [social media policy](#).
- **Technical standards** are adopted by the Office of Communications based on the currently available professional method of electronic production of DSHS visual communications products that allows Visual Communications to properly produce, update, catalog, store, and translate DSHS visual communications products.
- **Visual communications products** include but are not limited to:
  - The department logo.
  - Design elements for news releases, statements, and advisories.
  - Design elements for publications, including but not limited to brochures, pamphlets, booklets, reports, posters, flyers, newsletters, and fact sheets.
  - Overall web design.
  - Infographics.
  - Visual indicators, graphic representations, and icons.
  - Printed and digital advertisements, billboards, bus signage, bumper stickers, bookmarks, and wallet cards.
  - Display banners.
  - Conference materials.
  - Career fair materials.
  - Job recruitment materials.
  - Design elements of PowerPoint presentations.
  - Digital signage.
  - Videos and podcasts.
  - GovDelivery, MailChimp, and ConstantContact design elements.
- **Visual Communications Request Form:** The [form](#) by which administrations, divisions and programs submit requests for the creation and revision of visual communications products, including translations.
- **Visual Communications Unit** designs and produces agency publications, brochures and other materials for external audiences. It maintains and monitors the quality of design and use of the department brand and logo.
- **Web Services Unit** is responsible for design and maintenance of the DSHS external website. The website policy may be found in DSHS Administrative Policy Chapter 15 – Information Systems – policies [18.1](#), [18.2](#) and [18.3](#).

The office of communications produces visual communications products by any appropriate electronic means and reproduces printed material through the Department of Enterprise Services Production Services, qualified outside printing vendors or other printing methods. Visual communications products also are produced in electronic formats for internet printing or distribution.

## Policy

**A. Visual Communications Unit:**

- Designs, produces, edits, and revises all DSHS visual communications products for external audiences. See list of examples in Definitions section.
- Maintains and monitors the quality of content and design of DSHS visual communications products for external distribution and ensures DSHS complies with the provisions of [chapter 40.07 RCW](#) to eliminate reports and publications that are economically or otherwise unjustified, and to simplify others.
- Maintains production records and files of DSHS visual communications products and their revisions.
- Posts DSHS visual communications products to the online DSHS Publications Library and the DSHS YouTube channel for all department programs.
- Orders the translation of DSHS visual communications products from English to other languages and ensures they meet the printing industry's current technical and font standards. All language translations that are posted or distributed must be current with their respective English-language versions.
- Acts as the DSHS office of communications printing liaison with the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services Production and other outside printing vendors in accordance with [chapter 43.78 RCW](#).
- Bills programs for costs related to production of visual communications products (chargeback), including predesign, design, production, editing, revisions, etc. Current chargeback information is available from the visual communications unit.
- Coordinates payments from program customers to vendors for project costs such as printing, shipping, etc., unless the vendor bills the customer directly.
- Provides a written estimate to programs for project costs (design/production time, printing, etc.) upon request.
- Provides, within two working days of receiving the request, information on whether they can meet the deadline requested for the product(s) or whether they will grant an exception and allow contracting out for the work.
- The [DSHS Design and Production Process](#) is available online.

**B. DSHS Programs:**

- Must submit a completed [Visual Communications Request Form](#) prior to production of a DSHS visual communications product.
- Publications will comply with provisions of [chapter 40.07 RCW](#) Management and Control of State Publications; [Administrative Policy 2.08](#) Media Relations and [Administrative Policy 7.21](#) Access to Services for Clients who are Limited English Proficient.

**C. Exceptions:**

Programs with extraordinary needs may request in writing that the office of communications visual communications unit grant an exception to this policy. The unit may provide an exception to the policy if, after reviewing the completed Visual Communications Request Form, it determines it cannot produce the product. In this

situation, on a **case-by-case basis**, the visual communications unit will do any one or more of the following:

- Give written approval to the requesting program to use an outside vendor;
- Provide DSHS production guidelines, including the DSHS Branding Standards and Style Guide, directly to the outside vendor;
- Review, approve, and catalog the final artwork with the outside vendor prior to printing;
- Take receipt of the final artwork from the outside vendor and coordinate the printing or online posting of the visual communications product; and
- Retain publication artwork and related electronic files from the outside vendor for future printings. The artwork and all related project files become the property of DSHS.

DSHS Official