

How to Write Clear Language

Guidelines for writing information that all audiences will find easy to read and understand.

What is Clear Language?

Council is using the term Clear Language to describe how it is making its materials easy to read and understand. Council asks all its audiences, including members, staff, grantees, advocates, media and others to use these recommendations for printed documents, PowerPoint presentations, websites and social media.

Other organizations, including the federal government, are starting to use clear language but they call it by different names. Whether it's Easy Read, Plain Language, or other names, the purpose is to make information easier to read and understand.

Clear Language:

- Makes sure all readers understand information quickly and correctly.
- Is not over simplified and does not talk down to readers, and
- Readers concentrate on what a message says, instead of trying to understand complicated words and writing.

Writing Guidelines:

- Keep all words and body copy easy to read and understand.
- Write with accurate, simple words. Choose words you think your audiences understand. Eliminate acronyms and jargon unless you define them. Eliminate extra words.
- Use person first language
- Write in conversational style, as if you are talking with a person. Use pronouns.
- Write in active voice.
- Use complete, short sentences and paragraphs. Keep paragraphs to one main idea.
- Create clear headings and subheads to guide your readers through a document. Arrange your paragraphs in a logical order.
- Don't use long words when a shorter word will do.
- Don't write more than you need.

For more information: <https://ddc.ohio.gov/pub-how-to-write-clear-language>