



U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

GSA Order: General Services Administration (GSA) Executive Correspondence

OAS 1804.1A

Office of Executive Secretariat

executive-secretariat@gsa.gov

Purpose:

This Order establishes policy for managing executive correspondence and other official documents.

Background:

The Executive Secretariat (Exec Sec), Office of Administrative Services (OAS), pursuant to the [Delegation of Authority from the Administrator to the Chief Administrative Services Officer \(ADM 5450.39D, Ch 16\)](#), shall establish standards and controls for official correspondence or documents requiring the involvement of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Staff, or the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA).

Applicability:

This Order applies to GSA employees in the performance of their duties. The following are exceptions:

1. The Office of Inspector General per its independence under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. 401 et seq.); and
2. The Civilian Board of Contract Appeals due to its independent authorities pursuant to section 847 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006 (41 U.S.C. 7105).

Cancellation:

This Order supersedes OAS 1804.1, General Services Administration (GSA) Executive Correspondence.

Summary of Changes:

1. Removal of DEI references
2. Addition of Records Management regulatory guidance

3. GSA Executive Correspondence Guide (Appendix A) has been updated. All offices are expected to adhere to the guidelines therein.

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. The Office of the Administrator is responsible for approving and authorizing the signature on correspondence from the Chief of Staff, Deputy Administrator, or Administrator.
2. The Heads of Service and Staff Offices and Regional Offices are required to establish internal procedures and assign staff to handle executive correspondence in a timely manner. Staff that coordinate with Exec Sec will be trained on the correspondence process.
3. The Office of the General Counsel reviews all executive-level correspondence for legal sufficiency only.
4. The Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs clears executive-level correspondence to members of Congress; governors; state, county, local officials; and representatives from foreign governments and other governmental bodies.
5. All offices are responsible for adhering to the GSA Correspondence Guide and ensuring executive correspondence is not made public before it is signed.

Signature

/S/
Bob Stafford
Chief Administrative Services Officer
Office of Administrative Services

3/13/2025
Date

1. Requirements

GSA policy requires that official documents requiring the review, approval, or signature by the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Staff, as well as congressional correspondence coordinated with the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA), be transmitted through Exec Sec. Exec Sec manages the review, editing, and agency-wide clearance of official executive correspondence for the Office of the Administrator and OCIA to ensure conformance with correspondence and records management standards and policies.

Exec Sec drafts and edits official correspondence for heads of service offices as requested or required. This ensures conformance with correspondence and records management standards and policies.

Executive correspondence shall follow Federal Plain Language Guidelines, U.S. Government Publishing Office Style Manual, and GSA's Executive Correspondence Guide, which includes GSA correspondence style and usage standards.

Exec Sec will manage executive correspondence and official documents through the document management system.

2. Responsibilities

The responsibilities for the primary offices related to executive correspondence are as follows:

2.1 The Office of the Administrator

- Obtains the authorizing signature for executive correspondence signed by the GSA Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or Chief of Staff; and
- Delegates the responsibilities above to appropriate GSA personnel.

2.2 Heads of Services and Staff Offices (HSSO) and Regional Offices

- Establishes internal processes for drafting and clearing executive correspondence assigned to that office by Exec Sec;
- Ensures personnel adhere to the standards outlined in the GSA Correspondence Guide and comply with policies, procedures, and

deadlines for drafting and clearing responses as well as complying with records management requirements;

- Ensures personnel respond in a timely manner to questions and comments during the drafting and clearance process;
- Designates a correspondence point of contact and ensures all appropriate personnel request and receive training on the use of the document management system and GSA correspondence review processes; and
- Manages internal HSSO correspondence that does not require review, approval or signature of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Staff, or OCIA Associate Administrator.

2.3 Office of General Counsel (OGC)

- Reviews all executive correspondence for legal sufficiency only.

2.4 Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA)

- Clears all executive correspondence to Members of Congress; Governors; State, County, and Local officials; and representatives from foreign governments and other governmental bodies.

2.5 All Offices

- Offices drafting official agency correspondence are required to ensure these products adhere to the standards outlined in the GSA Correspondence Guide.
- All offices are responsible for ensuring executive correspondence and official documents to be signed by the Administrator or any agency official are not made public before they are signed.
- Release and distribution of approved official documents are based on the requirements of the original request and must be coordinated through the originating office.

2.6 Executive Secretariat

- Develops, manages, and maintains the GSA Correspondence Guide, which includes executive correspondence policies, procedures, best practices, style and usage standards, and ensures these remain updated on GSA's [InSite page](#);
- Reviews incoming executive correspondence; collaborates with HSSOs on creating and assigning controlled documents for the approval or

signature of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Staff, or OCIA Associate Administrator;

- Uses the document management system to track, monitor, and route (as needed) controlled documents to the appropriate GSA offices and personnel for action;
- Manages and oversees agency-wide clearance for executive and official correspondence that require the approval or signature of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Staff, or OCIA Associate Administrator, working with subject matter experts across service, staff, and program offices to resolve edits, comments, and issues to ensure GSA policies and positions are effectively communicated, routed, and transmitted in a timely manner;
- Drafts and edits official correspondence for the Office of the Administrator and for service offices as requested;
- Serves as GSA's clearinghouse to ensure all outgoing executive correspondence conforms with GSA's policies, procedures and is responsive, clear, accurate, and concise;
- Ensures official correspondence complies with standards for grammar, punctuation, formatting, and style;
- Secures official correspondence files and associated data; oversees the maintenance of the document management system; and generates reports on the status of active executive correspondence for program offices, as requested;
- Monitors and tracks deadlines for clearing executive correspondence;
- Coordinates, approves or denies internal extension requests for documents delayed in agency-wide clearance;
- Advises the Office of the Administrator of high-priority controlled documents or controlled documents with external deadlines;
- Provides technical assistance and training to HSSOs and program offices on policies, procedures, and best practices related to executive correspondence; and use of the document management system; and
- Serves as liaison to executive correspondence managers from the White House and other Federal agencies.

3. Definitions

3.1 Clearance

The official process of submitting a draft document to Exec Sec for review and approval by the appropriate GSA officials. Throughout the clearance process,

Exec Sec will check for accuracy, grammar, formatting, readability, and responsiveness.

3.2 Control

The electronic package for executive correspondence used to assign, track, and record the approval workflow. Documents in this package requiring approval or signature are referred to as controlled documents.

3.3 Correspondence

Any type of written communication from GSA stakeholders or the public pertaining to GSA business, regardless of delivery method, e.g., letters, emails.

3.4 Executive correspondence

Correspondence which requires the signature or clearance of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Staff, or OCIA Associate Administrator.

3.5 Official documents

All documents prepared, developed, reviewed, or used to carry out GSA's or the Administrator's official business.

4. Records Management

4.1 Responsibilities and Regulations

Records generated from the executive correspondence process must follow [GSA Records Management Program \(CIO 1820.2\)](#). Records will be managed by Exec Sec and the Office of Chief Information Officer's (OCIO) Enterprise Data and Privacy Management Division in accordance with the Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended, and all appropriate regulations.

Appropriate authorities include but are not limited to: Records Management By Federal Agencies (44 U.S.C. Chapter 31), Disposal of Records (44 U.S.C. Chapter 33), and Records Management (36 C.F.R. Subchapter B). As defined in [36 CFR 1220.18](#), permanent records should be protected, secured, and preserved while in agency custody. Controlled Document Tracking (CDT) is the system in which GSA stores and manages correspondence records.

Examples of permanent records are *any* correspondence signed by the GSA Administrator, Acting Administrator, Deputy Administrator and all other HSSO Officials where their signature on a document involves decisions and actions to administer agency operations and functions.

