

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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1. PURPOSE

This regulation establishes U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Headquarters (HQ) procedures for the use of Department-controlled digital signage within USDA HQ facilities to include the Whitten Building, South Building Patriots Plaza III, and any other sites designated as HQ facilities by the Office of Operations.

2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CANCELLATIONS

This is a new Departmental directive addressing this subject area. As such, it supersedes any existing agency or staff office policy that may exist and conflict with it.

3. DEFINITIONS

- a. Digital Signage. A form of electronic display that shows information, emergency information and other messages.
- b. Digital Signage Services. The technical team that receives and categorizes digital signage requests, displays the messages and routes the digital signage monitor requests.
- c. Agency/Office Points of Contact. Personnel who represent the Agency or Office head for purposes of approving and submitting digital message content.
- d. Department-controlled digital signage. A form of electronic display that shows information, news and other messages to the USDA workforce originating from the USDA HQ.
- e. Employee. A Federal employee as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105 as incorporated in 16 U.S.C. 590h.
- f. Employee organization. An association or organization as defined in DR 4020-251 (Associations of Management Officials and/or Supervisors and Other Organizations), and DR 4020-251-1 (Welfare and Recreation Organizations).
- g. Labor organization. An organization defined in 5 U.S.C. 7103.
- h. Employee message. A message originating from a USDA agency or staff office that contains information about a topic, event or activity of potential interest to USDA employees and meets the criteria established in this directive for distribution via digital signage.

4. POLICY

USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) will be responsible for oversight of the Digital Signage Policy.

The Digital Signage Policy is established to provide an opportunity for USDA personnel to participate in Digital Signage use, with a common goal of delivering targeted messages at specific locations at specific times. This communication medium is provided to inform staff and visitors about events occurring in a specific USDA location and other information and is intended to replace current paper-based signs thus reducing waste, drastically reducing the amount of electricity required to make the current signs and complying with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (Public Law 105-227). Standard information displayed will build interest in events and activities of general interest to all USDA employees or defined organizational segments of the Department.

Given the need to control and balance the content and flow of such information to employees, the use of these messages should be limited to only those messages that are most effectively conveyed through such a medium to the targeted employee population.

To be broadcast as an electronic message, messages must meet the criteria established in Section 5 (Digital Message Criteria) of this directive and be approved in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7 (Procedures).

All content must be approved through the Agency/Office Points of Contact (POC) and appropriate OCIO channels to ensure compliance with USDA Directives and Policies prior to distribution. In addition, records must be maintained of digital signage messages for a period of 30 days.

Specialty Monitors, such as directory boards which list the names and room numbers of USDA personnel and cafeteria boards which list cafeteria events/specials will be controlled by this policy as well.

5. DIGITAL MESSAGE CRITERIA

To be authorized for distribution via the digital signage medium, messages must meet the following criteria:

- a. The message must directly pertain to the targeted audience. For example, common types of information are:
 - (1) Scheduled events – on-site activities sponsored by the agency
 - (2) General interest – open to all USDA personnel
 - (3) Staff announcements – significant awards or achievement
 - (4) Welcoming statements – welcome special guests and visitors
 - (5) Department or Agency notices – messages from the USDA Secretary (Channel 6) or Agency Director
 - (6) Emergency notifications – building closings, fire or other safety notifications
 - (7) Notices of missing persons and children
 - (8) Official business notices of the occupant agency
 - (9) Agency-approved campaigns (charity, blood drive, safety, etc.)

(10) National news – USDA may utilize national/local news feeds when required; however, no other non-news programming will be allowed

(11) Weather Alerts

- b. Content must comply with all relevant telecommunications, ethics/conduct, and civil rights regulations pertaining to such matters as fund raising, terminology, and visual appearance. Specifically prohibited content is specified in Departmental Manual 3300-005.
- c. If websites appear in messages, only links to website addresses of Federal, state, and local government agencies or transit authorities are permitted.
- d. Except for emergency situations, requests to display messages must be received by the Digital Signage Services team at least five (5) work days prior to the requested distribution date.
- e. Unless the message is official in nature or pertains to an officially-sponsored USDA event, it will not contain the USDA logo or claim/infer USDA sponsorship.
- f. All messages must be in compliance with DR 4030-001, which addresses Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Specifically, all video messages must contain closed caption.
- g. All announcements and messages are to be concise, having no more than 35 words.
- h. All message requests will be submitted electronically utilizing the Digital Signage Submission Form.
- i. Audio may be utilized for emergency messages, messages from the USDA Secretary or Agency Directors, and national news events. Audio levels must be adjusted to a level whereby they do not interfere with the workplace serenity of surrounding offices.
- j. Messages displayed as “ticker” information will be reserved for news-related content, specifically USDA events that are in the news or national news events that are broadcast as part of a national news network channel.
- k. Digital signage monitors should be placed where the majority of USDA personnel within the facility will pass, such as building entrances, elevator lobbies and cafeterias. Requests for monitor installations will be evaluated and approved by the Office of Operations based on three criteria:
 - (1) Serving the largest number of USDA personnel;
 - (2) Proximity to any currently existing monitor; and

- (3) Agreement of all impacted Agencies/Offices or a single Agency/Office to pay for hardware and services at that location

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Communication - Organizational offices publicize the Department's policy on digital signage within their respective agencies and staffs
- b. Execution – The Departmental Management (DM), Management Services, Washington Communications Technology Services (WCTS) provides Digital Signage Services:
 - (1) Receives and acknowledges submitted digital signage requests from Agency/Office POCs
 - (2) Reviews the messages for adherence to technical criteria and policy adherence
 - (3) Resolves any technical/policy issues with the requestor
 - (4) Displays approved messages
 - (5) Saves all messages for 30 days
 - (6) Creates message templates and submission forms and makes them available to the Department.

