



Branding and Identity Guidelines



THE OMES BRAND AT-A-GLANCE

Who We Are

Oklahoma's Office of Management and Enterprise Services is a trusted, credible partner that empowers employees to provide business expertise so our customers can achieve their mission.

About Our Logo



This is the preferred version of our logo. It represents who we are and is one of our most valuable assets. Never abuse our logo. It might bite back.

Our Personality

We are a resourceful, agile, bold, tenacious, forward-thinking agency that will fight for our partners' success and ensure the job gets done right. We like adjectives when describing ourselves, but not so much when editing and approving official communications. We're just feisty like that.

Our Mission

Supporting our partners through unified business services.

Questions?

Contact branding@omes.ok.gov.

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PART I: OUR BRAND

The Office of Management and Enterprise Services is one of the largest State of Oklahoma agencies with about 1,500 employees providing financial, property, purchasing, human resources and information technology services to all state agencies; and assisting the governor's office on budgetary policy matters. As an innovative, technology driven agency, OMES strives to provide quality, deliverable service in a cost-efficient manner.

That's the boilerplate. It has to be given, so we might as well get it out of the way first. It tells you what we do and a bit about how we do it, but it doesn't tell you a lot about us. For that we turn to a few one-liners, adjectives and bullet points.

We'll call it our **Brand Essence and Core Values**:

- Excellent customer service.
- Fiscal responsibility.
- Value with every interaction.
- Responsive, bold and forward thinking.
- Demonstrative expertise.
- Innovation and collaboration.

This document will help protect that essence and present a uniform identity that allows our customers to immediately recognize a communication as an OMES communication. These standards apply to all OMES divisions and employees — yes, that means you.

Just like every strong and unified brand, OMES' image will be carefully managed. The guidelines on the following pages are intended to ensure that the elements of OMES' brand are used correctly and consistently, which will strengthen and unify our agency as well as strategically carry our brand message to our audience.

Consistency is a major component of brand creation and management. That being said, we've also included a measure of flexibility. It would be foolish not to, and as Henry David Thoreau said, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of feeble minds."

We want a smart consistency that allows our divisions and departments to respond to their needs while staying within the approved guidelines for our brand. Branding requires smart consistency over time. In this spirit, we are pleased to present the OMES logo and a few guidelines for its use.

PART II: OUR LOGO

The OMES logo is the most immediate representation of our essence. It instantly presents a visual identity and signals to our audience that a communication is from the Office of Management and Enterprise Services. We love our logo and will do whatever it takes to protect it (and by “whatever it takes,” we mean at the least some sternly worded emails to anybody that abuses it).

OMES leaders approved the logo after a strong grassroots effort to develop it based on our core values. The “O” shows our agency’s connectivity and spirit of collaboration. The logo is lean, modern, progressive and shows our efforts to be a technology driven, forward-thinking agency.

Approval Process

To protect the OMES brand and ensure its uses are consistent with the agency’s style and standards, approval is required on all designs using this logo. Approval for one use or design does not imply general approval for the use of the logo in other applications. The process is simple and no forms are required. Submit a Service Desk ticket for Public Affairs with the design and details or questions.

The Primary Logo

There are several versions of the OMES logo, but there’s only one preferred version. The full-color primary logo is the preferred logo, and it is strongly recommended it be used in branded applications whenever possible.



When printing constraints prevent the use of the primary full-color OMES logo, use a Public Affairs approved alternative one-color version.



Logo Do's and Don'ts

DON'T reduce the logo in print to less than **1.5 inches**. For online and other screen applications, **DON'T** reduce our logo to less than **120 dpi, 108 pixels** wide or **50 pixels** high. We want to ensure the prominence and clarity of the OMES logo.



We also want our logo to be strong and free, so please, **DO** allow some breathing room for the logo. A minimum clear space of **15 pixels** or **0.25 inches** has been established so it will not have to compete with other graphic elements.



DO use a preferred background of white when using the OMES logo. But if you must use a nonwhite background, **DON'T** let it hide our logo. The logo must be legible and distinct.



Here are several more **DON'TS**:



[Substitute fonts]



[Alter colors]



[Alter the shape]



[Remove or separate elements]



[Tilt the logo]



[Distort the shape]



[Rearrange the elements]



[Add elements or decorate the logo]



[Scale individual elements]



[Substitute other words or phrases]

The “O” Logo

The primary version has a slimmer sibling, affectionately known as the “O” logo, that can be used if space is a bit tight. Due to its compact design, this “O” version can fit into some smaller spaces or when a background might obscure text.

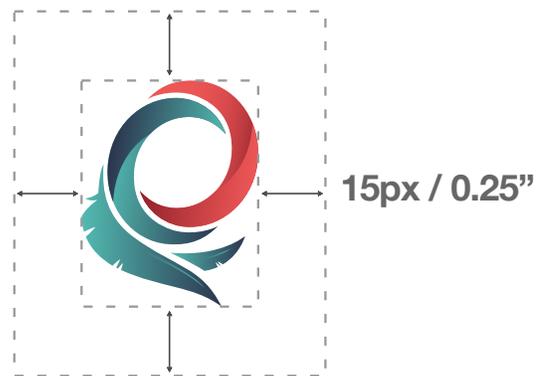
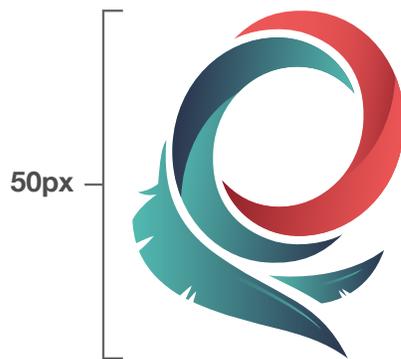


It is our hope that over time the “O” version can become instantly recognizable as standing for the unity and collaborative nature of OMES. We want it to become the Nike swoosh of Oklahoma government.

