

U.S. Department of Energy

Plain Writing Act

Compliance Report

April 15, 2024

I. Introduction

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) views the implementation of the Plain Writing Act as an important initiative that helps the Department share relevant information clearly, concisely, and informatively. The areas referenced in this report summarize some of our successes as we continue to emphasize writing in Plain Language.

II. DOE Plain Language Officials

- A. Ingrid Kolb, Director, Office of Management, Senior Agency Official Responsible for Plain Writing
- B. Michael Coogan, Office of the Executive Secretariat, Plain Language Point-of-Contact

III. Examples of Agency Website Communications Available in a Format Consistent with the Plain Language Guidelines

- A. *Office of Public Affairs*. The [Office of Public Affairs](#) manages DOE's public website – [Energy.gov](#). Since 2011, the office has consolidated nearly 70 of DOE's staff and Program Offices from separate websites onto [Energy.gov](#). Previously, relevant information was scattered across many stand-alone DOE program and office websites and not searchable from [Energy.gov](#). This consolidation allows visitors to enter a search term and conveniently find relevant information from a single source.

The [Office of Public Affairs'](#) commitment to principles of open government and Plain Language is embodied throughout [Energy.gov](#) through:

- *The Savings Hub*. In the Spring of 2023, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) launched the [Savings Hub](#) on [Energy.gov](#). This resource helps people understand and access the clean energy and energy efficient tax credits and consumer rebates available through the Inflation Reduction Act. [The Savings Hub](#) allows homeowners, renters, and drivers to learn about ways they can save money through clean energy and energy efficient improvements and upgrades. Since its launch, the tool's interface has been continuously improved, based on user feedback and discovery, to ensure it is as user-friendly and accessible as

possible. [The Savings Hub](#) was created in partnership with DOE's [Office of Policy](#) and the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

- *[Energy.gov/Invest](#)*. This interactive map helps the public understand, sort, and track manufacturing investments available nationwide through the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The interactive functionality of this map provides visitors with easy-to-use filters and allows visitors to manually click the map to obtain investment information. The [Office of Public Affairs](#) launched [Energy.gov/Invest](#) in partnership with the [Office of Policy](#) and several data teams across various DOE National Labs.
- *Spanish Language Functionality*. The [Office of Public Affairs](#) is exploring longer term technical and resourcing solutions to better support Spanish language outreach and content development. While [Energy.gov](#) is a key part of this outreach, this will be a cross-cutting effort in partnership with the [Office of the Chief Information Officer](#), [Office of Management](#), and other DOE program and staff offices.
- *The Upcoming Website Redesign*. The [Office of Public Affairs](#) is working on a sitewide redesign of [Energy.gov](#) that will allow visitors to see all major updates and publications related to a given topic in one place, rather than requiring visitors to navigate between multiple DOE program and staff office sites. The redesign will shift the information architecture of the site away from DOE's organization chart (with the information visitors are seeking nested within separate program and staff office websites) and towards a topic-based information architecture, with all the information in one place, by topic. Long term, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) will support the [Office of the Chief Information Officer](#) in its efforts to further consolidate separate DOE program and staff office websites into [Energy.gov](#), where appropriate.
- *News, Blogs, and Articles*. The blog section on [Energy.gov](#) highlights timely content featuring exciting innovations across DOE, from program offices to the National Laboratories. [Energy.gov](#) blogs and articles provide Plain Language summaries of complex scientific processes and discoveries in a conversational style for the public. Writers develop interactive content, such as timelines and quizzes, to explain topical energy concepts to the public. Press releases and statements from DOE leadership are written with Plain Language principles and posted to the [Energy.gov](#) newsroom.

Additionally, a new blog feature titled "[Malarkey Corner](#)" was rolled out last year to help address areas of misinformation concerning clean energy, energy-efficiency, Congressionally-mandated appliance standards, and other clean energy areas. These blogs are written in Plain Language and further the underlying spirit of Plain Language by working to reduce confusion around popular topics that could impact individuals' homes and finances. DOE aims to

help people better understand their options so they can make the best decisions for their specific needs and situations.

