



PLAIN WRITING ACT  
COMPLIANCE REPORT 2023



## Overview

This report describes the Federal Housing Finance Agency’s (FHFA) compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (Act). The purpose of the Act is to improve the effectiveness and accountability of federal agencies to the public by promoting clear government communication that the public can understand and use. The Act also defines the kinds of documents that are subject to the Act’s requirements as follows:

- (2) The term ‘covered document’—
  - (A) means any document that—
    - (i) is necessary for obtaining any Federal Government benefit or service or filing taxes;
    - (ii) provides information about any Federal Government benefit or service; or
    - (iii) explains to the public how to comply with a requirement the Federal Government administers or enforces;
  - (B) includes (whether in paper or electronic form) a letter, publication, form, notice, or instruction; and
  - (C) does not include a regulation.<sup>1</sup>

Effective writing is an FHFA priority, and the Agency is committed to publishing documents that are clear, concise, and well organized.

## Plain Writing Act Compliance

FHFA has taken a number of steps to enhance the quality and clarity of writing that the Agency produces:

- **Prioritizing Clear and Effective Writing in FHFA Documents:** Senior FHFA leadership prioritizes and regularly communicates the importance of clear and effective writing in all FHFA documents, both those for internal use and those issued or available to the public. Agency policies highlight FHFA’s commitment to producing documents that reflect strong analysis, collaboration, and clear writing.

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<sup>1</sup> 5 U.S.C. 301(a)(2)note



- **Offering Writing Training for Staff:** To improve the ability of staff to write clearly and effectively, FHFA offers a variety of internal courses related to effective writing:
  - **Effective Business Writing Courses.** Throughout 2023, several FHFA Divisions (the Division of Enterprise Regulation, the Division of Bank Regulation, and the Division of Public Interest Examinations) provided business writing training courses to assist their examination staff with improving their business writing skills. The courses covered the key traits of business writing, general versus technical writing, as well as the four phases of the writing process.
  - **Individual Business Writing Coaching:** In late 2023, FHFA’s Division of Enterprise Regulation entered into a contract with a vendor to provide Individual Writing Coaching to help exam staff improve the quality of their exam related documents and reports. This service is optional, but staff began to utilize it in late 2023, and additional staff are expected to participate in the future. This coaching targets employees who produce written work products in the Agency and want to increase the quality of first drafts and minimize subsequent revisions.
  - **FHFA Self-Editing Workshop.** Staff within FHFA’s Division of Research and Statistics developed and delivered a custom five-week Self-Editing Workshop during the Summer of 2023. This workshop helped participants focus on minor issues in writing that can add up to major stumbling blocks for readers. Course topics included Document Structure, Improving Readability, Non-Debatable Grammar, Tables, and Assorted Other Grammar Mistakes.
  - **FHFA Learning Journey (Leading Self Track).** FHFA offered a self-paced learning program in the spring/summer of 2023 where program participants completed a variety of professional and leadership training courses through the Franklin Covey All Access Pass. This curriculum included online videos/courses and performance support tools related to the development of written products and presentations. The content from this program comes from Franklin Covey’s Writing for Results and Presentation Advantage Training courses and provides guidance on developing various types of clear documents (e.g., e-mails, reports, memos, presentations, etc.)
  - **Written Communication Courses through Talent365.** In September 2023, FHFA launched a new learning management system (Talent365), which includes online courses and resources. A section of the on-



demand learning catalog is dedicated to written communication skills and contains nearly 50 learning titles on various aspects of written communication, including: writing e-mails, drafting reports, various levels of business writing skills, grammar, editing, and punctuation. Additionally, FHFA created a Writing Playlist which includes nine recommended courses that can be taken in sequence to improve writing. One of the most popular courses in this section of the library was Business Writing Practices.

- From December 2013 through year end 2023, approximately 459 FHFA employees have attended one or more of these courses.
- **Providing information on [www.fhfa.gov](http://www.fhfa.gov):** FHFA works to communicate information to the public in a clear and effective manner on the Agency's website, [www.fhfa.gov](http://www.fhfa.gov). The website integrates visual information and video communications along with clear written descriptions of FHFA initiatives and materials.

## Contact Information for Plain Writing at FHFA

Samuel Frumkin, Executive Secretary, is the Senior Agency Official for Plain Writing and can be reached at [plainlanguage@fhfa.gov](mailto:plainlanguage@fhfa.gov). FHFA has posted information about Plain Writing on the Agency's website.