Until then, there are some guidelines to using the “O.”

It’s good to fit into small spaces, but it should seldom appear without the use of the main logo on the document or other communication. This is especially true for external communications.

To standardize the use of the “O” logo, these minimum size guidelines are to be followed — **50 pixels** high at **120 dpi** for web pages and **0.75 inches** high for printed materials. Also, there should be a minimum of **15 pixels** of clearance space around the “O” on the web; and a minimum of **0.25 inches** of clearance in printed material.



IMPORTANT NOTE: All the do’s and don’ts that apply to the primary logo also apply to the “O” version. In addition, do not use the “O” as punctuation, periods or other type of unapproved marker. **In short, don’t mess with the “O.”**

The Online Logo

- The logo must be clearly displayed and legible.
- The logo must be linked to the OMES home page (omes.ok.gov).
- The OMES logo should appear on the home page of each OMES affiliated website, but need not appear on other pages in the site.
- The logo should not be animated.
- Use only the approved logo files. Do not redraw, reproportion or embellish the logo.

The Colors

The OMES colors were chosen to complement our agency's mission to be a bold and calming influence. When using a one-color version of the logo, only a color approved by Public Affairs can be substituted.



Dark Red	Light Red	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Letter Blue
				
7622 C RGB - 142,33,41 CMYK - 28,97,85,28 HEX - 8e2129	710 C RGB - 237,86,86 CMYK - 1,81,64,0 HEX - ed5656	533 C RGB - 43,52,77 CMYK - 86,77,45,41 HEX - 26344d	7472 C RGB - 82,187,177 CMYK - 65,58,57,37 HEX - 52bbb1	7477 C RGB - 38,69,94 CMYK - 90,69,42,29 HEX - 26455e

Type and Fonts

Primary Font

The primary font in the OMES logo, used for the letters “OMES,” is a specialty design and should not be copied for other applications.

Secondary Font

The secondary font in the OMES logo, used for the wording “Office of Management & Enterprise Services” or for division or department names, is Ubuntu and should not be changed when used with the logo.

Getting the OMES Logo

The correct logo can be obtained by submitting a Service Desk ticket for Public Affairs. Specify the logo you would like and the anticipated use. The logos are available as .gif and .png files. The .gif files should never be scaled because that sounds painful. The .png files can be scaled, but it must be done so that they remain proportionally balanced (Ah, if only proportional balance was possible for all us).

Obtaining a logo is not an approval for its publication or use in a document. The final use and design must be approved by submitting a second Service Desk ticket for Public Affairs with the final design or screen capture of its use.

PART III: SECONDARY LOGOS

OMES Divisions

When using the OMES logo with divisions, never use more than two lines of identifiers. Also, do not substitute the name of a division's department in the division name's place. Except for the "O" logo, OMES logos should appear with either the OMES agency name or the name of a division, but never a department within a division.

Unique Colors

We want to be consistent but not "the hobgoblin of feeble minds" — or boring or dictatorial. With that in mind, each division of OMES has a different color scheme to present its uniqueness. In instances where it might better suit a design and internal audience, the alternative-color scheme logo can be a good fit, but should not be used with external communications. These colors can only be used with the division logos, and each division must not stray from its distinct alternative color. All the do's and don'ts, size and placement guidelines for the primary logo apply to the divisional logo.



7477 C
RGB - 38,84,107
CMYK - 89,60,41,22
HEX - 26546b

297 C
RGB - 116,198,226
CMYK - 50,4,7,0
HEX - 74c6e2



2767 C
RGB - 30,43,79
CMYK - 96,86,41,38
HEX - 1e2b4f

7683 C
RGB - 72,110,193
CMYK - 76,58,0,0
HEX - 486ec1



1605 C
RGB - 72,110,193
CMYK - 76,58,0,0
HEX - 486ec1

7408 C
RGB - 30,43,79
CMYK - 96,86,41,38
HEX - 1e2b4f



669 C
 RGB - 58,41,76
 CMYK - 81,87,41,40
 HEX - 3a294c

7678 C
 RGB - 110,72,150
 CMYK - 68,85,4,0
 HEX - 6e4896



553 C
 RGB - 37,71,54
 CMYK - 80,47,75,48
 HEX - 254736

7738 C
 RGB - 86,186,90
 CMYK - 68,0,88,0
 HEX - 56ba5a



511 C
 RGB - 91,36,71
 CMYK - 57,91,44,39
 HEX - 5b2447

7655 C
 RGB - 211,94,205
 CMYK - 27,72,0,0
 HEX - d35ecd



7598 C
 RGB - 200,78,45
 CMYK - 16,83,96,5
 HEX - c84e2d

7564 C
 RGB - 247,155,29
 CMYK - 0,46,99,0
 HEX - f79b1d

Do not use the alternative division-color scheme with the “O” logo. It should only be used with the color scheme for the primary OMES logo. However, a one-color variant in either letter blue or white is acceptable.