- *Training.* Contributors to [Energy.gov](#) are encouraged to follow the principles of Plain Language in the webpages they maintain. They receive content guidelines and training on using Plain Language and following web best practices for making content accessible. In addition, [Energy.gov](#) offers [blog writing and social media guidance](#) to help offices develop easy-to-understand content.
- *Accessibility.* The [Office of Public Affairs](#) helped evaluate and implement a Section 508 tool called SiteImprove. This tool helps [Energy.gov](#) content owners identify broken links, misspellings, grammatical errors, and other accessibility/usability issues. The [Office of Public Affairs](#) is also ensuring that DOE's new website redesign mentioned above is 508 compliant and built to [U.S. Web Design Systems](#) standards that will improve the accessibility of DOE's site for many visitors.
- *Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools.* The [Office of Public Affairs](#) provides Google Analytics training to other DOE offices. This training helps content owners understand important metrics, such as website visitor trends, behavior, and keyword searches within the internal website and external search engines such as Google. Offices use these metrics to guide their digital strategy and ensure content is reaching target audiences. Using Google Webmaster Tools and Google Analytics, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) has found most user search queries consist of terms that are simple and in Plain Language.

In addition to [Energy.gov](#), the Office of Public Affairs oversees a number of Plain Language outreach tools to help non-technical, general audiences access government services, understand DOE's work and mission, and be informed on basic sciences and cutting-edge research. These tools include:

- *Social Media.* The [Office of Public Affairs](#) uses Plain Language on social media, converting complex, scientific information into easy-to-understand, bite-sized messages. Additionally, the Office provides style and editorial guidance to other [Department of Energy Program Offices](#) and national laboratories to encourage writers to use Plain Language for all social content.

The [Office of Public Affairs'](#) social media program aims to meet audiences where they are, on the platforms of their choice. To continue striving towards that goal, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) launched several new social media accounts over the past year, including having the first Cabinet Secretary with an active LinkedIn presence, and the first Cabinet Secretary and Department to be active on Threads.

The Office also launched a new Instagram account highlighting the National

Lab community (representing 17 semi-independent DOE National Laboratories) and focusing on popular, general audience-friendly science content.

Below is a snapshot of social media accounts currently maintained by the [Office of Public Affairs](#), which manages several agency-level social media platforms, including:

ACCOUNT	FOLLOWERS (As of April 2024)
Energy X (Formerly Twitter)	824,000
Energy LinkedIn	273,000
Energy Facebook	162,000
Energy Instagram	156,000
SecGranholm X (Formerly Twitter)	129,400
Energy YouTube — Subscribers	66,300
EnergyPress (ENERGYSpox) Twitter	24,800
SecGranholm Instagram	22,600
SecGranholm Facebook	15,000

- *Podcast.* DOE’s podcast, [Direct Current](#) – which the [Office of Public Affairs](#) produces and publishes – shares engaging, conversational stories about how DOE and the National Laboratories are making a positive difference for millions of Americans. [Direct Current’s](#) format is similar to National Public Radio, which hailed it as “[more ambitious](#)” than other government podcasts. To date, DOE has aired [59 episodes](#), each with corresponding transcripts and supplemental content, including blogs and videos.
- *Video.* The [Office of Public Affairs](#) produces video content summarizing the Secretary of Energy’s trips and outreach, major announcements, financial

incentives available through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and more. Through DOE's YouTube channel, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) also supports program and staff offices with their video and livestream needs, ensuring that content geared towards general and technical audiences is available in one, consolidated channel.

- *Newsletter.* Last year, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) launched its first public-facing, consumer-oriented newsletter called "The Current." This newsletter aims to help people save money, make their homes safer and more comfortable, and reduce their carbon footprint. The newsletter is written in Plain Language and sent from a rotating list of DOE staff to keep the tone personal and human. Each edition focuses on a consumer-oriented topic and includes recent updates and announcements related to consumer-oriented DOE initiatives. Photos and video are embedded as appropriate to provide more avenues for accessing DOE information. Visitors to [Energy.gov](#) can [sign up](#) to receive "The Current."
- *Forthcoming DOE Style Guide.* As part of the website redesign, the [Office of Public Affairs](#) is developing a new DOE-wide style guide to ensure greater consistency in publicly written materials. The style guide will include Plain Language best practices, including reducing technical jargon and acronyms; increasing consistency in written style throughout the website; clarifying DOE-specific grammar, language, and punctuation practices; and establishing consistent, community-preferred language preferences, in partnership with DOE's [Office of Energy Justice and Equity](#), and [Office of Indian Energy](#). Additionally, the style guide will include updated branding guidelines to ensure DOE materials are easily recognized as such.

