

Audience: The audience for these instructions is composed of County Office of Education (COE) K-12 program coordinators. They are experts in their program field and intermediate to advanced writers in the educational style. They do not have experience writing effective, usable web content. All groups have intermediate to advanced computer and Microsoft Word skills. All groups have intermediate to advanced ability to learn new subjects and follow instructions. None of them understand what works and does not work on the web. Few are familiar with the information needs of those who will use the program descriptions. Guidance in these two areas is woven into the instructions. An extra revision is necessary to produce the required level of content.

County Office of Education (COE) Website Program Description Development Instructions

Introduction

The new County Office of Education (COE) website will provide departmental and program information and resources to the community. Each COE program will have a webpage with a program description written by the program coordinator. The purpose of the program description is to provide clear, concise, useful information that will enable readers to understand and access program services easily and effectively.

The process you will follow to produce a program description includes the following steps:

Document Set-up:

1. Document template and software
2. Document name
3. Format and Styles

Phase 1: Write the first draft:

1. Program description title
2. Program focus and goals
3. Eligibility requirements
4. Resources
5. Contact information

Phase 2: Edit the first draft

Phase 3: Proofread the second draft

Phase 4: Make Final Changes and Proofread Again

Submit Final Draft for Webpage Production

Document Set-up

These instructions explain how to correctly set up, name, format, and style the program description document.

Document template and software. Program coordinators will write, edit, and proofread their program descriptions in Microsoft Word. Download and use the Microsoft Word project document template. It is located in the *Program Description* folder on the *COE_8* server. The template filename is *TEMPLATE-program-descript.doc*. It has the correct margins, spacing, indents, and tabs.

Note: Do not change the settings in the template.

Include graphic of the location of the document template on the COE_8 server.

Figure 1. Location of the document template on the COE_8 server.

Document name. There will be a total of 300+ program descriptions. Each program description will have 4 or more drafts. Easy-to-recognize filenames are necessary to prevent confusion and mistakes. Name your program description in one of three ways: (1) full program name (2) program acronym, or (3) an abbreviated-but-recognizable version of the program name.

Follow these additional naming conventions:

- Use hyphens between words in the filename. Do not leave spaces between words.
- Use all lowercase letters. Do not capitalize the filename, except for the word FINAL (final draft).
- Do not use special characters in the filename (@#\$%^&<>?/{}[]).
- Do not use punctuation (,!?;:"') other than the single period between the filename and the filename extension (filename.doc).
- Delete articles, conjunctions, or prepositions from the filename (a, an, the, and, of).
- Include an abbreviation of the draft number after the program name and before the extension. Use d1 for first draft, d2 for second draft, and d3 for third draft (filename-d1.doc).
- Replace the draft number with FINAL for the final draft (filename-FINAL.doc).
- Always append the .doc extension to the filename. The file extension is a suffix appended to filename that identifies the encoding convention or file format (.htm, .psd, .jpg, .gif, .php, .ai, .indd, .doc, .docx).

Examples: gate-d2.doc, americorps-d3.doc, ident-recruit-d1.doc, ece-FINAL.doc

Note: Do not use the .docx extension. Files ending in the .docx extension cannot be opened by earlier versions of Word. If your version of Word automatically appends the .docx extension, change it to .doc. Microsoft Word 2007 (Windows) and Word 2008 (Mac) automatically append the .docx extension. IT Help Desk staff are available to assist with changing the file format to .doc. Contact them at x555.

Format and style. Final drafts of program descriptions will be used to build program webpages. Word formatting (margins, spacing, page layout) and styles (bold, italic, underline) will interfere with the HTML code and prevent the webpage from functioning. Program descriptions must not be formatted or styled with Word formatting and style tools. Therefore, do not change the template settings or apply any Word styles to the text, or add images of any kind.

Follow these format and style guidelines:

- Use only the Arial font, regular (roman), 10 point size.
- Align all text to the left margin. Do not indent paragraphs or lists.
- Do not use the tables tool. Put tabular data in tabbed columns.
- All text should be black. Do not use other colors.
- Create space between paragraphs by using the Return key.
- Do not use bold, italic, strikethrough, underline, reversed, superscript, or subscript styles.
- Do not use shading, extra spacing, borders, or rules.
- Do not add logos, graphics, illustrations, or photographs.

Include graphic of a correctly formatted and styled program description.

Figure 2. Correctly formatted and styled program description.

Phase 1: Write the First Draft

The purpose of a program description is to inform, assist and satisfy as many site visitors as possible. To be effective, program descriptions must provide the information that readers find relevant and useful. These are the audiences that will read the program descriptions: (1) COE staff; (2) K-12 educators, administrators, and staff; (3) parents of students; and (4) federal, state, and local government agency staff. Survey results show that effective program descriptions contain specific types of information arranged in order of importance to the reader. To achieve best results, follow the writing and editing instructions below.