External Use

Except for legal documents or when required by statute, anything referenced by a division of OMES to the public shall strictly be referenced as “OMES.”

Any reports, forms, publications, documents, etc. distributed to an external audience — anybody not employed by OMES — must use the OMES primary logo or the “O” logo. Divisional logos are only to be used for an internal OMES audience.

Additional Logos

OMES can approve self-funded, marketable programs to operate with their own logo. When possible, these logos should follow the same placement and size guidelines outlined in this document for the OMES logo. The accepted unique brands to date are:



The use of previous division, department or program logos, unless approved as a unique brand by OMES Public Affairs, is to end. To seek approval of a unique brand, submit requests to branding@omes.ok.gov for more details and the proper paperwork to begin the process.

Use With Other Logos

In some circumstances it may be desirable to include logos from other state agencies, partner organizations or sponsorships in addition to the OMES logo.

When used with one or two additional logos, the visual weight of the OMES logo should be greater than or equal to the visual weight of the accompanying logos. Keep in mind the visual weight and actual size can be quite different; if appropriate, the OMES logo should be treated as the dominant logo. An exception to this rule would, of course, be the state seal.



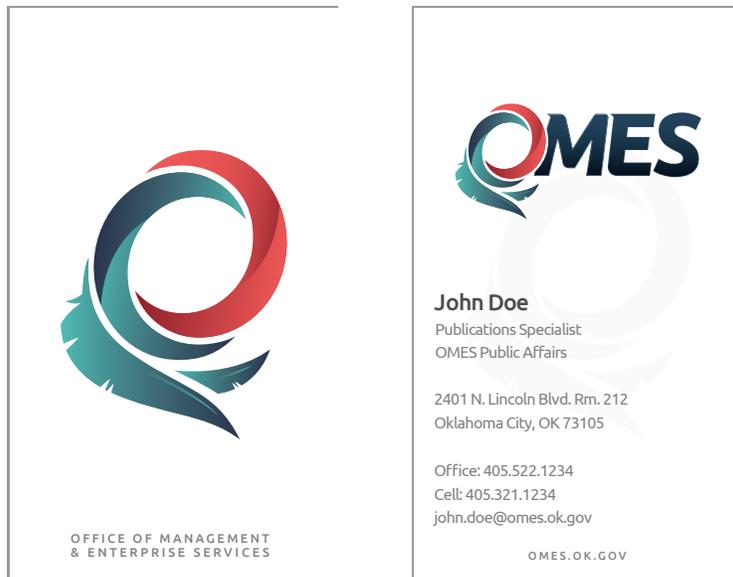
When used in conjunction with logos of non-state partners, the OMES logo should maintain equal visual weight; it should not be seen as subordinate.

PART IV: SPECIFIC STANDARDS

The following standards address design elements on everyday business communications. Placements and clearances in the templates must be followed for brand consistency and appealing design. Templates are on the shared drive at J:\Function\Branding. For uses not met with the supplied templates, submit a Service Desk ticket for Public Affairs with details about the need.

Business Cards

Divisions may order business cards by submitting the OMES Business Card Request Form, located on the shared drive at J:\Function\All OSF\FORMS\Business Cards, with a Service Desk ticket. The card features the holders name, job title and division, along with two lines for a mailing address. There are three lines for contact information. General practice is for office phone and cellphone numbers followed by an email address. Upon request, one line can be replaced with different contact information, such as a fax number. **A fourth line will not be added.** Only marketable programs are permitted special designs on the back of the business cards.



Envelopes

Return addresses on envelopes are printed in one color, usually the blue below. Three lines are used to identify the agency sending the communication and two lines for the address. To request changes, submit a Service Desk ticket for Public Affairs.



Letterhead and Memos

Letterhead is used for external communications and requires use of the primary OMES logo. Memos are for internal communications. The headers and footers on both sets of templates are divisionally specific and should not be changed without approval and formatting by Public Affairs. A second page with a footer is automatically added if the communication goes beyond one page.

Ferris J. Berger
State Purchasing Director
Central Purchasing



OMES
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT
& ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Preston L. Doerflinger
Director
Secretary of Finance, Administration
and Information Technology

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STATE OF OKLAHOMA • OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & ENTERPRISE SERVICES • OMES.OK.GOV

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Ferris J. Berger
State Purchasing Director
Central Purchasing

MEMORANDUM

Preston L. Doerflinger
Director
Secretary of Finance, Administration
and Information Technology

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CENTRAL PURCHASING | 5005 N. LINCOLN BLVD., STE. 300, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105 | OFFICE: 405-521-2116 | FAX: 405-521-4475
STATE OF OKLAHOMA • OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & ENTERPRISE SERVICES • OMES.OK.GOV

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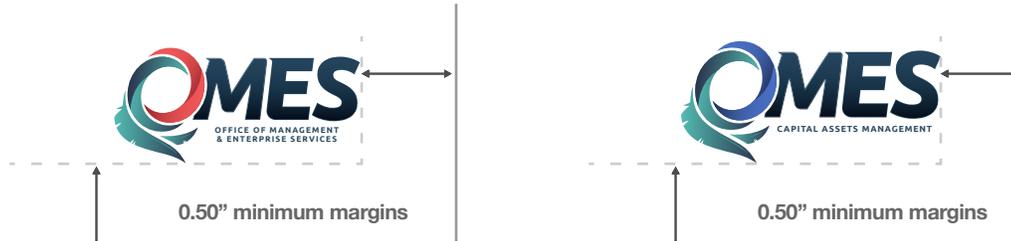
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CENTRAL PURCHASING | 5005 N. LINCOLN BLVD., STE. 300, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105 | OFFICE: 405-521-2116 | FAX: 405-521-4475
OMES.OK.GOV