- B. [U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#).** EIA staff developed and offered an in-house writing curriculum – a series of eight writing courses aptly named *Write Right*. In 2023, EIA trained 398 Federal employees and contractors under *Write Right*. Employees who attend these courses improve their Plain Language skills – punctuation, grammar, proofreading, and conciseness – and learn more about common writing mistakes and how to plan and revise their work. Each course is customized with EIA-relevant hands-on writing activities and EIA writing samples and focuses on areas where writers and their managers need to improve.

Leading up to the five-part series in 2023, EIA deployed a marketing strategy that included (1) sending e-mails to all employees from the Write Right Program Manager and follow-up emails from the EIA Administrator encouraging employees to attend and (2) the five classes, spaced one month apart, presented from January through May.

The attendance at these courses was significantly higher than in previous years at EIA. The success of this series is largely due to the agency administrator's engagement and attendance at the training sessions and the support of other high-level executives who

not only strongly encouraged employees to attend but also personally attended the sessions. The course topics included:

Course 1: Plain Writing at EIA (Two hours)

- Reviewing the agency requirements for Plain Language
- Understanding the Plain Language writing style
- Applying Plain Language to EIA communications (reports, presentations, social media, etc.)

Course 2: Document Planning (Two hours)

- Using a document planner
- Developing a structure for your document
- Making the document flow smoothly from one section to the next
- Navigating the writing process when a document has multiple authors

Course 3: Editing Your Own Writing (Two hours)

- Understanding the difference between editing and proofreading
- Using tips and strategies for editing your writing
- Reading your draft with fresh eyes
- Using Microsoft Word tools for editing
- Incorporating Plain Language principles into your writing
- Planning your document by brainstorming reader questions
- Using the EIA Document Planner to make the writing process easier and more effective
- Checking your writing for common grammar and punctuation errors

Course 4: Ten Tips to Improve Your Writing (1.5 hours)

- Planning your document
- Revising and editing your work
- Following Plain Language guidelines
- Writing effective titles and headings

Course 5: MS Word Tools (1 hour)

- Enabling advanced Spell Check features
- Using Speak to read your paper aloud
- Using Find as an editing tool
- Using Find and Replace to correct pervasive mistakes
- Creating and using macros to fix mistakes across documents and make multi-author documents cohesive

In addition, in 2023 EIA presented a revised version of this five-part series at Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) called *Fundamentals of Plain Writing at BPA* (BPA delivers reliable, affordable, and carbon-free hydropower to communities across the Pacific Northwest and is part of the Department of Energy). Using the five core classes, EIA customized a six-hour series presented in two three-hour sessions. The first time EIA presented the class, 78 employees attended. Because demand for the class was high, BPA scheduled three more sessions in 2024, expecting an additional 200 employees to receive this training. This writing series is the first Plain Language training BPA has offered to employees.

The *Write Right* curriculum is successful because EIA has made a serious commitment – in time, money, and enthusiasm – to helping staff write more effectively. As one senior manager said, “We’ve definitely sent a signal that the agency is taking writing quite seriously and considers it a top priority.”

In 2023, EIA updated its *EIA Writing Style Guide* to address the evolving nature of its products. EIA writers look to the guide to help their writing remain consistent with EIA’s Plain Writing style so the public can understand and use highly technical information.

From its nearly 70 reports published in 2023 on energy topics, EIA used Plain Language principles consistently throughout all web content, including its two annual flagship reports – the *Annual Energy Outlook* and *International Energy Outlook* – as well as its monthly *Short-Term Energy Outlook* and daily *Today in Energy*. The *Short-Term Energy Outlook* includes two important supplements in the spring and winter: The *Summer Fuels Outlook* and the *Winter Fuels Outlook*. The winter supplement forecasts the heating fuel costs in the winter, important for consumers who use space heating in the winter. The summer supplement primarily discusses gasoline costs as it relates to summer-month fuel requirements.

Most EIA publications contain related infographics and social media campaigns that highlight for visitors — in simple and clear terms — notable and meaningful energy and forecasting data.