Permanent records must be transferred to the National Archives of the United States when the records are eligible based on transfer instructions specified in a NARA-approved records schedule. In general, this should be when the records are 30 years old or older (36 CFR 1235.12, [see also 36 §1235.14](#) for longer retention). Unscheduled records are Federal records whose final disposition has not been approved by NARA on a SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority. Such records must be treated as permanent until a final disposition is approved. (36 CFR 1220.18)

Appendix A: GSA Correspondence Guide



EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE GUIDE

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Updated March 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 A MESSAGE FROM EXEC SEC

4 THE BASICS

Role of Exec Sec
Getting Started
Document Types & Protocols
Reference Materials (Standards for GSA Correspondence)

8 SECTION 1: WRITING A LETTER

General Formatting
Letter Templates
Letter Outline

15 SECTION 2: WRITING A MEMORANDUM

General Formatting
Memorandum Templates
Memorandum Outline

20 SECTION 3: WRITING A DECISION PAPER

General Formatting
Decision Paper Templates
Decision Paper Outline

27 SECTION 4: CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Information on Congressional Letters
Congressional Committees and Subcommittees

30 SECTION 5: APPENDIX

Document Creation Checklist
Leadership Signature Blocks
Rules of Capitalization
Citation
Formatting
Forms of Address
Other

A Message from the Executive Secretariat

GSA, its service and staff offices communicate some of the agency's most important messages with and to employees, the public, stakeholders, and GSA partners. It is important to GSA's mission that its correspondence be accurate, responsive, and timely.

GSA's Executive Secretariat created this guide to help all employees—no matter their role—draft and create clear, professional documents as easily and efficiently as possible.

THE BASICS

The Role of the Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat (Exec Sec) coordinates and controls the flow of all correspondence requiring the signature of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Associate Administrator of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA), and, in some instances, the Public Building Service (PBS) and Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners. Most other correspondence can be managed by the originating office.

The Exec Sec Team is responsible for **technical editing**, maintaining consistent GSA **correspondence style guidelines**, and providing **tools** to create responsive, complete, and accurate correspondence. Exec Sec also acts as a **support team** for each program office. The team helps programs choose the correct supporting documents, identify additional program offices and stakeholders that must review or collaborate on their correspondence, and provide guidance on using the correspondence document management system. The platform used for managing correspondence.

Each program office is assigned a Exec Sec point of contact. Your office's contact person can be found [here](#).



How to Use This Guide

This guide focuses on elements of writing letters, memorandums, and decision papers associated with most types of correspondence. Each section includes a sample document, an explanation of the layout, and components of the document. Click on the links below to view templates and to find information on the Exec Sec staff.



[DOCUMENT
TEMPLATES](#)



[KEY EXEC SEC
CONTACTS LIST](#)



GETTING STARTED

What Documents Get Reviewed

If your document requires signatures of or must be approved by the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Associate Administrator for the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, you must request a “control” using our [intake form](#). A control is the term used to define correspondence that must be reviewed and routed through GSA’s document management system. On page 6 of this document, you will find instructions for each type of correspondence. These instructions indicate which correspondence types should be entered and routed through the document management system.

Review and Routing Process

Routing correspondence through the agency’s review and concurrence process is a multi-step process that involves multiple stakeholders. We complete document reviews not only to format each document to GSA’s standards, but also to engage our leaders, create buy-in on internal GSA initiatives, ensure appropriate legal considerations are taken into account, and provide an organizational and structured tool for the large volume of documents created to conduct GSA business.

GSA uses the document management system to move documents through the concurrence process, record approvals, and obtain signatures. In order to use the system, all subject matter experts who draft documents must request access and obtain training. Each program office has designated correspondence contacts who can request system access, training and who will support their office’s correspondence needs. To help you with navigating the document management system, the Executive Secretariat has created tip sheets, which are included in the appendix of this guide.

After drafting your document, refer to our section on obtaining clearances for instructions on gaining the proper departmental approvals before submitting correspondence for signature.

Elevating Regional Issues







Occasionally, regions will receive correspondence which must be elevated to GSA headquarters for a response. Regions should coordinate with their counterparts in Central Office to determine who should sign the response. After the signatory has been determined, a control may be created, if necessary.

Sensitive Information

If the subject matter or supporting documents are of a sensitive nature (for instance, personnel information, classified materials, or security matters), which should not be uploaded into the document management system; contact your Exec Sec POC, who can provide guidance on how best to handle routing your documents for approval.

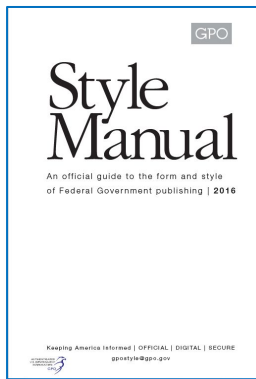
TYPES OF DOCUMENTS & PROTOCOLS

All documents listed below are processed through the Executive Secretariat or Directives program. The chart below displays common approval offices by document and documents which should be routed for agency review and approval using the Intake Form.

DOCUMENT TYPE	Approvals Required	Supporting Documents Required
DOCUMENTS WITH A-SUITE SIGNATURE Financial reports, Congressional reports, Audits, and some Awards  Contact Exec Sec POC for specific report formatting and approvals.	OGC, and Other Approvers Vary	Supporting Documents, sometimes a Decision Paper
CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS OR INQUIRIES Any letter or inquiry from a public official  See SECTION 4 of this Guide.	HSSO, OCIA, OGC	Decision Paper required for reports. Supporting Documents required if provided by external organization or individual.
GENERAL LETTERS & INQUIRIES Non-Congressional letters and letters with no A-Suite involvement  See SECTION 1 of this Guide.	HSSO, OGC	Incoming document, supporting documents.
DIRECTIVES Internal documents that determine standard GSA business practices. Orders, Manuals, Delegations of Authority, Instructional Letters  Contact the Directives Team at directives@gsa.gov .	HSSO, OGC, and A-SUITE as requested	Supporting Documents and Incoming Documents. Decision Paper required if A-suite is involved.
CERTIFICATES  Contact your Exec Sec POC.	HSSO, OGC, A-SUITE	Incoming Document, Supporting Documents, Decision Paper
RETIREMENT LETTERS  Contact executive-secretariat@gsa.gov	HSSO	Supporting Document and Incoming document

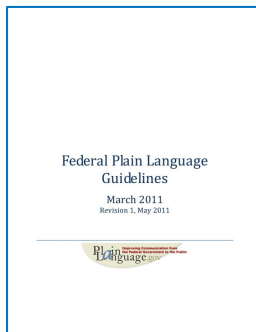
REFERENCE MATERIALS

Our standards are tools to help you draft and edit documents, allowing them to be processed quickly for signature. With rare exceptions, Exec Sec follows the most current [U.S. Government Publishing Office \(GPO\) Style Manual](#) and adhere to the [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#). Exceptions and additions can be found in this manual, which the Executive Secretariat routinely updates.



GPO Style Manual

- Capitalization
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Abbreviations, acronyms
- Hyphen use ("compounding")
- Signs and Symbols
- Formatting numbers



Federal Plain Language Guidelines

- Identify and write for your audience
- Address one person, not a group
- Use lots of useful headings
- Write short sections
- Words, Sentences, Paragraphs



Document Drafting Handbook

For documents published in the *Federal Register*, guidance is available in the U.S. National Archives and Record Administration's [Document Drafting Handbook](#).

SECTION 1

WRITING A LETTER

This section includes:

1. General Formatting
2. Letter Templates
3. Letter Outline
4. Explanations for each section of a letter

WRITING A LETTER

Exec Sec has developed letter templates to assist offices with style and formatting standards for agency correspondence. Letters are the most common form of response to inquiries from other agencies, the public, and Congress. While we have created both Microsoft and Google templates, our office highly recommends the use of Google Docs templates whenever possible. The Google application allows for simultaneous collaboration and enhanced version control.

Google templates should be copied and saved to your Google folder. To download Word templates, click "File," then "download" to "Microsoft Word (.docx)", and save the file to your hard drive. Note: Please do not use Google Docs and then convert to Word, as the formatting may not properly convert.

Consult your Exec Sec POC or your office's correspondence POC should you need assistance when determining the best format for your correspondence.

General Formatting



Font

GSA's standard font is Arial 12. However, you may use Arial 11 to keep the signature block on the same page. For short letters, you may use Arial 13; this font will fill more space and is easier for some readers to read.



Spacing

Letters should be single-spaced between sentences and double-spaced between paragraphs. Enter one space after colons and terminal punctuation (e.g., periods, question marks, etc.).