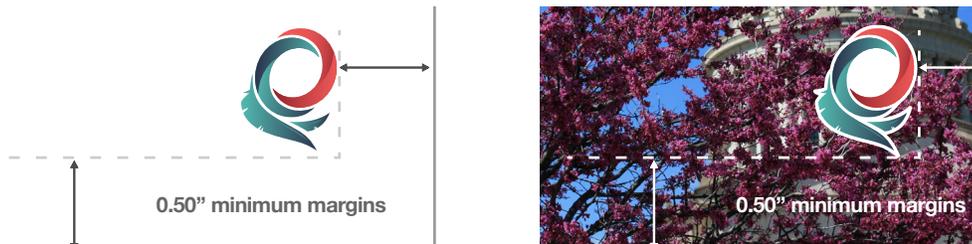
Reports

Reports will often be seen by the public, thus will typically require the OMES primary logo on the cover. It should be placed on the bottom right of the cover page as indicated below. When appropriate with an internal report only, the divisional logo may be used.



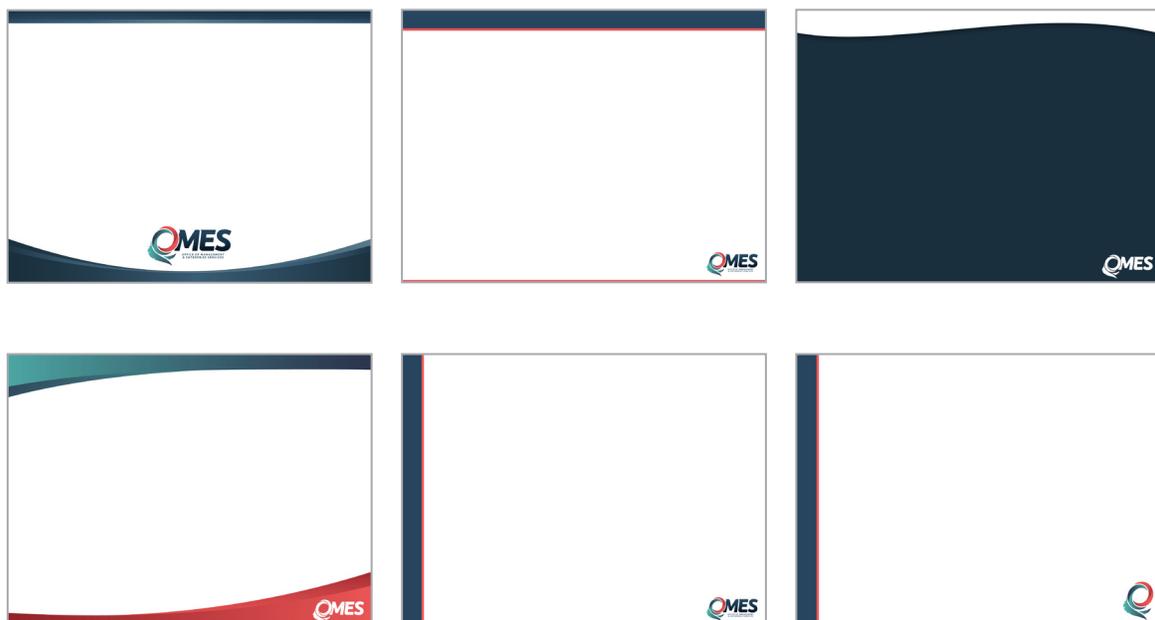
Publications

Publications are usually for external audiences, and while they can be printed, they are considered digital first. These are the bigger things we do when we want to be fancy. The "O" logo will usually go on the bottom right of the cover. The full primary logo may also be used. In instances where the single color white or letter-blue logo will not work, a full-color, white outlined logo is acceptable for busy covers. An OMES closing page, with the full or "O" logo, will end the publication. A divisional logo may be used within the publication.



PowerPoints

There are several options for clean, open templates. PowerPoints are external documents, must be branded correctly, use proper fonts, adhere to Associated Press style, limit the use of clip art and animation and be able to meet accessibility standards if posted online. Before use, PowerPoints must be approved by submitting the document on a Service Desk ticket for Public Affairs.



Photography and Video

High-quality photography and video convey a level of professionalism and polish befitting the dynamism of OMES and help represent the strength of the OMES brand with the power of visual communications.

Photography Resources

A bank of Capitol photos are available through the Capitol photographers, 405-521-4071. OMES offers photography and video services as a shared service through OMES Public Affairs. To schedule, please submit a request through the Service Desk.

Resolution Requirements

For print: 300 dpi recommended; 200 dpi minimum (JPG, TIFF; CMYK mode).

For Web: 120 dpi (JPG, PNG; RGB mode).

For video: Recommended minimum dimensions of 720 by 1280 pixels.

Video Requirements

Ending Title Slide

The preferred OMES logo with website link, or the specific division's alternative version and corresponding website, should be on the last slide. One of the approved, self-funded, marketable program logos can also be used if preferable.

Lower Thirds of Video

Use lower thirds only for subject identification on subject's first speaking appearance. Position the identification on the left or right side of the frame, depending on the subject's location. Identify each subject just once.

