

**WEB PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS**

WEBSITE

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Provide a link to the homepage from every page on the website
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Display a statement of content ownership or management on every page
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Include an 'About Us' page that explains the county's strategic plan, mission, governance, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Provide an easily findable way for users to contact county departments – general contact as well
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Include an internal search function to help the public locate information
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Provide a link that explains how users can access information under the Freedom of Information Act.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Do not post empty pages or pages "under construction"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Do not link political sites or use the site for direct or indirect lobbying
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Conduct a 508 assessment to ensure site is accessible to people using assistive technologies  
<https://www.hhs.gov/web/section-508/index.html>
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Obtain permission for any copyrighted material on website

LINKS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Use standard colors for visited and unvisited links
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Use meaningful language for links rather than "click here"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Indicate the file type and size for downloadable files

FORMS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Establish and/or increase the use of forms that are fillable and can be sent directly from site.  
Acknowledge with an automated response whenever a user submits a completed form
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Clearly and consistently distinguish required data entry fields from optional data entry fields
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Provide radio buttons to choose one response from mutually exclusive options.

GENERAL

- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Enforce the county's content management roles, procedures, and style guides
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Establish a plan and schedule to review and archive old content in relation to retention schedules
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. All content should be written in plain language
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Use electronic forms to conduct business to the extent practicable

Adapted from the: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services website

Checklist for Plain Language on the Web

<https://plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/web-checklist/>

On the web, people are in a hurry. They skim and scan, looking for quick answers to their questions. Help your readers quickly find what they need with these web writing tips:

- Less is more! Be concise.
- Break documents into separate topics.
- Use even shorter paragraphs than on paper.
- Use short lists and bullets to organize information.
- Use even more lists than on paper.
- Use even more headings with less under each heading.
- Questions often make great headings.
- Present each topic or point separately, and use descriptive section headings.
- Keep the information on each page to no more than two levels.
- Make liberal use of white space so pages are easy to scan.
- **Write (especially page titles) using the same words your readers would use when doing a web search for the info.**
- **Don't assume your readers have knowledge of the subject or have read related pages on your site. Clearly explain things so each page can stand on its own.**
- **Minimize the use of acronyms and jargon**
- Never use "click here" as a link. Link language should describe what your reader will get if they click the link.
- Eliminate unnecessary words.

Additionally:

- Always hyperlink sources. When you reference another website's content, make sure you hyperlink back to that site. It's good internet etiquette.
- Commit to having at least two others proof your work before publishing. Be cognizant of spelling, capitalization or grammar rules. Use the dictionary and/or Google it!

Goals:

- Home page states "Welcome! How may we help you?" (example: <https://www.sjgov.org/> )
- Simplify home page of website (example: <https://www.lakecountyca.gov/>)
- Reference important Board items in corresponding department's page for ease of public reference, exclusively in Board agenda items are difficult to locate and search
- Reduce or eliminate documents that download separately
- Add staff names, titles, and emails to departmental pages for ease of public communication. People want to contact staff directly and not use general mailbox emails for some of their correspondence.
- Include other semi-related department contact information at the bottom of the page.  
[https://www.sjgov.org/business/development/license\\_permits](https://www.sjgov.org/business/development/license_permits)
- Explore Google Translate options (example: <https://www.sjgov.org/> )
- <http://openbudget.humboldt.gov/#!/year/default> - a very different way to show financial transparency

- Replace photos throughout website a few times a year to keep website fresh
- List most current dated items at top of list in all instances on website
- Provide section information when printing the County Code and Administrative Manual  
<http://www.countyofglenn.net/print/223>
- Eliminate using the template pages when not applicable: <http://www.countyofglenn.net/dept/board-supervisors/forms> , <http://www.countyofglenn.net/dept/ag-commissioner/agendas-minutes>
- Improve website search functions - Test the following search request: *Permit for wood stove*
  - Fail: Sutter, Glenn, Humboldt, Modoc, Tehama
  - Success: Marin, San Joaquin, Butte, Colusa,