7. PROCEDURES

- a. For all requests originating from USDA personnel:
 - (1) The requestor accesses the digital signage website at www.hqnet.usda.gov/dsb/ to download both the Sample Digital Signage Submission Form (see form information in Appendix A) as well as available templates. Also available on the website are the digital signage policies and a list of the Agency/Office POCs.
 - (2) The requestor chooses from available templates or creates own content based on guidance within the digital signage policy. Once completed, requestor sends both the Sample Digital Signage Submission Form and the completed template to their Agency/Office POC listed in the website.
 - (3) The Agency/Office POC will contact the requestor as to the request status.
- b. For all requests originating from Agency/Office POCs within USDA Agencies, Staff Offices:

- (1) The Agency/Office POC requestor accesses the Digital Signage Broadcast (DSB) SharePoint site and downloads the Digital Signage Submission Form. The requestor then chooses the appropriate template, either an Agency/Office template if the message is an Agency/Office announcement or a blank template if the announcement is a non-Agency event, such as a Walkathon, in accordance with the digital signage policy. The requestor uploads the completed template to the submission form and submits the message request.
- (2) For digital signage requests received from Agency/Office personnel, Agency/Office POCs will review requests for policy and technical alignment and forward to the Digital Signage Services team via the DSB SharePoint site.
- (3) All requests from the Agency/Office POCs are sent to the Digital Signage Services team who review the messages for
 - (a) policy; and
 - (b) technical requirement conformance to ensure it can be transmitted utilizing the digital signage player.
- (4) Digital Signage Services notifies the requestor that the message is accepted for submission as requested or that the message requires additional information, content or formatting changes in order to be displayed.
- (5) Requests will be submitted to the Digital Signage Services team at least 5 days in advance of the required message.
- (6) Where numerous submission form announcements are received for the same event, the first submission form will be given precedence unless the Secretary determines otherwise.
- (7) Emergency requests will be sent by Department Management Office of Operations Incident Management Team to all affected monitors. Emergency messages will appear on the screens with a blue background and will be the only messages allowed with this background.
- (8) Access for hearing impaired personnel will be via closed captioning. Access for visually impaired personnel will be through the digital signage website www.hqnet.usda.gov/dsb/ which will display the messages at each monitor location from which the customer can choose.
- (9) Messages will not run for more than 2 weeks.
- (10) Messages will be broadcast on monitors from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

(11) Screens will display a maximum of 10 slides or messages per day. If more than 10 slides are requested in a single day, prioritization will be accomplished by the Agency/Offices who have requested signage, as facilitated by the Digital Signage Services Team. If monitors are in shared space, each office or agency will be allowed the opportunity to display an equal number of messages per day.

(12) For questions regarding the appropriateness of content, contact Digital Signage Services at WCTS.dsb@dm.usda.gov.

8. TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- a. All announcements and messages are to be concise, having no more than 35 words (see submission form):
- b. Announcement text is to have no grammatical or spelling errors.
- c. All related photos for messages must be submitted along with the submission form detailing the message.
- d. Ensure photos for announcements/messages are quality photos that are not smaller than 500x500 pixels.
- e. Digital Signage Services can accept digital signage form requests in the standard approved templates available at www.hqnet.usda.gov/dsb/ as well as JPG or PNG files. The required size is 1910 x 880 at 72 dpi. Contact Digital Signage Services at WCTS.dsb@dm.usda.gov with questions regarding text and illustration guidelines.
- f. USDA reserves the right to make any changes to submitted digital signage requests.
- g. Digital Signage Services does not provide any content creation services.
- h. The use of solid blue backgrounds on screens is reserved for emergency communications only. Digital signage submitted with a solid blue background will not be scheduled for display and will be returned to the requestor.
- i. Digital videos must be 10 seconds or less in length. Audio may be considered on a limited basis, where technically feasible and should include closed captioning. The best format for digital video is WMV. It should be in a large format to fit big screens.
- j. When developing content for the signage, instead of thinking of a television, think of a billboard with messages that can be communicated in the blink of an eye.
- k. Digital graphic content must be in PowerPoint, Adobe or JPEG formats (original graphics or permission provided for copyright protected graphics are allowed).

- l. Slides are displayed for 5-10 seconds.
- m. PowerPoint animation does not work on displays.
- n. If the event is cancelled, please cancel the request by sending a notification to the WCTS.dsb@dm.usda.gov mailbox, or if necessary, submit a new digital signage request form advertising the cancellation.

-END-

Appendix A
Authorities and References

DR 1600-002 Posting of Notices and Information Bulletins
DR 3080-001 Records Management
DR 3090-0001 Litigation Retention Policy for Documentary materials including Electronically Stored Information
DR 3450-002 FOIA Implementing Regulations
DM 3525-002 USDA Internet Use and Copyright Restrictions
DR 4030-001 Section 508 Implementation - Final Guidance
DR 4070-735-001 Employee Responsibilities and Conduct
DR 1410-001 Publications Review/Clearance Policy
DR 1440-002 Communications Coordination and Review Policy
Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.)

Appendix A

Sample Digital Signage Submission Form

Contact Name:

Contact Email:

Contact Phone Number:

Department/Organization:

Building/Digital Display Location:

Message Start Date/Time:

Message End Date/Time:

Title of Message/Event:

Body of message (if Ticker message):

Number of Attached Images:

Copyright Authorization (if required)