Naming Conventions

Use full first and last name, and middle initial upon request of the subject. Use full, formal title, but if it's lengthy, use your judgment to shorten or abbreviate to keep the title readable in a short timeframe.

Exports

To export videos for external viewing, please follow these general guidelines for resolution and audio:

Low-res output (by approval only): MPEG-4, 360 p at 5000 kbits/s, 48 kHz audio.

HD upload for YouTube: H.264 .mov, 720 p at 8000 kbits/s, 48 kHz audio.

Full HD: H.264 .mov, 1080 p at 8000 kbits/s, 48 kHz audio.

Emails

Signatures

Consistent email signatures deliver a visually coherent look across OMES. Just as our business cards follow a standardized approach, email signatures should be consistent. Consider your email signature your digital business card, and include the appropriate information.

Email signatures should include:

- Your name.
- Job title.
- Division or department.
- Phone number.
- Fax number (if applicable).
- Cell number (if applicable).
- OMES website (omes.ok.gov)
- Email and wireless update link.

Signatures can include the unaltered OMES primary logo or the “O” logo. Email signature templates with the correct logo size and text placement are available at J:\Function\Branding or by contacting branding@omes.ok.gov. The logo size and text weight should not be adjusted from those templates.

FirstName LastName | YourTitle
p. 000-000-0000 | f. 000-000-0000 | c. 000-000-0000
Division | OMES
social media | omes.ok.gov



[Sign up](#) to receive email or wireless updates from OMES.

FirstName LastName
YourTitle
Office of Management and Enterprise Services
000-000-0000 desk
000-000-0000 mobile
omes.ok.gov

[Sign up](#) to receive email or wireless updates from OMES.

FirstName LastName

YourTitle, OMES then division

000-000-0000 | P

000-000-0000 | C

omes.ok.gov | social media

[Sign up](#) to receive email or wireless updates from OMES.

You also have the option to use a one-line signature for replies and forwards:

FirstName LastName | YourTitle | OMES | p. 000-000-0000 | c. 000-000-0000 | omes.ok.gov

Standards

- Personal quotations or philosophical statements cannot be included as part of your signature. Your OMES signature is a direct representation of the agency's viewpoint.
- Watermarked, colorful or photographic backgrounds are not permitted as they often make correspondence difficult to read and are not always compatible with other email programs.
- The preferred font and size is Calibri, 11 point. Decorative fonts are not to be used.
- Email address is not encouraged for the signature, as it is included in your email message.
- Avoid using a mailing address in the signature, as it is generally not needed and can be put in the body of the email when requested.
- When applicable, professional designations or certifications may be placed directly after your name. For example: John Doe, CPO.
- Email is considered an external communication and therefore only the OMES primary logo or "O" logo should be used.
- Email signatures can include social media links for agency and approved programs.
- The usage of the OMES logo must follow the given guidelines. Don't abuse the logo.
- Do not paste in extra signature items after your OMES signature, such presentations are unprofessional and can confuse the reader. A legal disclaimer is allowed if wanted.
- An approved maketable program (Page 12) may use its logo for a signature when appropriate.

The following clause may be included at the bottom of the signature after the updates tag:

If you have questions or problems related to the IT accessibility of this message or attachments, please contact the OMES accessibility compliance representative at accessibility@omes.ok.gov.

Signage

General

Signage provides a means to consistently identify, locate, direct and inform across State of Oklahoma buildings and offices.

Bulletin Boards

Only State of Oklahoma or legally required material can be posted on publicly viewable bulletin boards. If a date is present on the material, the posting must be removed as soon as that date passes.

Trade Show Materials

Display Banners

The display should visually communicate what your division or department does, addressing the needs and interests of the audience. Bold graphics and effective photos will attract a person walking from one display to the next. The following standards are a starting place:

- Use your complete agency and division name to identify your display. Acronyms and most abbreviations are not appropriate.
- Headlines should be readable from at least 10 feet.
- Use only your division or department's key messages on the display. Provide the details in a takeaway piece.
- Pictures should be 5 inches by 7 inches or larger.
- The OMES logo should be large enough to be readable from a distance of at least 25 feet.

Tablecloths

Tablecloths should adhere to all branding standards and guidelines and appropriately name the division or marketable program, including a website.

Trade show booth

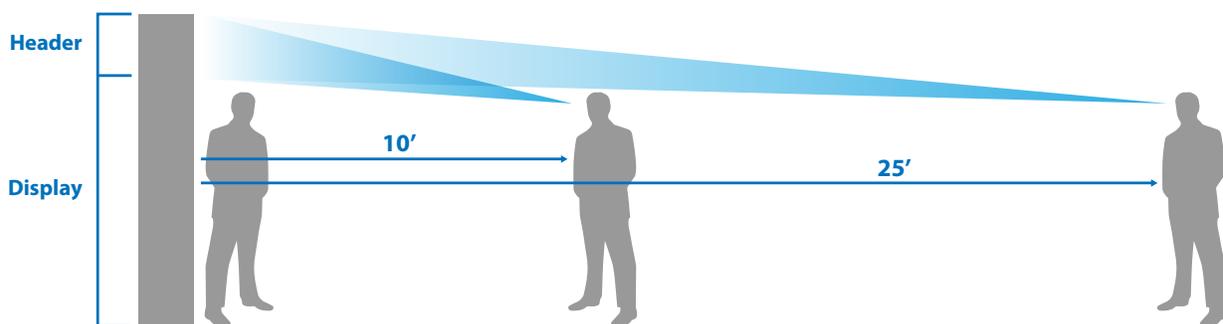
Trade shows offer a great opportunity for brand deployment. Customers are exposed to OMES products and services and offered the opportunity to speak with and have their questions immediately answered by knowledgeable staff.