EIA’s [YouTube](#) channel features informational videos in Plain Language on:

- Completing EIA surveys and forms
- Highlighted topics
- Data tools and how to use them
- Webinars on pressing energy issues, and
- Product launch events with private sector partners, such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

EIA’s website contains educational materials reflecting Plain Language principles, including:

- [*Today in Energy*](#). These short articles use Plain Language along with graphics, photos, maps, and animations to educate the public on timely energy issues and topics. Every business day, EIA provides bite-sized pieces of information that readers can use in business, government, schools, and their personal lives. Energy experts explain topical data, reports, issues, and trends to build the public's understanding of energy issues.

In 2023, EIA began developing a new format for the *Today in Energy* product that eliminates redundancy and makes timely information more readily available to readers in one location. The new *Today in Energy*, launched in January 2024, now features announcements, in-brief analysis, and in-depth analysis.

- [*Energy Kids*](#). This student-friendly webpage provides opportunities – through information and activities – to learn about energy while improving research and reading skills. The teacher guide provides activities for teachers who use [*Energy Kids*](#) as a resource to teach students about energy in a fun and interactive way.
- [*Energy Explained*](#). This extensive resource describes the different sources and uses of energy in understandable, everyday language. EIA updated more than 178 *Energy Explained* pages in 2023.
- [*Frequently Asked Questions*](#). This EIA resource provides answers in Plain Language to complicated questions about energy asked by the public and other stakeholders through EIA's website and other social media. EIA frequently updates the FAQ page to include the most current information and most popular inquiries. EIA updated all 99 FAQs in 2023.
- [*Glossary*](#). Because EIA's content can be very technical, EIA maintains an extensive glossary of terms that EIA authors can use to hyperlink technical terms for readers who want more detailed explanations. The glossary is also a searchable tool web users can easily find on [EIA.gov](#).

In 2023, EIA launched its *Short-Term Energy Outlook Rethink* project. The *Short-Term Energy Outlook* (STEO) is a two-year forecast released monthly. EIA reached out to the STEO audience and conducted an external survey asking readers how they use the STEO and how EIA can better meet the reader's needs. EIA is using the Rethink project as an opportunity to revamp the STEO based on user feedback.

EIA also deploys a dashboard with state-level estimates for selected household energy consumption, expenditures, and characteristics information from the *2020 Residential Energy Consumption Survey* (RECS). Visualizations include U.S. maps, charts, and data for 20 different estimates, providing the public with both a national view of energy usage and state-specific data. The dashboard highlights the data for all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the first time RECS has this state-specific data available. The

dashboard fulfills a strategic goal to advance EIA data visualization and a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirement to improve data presentation of consumption products.

As several extreme weather events affect large areas of the country, EIA publishes real time and retrospective analysis of these energy disruptions in easy-to-understand formats for the public. In 2023, EIA helped customers track the impacts of how severe weather disrupted energy infrastructure and markets.

In response to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the resulting uncertainty in energy markets, EIA frequently updated its analysis of market changes in crude oil prices and demand, tanker transportation rates, and U.S. petroleum imports, among other factors. In light of these sudden geo-political shifts affecting U.S. household energy costs, EIA is continuing to keep the public informed about how these changes could affect them.

EIA uses social media to promote [Today in Energy](#) stories and newly published reports and analyses, and is active on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, and YouTube. EIA social media statistics from April 2023 to March 2024:

ACCOUNT	FOLLOWERS (As of April 2024)
EIA X (Formerly Twitter)	180,700
EIA Facebook	44,000
EIA LinkedIn	27,463
EIA X (Formerly Twitter) (Administrator)	4,892

EIA data show the audience for these social platforms is significantly larger than the number of followers.

EIA uses social media to connect consumers with useful EIA tools, such as the [Hourly Electric Grid Monitor](#), the [Status of U.S. Nuclear Outages](#) page, and the [Flood Vulnerability Assessment Map](#).

EIA continues to enhance its ability to respond to electricity emergencies with the [Energy Disruptions](#) webpage, hurricane status reports, and [Today in Energy](#) articles that provide information on a storm’s potential to disrupt the energy system and analyses of the resulting impacts after landfall.

