

**Federal Labor Relations Authority  
Plain Writing Act Compliance Report  
Updated April 22, 2016**

**I. Senior Agency Official for Plain Writing:**

a. Senior Agency Official responsible for Plain Writing:

Gina Grippando, Counsel for Regulatory and Public Affairs

b. Plain Writing coordinators within the Agency:

Cabrina Smith, Chief, Case Intake and Publication (Authority Component)

Donna DiTullio, Chief Legal Advisor, Federal Service Impasses Panel Component (FSIP)

Richard Zorn, Assistant General Counsel for Appeals, Office of the General Counsel Component (OGC)

**II. Explain what specific types of agency communications you have released by making them available in a format that is consistent with the Plain Writing guidelines.**

<b>Type of communications or document or posting. List how this is made available to the public.</b>	<b>Who is the intended user and approximate number of potential users?</b>	<b>What has changed by using Plain Writing?</b>
<b>Press Releases</b>	Federal-agency employees; managers; union representatives; and other members of the public	More effective and clearer communication about important FLRA events, initiatives, and other announcements.
<b>Authority Orders directed to party customers</b>	Labor-relations practitioners; federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.	More effective communication and clearer information for parties regarding procedural matters in cases filed with the Authority.
<b>Authority Decisions</b>	Labor-relations practitioners; federal-agency employees; managers; union representatives; Federal-sector arbitrators; and other members of the public.	Following a decision-writing initiative (discussed in more detail below in Section III.c.), Authority decisions are now clearer and more effectively convey difficult legal concepts to readers.

		<p>The Authority has eliminated redundancies in its decisions by weaving the parties' arguments into the analysis portion of decisions, rather than initially setting forth the parties' arguments and then restating them in the analysis. By moving all legal citations to footnotes – instead of placing them in text – Authority decisions are now more readable because the citations do not interrupt the flow of sentences.</p>
<p><b>Authority Drafting Guide (Updated March 12, 2013 and on March 5, 2014).</b></p>	<p>Attorneys and labor-relations specialists who draft or review Authority decisions.</p>	<p>This 80-page drafting guide encourages clarity and uniformity in the way case-writing staff drafts and reviews Authority decisions. The guide sets forth the style, general formatting, and citation formatting that case-writing staff should use in Authority decisions. The guide specifically instructs case-writing staff to use plain writing where appropriate. And the guide also incorporates all of the decision-writing-initiative-recommendations (discussed in more detail below in Section III.c.) that the Members adopted.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Authority Guide to Arbitration (Updated February 26, 2013).</a></u></b></p>	<p>Labor-relations practitioners; federal-agency employees; managers; union representatives; federal-sector arbitrators; and other members of the public.</p>	<p>More effective communication and clearer guidance and information to parties and arbitrators regarding the arbitration process and their legal rights and responsibilities.</p>

<p><b><u>Negotiability Guide (Issued June 17, 2013)</u></b></p>	<p>Labor-relations practitioners; federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives; federal-sector arbitrators; and other members of the public.</p>	<p>More effective communication and clearer guidance and information to parties regarding the negotiability process and their legal rights and responsibilities.</p>
<p><b><u>FLRA eFiling Regulations (effective May 4, 2012).</u></b></p>	<p>Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.</p>	<p>More effective communication and clearer information regarding procedural requirements for electronically filing cases with the Authority, FSIP, and OGC.</p>
<p><b><u>OGC Guidance on Information Requests (October 2011)</u></b></p>	<p>Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.</p>	<p>The Guidance is a revision of previous guidance that issued on this topic. Using plain writing, it assists parties – both union and management –in determining their rights and obligations regarding information requests related to their collective-bargaining responsibilities under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute.</p>
<p><b><u>OGC Case Law Outline (February 2012 and subsequent updates)</u></b></p>	<p>Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.</p>	<p>This legal research tool is the second edition that the OGC revised to incorporate plain writing. OGC employees and parties who appear before the FLRA are the primary users of this resource.</p>
<p><b><u>Representation Case Law Outline (April 2013)</u></b></p>	<p>Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.</p>	<p>This Outline, which incorporates plain-writing principles and is available on the Agency website, is a very important tool for researching representation case issues.</p>

<b>Revision of Representation Regulations (Part 2422) and Unfair Labor Practice Regulations (Part 2423)</b>	Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.	The OGC revised representation and unfair labor practice regulations to be consistent with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 guidelines.
<b>External Publications – Agency Strategic Plan, Congressional Budget Justification, and Performance Review Report</b>	The Public, OMB, and Congress	In 2015, the Authority prioritized application of plain-language principles to these documents.
<b>The Agency’s website – www.FLRA.gov – redesigned and launched a brand new website (Agency-wide effort – Nov. 2015 through April 2016)</b>	The public, labor-relations practitioners, federal-agency employees, Congress, OMB	Plain-language principles applied – active voice; improved organization by case types; visually engaging design, simplified global navigation, improved usability and search function, all-new substantive content, and a convenient training-registration tool
<b>OGC Dismissal Letters and Appeal Decisions</b>	Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.	OGC strives to provide clearer bases for decision-making.
<b>FSIP Decisions and Orders; Opinions and Decisions of Panel Arbitrators; and procedural-determination letters</b>	Labor-relations practitioners; Federal-agency employees; managers; and union representatives.	FSIP consistently uses clear and concise communication.