All appropriate supporting brand attributes, including typography, imagery, color palette, writing style and tone should be incorporated. Booth graphics and materials are to establish brand presence and provide a backdrop for event staff.

The OMES logo should be prominently displayed and proper usage guidelines followed.

Exhibit Design

Exhibits, like ads, consist of two parts — headers and display. OMES branding for a booth or banner should always appear within the header at the top of an exhibit system, just above eye level. The logo should be visible from a minimum distance of 25 feet. Headlines should be visible from a minimum of 10 feet. Detail messaging should also be readable from a minimum of 10 feet, but may appear lower than eye level as it is meant to be read at a closer distance when not blocked by other booth visitors.



Additional Considerations

There are numerous considerations when planning an exhibit booth. All of these elements should be taken into account to produce the best experience possible:

- Physical attributes of the space, i.e. carpet, furniture, workstations, countertops, storage.
- Placement of graphics and furniture and their impact on visitor movement through the booth.
- Supporting video, interactive presentations, slide shows, brochure displays.
- Safety — sharp corners, cables, outlets and plugs, or potential damage caused by tight spaces.

Promotional Items

Promotional items are used to build the OMES brand and must:

- Use the approved logo colors.
- Adhere to logo clear space requirements.
- Use the appropriate file type for the application.
- Have an appropriately sized logo.
- Complement the OMES brand essence.
- Be approved by Public Affairs or the appropriate division director.
- Be audience or culturally appropriate.

Vehicles

Please refer to the state standard for vehicle marking, [47 O.S. 151](#). OMES DCAM Fleet Management can apply the appropriate markings for a fee. Vehicles shall not display dealer's or vendor's decals, or employee's personal license plates, emblems, stickers, mascots or decorations.

Font Usage

For letters, memos, reports, publications, electronic presentations and emails a standard nondecorative font should be used. The font size should be no smaller than 10 point and no bigger than 16 point for normal body copy. Headline font sizes can be larger.

Acceptable fonts include:

- **Serif:** Calisto, Cambria, Georgia and Times New Roman.
- **Sans-serif:** Arial, Calibri, Helvetica and Verdana.

PART V: PRINT VS. DIGITAL

OMES wants to think digital first. Often times, it's the most efficient way to get your information out. It's quicker, cheaper and aesthetically our Public Affairs designers can make such documents more accessible and better looking for readers.

Printing Process

To ensure quality of all OMES printed material and that OMES branding and style guidelines are followed, all OMES divisions are required to submit commercial printing jobs, whether for Central Printing or other vendors to OMES Public Affairs. This includes all commercial printing projects, not just those designed by Public Affairs. [The policy](#), which took effect in February 2016, is meant to streamline the printing process and protect the OMES brand. The full policy can be found on the [OMES Rules, Policies & Statutes webpage](#).

These steps should be followed to print your project:

1. OMES partner submits a Service Desk request for Public Affairs to design/layout for print publication or to print a previously designed document.
2. Public Affairs executes request and appropriate cost statement and print quantity are placed on publication.
3. Order for Print is sent to Central Printing or other vendor by Public Affairs with request for proof prior to printing.
4. Print approval is granted, or adjustments are made and proof is reissued until approval for print is granted.
5. Final document is delivered to Public Affairs for final review unless otherwise requested by partner.

Disclaimer

All printed and digital material distributed outside of OMES should have one of the following disclaimers on it.

Printed Publications

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Digital Only Publications

Document available on agency website

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Document not available on agency website

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PART VI: TRADEMARKS

OMES is responsible for protecting the brand identity of the agency and its programs. As part of that effort, the OMES public affairs and legal divisions will work to ensure that official brandmarks (words, names, symbols or designs) are registered as trademarks with the State of Oklahoma.

The purpose is to establish a standard, uniform process for the trademark registration of words, names, symbols or designs created and used by OMES business units.

The OMES public affairs and legal divisions will present the OMES management team with brand marks that it believes should be protected. For those marks identified to be protected, public affairs will work with the business units to collect information necessary to complete the registration process. Public Affairs will provide the documentation and graphics necessary for the filing.

The legal division will file the trademark registration with the Oklahoma Secretary of State's office and provide public affairs with a copy of the completed trademark registration form as filed. The legal division will also provide public affairs with a copy of the trademark certificate upon its granting.

PART VII: THE WRITTEN AND VIRTUAL WORD

Written Style and Grammar

OMES follows The Associated Press style with a few exceptions. Referencing the most recent *AP Stylebook* or signing up to use the service's website at apstylebook.com can prevent many a fall down the stylistic slippery slope of errors.

Exceptions to AP Style

Document titles

OMES uses both italics and quotation marks when referring to works of literature and other documents. Titles of publications, reports, books, magazines, albums, movies, television shows, paintings, boats, airplanes and other large stand-alone works go in italics. Titles of smaller works such as chapters, poems, song titles and articles go in quotation marks. Titles of forms, procedural documents and webpages do not need italics or quotation marks.

Example: The song "Your Favorite Song" is on *The Best Album of All Time*.