Margins

The margins should be 1 inch on all sides, and the text should be left-aligned.



Page Numbering

Page numbers should begin on page two and be positioned in the center of the header.



[CLICK HERE FOR LETTER TEMPLATES](#)

LETTER OUTLINE

Below is an example of an approved letter with a key to identify each section. This would be approved on GSA-approved letterhead. On the following pages, you will find guidance and notes on each section.

A

September 13, 2022

B

The Honorable John Smith
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

C

Dear Representative Smith:

D

Thank you for your letter dated August 4, 2022, regarding Phase II of the Generic Land Port of Entry (LPOE) reconfiguration and expansion project.

E

The budget for fiscal year 2017 request \$625 million for Phase II of the project, which included a new pedestrian processing facility and additional north- and southbound inspection lanes. The Phase II request, however, was not included in the budget for 2017 enacted by Congress.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) remains committed to working with Congress, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, local officials in California, and others to ensure the Generic LPOE has the necessary infrastructure to meet the Nation's security needs.

As background, in fiscal year 2015 Congress appropriated \$87 million to begin Phase I of the project. Phase I will provide five southbound privately owned vehicle (POV) lanes and a southbound bridge over the New River; 10 northbound POV inspection lanes with primary and secondary inspection canopies, booths, and inspection equipment; a new headhouse; and sitework to accommodate those facilities. This work is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2018.

F

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXX.

G

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

H

Jane Doe
Associate Administrator

I

Enclosures (2)

SECTIONS OF A LETTER

A

Date

B

Address

C

Salutation

DATE

Type the date four lines below the letterhead.

ADDRESS

Type the address block six lines below the letterhead (i.e., two lines below the date with one blank line). Begin with the appropriate honorific, followed by the individual's full name (e.g., "The Honorable Nancy P. Pelosi" or "John Doe").

Indent two spaces for the second line of an address. Two spaces should separate the State and Zip Code.

ADDRESSING CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS

Congressional letters should be addressed to the Member writing GSA. This is true even when a Member's staff writes on the Member's behalf. In such cases, include an "attn:" line for the staffer after the Member's name or, if the letter is addressed to a district office, after the Member's title.

Congressional letters should be addressed to the Member's Washington, DC, office unless the Member requests otherwise or the incoming inquiry is from the Member's district office. In such cases, address the letter to the requested address or the Member's district office.

A Member may request that GSA respond directly to their constituent. In those cases, address the letter to the constituent and include a courtesy copy for the Member.

SALUTATION

Type the salutation two lines below the address. GSA uses "Dear" followed by the individual's title and last name. Use "Dear Senator +last name:" or "Dear Representative +last name:" unless the Member writes to GSA as a Chair. In that case, use Chair +last name.

SECTIONS OF A LETTER

D

Standard Opening Paragraph

STANDARD OPENING PARAGRAPH

GSA uses a standard opening for letters responding to Congress inquiries. The opening has two primary aims: thank the Member for their inquiry and summarize the issue GSA is responding to. Revise the standard opening to fit the inquiry's facts.



Example of GSA's standard opening when responding to a Member writing on behalf of a constituent:

"Thank you for your letter dated February 11, 2020, on behalf of your constituent, John Smith, requesting that the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) reconsider its decision to cancel Mr. Smith's Schedule contract."



Example of GSA's standard opening when responding to a Member's follow-up inquiry, and nothing has changed since GSA's previous letter:

"Thank you for your letter dated June 4, 2021, forwarding additional correspondence you received from your constituent, Jane Doe, regarding the U.S. General Service Administration's (GSA) planned decision to donate unused Federal property to the State of Michigan. You previously wrote to GSA regarding this matter on April 5, 2021. A copy of that letter is enclosed."



Example of when the incoming letter was addressed to someone other than the person responding:

End the standard opening paragraph with the following sentence when a Member (or another person) writes to the Administrator, but the OCIA Associate Administrator (or another person) will be signing the response:

"Your inquiry has been referred to me for response."

SECTIONS OF A LETTER

E

Body

F

Standard Closing Paragraph

BODY

If possible, answer the question or address the issue at the outset. Then explain the reason(s) for GSA's conclusion or decision.

Keep your paragraphs short, and limit them to one idea.

STANDARD CLOSING PARAGRAPH

GSA's standard closing paragraph invites further discussion and provides a contact number for such discussion.



Example of standard closing with an alternate contact:

"If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) XXX-XXXX or John Doe, Associate Administrator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) XXX-XXXX."



Example of standard closing without an alternate contact:

"If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) XXX-XXXX."

Additional considerations concerning GSA's standard closing:

- Omit "additional" in "additional questions" if GSA is not responding to an inquiry (i.e., the recipient did not write to GSA previously).
- The OCIA Associate Administrator is the alternate contact for all Administrator-signed letters to Congress.

SECTIONS OF A LETTER



Complimentary
Close



Signature Block



Enclosures &
Courtesy

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE

Type the complimentary close two lines below the letter's last line, leaving one blank line. GSA uses "Sincerely" to close letters, though "Respectfully" or "Respectfully Submitted" are used for letters to the President. You can find other exceptions in Titles, Salutations, and Forms of Address.

SIGNATURE BLOCK

Leave three blank lines between the complimentary close and the signature block. (Two lines may sometimes be used to avoid pushing content onto a new page.) Use the signatory's full name, with their title immediately below it. Include the signatory's organization or office below their title only if it isn't in the letterhead. (Exception: The Administrator.)

Find Example Signature Blocks [here](#).

ENCLOSURES & COURTESY

Type "Enclosure" two lines below the signature block. Type "Enclosures," followed by the number of enclosures in parentheses if there is more than one enclosure. Always state in the letter what enclosures are being provided. (For example: As you requested, I have enclosed a copy of the contract.)

For courtesy copies, type "cc:" two lines below the signature block. If there is more than one recipient, begin the list of recipients at the left margin on the next line, with each recipient on a separate line. The recipients should be in alphabetical order of last name or committee name (with committee chairs being listed before ranking members). Use "The Honorable" where appropriate.

SECTION 2

WRITING A MEMORANDUM

This section includes:

1. General Formatting
2. Memorandum Template
3. Memorandum Outline
4. Explanations for each section of a memorandum

WRITING A MEMORANDUM

Use memorandums for internal communications regarding procedures or official business within GSA. Unlike an email, a memo is a message you send to a large group of employees, like your department or everyone at the agency.

Exec Sec has developed templates to assist offices with style and formatting standards for memorandums. While we have created both Microsoft and Google templates, our office highly recommends the use of Google Docs templates whenever possible. The Google application allows for simultaneous collaboration and enhanced version control.

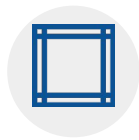
To download Word templates, click “File,” then “download” to “Microsoft Word (.docx)”, and save the file to your hard drive. Note: Please do not use Google Docs and then convert to Word, as the formatting may not properly convert.

General Formatting



Margins

The margin should be 1 inch on all sides.



Font

GSA's standard font is Arial 12. But you may use 11 to keep the letter to one page or 13 to expand to a second page.



Justification

The text should be left justified, with the names, titles, and offices aligned.



Spacing

Memorandums should be single-spaced between sentences and double-spaced between paragraphs. Enter one space after colons and terminal punctuation (e.g., periods, question marks, etc.).



Page Numbering

Include page numbers beginning on page 2. The page number should be centered in the page header.



[CLICK HERE FOR MEMORANDUM TEMPLATES](#)

MEMORANDUM OUTLINE

Below is an example of an approved memorandum with a key to identify each section. On the following pages, you will find guidance and notes on each section.

- A** July 20, 2021
- B** MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN DOE
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT-WIDE POLICY (M)
- C** THROUGH: JANE SMITH
COMMISSIONER
PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE (P)
- D** FROM: JAMES BARNS
ADMINISTRATOR (A)
- E** SUBJECT: A Sample Memorandum

- F** Begin the body of the memorandum three lines below the SUBJECT line. All text should be in black. You can access this sample as a [memorandum template](#) in Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Insert a letterhead and footer address based on the FROM official.

GSA's standard font is Arial 12 point. However, you may use Arial 11 or 11.5 point if space is a concern, or 13 point if the memorandum is very short.

