

ACF Website Requirements

Use this list to help guide you through development projects and confirm you have met all necessary requirements for creating new or redesigning existing ACF websites.

This list condenses the most important guidelines and best practices for federal websites. ACF follows federal standards with a few adjustments for branding and consistency. Details on the source of federal requirements and implementation of checklist items can be found on [acf.hhs.gov/digital-toolbox](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/digital-toolbox) or [digital.gov](https://www.digital.gov).

Requirements for New and Redesigned Sites

Host site as a .gov domain
Adhere to Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) only standard
Build site using the latest version of Drupal
Build websites using mobile-friendly, responsive design.
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 ” page that explains the site’s mission, governance, and responsible parties.
Provide contact information that is easy to find.
Include a search function to help users easily locate information.
Link to a policy that explains your agency's criteria for choosing external sites .
Include a link to ACF’s privacy policy .
Provide links to plug-ins for all non-html files or page elements.
Provide a link for users to access ACF information under the Freedom of Information Act .
Link to USA.gov , HHS.gov, and ACF.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.

Branding/Style Requirements

	Use U.S. Web Design Standards to create trustworthy, accessible, and consistent websites applying the ACF Color palette .
	Embed the HTML branding bar featuring the HHS and ACF logos/sites above website header
	Write for the web using the ACF Editorial Guide
	Use high-resolution photos; HD retina-ready preferred.
	Avoid creating new logos. Clearance of new logos are not supported, at this time.

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 websites .

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 site's content management roles, procedures, and style guide .
Establish a plan and schedule to review and archive old content .
Set up an analytics program to gather information about your users' behavior, review data, and make site improvements. Implement Digital Analytics Program (DAP) federal-wide analytics tool for common web metrics. ACF DAP POC: digitalcomms@acf.hhs.gov
Consult your records officer to determine the retention schedule and format for your web records .

Keep in mind:

Establish a comprehensive content strategy .
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.
Ensure that you have met all required 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).