

U.S. Department of Energy

Plain Writing Act

Compliance Report

April 15, 2026

I. Introduction

The United States (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 and concisely. The areas referenced in this report summarize some of our continuing efforts to emphasize writing in Plain Language.

II. DOE Plain Language Official

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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](#). Nearly 70 DOE [Staff and Program Offices](#) have been consolidated from separate, stand-alone websites onto [Energy.gov](#), allowing visitors to enter a search term and conveniently find relevant information.

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

- *Website*. The content of [Energy.gov](#) is organized to help visitors access—in one place—major updates and publications related to specific topics. Users can find relevant information more efficiently by searching for a specific topic and viewing consolidated results, rather than navigating across multiple DOE [Staff and Program Office](#) websites to find what they need. For example, information on subjects such as artificial intelligence is presented in a centralized, topic-based format, allowing visitors to quickly locate the information they seek through a single search experience.
- *Newsroom*. Press releases, statements, remarks, testimony, and newspaper opinion pieces (op-eds) from DOE leadership are written with Plain Language principles. Media resources are also available.

- *Blogs and Articles.* Blogs on [Energy.gov](#) highlight 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.
- *Training.* Contributors to [Energy.gov](#) are encouraged to follow the principles of Plain Language on the webpages they maintain. They receive content guidelines and training on using Plain Language and following web best practices for making content accessible.
- *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 website redesign mentioned above is 508 compliant and built to [U.S. Web Design Systems](#) standards that improve the accessibility of DOE's site for many visitors.

In addition to [Energy.gov](#), the Office of Public Affairs oversees other 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 social media program aims to meet audiences where they are, on the platforms of their choice. The Office uses Plain Language on all social media accounts, converting complex, scientific information into easy-to-understand, bite-sized messages. Additionally, the Office provides style and editorial guidance to other [DOE Program Offices](#) and [National Laboratories](#) to encourage writers to use Plain Language for all social 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 March 2026)
Energy X	877,078
Energy LinkedIn	340,000

Energy Facebook	220,000
Energy Instagram	120,000
SecretaryWright X	58,200
Energy YouTube — Subscribers	80,100
EnergyPress (ENERGYSpox)	23,300
SecretaryWright Instagram	50,000
Secretary Chris Wright Facebook	3,100

- *Video.* The Office of Public Affairs produces video content summarizing the Secretary of Energy’s media interviews, speeches, travel, major announcements, and more. Through [DOE’s YouTube channel](#), the Office of Public Affairs also supports [Staff and Program Offices](#) with their video and livestream needs, ensuring that content geared towards general and technical audiences is available in one, consolidated channel.
- B. *U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).*** EIA incorporates Plain Language principles in all aspects of its public outreach.

Training

EIA staff developed an in-house writing curriculum—a series of eight writing courses aptly named *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. In 2025, EIA trained 136 Federal employees under *Write Right*.

The 2025 course topics included:

Course 1: Templates: Word Reports and PowerPoint Presentations (One hour)

- Reviewing the agency requirements for preparing reports and presentations
- Understanding how the templates work and their pre-programmed features
- Understanding how the templates enhance Plain Language at EIA

Course 2: Editing Your Own Writing (2 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 3: 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 4: Writing Effective Email (1.5 hours)

- Understanding basic email structure
- Reviewing business email etiquette
- Understanding elements that affect tone
- Reviewing how Plain Language writing and structure help the recipient find the important information and respond with the information you need

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.”

Additionally, in 2025 EIA presented a course specifically tailored for the [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 DOE). EIA customized a six-hour series, using BPA writing samples, presented in two three-hour sessions attended by 45 BPA employees. The topics included:

Day 1

Plain Writing at BPA

- Reviewing the agency requirements for Plain Language
- Understanding the Plain Language writing style
- Applying Plain Language to BPA communications

Group Writing Exercises and Discussion

- Breakout sessions for small groups to revise BPA writing samples
- Class discussion on breakout session findings

Day 2

Document Planning

- 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

Editing Your Own Writing

- Understanding the difference between editing and proofreading
- Using tips and strategies for editing your writing
- Using Microsoft Word tools for editing
- Checking your writing for common grammar and punctuation errors

Writing Effective Email

- Understanding basic email structure
- Reviewing business email etiquette
- Understanding elements that affect tone
- Reviewing how Plain Language writing and structure help the recipient find the important information and respond with the information you need

Because demand for the class remains high, BPA scheduled two additional sessions in 2026.

Website

On July 1, 1995, EIA became the first Program Office in the Department of Energy to launch a website. In 2025, EIA celebrated 30 years of promoting public understanding of energy through [EIA.gov](https://www.eia.gov).