- C. ***Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)***. More than 30 percent of all Energy.gov visitors viewed EERE webpages in 2023. To reach the widest possible audience, EERE uses Plain Language throughout its website, including:

- [Why Clean Energy Matters](#)
- [Clean Energy Jobs](#)
- [Myth Busting with EERE](#)
- [Do-It-Yourself Energy Savers Projects](#)
- [How Do I Apply for EERE Funding?](#)

In addition to providing content on clean energy basics, EERE's webpages reflect Plain Language guidelines and best practices in user experience. Notable examples include:

- ***Why Clean Energy Matters***. EERE explains the drive behind its work to a general audience by using a question-and-answer format.
- ***Clean Energy Champion Profiles***. These features spotlight the positive impact of EERE's workforce on the world around them. Each article shows the personal side of EERE by highlighting real people who support a clean energy future.
- ***Energy Saver Webpage***. This webpage provides practical, easy-to-understand consumer advice for saving energy. [Energy Saver](#) content, including blog posts and downloadable print materials, are written in Plain Language for consumers. More complex topics are housed on other parts of [Energy Saver](#) and linked when appropriate. [Energy Saver](#) also suggests do-it-yourself projects and offers [tax credit and incentive information](#) to engage the public and encourage energy-saving actions. Interactive content, such as the [Energy Efficient House Tour](#), guides visitors through potential home efficiency upgrades.
- ***Clean Energy in Action Blog***. This blog discusses clean energy technologies in easy-to-understand language. By busting the myths of common misconceptions, highlighting changes to energy policy, summarizing research findings, and celebrating clean energy champions, EERE engages the public in a conversational manner.
- ***How Do I Apply for EERE Funding?*** In February 2023, EERE updated funding information for clean energy projects. EERE incorporated usability best practices, such as streamlining user navigation, by using bulleted lists, providing logical next steps, and incorporating step-by-step videos with text overlays to break down EERE's funding process. These easy-to-understand updates helped more than double the number of users and interactions on webpages related to EERE funding compared with the previous year, effectively reaching more than 500,000 people in 2023.

- *How Do Wind Turbines Work?* This popular EERE webpage provides an easy-to-understand explanation of how wind turbines operate and defines technical terms in Plain Language. The initial success of this webpage inspired other EERE webpages to follow suit, including the page *How Does Solar Work?*
- *The Spark Squad Comic Books*. This “energy saver for kids” webpage provides children and families with engaging and fun content that encourages children to explore water power technologies, such as marine energy and hydropower. The mission of the *Spark Squad* is to inspire students to explore renewable energy and join the next generation of the clean energy workforce.
- *Social Media Posts*. EERE manages three primary social media accounts that reach audiences such as students, job seekers, and industry representatives in shared online communities. In 2023, EERE’s main social media accounts gained about 17,000 new followers, due in part to their simplified and conversational-style language and engaging graphics and photos.

ACCOUNT	FOLLOWERS (As of April 2024)
EERE Facebook	179,500
EERE LinkedIn	40,000
EERE X (Formerly Twitter)	23,200

- *508 Compliant Infographics*. EERE condenses highly technical information about clean energy topics into simple and accessible infographics used for multiple purposes, including social media posts, reports, and webpages. Infographics are readable by a screen reader.
- *Communication Standards* webpage. This webpage includes guidelines for content writers and editors and a [section explaining the Plain Writing Act](#) and its requirements. The Communication Standards section also includes *EERE’s style guide* and guidelines to ensure content is 508 compliant and accessible to those with disabilities.
- *Communication Product Templates*. EERE provides a large assortment of Adobe InDesign, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Word templates for internal users to develop high-quality products. The InDesign templates include one-pagers, scientific and technical reports, flyers, postcards, and more.

Included in the template suite is a product matrix PDF that assists internal users in choosing appropriate templates for their audience.

- *DOE Web Council*. EERE participates in the DOE Web Council, which meets monthly to address common issues, including Plain Writing Act compliance.

D. *National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)*. The NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy, responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains multiple websites that follow Plain Language principles. NNSA's primary website – [Energy.gov/nnsa](https://energy.gov/nnsa) – is regularly updated with press releases, articles, infographics, animations and videos, newsletters, fact sheets, and other documents. This information highlights NNSA's mission and activities, including areas such as stockpile stewardship and nuclear nonproliferation. The website also provides information on NNSA careers and structure, and links to NNSA's social media channels (Facebook, X, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram).

NNSA also maintains a [Directives website](#) that serves as a content and document management system for policies and procedures.