Lines should be in single-line spacing but in double-spacing between paragraphs. The standard measurement for all margins in GSA memorandums is 1 inch on the top, bottom, and sides. All text in a memorandum should be aligned left.

You can "attach" extra material to memorandums. Explain all attachments and include the number as shown below.

If the memorandum is longer than one page, insert a page number starting on page 2 in the center of the page header. (In Word, double click at the top of page 2 to open the header. Use "Insert" to insert a page number. To prevent a page number on page 1, go to "Page Layout" and click on "Page Setup." Then click on "Layout" and choose "Different first page." The process in Google Docs is somewhat similar.)

- G** Attachments (3)
- cc: Tom Jones

SECTIONS OF A MEMORANDUM

A

Date

B

Memorandum For

C

Through

D

From

E

Subject

DATE

The memorandum should be dated once approved. Type the date four lines below the letterhead.

MEMORANDUM FOR

Leave a blank line after the date and type "MEMORANDUM FOR". Include the person's name, title, office, and office symbol (in parentheses).

THROUGH: *(Not always required.)*

If a memorandum needs to be routed through one or more intermediate officials on its way to its intended addressee, add "THROUGH:" two lines below the last line of the FOR line.

Always place THROUGH above the FROM line, even if the official in the FROM line outranks the official in the THROUGH line.

Ensure the names, titles, and offices are aligned.

FROM:

Type the "FROM:" line two lines below the "MEMORANDUM FOR" or "THROUGH" line.

SUBJECT:

Type the "SUBJECT:" line two lines below the "FROM" line. Type the "SUBJECT" line in title case, meaning the first letter of all the main words should be capitalized.

Define acronyms and initialisms in the "SUBJECT" line by writing out the phrase and then inserting the acronym or initialism in parentheses. Only the acronym or initialism should be used thereafter. For example:
"Delegation of Authority to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to Make Building Improvements" (period omitted)

SECTIONS OF A MEMORANDUM



BODY

Begin the body of the memorandum three lines below the last line of the "SUBJECT" line. (There will be two blank lines between the SUBJECT line and the body of the memorandum.)

ATTACHMENT

Type "Attachment" two lines below the body of the memorandum. Type "Attachments" if you have more than one attachment and type the number of attachments in parentheses.

Be sure to identify the attachments in the memorandum itself.

SECTION 3

WRITING A DECISION PAPER

This section includes:

1. Purpose
2. General Formatting
3. Decision Paper Template
4. Decision Paper Outline
5. Explanations for each section of a decision paper

WRITING A DECISION PAPER

A decision paper's primary purpose is to help GSA leaders make a decision. To this end, it should briefly describe the matter, the considerations, any alternatives, any coordination, and a recommendation(s). The information should support the recommendation(s). With a few exceptions, decision papers are mandatory for any matter requiring the A-suite's review or signature. Exceptions are explained in FAQ #1 at the bottom of the Decision Paper template. If you are unsure, consult your Exec Sec POC when determining the best format for your decision paper.

Exec Sec has developed templates to assist offices with style and formatting standards for decision papers. While we have created both Microsoft and Google templates, our office highly recommends the use of Google Docs templates whenever possible. The Google application allows for simultaneous collaboration and enhanced version control.

Google templates should be copied and saved to your Google folder. To download Word templates, click "File," then "download" to "Microsoft Word (.docx)", and save the file to your hard drive. Note: Please do not use Google Docs and then convert to Word, as the formatting may not properly convert. Decision paper template include full instructions and an FAQ section. Complete all sections, list all attachments, and then delete the instruction and FAQ pages.

General Formatting



Font

GSA's standard font is Arial 12. However, you may use Arial 11 to keep the signature block on the same page.



Spacing

Decision Papers should be single-spaced between sentences and paragraphs. Enter one space after colons and terminal punctuation (e.g., periods, question marks, etc.).



Margins

The margins in the template are already set at 1 inch on the left and right and at 0.6 inches on the top and bottom.



Page Numbering

The templates below will automatically include page numbers beginning on page 2, centered in the page header.



[**CLICK HERE FOR A DECISION PAPER TEMPLATE**](#)

DECISION PAPER OUTLINE

Below is an example of an approved decision paper with a key to identify each section. On the following pages, you will find guidance and notes on each section.

		A October 29, 2023
	B	<u>DECISION PAPER</u>
C	TO:	Jane Doe Administrator (A)
D	THROUGH:	John Smith Commissioner Public Buildings Service (P)
E	FROM:	Mary Brown Regional Commissioner Public Buildings Service (WP)
F	SUBJECT:	Operation and Maintenance Delegation of Authority U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC
G	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPEDITE (must include the deadline for final approval, a justification, and approval by your HSSO or Deputy Regional Commissioner): N/A	
H	RECOMMENDATION: Approve U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) request for an Operation and Maintenance Delegation of Authority	
I	BACKGROUND: DOT has requested a Delegation of Real Property Management and Operation Authority for its headquarters building, a recently acquired office building located at 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE in Washington, DC (DC0687ZZ). (Request letter attached.) Also, at DOT's request, NCR is requesting final GSA approval by October 30, 2020. GSA acquired the privately owned property that served as the DOT cabinet-level headquarters for the Office of the Secretary, DOT Operating Administration and the Office of the Inspector General. This property also houses mission-critical personnel and equipment, such as the Department's Worldwide Transportation Operation Center (TOC), which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is a unique facility that is crucial to fulfilling an essential mission: providing a safe, efficient, and modern transportation system for the American public. DOT occupies 100 percent of the space in the subject location.	
J	ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATION: GSA acquired DOT's headquarters building for \$760 million. The building houses approximately 4,997 personnel in 1.47 million rentable square feet (RSF) of space or approximately 1.2 million usable square feet of space.	

DECISION PAPER OUTLINE CONTINUED (Page 2)

2

If GSA operates this 1.47-million RSF building, it is estimated that it will need six employees for an approximate total annual cost of \$697,030.00.

J

In addition, the estimated annual operation and maintenance contract cost for a building this size will be \$16 million.

Pricing will be established by using Fair Annual Rent (FAR) appraisals. Operating costs are estimated in accordance with appraisal methodology, based on private sector estimates for similar properties. It should be noted, however, the operating estimate is not a recapture of actual expenses incurred. It is rather a reflection of what the private sector might reasonably pay for normal building operations.

K

- a. Option 1- **(Recommended) Approve the delegation request.** The approval grants DOT the delegation of authority in accordance with 40 U.S.C 121(d). Upon the Administrator's signature on the attached delegation and interagency agreement (and the transmittal letter), PBS NCR will obtain the signature of DOT, provide a copy to all parties, and upload the signed document to the Controlled Document Tracker. A delegation agreement will allow for DOT to conduct all of the operation and maintenance replacement of major building infrastructure items.
- b. Option 2 **Take no action.** If the delegation is not approved, GSA would assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE facility. GSA is currently in the procurement process of a contract to assume operation and maintenance responsibility of the facility. Should DOT be granted the delegation, the contract, which is scheduled to be awarded in January 2021, will be transferred from GSA to DOT. Additionally, PBS NCR does not have sufficient facility management staff to manage the facility.

L

COORDINATION:

This recommendation has been coordinated with:

NCR:

PBS, Office of Facilities Management
PBS, Office of Portfolio Management and Real Estate
Office of Regional Counsel

Central Office:

PBS, Office of Facilities
Office of General Counsel

APPROVED:

Signature

Date

Attachments (9):

Request Letter from DOT (plus two enclosures; the third enclosure is Exhibit C to the delegation)

SECTIONS OF A DECISION PAPER

A

Date

B

Decision/Info/Briefing

C

To

D

Through

E

From

F

Subject

G

Expedite

DATE

The date is the day the decision paper is submitted for the A-suite's approval; type the month and year (e.g., March xx, 2023), and Exec Sec will insert the day.

DECISION/INFORMATION/BRIEFING

Indicate whether you are requesting an approval, a decision, a meeting, or whether information is being provided.

TO

Include the individual's name, title, and office symbol (in parentheses). No office line is needed for the A-suite.