Italics

Besides using italics for the titles of large works, italics can be used to emphasize a word or cite an example.

State

OMES style is to uppercase the word state when used as State of Oklahoma or when referencing the State Capitol Building. Lowercase state when it stands alone.

Plain Language

OMES is committed to communicating using a language that is easy to understand. Plain language is a process that involves focusing clear, concise and easy to understand written communication on the needs of the intended audience. With everything you publish, your audience should be able to:

- Find what they need.
- Understand what they find.
- Use that information to meet their needs.

Steve Pinker, author of *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*, wrote an essay for the [Wall Street Journal](http://www.wsj.com) on Sept. 25, 2014, speaking of the need to write clearly and concisely. Here are a few lines:

The curse of knowledge is the single best explanation of why good people write bad prose. It simply doesn't occur to the writer that her readers don't know what she knows — that they haven't mastered the argot of her guild, can't divine the missing steps that seem too obvious to mention, have no way to visualize a scene that to her is as clear as day. And so the writer doesn't bother to explain the jargon, or spell out the logic, or supply the necessary detail. ...

Cadres of expensive professionals — lawyers, accountants, computer gurus, help line responders — drain vast sums of money from the economy to clarify poorly drafted text. ...

Your readers know a lot less about your subject than you think, and unless you keep track of what you know that they don't, you are guaranteed to confuse them.

Common Stylistic and Grammar Errors

Abbreviations and acronyms

In general, avoid alphabet soup and spell out the full name if there's a chance a reader won't recognize the meaning of an abbreviation or acronym. A first reference should almost always be spelled out. On first reference, the abbreviation or acronym does not need to follow in parentheses, especially if the shortened form is used close to the spelled out first reference. In limited cases, if the abbreviation or acronym is more common than the long form, then just use the short form (DVD, ATM, laser, scuba).

Keep in mind your audience. While OMES might be well-known to us and others within state government, outside these walls most people would struggle to come up with Office of Management and Enterprise Services as the meaning of the abbreviation.

If you were wondering:

An acronym is a word formed by combining the first letter or letters of a series of words into distinct syllables (laser for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation, NAFTA for North American Free Trade Agreement); an abbreviation is the shortened form of a written word (Gov. for governor, Dr. for doctor) or the first letters of an organization pronounced individually (OMES for Office of Management and Enterprise Services, FBI for Federal Bureau of Investigation). An abbreviation is not an acronym. And let's just say using OMES as an acronym can get a bit messy.

Ampersands (&)

Typically don't use them in place of the word "and." Occasional use in headlines and other headings is acceptable.

Capitalization

When in doubt, don't capitalize. Do not capitalize these words: website, online, email, web, internet. Do not capitalize words just for emphasis. Do not capitalize common nouns. Do not capitalize departments and offices unless they contain a proper noun or are the official name. Do not capitalize governor when it appears alone in copy, but do capitalize Legislature when used alone and it refers to a specific — like Oklahoma's — Legislature.

He happily worked in the OMES Communications Department.

He happily worked in the communications department.

The governor signed the bill.

Gov. Bellmon signed the bill.

The Oklahoma Legislature approved the bill.

The Legislature also approved the bill's amendment.

No other legislature approved both the bill and amendment.

Capitol and capital

Capitalize *Oklahoma Capitol* and the *Capitol* when referring to the building in Oklahoma City. Follow the same practice when referring to the *U.S. Capitol* and other state capitols.

Use *capital* for a city or town that is the seat of government: Oklahoma City is the capital of Oklahoma.

When used in a financial sense, capital describes money, equipment or property used in a business by a person or corporation.

Commas (,)

Do not use the serial or Oxford comma — the comma before the “and” in a simple series.

This, that and the other thing.

We spoke with HCM, IS and CAM.

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series, however, if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction.

I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.

Company names and products

Honor companies’ conventions, according to their official websites (iPhone, YouTube, GlobalHealth).

Refer to a company or product as “it.”

Refer to OMES as “we.”

Abbreviate company, corporation, incorporated and limited when used after the name of a corporate entity: American Express Co., Carnival Corp., The Home Depot Inc., Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd.

Dash (—) versus hyphen (-)

Long dashes are typed with a space before and after — just like that.

Hyphens are used to consolidate things, so to speak, and so, there are no spaces: 2-4 p.m. and 20-30 days, for example.

Hyphens also link words to form a single phrase and compound modifiers (first-time user, 500-acre farm). But don’t hyphenate extremely common compounds (high school prom) or compounds containing an “ly” adverb (quickly decided contest).

Dates

Follow AP guidelines on which months to abbreviate. Spell out the day and abbreviate the month (if applicable) if it is used with a specific date (Sunday, Jan. 24, 2015). If just the month and year are used, spell out the month (January 2015).

Exclamation Points (!)

Do not overuse exclamation points, it causes them to lose relevance and become cliché. Use a comma after mild interjections. End mildly exclamatory sentences with a period. Use the exclamation point to express a “high degree” of surprise, incredulity or other strong emotion.

Crime fiction and suspense novelist Elmore Leonard offered this tip on exclamation points:

“Keep your exclamation points under control. You are allowed no more than two or three per 100,000 words of prose. If you have the knack of playing with exclamers the way Tom Wolfe does, you can throw them in by the handful.”

Extreme writing

Don’t use combinations of italic, bold, caps and underline: It was **THE BEST** report ever given.

Numbers

It’s really easier than it seems. With a few exceptions, spell out one through nine and first through ninth.