NNSA's websites reflect Plain Language principles that give the public a better understanding of NNSA's programs, such as:

- *Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan*. This report describes NNSA's efforts to maintain and modernize scientific tools, capabilities, and infrastructure to ensure the success of NNSA's nuclear weapons mission.
- *Prevent, Counter, and Respond – A Strategic Plan to Reduce Global Nuclear Threats*. This report describes NNSA's planning and program activities on U.S. national security and advance global nuclear security. The report uses Plain Language principles to clearly define and describe its missions to prevent, counter, and respond to the threats of nuclear proliferation and terrorism.
- *Fact sheets*. NNSA produces numerous fact sheets that outline its weapon life extension programs, important missions, other important public-facing documents, and material for the media. The fact sheets follow Plain Language principles.
- *Top 10*. This page provides users with the ten most frequently accessed policies and directives from the preceding month.

E. *Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)*. Information and technology help DOE meet its mission in energy, science, and nuclear security. The OCIO's programs span all these areas.

The OCIO also maintains the Department’s internal Powerpedia wiki, which has a section educating staff on how to use Plain Language (see below, section V, part B). The OCIO uses Plain Language to convey technical and operational concepts.

The OCIO also partners with the [Office of Public Affairs](#) and the DOE Web Council to regularly bring Plain Language concepts to web content managers across the agency.

IV. Examples of Other Agency Communications Consistent with the Plain Language Guidelines

Office of the Executive Secretariat. The Office of the Executive Secretariat oversees Secretarial correspondence and most DOE Congressional Reports. The office provides DOE guidance on these documents consistent with the Plain Writing Act and reviews documents for consistency with the Act’s guidelines.

V. Informing Agency Staff of the Plain Writing Act’s Requirements

- A. DOE’s [website](#) contains links to the agency’s current and previous *Plain Writing Act Compliance Reports*.
- B. The Department’s internal wiki – Powerpedia ¹ – has a Plain Language page. Through the wiki, DOE lists resources and information, including:
 - Embedded YouTube videos from the Plain Language Action Information Network that highlight best practices for clear writing.
 - Training schedules for Plain Language classes.
 - Guidelines and links for writing in Plain Language.
 - Before and after Plain Language examples.
- C. The Department has a new internal portal, *The Energy Hub*, which organizes content from DOE's complex web of internal systems into a clean, intuitive “front door.” The Energy Hub is user-friendly and makes it easy for Department employees and contractors to find essential information, tools, and resources. Plain Language Training classes are posted on The Energy Hub.

VI. Training

Plain Language training has been a staple at DOE since 2011. Initially directed toward its headquarters personnel in the District and Germantown, Maryland, training for employees

¹ Accessible only to Department of Energy employees and contractors

and contractors expanded to the Department’s laboratories and field offices across the country via video conferencing. Plain Language training expanded further when laboratories and field offices requested in-person instruction. During public health concerns of the past four years, some training transitioned to virtual. All classes are led by an in-house agency instructor.

DOE personnel have fully embraced Plain Language training. The Department holds open classes for employees and contractors in groups of 20-30, as well as DOE Program Offices when they request training as a group.

The Plain Language training specifics from April 2023 to March 2024:

	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Participants</u>
In-Person DC Headquarters (Forrestal Building)*	4	90
In-Person Germantown, Maryland**	2	44
Virtual Instruction Requested Specifically by DOE Program Offices***	3	93
In-Person Instruction at the National Training Center, Albuquerque	1	19
In-Person Instruction at the Los Alamos Field Office	2	24
In-Person Instruction at the National Nuclear Security Administration, NM	1	13
In-Person Instruction at the Office of Science & Technical Information, TN	1	29
In-Person Instruction at the Office of Science Consolidated Service Center, TN1		23
In-Person Instruction at the Hanford site, Richland, WA	2	45
In-Person Instruction at the Sandia Field Office, Albuquerque	3	75
TOTAL****	20	455

* *Includes one class requested by the National Nuclear Security Administration*

** *Includes one class requested by the Office of Enterprise Assessments*

*** *One class was requested by a combination of the Grid Deployment Office and the Office of State and Community Energy Programs; one class by the Office of Legacy Management; and one class by the Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chain Office*

**** *The “Total” figures do not include the BPA training classes mentioned on page 5*

At both its Forrestal and Germantown facilities, the Department promotes Plain Language training and generates awareness to all employees and contractors through the monthly electronic Secretary’s newsletter and promotional flyers at key building locations. At the Forrestal Building, the classes are also promoted through an in-house electronic billboard

at two locations. At Department sites across the country, points-of-contact promote Plain Language training.