As the website has grown over the years, so has its popularity. The website went from seven visitors on its first day to about 2,000 visitors per day during its first two years. Since then, its reach has only grown, receiving about 30 million visits annually in 2015 to about 42 million visits as of March 1, 2026.

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

- [*Today in Energy*](#). Published two-three times weekly, this report delivers information on timely energy-related news, issues, and announcements. In-brief

and in-depth analyses are also provided. This report uses Plain Language, along with graphics, photos, maps, and animations, to educate the public on current energy topics.

- [*Energy Kids*](#). This student-friendly resource provides opportunities—through information and activities—to learn about energy while improving research and reading skills.
- [*Energy Explained*](#). This extensive resource of 169 energy education pages describes the different sources and uses of energy in understandable, everyday language. EIA updates the data on these pages each year to ensure they present the most current information.
- [*Frequently Asked Questions*](#). This EIA resource provides answers in Plain Language to complicated energy questions asked by the public and other stakeholders. EIA frequently updates the FAQ page to include the most current information and most popular inquiries.
- [*Glossary*](#). Because EIA’s content can be very technical, EIA maintains an extensive glossary of terms on its website allowing both EIA readers and EIA authors to hyperlink technical terms.
- [*A-Z Index*](#). This alphabetical index on EIA’s website includes the most popular topics and publications, frequent inquiries, and issues closely related to EIA’s mission. The index is structured so that synonyms, acronyms, and cross-referencing provide multiple ways for users to access information across the website. The index includes common and technical terms relevant to a broad audience, serving both energy specialists and the public.

In 2025, EIA began a multi-year project to improve the [*Energy Explained*](#), [*Energy Kids*](#), and [*Frequently Asked Questions*](#) resources. The project aims to:

- Refresh each article and FAQ
- Make the content more evergreen
- Bring consistency between Energy Explained and Energy Kids content
- Improve format and navigation menus

As of mid-April 2026, EIA completed 61 of 169 [*Energy Explained*](#) and 52 of 99 [*Energy Kids*](#) pages. EIA will start the [*FAQ*](#) part of the project later in 2026.

Social Media

EIA uses social media to:

- Promote [*Today in Energy*](#) stories and newly published reports and analyses

- Connect consumers with useful EIA tools, such as the [Hourly Electric Grid Monitor](#) and the [Status of U.S. Nuclear Outages](#) pages.

EIA is active on Facebook, X, Flickr, LinkedIn, and YouTube. EIA social media statistics from April 2025 to March 2026:

ACCOUNT	FOLLOWERS (As of March 2026)
EIA X	183,700
EIA Facebook	46,000
EIA LinkedIn	33,192
EIA X (Administrator)	4,818

EIA data show the audience for these social platforms is significantly larger than the number of followers. Social media allows EIA to enhance its communication to the public on current energy topics.

Videos

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

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

Reports and Publications

From its nearly 70 reports published annually on energy topics, EIA uses Plain Language principles consistently throughout all web content, including:

- Its annual flagship report: the [Annual Energy Outlook](#), a 30-year forecast of U.S. energy markets and trends.
- Its [Short-Term Energy Outlook](#), a monthly two-year forecast. This report includes [two important seasonal supplements](#): the *Summer Fuels Outlook* primarily discusses gasoline costs as it relates to summer-month fuel

requirements, and the *Winter Fuels Outlook* forecasts heating fuel costs, including oil, natural gas, electricity, and propane.

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.

- C. ***Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI)*** (Formerly *Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy [EERE]*). More than 25 percent of all [Energy.gov](#) visitors viewed CMEI webpages in 2025. To reach the widest possible audience, CMEI uses Plain Language throughout its website, such as the webpage [Do-It-Yourself Energy Savers Projects](#).

In addition to providing content on cost savings, CMEI’s webpages reflect Plain Language guidelines and best practices in user experience. Notable examples include:

- ***Energy Saver Webpage***. This webpage provides practical, easy-to-understand consumer advice for saving energy. [Energy Saver](#) content is written in Plain Language to help consumers understand energy-saving options for their homes and vehicles. [Energy Saver](#) suggests do-it-yourself projects and offers [financing and incentive information](#) to engage the public and assist with energy-saving actions.
- ***Energy Innovation in Action Blog***. This blog discusses the work of CMEI in easy-to-understand language.
- ***CMEI Funding Webpage***. CMEI centralizes information about open funding programs and upcoming opportunities in one location. The content is structured to quickly funnel users to more detailed information about current funding opportunities, prioritizing programs with upcoming deadlines.
- ***Social Media Posts***. CMEI manages three primary social media accounts that reach audiences such as students, job seekers, and industry representatives in shared online communities. In 2025, CMEI’s Facebook page lost 1,358 followers, but LinkedIn gained 3,466 followers and X gained 477. In the first quarter of 2026, CMEI’s “engagement rate”—visitors who either liked a post, shared it, or commented on it—increased six percent compared to the first quarter of 2025.