THROUGH

Include the individual's name, title, and office symbol (in parentheses).

FROM

Include the individual's name, title, and office symbol (in parentheses). Typically, a decision paper is from the individual submitting the document.

SUBJECT

Using title case, summarize the subject. For example, "U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Leasing Authority Request, Kansas City, MO." For longer titles, use sentence case but omit the period.

EXPEDITE

If you need approval in fewer than 25 business days, check the "expedite" box. You must also provide a due date, justification for the due date, and an approval from your HSSO or Deputy Regional Commissioner for the expedited review.

SECTIONS OF A DECISION PAPER

H

Recommendation

I

Background

J

Analysis and
Considerations

RECOMMENDATION

Summarize the recommended action(s) and specify the option number in parentheses. For example, "Approve and sign the attached Delegation of Authority and cover letter. (Option 1)" Clearly state in this section which documents need signature. Also add any special signing instructions: e.g., the PBS Commissioner will sign the Memorandum of Agreement first, followed by the Attorney General.

BACKGROUND

General Background Facts:

Outline the issue in logical order, using bullets. Identify any restrictions for reviewers. For example, "OMB has already approved the language." Reserve the last bullet for the subject matter expert's contact information in case a reviewer has questions. If the documents must be cleared by OMB, indicate whether they are pre- or post-OMB review.

Cost Summary:

Outline any cost implications. If there are none, state "N/A."

Timeline:

List any major past, present, and future milestones. State the deadline and the source of it (e.g., statutory or OMB).

ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Provide two or more options, starting with the recommended one. State the pros and cons for each option. If there is only one, state that and explain why. (For example: "GSA has only one viable option because the report is statutorily required.")

SECTIONS OF A DECISION PAPER



K

Coordination

L

Attachments

COORDINATION

List any internal and external concurrences. If there have been no concurrences, state "None." Also, state any special requirements, such as a public signing ceremony or signature by another agency head.

ATTACHMENTS

Insert "Attachment" if there is one attachment, or "Attachments" and the number of attachments (in parentheses) if there is more than one attachment. For example: "Attachments (3): Transmittal Letter; Cost Analysis Spreadsheet; and Photo of Site."

SECTION 4

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

This section includes:

1. Information on Congressional Letters
2. Congressional Committees and Subcommittees

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

All congressional correspondence received by your office should be sent immediately to Exec Sec at executive-secretariat@gsa.gov. Exec Sec will establish the control and coordinate with the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA) to obtain input and clearance. Below are situational examples of congressional correspondence with suggested formatting.

Addressing Letters to Congressional Staffers

If a congressional letter says GSA should respond to a congressional staffer, address the letter to the Member of Congress, with “Attn” to the staffer. Here is an example:

The Honorable Jane E. Doe
Attn: Andrew Jones
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Signatures on Congressional Letters

After you submit the incoming documentation to Exec Sec at executive-secretariat@gsa.gov, OCIA will determine who will sign the response. Occasionally, and as the response is developed, the determination of who will sign may change.

Responding with a Letter to Several Congress Members or Sending a Letter to More Than One Member

Some letters may have specific requirements. Consult with OCIA, but here are a few general rules:

- If multiple Members of Congress signed the incoming letter to GSA, either:
 - Create separate letters to each Member. If so, we add the following to the closing paragraph: “An identical letter has been sent to your colleagues, or
 - Use one single letter and list all the recipients in the address block and the salutation.
- For separate letters to members of multiple committees, add the following to the closing paragraph: “An identical letter has been sent to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the applicable committees.”
- For letters going to several Members (e.g., to all of GSA’s congressional appropriations committees), use a single letter and list all the recipients in the addresses and salutations.

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

Identifying Congressional Committees and Subcommittees

GSA frequently works with the following committees and subcommittees. The names of the Standing Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as those of the Joint Congressional Committees, are listed in the [Congressional Directory](#) and on various internet sites. The website [Congress.gov](#) provides information on each [committee](#).

SENATE	HOUSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Appropriations• Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee (House and Senate, under each Committee on Appropriations)• Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs• Committee on Environment and Public Works, and its Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Appropriations• Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee (House and Senate, under each Committee on Appropriations)• Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and its Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management• Committee on Oversight and Reform

Referring to Chairs of Congressional Committees

Use “Chair” as their title in the address. For salutations, if there is only one Chair, you may add their surname: “Dear Chair Plover.” If there are a Chair and Ranking Member, use only their titles: “Dear Chair and Ranking Member:” or “Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:”

Responding When No Changes in Response Have Been Made

What if my office has already answered the Member’s question in a previous letter to that Member? If it is determined there has been no change, the below can be edited to fit the specific situation:

“Thank you for your letter dated (date) forwarding additional correspondence you received from your constituent, Firstname Lastname, regarding xyz. We appreciate your continued interest in the matter. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has no further comment beyond the information previously provided in correspondence sent to you on (date). A copy of that letter is enclosed.”

SECTION 5

APPENDIX: Style and Usage Standards

This section includes:

1. Correspondence Package Checklist
2. Leadership Signature Blocks
3. Rules of Capitalization
4. Citation
5. Formatting
6. Forms of Address
7. Other



CORRESPONDENCE PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Exec Sec, in collaboration with the agency and other Federal partners, ensures that executive correspondence and documents are processed timely and accurately. We have created the following checklist with resources to help all employees draft and create a complete correspondence package. Prior to creating a control, please review the following checklist to ensure you have all necessary documents to route your package.



DOCUMENT PLANNING

Templates/Formatting

- ☐ Review Correspondence Guide for document standards and general formatting instructions
- ☐ Also refer to [InSite](#) for available document templates
- ☐ Consult Exec Sec POC for assistance, as needed

Collaboration

- ☐ Circulate for internal content collaboration and feedback
- ☐ Refer to Page 6 of this guide or [Correspondence Guide \[DOCX - 1 MB\]](#) for instructions on obtaining the proper departmental approvals before submitting letters, memorandums, decision papers, and other correspondence



INTAKE FORM READINESS

Control Completeness

- ☐ Verify the document parameters are complete and accurate including: statutory or external due dates, necessary review participants, and program POC
- ☐ Collect all supporting materials and documents



DOCUMENT CREATION AND QUALITY

External Requirements

- ☐ In response to the requirements presented by the external agency, consider whether the document is 1. Responsive 2. Complete and 3. Accurate

Internal Requirements: GSA Style and Branding

- ☐ Confirm the document meets the [GSA Correspondence Style and Usage Standards](#)
- ☐ Confirm the document follows GSA's [branding guidance](#) from the Office of Strategic Communication

Legal Considerations

- ☐ Consult with OGC for any legal requirements



LEADERSHIP SIGNATURE BLOCKS

SIGNATURE BLOCK OVERVIEW

Leave three blank lines for the signature (between the complimentary close and the signer's typed name). Two blank lines may be used to avoid pushing content onto a new page. Use the signatory's full name, with their title immediately below it. Except for the Administrator, include the signatory's organization or office below their title (only if it isn't in the letterhead).

ADMINISTRATOR

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Robin Carnahan
Administrator

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Katy Kale
Deputy Administrator

PBS COMMISSIONER

(sometimes includes an alternate contact):

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) 501-1101 or FirstName LastName, Title, Office, (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Elliot Doomes
Commissioner

FAS COMMISSIONER

(sometimes includes a contact):

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or FirstName LastName, Title, Office, at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Tom Howder
Commissioner

OCIA ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) 501-0563.

Sincerely,

Gianelle E. Rivera
Associate Administrator

PROGRAM MANAGER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) 219-3078.