### **III. Inform Agency staff of Plain Writing Act’s (Act) requirements:**

- a. Information on the Act remains posted on the FLRA’s intranet and internet sites.
- b. The OGC Writing Committee has been in existence for three years. The OGC Writing Policy (March 2012, revised October 2014) remains in effect. OGC employees continue to use the two-page two-sided laminated Quick Reference Guide (April 2012). The Writing Committee provides on-going assistance to other OGC committees, workgroups, and authors by reviewing external written work of a policy nature.

- c. The OGC Writing Committee continues to implement two new writing initiatives. Through the Quarterly Writing Competition, the Committee awards a trophy and a small cash award to the author of a high-quality written document. During the past year, several employees received this award. Within the last year, the OGC debuted a Wiki, which is a means of collaboration and communication within the OGC. The Writing Committee has a page on the Wiki where the Committee posts the winners of the Quarterly Writing awards. The Committee also posts the winner’s document. The Wiki also contains a page of quality documents where the writer has used plain language, and these are available to all employees to use as a resource. In 2015, the Committee continued to make awards to those employees whose documents were worthy of recognition. And the OGC has posted on the Wiki many more quality documents for agents to use as resources.
  
- d. The Authority continues to improve the changes that it implemented as part of the decision-writing initiative that it began in October 2011. A decision-writing workgroup provided the Authority’s Members with several recommendations intended to improve the quality and readability of Authority decisions. These recommendations, all of which the Authority Members adopted, include: substituting more informative, “deep-issue statements” for the standard boilerplate in the “Statement of the Case” section; eliminating the “Positions of the Parties” section, and, instead, “weaving” the parties’ arguments into the “Analysis” section; in the “Background” section, eliminating unnecessary cites to the record except when directly quoting or there is some need to know where in the record the point has been made; reducing acronyms and initialisms; eliminating “substantive” footnotes, to ensure that all relevant points of discussion appear in the text; moving case citations and record citations to footnotes, rather than keeping them in text, in order to improve readability; and changing the “Decision” and “Order” sections from passive to active voice.
  
- e. Two years ago, the Authority started a new column in the Agency’s weekly newsletter, FLRA In Session. This column, The Writing Corner, presents weekly tips on plain writing. In 2015 the Writing Corner continued to appear in the weekly FLRA In Session.

**IV. Training**

a. Agency provided the following trainings:

<b>Type of Training</b>	<b>Number of employees trained</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>For Authority Staff: Live Presentation by Bryan Garner,</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>November 14, 2012</b>

Advanced Legal Writing and Editing		
For OGC Staff: Live Presentation by Bryan Garner, Advanced Legal Writing and Editing	50	December 6, 2012
For Authority Staff: Introductory and Refresher Drafting Guide Training, presented by Authority Staff	20	March 5, 2014

**V. Ongoing compliance/sustaining change**

- a. Individuals should send issues regarding compliance to Gina Grippando at [EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov](mailto:EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov).
- b. FLRA-component coordinators are responsible for documenting and reporting the use of plain writing in Agency communications.
- c. Each FLRA component (Authority, FSIP, and OGC) is responsible for developing a plain-writing clearance process for documents.

**VI. Agency's plain-writing website:**

- a. Website address: [http://www.flra.gov/plain\\_language](http://www.flra.gov/plain_language).
- b. Contact us at: [EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov](mailto:EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov).
- c. Implementation of the Act
  - i. Press Releases.
  - ii. [OMB implementation guidance on the Plain Writing Act of 2010](#).

**VII. Customer-Satisfaction Evaluation After Experiencing Plain-Writing Communications**

We invite the public to give us feedback on the FLRA's implementation of its Plain-Writing Initiative using [EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov](mailto:EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov). We will report on such feedback in future compliance reports. During the past year we have not received any feedback or inquiries. The Agency's newest initiative for 2016 is the new and improved

agency website at FLRA.gov. We invite the public to provide feedback on the new website using [EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov](mailto:EngagetheFLRA@flra.gov).