ACCOUNT	FOLLOWERS (As of March 2026)
CMEI Facebook	169,600

CMEI LinkedIn	49,700
CMEI X	24,600

- *508 Compliant Infographics.* CMEI condenses highly technical information about 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* webpages. CMEI includes guidelines for content writers and editors and a [section explaining the Plain Writing Act](#) and its requirements. The Communication Standards section also includes *CMEI's style guide* and guidelines to ensure [content is 508 compliant](#) and accessible to those with disabilities.
- *Communication Product Templates.* CMEI 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, and more.
- *DOE Web Council.* CMEI participates in the DOE Web Council, which meets monthly to address common issues, including ways to comply with the [Plain Writing Act](#).

D. *National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).* The NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within DOE that protects our nation by designing and delivering a safe, secure, and effective U.S. nuclear stockpile. 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 modernization 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 Modernization 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.

- [*Deny, Detect, Defeat – 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.
- 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.*](#) This Office 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 [Open Government website](#) contains links to the agency’s current and previous *Plain Writing Act Compliance Reports*.
- B. The Department’s internal wiki—Powerpedia—has a page that promotes the use of Plain Language throughout the Department. 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
 - Schedules for Plain Language Training classes and opportunities to register for them
 - Guidelines and links for writing in Plain Language

- Before and after Plain Language examples
- C. The Department has an internal portal, *The Energy Hub*, which organizes content from DO’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.

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 and contractors expanded to the Department’s laboratories and field offices across the country via video conferencing in 2013. Plain Language training expanded further when laboratories and field offices began requesting in-person instruction in 2015. Virtual training was added in 2022. 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, as well as [DOE Program Offices](#) when they request training as a group.

New material is constantly added to the course, which has expanded from three hours in 2011 to about six today.

Because of the Federal Government’s reorganization in 2025, Plain Language training was limited. Here are the specifics for DOE’s Plain Language training from April 2025 to March 2026:

	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Participants</u>
In-Person DC Headquarters (Forrestal Building)*	2	66
Virtual Instruction Requested by the National Nuclear Security Administration	1	12
TOTAL**	3	78

* Includes one class open to all Department of Energy employees and contractors, and one class requested by the National Nuclear Security Administration.

** The “Total” figures do not include the BPA training classes mentioned on page 3.

The Department promotes upcoming Plain Language training to all employees and contractors at both its DC headquarters and Germantown facility through a broadcast email message. The DC Headquarters also publicizes the classes through its two in-house electronic billboards spaced in central locations; promotional flyers at 30 elevator kiosks; and a 30x40-inch poster at a high-traffic location. When Plain Language training is conducted at Department sites across the country, points-of-contact promote Plain Language training to their colleagues.

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
- Avoiding hidden verbs
- Using pronouns and short, simple words
- Shortening sentences and paragraphs
- Identifying your audience
- Using lists (bullets, numbers, letters) and tables instead of long-form paragraphs
- Using formatting techniques (headings, additional white space between lines) to make 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 *Writing Style Guide*](#) is one example). Some Offices, such as the [Office of the Chief Information Officer](#) and the [Energy Information Administration](#), 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.** Both the Department's Powerpedia internal wiki—and its internal portal, *The Energy Hub*—have an Acronyms List that identifies Department-related acronyms for readers and provides the acronym's description.
- C.** Plain Language training is ongoing for DOE's DC headquarters and its Germantown facility, as well as 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. The Plain Language page on *The Energy Hub*, DOE's internal portal
- D. DOE's link on its internal Plain Language website to [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#)
- E. DOE's link on its Plain Language website to the [Plain Language Action Information Network](#)
- F. 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 outreach.
- B. The Energy Information Administration annually updates its *Writing Style Guide* based on employee feedback and approval from the Style Guide Workgroup. 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. The *Style Guide* focuses on creating reader-centric content in a conversational, relevant voice that aligns with energy trade press. Many EIA employees also post the Writing Style Guide's tip sheet on their office walls and doors. EIA's Style Guide won a ClearMark Award from the Center for Plain Language.
- C. The attendance figures 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 2025 showed that 95 percent of 8,457 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, 95 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.** For the seventh consecutive year, a member of DOE's Plain Language Working Group served as a judge for the Center for Plain Language's ClearMark Awards, which showcases the best in Plain Language communication.
- E.** For a three-year period, another member of DOE's Plain Language Working Group served as a judge for the Center for Plain Language's *Federal Plain Language Report Card*. 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.