DOE's Plain Language classes provide tools that allow writers to present information more clearly, including:

- Focusing on the reader when you write
- Writing not what you want to say, but what the reader needs to know
- Using active voice and not passive voice, and how to distinguish between the two
- Limiting jargon and acronyms
- Using pronouns and everyday words
- Shortening sentences and paragraphs
- Identifying the audience
- Using lists (bullets, numbers, letters) and tables instead of long-form paragraphs
- Making your document easier to read, allowing readers to more easily absorb information

VII. Ongoing Compliance/Sustaining Change

- A. All DOE employees and contractors are encouraged to incorporate Plain Language principles in their writing. Some Program Offices have developed style guides that support Plain Language concepts (The [Energy Information Administration's \[EIA\] Writing Style Guide](#) is one example). Some offices, such as the [Office of the Chief Information Officer](#) and EIA, also integrate Plain Language concepts into their document review process.

The [Office of the Executive Secretariat](#) incorporates Plain Language standards in its review of DOE documents and external correspondence and works with Program Offices to emphasize Plain Language principles.

- B. The Department's Powerpedia internal wiki has an Acronyms List that identifies Department-related acronyms for readers and provides the acronym's description.
- C. Plain Language training is ongoing for DC headquarters, Germantown, and DOE sites across the country.

VIII. DOE Plain Language Websites/Links

- A. DOE's [Plain Language webpage](#)
- B. The Plain Language page on Powerpedia, DOE's internal wiki site

- C. DOE's link on its internal Plain Language website to [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#)
- D. DOE's link on its Plain Language website to the [Plain Language Action Information Network](#)
- E. The Energy Information Administration's [Writing Style Guide](#) and its one-page [tip sheet](#)

IX. Customer Satisfaction Evaluation after Experiencing Plain Language Communications

The Department continues to monitor and optimize how [Energy.gov](#) is serving consumers, businesses, governments, educators, researchers, and the public. As DOE places increasing emphasis on mobile-friendly online content, Plain Language principles become more critical in meeting the agency's communications needs.

- A. The [Office of Public Affairs](#) continuously updates the [Energy.gov](#) homepage and Energy 101 content to be responsive to user interest. The Office uses social media and multimedia data analytics to determine which topics audiences are interested in and develop future outreach accordingly.
- B. In 2022, the [Energy Information Administration](#) (EIA) working group met and decided on a number of updates to its [Writing Style Guide](#) based on its writers' experiences and best practices in Plain Language and the energy trade press. The new focus of the style guide is creating reader-centric content in a conversational, relevant voice that aligns with energy trade press. EIA continues to update the guide annually based on employee feedback and style guide workgroup approval.

[EIA's style guide](#) is its central document for Plain Language, and employees use the guide for help and advice on EIA writing style, grammar tips, and writing clearly. Many EIA employees also post the *Writing Style Guide's* [tip sheet](#) on their office walls and doors. [EIA's style guide](#) has won a ClearMark Award from the Center for Plain Language.

- C. The attendance numbers for EIA's *Write Right* curriculum show that the courses are popular. Comments on the evaluation surveys indicate that participants found the training informative and useful.

EIA's annual web customer satisfaction survey conducted in August 2023 showed that 95 percent of 17,917 respondents indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of the information on EIA's website. When asked about the overall experience with navigation and design, 93 percent were "satisfied" or "very satisfied." This survey also collects information on who is visiting the website and the information they are seeking.

Other EIA product-specific surveys collect information on how customers use a particular product, if the customer finds it useful, and how EIA can improve it.

- D.** A member of DOE's Plain Language Working Group served as a judge for the Center for Plain Language's *Federal Plain Language Report Card* from 2020 to 2022. The judges brought their expertise and knowledge of Plain Language principles to the judging process, while gaining greater insight on how Federal Government websites can use Plain Language to convey their messages more clearly to the public.
- E.** Another member of DOE's Plain Language Working Group, for the fifth consecutive year, served as a judge for the Center for Plain Language's *ClearMark Awards*, which showcases the best in Plain Language communication.