Use figures for 10 and above.

Here are a few exceptions:

- Ages (5-year-old, 7 years old).
- Dimensions (3 feet 9 inches).

- Percentages (1 percent, 4 percent).
- Did we mention, always spell out percent?
- Spell out a number if it's the first word of a sentence, unless it's a headline.
- Don't write "1/2." Instead spell out "half" or use "0.5."

OMES

The abbreviation is acceptable on second reference for the State of Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services. OMES was formerly known as the Office of State Finance until it and four other agencies (Department of Central Services, Office of Personnel Management, Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board and Employees Benefits Council) were consolidated under HB 2140 in 2011.

Passive Construction

Passive voice lengthens and confuses the sentence by using phrases to move the subject after the verb. Active sentence structure places the subject in the subject position and is preferred.

Passive: *Smith was appointed director by the committee.*

Active: *The committee appointed Smith director.*

Purchase Card

Spell out purchase card on first reference. In line with AP, if an abbreviation is used in subsequent references, P-card is the preferred form.

Quotation marks

Periods and commas go within quotation marks.

He said, "It was the best of times."

"It was the best of times," she said.

Question marks within quotes follow logic. If the question is the quote, the mark goes inside the quotes. If it's a question that ends with a quote, the question mark goes outside the quotes.

The teacher asked, "What makes life worth living?"

Who wrote the answer, "To be born with the gift of laughter and a sense that the world is mad"?

Use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes.

He said, "She told me, 'I love you.'"

Telephone numbers

Use figures with a dash separating numbers 405-522-1234. If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension 405-522-1234, ext. 2.

Times

Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 9-11 a.m., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Online Presence

Digital Communications

Digital content is not the same as print content. People encounter and read it differently — they scan it, so you need to write it differently. Divide it into smaller chunks with subheadings.

Spam: Don't unintentionally make emails to customers look like spam. This is especially important in subject lines. Avoid words like 'free' and 'win.' Avoid misspellings, text-speak abbreviations and acronyms as these are on spam filter lists. Think about how the words will look in a customer's inbox.

Social Media

Twitter Guidelines

Avatar: 70 x 70 pixels.

Background: 1600 x 1200 pixels.

Name: 20-character limit.

Bio: 160-character limit.

Website: Link to omes.ok.gov or other approved marketable domain.

Twitter URL: Matches your account name.

Facebook Guidelines

Profile picture: 180 x 180 pixels.

Facebook URL: This can never be changed, so choose carefully.

Page name: No character limit.

Page type: Under "Page," select "Company, Organization or Institution" and then "Government Organization."

Timeline Cover Photo: 851 x 315 pixels.

YouTube Guidelines

Channel art: 2560 x 1440 pixels.

Channel name: OklahomaOMES.

YouTube URL: www.youtube.com/user/OklahomaOMES.

Web Applications

Visual elements of a web application should be customized to reflect its use to conduct official OMES business. Follow the guidelines for the use of the OMES logo outlined in this document.

Websites

Good web design is essential for usability, accessibility, message clarity and reputation. OMES divisions should also strive for accuracy, updating pages frequently and removing outdated pages. Follow the guidelines for the use of the OMES logo outlined in this document.

Searchability: Write to be found. What words would people type into Google to find you? Use those words in your copy. But don't overuse the same phrase to the detriment of your writing or marketing.

Legibility: It's hard to read off a screen. It's 25 percent slower than print. Help your reader. Don't go crazy with bolding, italicizing and capitals. Never use underlining to highlight because it will make your text look hyperlinked and confuse your reader.

Maintaining Content: Unlike print publications, web content can be edited and republished almost instantaneously. Although timeliness brings added responsibility, website visitors expect everything on the OMES site to be relevant and up-to-date. To ensure that content continues to meet the changing needs of your audience, maintaining it is a priority.

Accessibility: Don't exclude visually impaired or blind readers. Don't let your copy rely heavily on imagery and use tags and captions as opportunities to fully describe pictures. Remember to describe hyperlinks effectively in the text that is linked. Do not use linked text that reads "click here."

State of Oklahoma websites, resources and content must be accessible to users with disabilities. OMES has adopted the [Information Technology Accessibility Standards](#) as our standard for accessibility, establishing that all sites should strive for conformance with the 2004 state law.

Five Quick Writing Tips

1. Use one space between sentences. We know your typing teacher told you two, but for the purposes of modern layout, one is enough.
2. Keep it to one thought per paragraph, especially online. Long bulky paragraphs tend to lose the readers' attention.
3. When you use "that," read the sentence again and imagine it without it. Chances are you don't need it.
4. Space and attention are limited, so get right to it. The first sentence should tell your reader exactly what to expect from the rest of the piece.
5. Use commas respectfully — they really aren't the punctuation for every situation. Sentences do not require several sprinkled about for effect.

Bonus Tip

Reread your writing aloud. If it's bad, it will sound stilted and artificial. When you finish, if you can, put it aside for a day, then read back through it. Root out words you don't need, such as redundancies and hyperbole, and delete them. If you use too many adjectives and adverbs, don't hesitate to strike them as well. They aren't all bad, but they should really be limited unless they truly add important description. Words such as "very" and "extremely" hardly ever do. As Mark Twain wrote in 1880:

"When you catch an adjective, kill it. No, I don't mean utterly, but kill most of them — then the rest will be valuable. They weaken when they are close together. They give strength when they are wide apart."