Sincerely,

Travis Lewis
Program Manager
Executive Secretariat



RULES OF CAPITALIZATION

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Document types referenced: lease, contract, delegation, etc.	All	Use lowercase. Capitalize in titles or headers. Capitalization may sometimes be required, especially for legal documents.	Examples: the lease, the contract "The Blue Report (Report) is done. The Report states..."
Executive orders	All	Capitalize the word "Executive" but not "order." Use the abbreviation "E.O." after the first reference. However, capitalize "order" if you are referring to a specific E.O.	Example: Sometimes the President issues multiple Executive orders. But this was not the case with Executive Order 14038.
Government entities	All	When referring to the United States Government, capitalize "Federal," "Government," and "Governmentwide." Capitalize "City," "County," "State," and "Nation" when referencing a specific city, county, state, or nation. Also capitalize "State" when referring to the State level of government in the United States. Otherwise, use lowercase. Use lowercase for "agency." Exception: It may be appropriate to capitalize "Agency" in certain legal documents (e.g., contracts): "...the U.S. General Services Administration (the Agency)..." Capitalize "court" only when 1) using the entire name of the court, 2) referencing the United States Supreme Court, or 3) referring to documents received from or sent by a specific court. Capitalize Department, Bureau, Administration if referring to a specific entity that includes these words in its name.	Example: Federal Government Example: Across the Nation, GSA coordinates with State and local governments. Example: the agency's pricing policy Your Bureau will receive a rent waiver. (Writing to the FBI.)



RULES OF CAPITALIZATION

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Job titles	Correspondence and reports	<p>Capitalize job titles when they are associated with a name and are official titles.</p> <p>Use lowercase for job titles when they are merely descriptive.</p> <p>However, to indicate authority, or out of courtesy, capitalize certain titles. At GSA, for example, we would capitalize titles of top officials.</p> <p>The Administrator's full and proper title is "Administrator of General Services."</p> <p>Capitalization is usually required for legal and personnel documents.</p> <p>(For additional details, see GPO 3.36 and 37.)</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>Administrator Jane Doe; John Doe, PBS Commissioner; Contracting Officer Jane Doe; Jane Doe, Contracting Officer</p> <p>the program analyst; the building manager; the contracting officer</p> <p>the Administrator</p>
Public Law	Non-legal, public-facing documents	Spell out "Public Law" on first reference; use "Pub. L." thereafter. (The general public may not be familiar with the abbreviation "Pub. L." or "P.L.")	Public Law 115.2
Years (fiscal year, calendar year)		<p>Use lower case for "fiscal year" and "calendar year" unless they are part of a title or other proper name.</p> <p>Capitalize the initialisms FY and CY.</p> <p>Use either FY18 or FY 2018, but FY 2018 is more formal. Be consistent in the same document. (However, it is appropriate to use FY18 in tables even if we use FY 2018 in the text.)</p>	Example: Congress authorized the funding in fiscal year 2018.



CITATION

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Citing acts, regulations, etc. repeatedly in the same document	All (However, OGC may determine the full reference or citation is needed rather than an abbreviated version.)	<p>Give the full version the first time, but put an abbreviated version in parentheses to be used in later instances.</p> <p>For repetitive citations in footnotes, use "Id." in legal documents, and, in other documents, generally use "ibid."</p>	<p>Example: GSA has reviewed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (Act). The Act is significant because...</p> <p>Example for Id.:</p> <p>¹ 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (2006). ² Id.</p>
Citing regulations (e.g., Federal Acquisition Regulation, Federal Management Regulation, Federal Travel Regulation)	All	Cite the level appropriate for the target audience and the issue.	Need to cite the source (e.g., Federal Acquisition Regulation, Federal Management Regulation, Federal Travel Regulation) when discussing the application of a specific regulation.
Section symbol ("§") (when to use)	Internal, legal, or Government documents	Please see the examples for the correct format.	<p>5 U.S.C. § 5703</p> <p>FMR § 102-38.360</p> <p>41 U.S.C. §§ 8101-8106</p>



CITATION

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Section symbol (“§”) (when to avoid)	Non-legal, public-facing documents	Avoid the section symbol in public-facing documents. The general public may not recognize it.	40 U.S.C. 121(d) and 585(a) ... as stated in section 585(a)....
U.S.C./CFR citations (a)	Internal, legal, or Government entity documents	If one section suffices, cite only that one section. Note: CFR citations follow the same format as for the U.S.C., but the initialisms for Code of Federal Regulations, Federal Travel Regulation, and Federal Management Regulation have no periods.	41 U.S.C. § 501 CFR, FTR, and FMR; <i>but</i> U.S.C.
U.S.C./CFR citations (b)	Formal or public-facing documents	Write for the audience and spell out on first use because the public may not know the meaning of U.S.C. and CFR. The words "title" and "section" are lowercase unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence or are otherwise denoted as capitalized for consistency within a document.	Example: ...in accordance with title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), subchapter II.

For additional guidance, consult the [GPO Style Manual](#) or, for legal documents, the current edition of The Bluebook®.



FORMATTING

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Acronyms and Initialisms (Part 1)	All	<p>Define the full phrase the first time, and use acronyms or initialisms only if the phrase occurs again.</p> <p>Capitalize all letters unless: 1. the acronym is trademarked with lower case, or 2. the GPO Style Manual does not do so.</p> <p>Do not place periods between letters, but see exceptions.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>rentable square feet (RSF)</p> <p>USF, GSF, USDA, GSA, IT (<i>but</i> DoD, DoS)</p> <p>Exceptions: E.O. U.S. U.S.C. (United States Code)</p>
Acronyms and initialisms (Part 2)	All	<p>Avoid using an initialism or acronym unless it is used more than twice in the document.</p> <p>Some acronyms or initialisms don't need to be spelled out because they are "generally known." (See GPO Style Manual 9.4.) And some would even be too cumbersome to spell out because they are so long.</p> <p>An apostrophe is not used for plural acronyms.</p>	<p>Example: The U.S. General Services Administration concurs with the findings. ["GSA" is not added in parentheses here because we only reference our agency name once or twice in this document.]</p> <p>IT (generally known, but use your judgment)</p> <p>ANSI/BOMA (acronym is too long to spell out and is well known to the real estate community anyway)</p> <p>Examples for plurals: RAs, HSSOs</p>
Acting or former officials	All	<p>For top-level acting officials, use "honorable" in the address of the letter. (Note that officials "acting" in certain high offices are referenced as "honorable" while acting.)</p> <p>For previous officials, use "former". (The GPO Style Manual, in contrast, uses "ex-".)</p>	<p>The Honorable Jane Doe Acting Secretary of Commerce Washington, DC ZIP</p> <p>Dear Acting Secretary:</p> <p>----- former Administrator Murphy; former President Clinton</p>



FORMATTING

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Commas in a series	All	Use a comma after each member within a series of three or more words, phrases, letters, or figures connected with and, or, or nor.	Examples: The colors are red, white, and blue. The project funding will not cover move costs, furniture, or information technology.
i.e. and e.g.	Non-legal documents	Use "i.e." to restate a point ("in other words") or to introduce an all-inclusive list of everything mentioned after the i.e. Use "e.g." to provide examples that may not be inclusive of the entire list. No italics or underline. Also note that a comma is used after both "i.e." and "e.g."	Examples: The documents must be submitted in the same manner, i.e., via the online portal. GSA has regional offices in several cities, e.g., Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco.
Government entities—referencing multiple levels	All	(a) For references to Government entities with multiple units, such as agencies, bureaus, and offices: An en dash (–) or a comma is acceptable for most documents. For entities with two units, an apostrophe is also acceptable (e.g., the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service). Commas are advisable for formal or legal documents.	Examples: The U.S. Department of Agriculture–Forest Service requested... The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service requested... The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service requested...