Program description title. The program description title will head the program webpage. The title will be the program name. Follow this naming convention: spell out the complete program name, followed by the acronym in parentheses.

Examples:

Americorps-United for Literacy (Americorps)

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)

Identification and Recruitment (I&R)

Program focus and goals. This section has no heading. It begins the program description and follows the program title. Briefly and clearly describe the main areas of program focus, the main program goals and the groups or individuals that are served.

Examples:

- The Early Childhood Education (ECE) program provides educational, social, and health services for preschool children in order to improve student health, social skills, and academic achievement.
- The Migrant Education Identification and Recruitment (I&R) program identifies and recruits migrant students into programs that will raise their academic achievement levels.
- The After School Partnerships (ASP) program provides leadership, standards, professional development and mentoring services to K-6 After School Education and Safety programs in order to raise the level of the program standards and achievements.

Note: The first time the program name appears in the body of the program description, spell it out fully and follow it with the acronym in parentheses. Then use the acronym by itself throughout the rest of the program description.

Specific services. The heading for this section is *Services*. Begin with a simple lead-in sentence followed by a bulleted list of up to 10 specific services offered by the program. Each service should clearly state what is it, what it does, and the individuals or groups that it serves.

Example:

The Standards and Assessment program offers these services:

- Professional development workshops in California standards and assessment methods
- Assessment visits to low-performing elementary schools to evaluate instructional materials
- Leadership, resource materials, and coaching to promote continuous instructional program improvement

Eligibility requirements. The heading for this section is *Eligibility Requirements*. Begin with a short lead-in sentence, followed by a bulleted list of eligibility requirements that potential participants must meet in order to qualify for services.

Example:

Migrant Education health, social, and educational services are available to:

- Infants and preschool-age children (birth to age 5) of migrant workers
- School-age children (ages 5-18) of migrant workers
- Out-of-school migrant youth (ages 16-21)

Resources. The heading for this section is *Resources*. Begin with a short lead-in sentence, followed by a list of up to ten resources that would be of value to visitors interested in the program. Resources can be (1)

documents in PDF format that can be downloaded from the webpage, or (2) resource websites. Include the web address (URL) to the specific resource webpage, not to the homepage of the website.

Example:

Williams Settlement schools will find the following resources valuable:

- Williams Settlement California Department of Education (CDE) information
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/ce/wc/>
- Williams Settlement Forms and Publications:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/ce/wc/>
- California K-12 Academic Standards:
<http://www.pasesetter.com/demonstrationPrograms/summergap.html>
- The Habits of Successful K-12 Schools:
<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=edc&group=52001-53000&file=52200-52212>

Contact information. List the program contact person and contact information in the following order.

1. Contact person first and last name
2. Title
3. Email address. Example: aperson@coe.k12.ca.us
4. Office phone number (direct line) with area code. Example: 831-655-5555

Example:

Arlene Standish
Program Administrator/Coordinator
awheelis@coe.ca.us
831-655-5555

Phase 2: Edit the First Draft

After completing the first draft, make a copy and replace d1 (first draft) in the filename with d2 (second draft). This is now your second draft. Make your edits to this document. First drafts are rarely clear, concise or complete. Reread your first draft and edit it for clarity of meaning and completeness of information.

Note: Keep in mind that you are writing for readers who know little or nothing about your program. It may help you to have people outside of the program read the first draft and provide feedback. Ask where the information is unclear or incomplete.

Phase 3: Proofread the Second Draft

After completing the second draft, make a copy and replace *d2* (second draft) in the filename with *d3* (third draft). Make your edits to this document. Proofread thoroughly for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. Do not rely on the Word spell checker. They make many mistakes. Be sure to carefully check all phone numbers, addresses, and URLs (web addresses).

Phase 4: Make Final Changes and Proofread Again

After completing the third draft, make a copy and replace *d3* (third draft) in the filename with *FINAL* (final draft). Make your edits to this document. Reread the program description and make any final minor changes that will improve clarity or add value for the reader. Check formatting and styles. Delete all extra document formatting and styles. Refer to the *Format and Styles* rules in the *Set-Up* section, above. Proofread again thoroughly for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. Do not rely on the Word spell checker. They make many mistakes. Be sure to carefully check all phone numbers, addresses, and URLs (web addresses).

Submit Final Draft for Webpage Production

When the final draft has been completed, email it to the Web Team secretary (mrandall@coe.ca.us) so that the corresponding program webpage can be built. When the program webpage has been completed, the program coordinator will be contacted and asked to review it prior to the public launch.

Conclusion

The Superintendent plans to provide the community with a dynamic website filled with information of value. Clear, informative program descriptions will be the primary source of information on the website. The Superintendent appreciates the time and work invested by staff to produce effective website content. She feels strongly that it will promote a healthy, productive partnership between the COE and the community.

Writing and Editing Assistance

Should you have questions or concerns at any point in this process, help is available during regular office hours. Please contact:

Joy Bower

Web Developer

jbower@coe.ca.us

831-655-5555