

Website Requirements Checklist

The following checklist condenses the most important federal and Department guidelines and best practices for federal websites. Details on source of requirements and implementation of checklist items can be found on hhs.gov/web or howto.gov by following the links provided for more information.

Website Requirements

- [Host the website on a .gov.](#)
- [Provide a link to the homepage](#) from every page on the website.
- Display a statement of [content ownership or management](#) on every page.
- Include an [About Us page](#) that explains the site's mission, governance, and responsible parties.
- Provide an easily findable way for users to [contact you](#).
- [Includes a search function](#) to help the public easily locate information.
- Link to a policy that explains your agency's criteria for [choosing external sites](#).
- Include a link to a page describing your [privacy policies](#).
- [Provide links to plug-ins](#) for all non-html files or page elements.
- Provide a link that explains how users can access information under the [Freedom of Information Act](#).
- Link to [USA.gov](#) and HHS.gov in the footer of your website.
- Provide a user-friendly message for a [404 error page](#).
- [Do not post empty pages](#) or pages "under construction."
- [Do not link to political sites](#) or use the site for direct or indirect lobbying.
- Conduct a [508 assessment](#) to ensure your site is accessible to people using assistive technologies.
- Obtain OMB approval for any efforts to [collect information from the public](#).
- Obtain permission for any [copyrighted material](#) that may appear on your site.

Links

- Use standard colors for [visited and unvisited links](#).
- Use [meaningful language for links](#) rather than "click here."
- Indicate the file type and size for [downloadable files](#).
- Present [links to foreign language materials](#) in their language.
- Use an exit notification to identify and disclaim [links to non-federal government Web sites](#).

Forms

- [Acknowledge with an automated response](#) whenever a user submits either a completed form.
- [Design check box controls](#) to allow users to select one or more items, clear checked box selections, and select an option by clicking on either the box itself or its label.
- [Clearly and consistently distinguish](#) required data entry fields from optional data entry fields.
- [Provide radio buttons](#) to choose one response from mutually exclusive options.

Managing the Website

- Document and enforce your sites [content management roles, procedures, and style guide](#).
- Establish a plan and schedule to [review and archive old content](#).
- [Set up an analytics tool](#) to gather information about your users' behavior, review data, and make site improvements.
- Consult your records officer to determine the retention schedule and format for your [web records](#).

Keep in mind

- Follow the Federal Web Managers Council's [recommendations for managing web content](#).
- Consult the [Research-based Usability Guidelines](#) when designing your information architecture and navigation.
- Consider [conducting usability testing](#) to ensure users can easily and successfully complete their tasks.
- Follow best practices for [search engine optimization](#).
- Write for the web using the [HHS Web Style Guide](#).
- Ensure that you have met all required [standards and policies for new media](#).
- [All content should be written in plain language](#), consistent with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 and the government's plain language principles.
- Provide access for people with [limited English proficiency](#) in compliance with Executive Order 13166.
- Use electronic forms to conduct official business with the public to the extent practicable, in accordance with the [Government Paperwork Elimination Act](#) (GPEA, Pub. L. 105–277).