FORMATTING

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Government entities—referencing multiple levels (continued)—largest to smallest; and use of “U.S.”	All	<p>(b) List the units from largest to smallest. Use an en dash or a comma between two units and commas between three or more units.</p> <p>(c) If “U.S.” is cited in the larger unit, do not repeat it for the smaller units.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture–Forest Service occupies the building.</p> <p>The Sierra National Forest Maintenance Office, an office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture–Forest Service, requested...</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Sierra National Forest Maintenance Office requested....</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service occupy the building.</p>
“-wide” or “wide”	All	<p>Do not use a hyphen with “wide,” (including for Governmentwide), except for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- “agency-wide”- Government-wide, if Government-wide and GSA's Office of Government-wide Policy are both used in the same document.	<p>areawide and nationwide</p> <p>This is a problem Governmentwide.</p> <p>The Office of Government-wide Policy has issued a document that applies Government-wide.</p>



FORMATTING

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Honorifics (Mr., Ms., the Honorable, etc.)	All	<p>We are avoiding gendered honorifics; instead, we are using the person's title, where appropriate.</p> <p>However, in some cases honorifics are needed. For example, a person might have an official title. In those cases, we try if possible to ascertain what the recipient's preference is.</p> <p>We are using "Chair" (rather than Chairman/Chairwoman/Chairperson).</p> <p>Plurals: Messrs. (for Mr.), Mses. (for Ms.), Mmes. (for Madam).</p> <p>We tend to avoid "Mrs." but you can use it if the recipient prefers that honorific.</p> <p>Be aware that some people are making nonstandard pronoun choices. Sometimes we are using "they" in a singular sense. The best solution is to rephrase to avoid using pronouns.</p> <p>In letter addresses, use "the Honorable" for top officials who have been nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, as well as elected officials, and judges.</p>	<p>Dear Secretary Blandon:</p> <p>Dear Chairs Howd and Dorn:</p> <p>Dear Mmes. Howd and Dorn:</p> <p>Jane Doe uses he/him, and John Doe uses she/her.</p> <p>The constituent is asking about a contract they hold with GSA.</p> <p>The Honorable Jane Doe United States Senate Washington, DC 20510</p>



FORMATTING

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Numbers	All	In general, use figures for distance, measurement, time, and money, and for single numbers of 10 or more, except at sentence start.	Example: GSA has signed two 5-year leases. See Chapter 12 of the GPO Style Manual for examples and more information.
Numbers in parentheses	All	No need to repeat the same number in parentheses.	Correct: GSA ordered five units. (Incorrect: GSA ordered five (5) units.)
Quotations	All	Per the GPO Style Manual , "The comma and the final period will be placed inside the quotation marks. Other punctuation marks should be placed inside the quotation marks only if they are a part of the matter quoted." "In congressional and certain other classes of work showing amendments, and in court work with quoted language, punctuation marks are printed after the quotation marks when not a part of the quoted matter" (sections 8.138 and 8.139).	Normal punctuation: He said "four," not "five." Example for amendments, etc. in which commas and periods are not part of the quoted matter: Change "February 1, 1983", to "June 30, 2016".
Spacing	All	Enter one space between sentences and after colons.	GSA awarded the lease. The tenant will occupy the space in June.
Trademarks	All	Use proper names and the trademark symbol for GSA programs that have registered trademarks. Use the proper name and trademark symbol on all full references to a program in a given document.	Example: GSA SmartPay® If a shortened reference is to be used, provide it in parentheses. For example, GSA SmartPay® (SmartPay).



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Inclusive Language

Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities. GSA is committed to supporting diversity and inclusivity. We have developed a [reference document](#) on how to address these issues in official GSA correspondence.

In general, it is best to avoid gendered “honorifics” (e.g., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Madam, etc.) where practicable. Use the person’s title instead.

But if the title is not fitting or is cumbersome, or if the person has no title:

1. Follow their stated preference, if any.
2. If they have no stated preference, and the letter needs a Mr./Ms./Mrs. to be formal or traditional, use the proper one if you can confirm it through careful research.
3. Otherwise, use only the person’s full name.

Honorifics

An honorific is a title that conveys esteem, courtesy, or respect for position or rank when used in addressing or referring to a person. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) refers to a set of practices intended to ensure people from a broad set of socio-demographic backgrounds are represented and able to thrive in a workforce; and that an organization’s actions and services to the public consider the needs and desired outcomes for all its stakeholders.

Avoid gendered honorifics; instead, use the person’s title, where appropriate. However, in some cases honorifics are needed. For example, a person might have an official title. In those cases, we try if possible to ascertain what the recipient’s preference is.

Be aware that some people are making nonstandard pronoun choices. Sometimes we are using “they” in a singular sense. The best solution is usually to rephrase to avoid using pronouns.



FORMS OF ADDRESS

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Pronoun use (we, our, us, etc.)	All	<p>In general, using pronouns creates a conversational tone and can help you write in plain language. But some care is required, as follows.</p> <p>In official or formal documents, be careful before using the first person singular (I/me/my); find out if the signer would be comfortable with that use.</p> <p>First person plural (we/our/us) and second person (you/your) work well unless this use seems too informal for the context. Documents from GSA leadership to employees often use we/our/us and you/your unless they are very formal communications.</p> <p>When using we/our/us, be sure it is clear who is being referred to, especially if GSA is working on a project with other agencies. It may be better to avoid we/our/us in some cases.</p> <p>Also, avoid mixing third person with first person.</p> <p>When using "it," be sure it is clear what "it" references. When using "this," add a noun to specify: "this action," "this report," etc.</p> <p>Keep an eye out for GSA guidance on the use of inclusive pronouns. For correspondence, we usually avoid third person pronouns. But when they can't be avoided, we tend to use "they," even when referring to one person. Also, the recipient of the document may have stated preferences; if so, follow those.</p> <p>Above all, be consistent within each document.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>We plan to approve the draft agreement.</p> <p>GSA is working with DoD and the Navy to extend the Navy's lease.</p> <p>GSA is committed to its mission. OR: We are committed to our mission. (But not: GSA is committed to our mission.)</p> <p>The constituent has been writing every month for a year, but they have yet to receive a response.</p>



FORMS OF ADDRESS

The White House

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
The President	The President The White House Washington, DC 20500	Dear President (surname): Respectfully, or The President: Respectfully submitted,
President-elect of the United States	The Honorable (full name) President-elect of the United States (local address) (ZIP Code)	Dear President-elect (surname): Sincerely,
Spouse of the President	Mrs./Ms. (full name) or Mr. (full name) The White House Washington, DC 20500 (Current First Lady is Dr. Jill Biden.)	Dear Mrs./Ms./Mr. (surname): Sincerely,
Assistant to the President	The Honorable (full name) Assistant to the President The White House Washington, DC 20500	Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (surname): Sincerely,
Former President	The Honorable (full name) (local address) (ZIP Code)	Dear President (surname): Sincerely,
The Vice President	Formal: The Vice President United States Senate Washington, DC 20510 Informal: The Honorable (full name) The Vice President of the United States Washington, DC 20501	Dear Vice President (surname): Sincerely,
Former Vice President	The Honorable (full name) (local address) (ZIP Code)	Dear Mr./Madam (surname): Sincerely, Traditionally, revert to a <u>former</u> VP's prior highest office: Dear Senator Gore:
Director, Office of Management and Budget	The Honorable (full name) Director Office of Management and Budget Washington, DC 20503	Dear Director (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Congress

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
President of the Senate	The Honorable (full name) President of the Senate United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear President of the Senate: Sincerely,
President of the Senate Pro Tempore	The Honorable (full name) President Pro Tempore United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear President of the Senate Pro Tempore: Sincerely,
Speaker of the House of Representatives	The Honorable (full name) Speaker of the House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Speaker (surname): Sincerely,
Majority Leader United States Senate	The Honorable (full name) Majority Leader United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Majority Leader: Sincerely,
Minority Leader United States Senate	The Honorable (full name) Minority Leader United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Minority Leader: Sincerely,
United States Senator	The Honorable (full name) United States Senate Washington, DC 20510 or The Honorable (full name) United States Senator (Congressional District office address)	Dear Senator (surname): Sincerely,
Majority Leader House of Representatives	The Honorable (full name) Majority Leader House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Majority Leader: Sincerely,
Minority Leader House of Representatives	The Honorable (full name) Minority Leader House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Minority Leader: Sincerely,
United States Representative	The Honorable (full name) House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 or The Honorable (full name) Member, United States House of Representatives (Congressional District office address)	Dear Representative (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Congress

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Senate Committee Chair and Ranking Member	The Honorable (full name) Chair, Committee on (name) United States Senate Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable (full name) Ranking Member, Committee on (name) United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Chair (surname): or Dear Chairs: Sincerely, Dear Ranking Member (surname): or Dear Ranking Members: Sincerely
House Committee Chair and Ranking Member	The Honorable (full name) Chair, Committee on (name) House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable (full name) Ranking Member, Committee on (name) House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Chair (surname): or Dear Chairs: Sincerely,
Senate Subcommittee Chair	The Honorable (full name) Chair, Subcommittee on (name) (name of parent Committee) United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Chair: Sincerely,
House Subcommittee Chair	The Honorable (full name) Chair, Subcommittee on (name) (name of parent Committee) House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Chair: Sincerely,
Joint Committee Chair	The Honorable (full name) Chair, Joint Committee on (name) Congress of the United States Washington, DC (ZIP Code)	Dear Chairs: Sincerely,
Senator-elect Representative-elect	The Honorable (full name) United States Senator-elect or Representative-elect (address, if given) or Care of the United States Senate or House of Representatives	Dear Senator-elect (surname): Sincerely, Dear Representative-elect (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Congress

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Secretary of the United States Senate	The Honorable (full name) Secretary of the Senate United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Secretary (surname): Sincerely,
Clerk of the House	The Honorable (full name) Clerk of the House of Representatives House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Clerk (surname): Sincerely,
Resident Commissioner	The Honorable (full name) Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Resident Commissioner (surname): Sincerely,
Delegate	The Honorable (full name) Delegate from (name) United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Delegate (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Executive Departments and Independent Agencies

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Cabinet Members	The Honorable (full name) Secretary of (Department) Washington, DC (ZIP Code) <i>but</i> The Honorable (full name) Attorney General Washington, DC 20530	Dear Secretary (surname): Sincerely, Dear Attorney General (surname): Sincerely,
Deputy Secretaries Assistant Secretaries Under Secretaries (Use "The Honorable" if a Presidential appointee confirmed by the Senate.)	The Honorable (full name) Deputy Secretary (name of Department) Washington, DC (ZIP Code) <i>or</i> The Honorable (full name) Assistant Secretary (name of Department) Washington, DC (ZIP Code) <i>or</i> The Honorable (full name) Under Secretary (name of Department) Washington, DC (ZIP Code)	Dear Deputy/Assistant/Under Secretary (surname): Sincerely,
Postmaster General	The Honorable (full name) Postmaster General Washington, DC 20260	Dear Postmaster General (surname): Sincerely,
Head of an Authority or Board	The Honorable (full name) (title) (agency name) (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear (title) (surname): Sincerely, (For "acting" Cabinet or other officials, see Note 1 below.)
Head of a Major Organization within an agency, if a Presidential appointee	The Honorable (title) (organization name) (agency name) (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear (title) (surname): Sincerely,
Chair of a Commission or Board	The Honorable (full name) (commission name) (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Chair (surname): Sincerely,
Chair of a Permanently Chartered Commission or Council	Chairman (full name) (commission name) (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Chair (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

The Federal Judiciary

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
The Chief Justice	The Chief Justice The Supreme Court Washington, DC 20543	Dear Chief Justice: Sincerely,
Associate Justice	Justice (surname) The Supreme Court Washington, DC 20543	Dear Justice (surname): Sincerely,
The Clerk of the Supreme Court	The Clerk of the Supreme Court The Supreme Court Washington, DC 20543	Dear Clerk (surname): Sincerely, (Note: Check with OGC before using this salutation format.)
Judge of Federal, State, or Local Court	The Honorable (full name) Judge of the (name of court) (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Judge (surname): Sincerely,

Legislative Agencies

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Comptroller General	The Honorable (full name) Comptroller General of the United States U.S. Government Accountability Office Washington, DC 20540	Dear Comptroller General (surname): Sincerely,
Librarian of Congress	The Honorable (full name) Librarian of Congress Library of Congress Washington, DC 20540	Dear Librarian (surname): Sincerely,
Public Printer	The Honorable (full name) Public Printer U.S. Government Publishing Office Washington, DC 20401	Dear Public Printer (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Military Services

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
All Services Active Duty Military Service Member	(full rank, full name, abbreviation of branch of service) (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Rank (surname): Sincerely,
Retired Officer	(full rank, full name, abbreviation of service) Retired (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear (Rank, surname): Sincerely,

State and Local Government Officials

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Governor of State	The Honorable (full name) Governor of (State) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Governor (surname): Sincerely,
Lieutenant Governor	The Honorable (full name) Lieutenant Governor of (State) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Lieutenant Governor (surname): Sincerely,
State Senator	The Honorable (full name) (State) Senate (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Senator (surname): Sincerely,
State Representative Assemblyman Delegate	The Honorable (full name) (State) House of Representatives (or Assembly or House of Delegates) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear (title) (surname): Sincerely,
Mayor (For local and county officials, see Note 2 below)	The Honorable (full name) Mayor of (City) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Mayor (surname): Sincerely,

Physicians and Lawyers

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Physician	(full name), M.D. (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Dr. (surname): Sincerely,
Lawyer	(full name) Attorney at Law (address)	Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

Foreign Diplomatic Missions to the United States

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Foreign Ambassador in the United States	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Ambassador of (Country) Washington, DC (ZIP Code)	Excellency: (formal) Dear Mr./Madam: Ambassador: (informal) Very truly yours, (formal) Sincerely, (informal)
Foreign Minister in the United States (Head of a Legation)	The Honorable (full name) Minister of (Country) Washington, DC (ZIP Code)	Dear Mr./Madam Minister: Sincerely,
Foreign Minister in Counselor in the United States	The Honorable (full name) Minister Counselor Embassy of (Country) Washington, DC (ZIP Code)	Dear Mr./Madam Minister: Sincerely,
United States Representative to the United Nations or Organizations of American States	The Honorable (full name) United States Representative to the United Nations (or Organization of American States) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Representative (surname): Very truly yours, (formal) Sincerely, (informal)
Chief of State and/or Head of Government	His (Her) Excellency (full name) President (or other title) of (country) (address)	Dear (title) (surname): Sincerely,
Vice President	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Vice President of (country) (address)	Dear Vice President (surname): Sincerely,
Premier	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Premier of (country) (address)	Dear Mr./Madam Premier: Sincerely,
Prime Minister (except British)	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Prime Minister of (country) (address)	Dear Mr./Madam Prime Minister (surname): Sincerely,
British Prime Minister	The Right Honorable (full name), MP (address)	Dear Prime Minister: Sincerely,
Deputy Prime Minister	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Deputy Prime Minister if (country) (address)	Dear Deputy Minister (surname): Sincerely,
Foreign Minister	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Minister of Foreign Affairs of (country) (address)	Dear Minister (surname): Sincerely,
Minister of Trade	His (Her) Excellency (full name) Minister of Trade (country) (address)	Dear Minister (surname): Sincerely,



FORMS OF ADDRESS

American Missions

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
American Ambassador	The Honorable (full name) American Ambassador (City) (Country)	Dear Ambassador(surname): Very truly yours, (formal) Sincerely, (informal)
Personal (Special) Representative of the President	The Honorable (full name) Personal Representative of the President of the United States of America to (Country) (address) (City) (State/Country)	Dear Personal Representative (surname): Sincerely,
American Consul General or American Consul	(full name) American Consul General (or American Consul) United States of America to (City) (Country)	Dear (title) (surname): Sincerely,

Other

ADDRESSEE	ADDRESS BLOCK	SALUTATION and CLOSING
Unknown Gender	Leslie Smith (address) (City, State) (ZIP Code)	Dear Leslie Smith: Sincerely,



OTHER

TOPIC	CONTEXT	CURRENT STANDARD/APPROACH	COMMENTS/EXAMPLES
Avoid “shall” or “should” when expressing an obligation.	Non-legal documents	“Shall” and “should” do not clearly express an obligation. Use “must” or other clear language when possible.	See Federal Plain Language Guidelines (Revision 1, May 2011), page 25.
OGC-drafted or OMB-approved documents	All	Exec Sec follows the copy. If OGC has created a document, and the document is generally internally consistent (e.g., the legal references or the capitalizations), the document is edited for consistency only.	
Enclosure or attachment	All	Use “enclosure” and “enclosed” in letters. Use “attachment” and “attached” in memoranda and decision papers. This distinction applies to both digital or printed formats.	In a letter: “PBS addresses the concern in the enclosed document.” In a memorandum: “PBS addresses the concern in the attached document.”



For correspondence questions, please reach out to your program's dedicated Executive Secretariat point of contact or email questions to executive-secretariat@gsa.gov.