Plain Writing Act Compliance Report of the Farm Credit Administration

April 11, 2025

The Farm Credit Administration recognizes the importance of plain writing, and we strive to ensure that all the documents we issue are written clearly. By doing so, we accomplish our mission more effectively, and we comply with the requirements of the Plain Writing Act of 2010.

The Plain Writing Act requires federal agencies to write "clear government communication that the public can understand and use." In July 2011, we issued a Plain Writing Act Implementation Plan (PDF) to ensure that we meet the requirements of the law.

This report describes our plain writing program and our activities over the past 12 months to support plain writing at FCA.

FCA documents covered by the Plain Writing Act

FCA has identified the following agency documents as covered by the Plain Writing Act:

- Reports of examination
- Informational memorandums
- Bookletters
- Policy statements
- Legal opinions
- Major agency reports
- Text for the website
- Regulatory preambles

The following table provides more detail about some of these documents.

Publication type	Audience	How we ensure these documents comply
All major agency reports, all of which are available on our website	These documents have multiple audiences: • Representatives of the Farm Credit System • Members of Congress • Media representatives • The general public	Editors in FCA's Office of Congressional and Public Affairs (OCPA) review these documents for clarity and work with content authors to revise them.
Reports of Examination—presented to management and board directors at the institutions we regulate	Management and board directors at Farm Credit System institutions review these reports, which FCA examiners produce to document findings from the exams they perform. Approximately 10 to 20 individuals review each report. The System consists of 59 banks and lending associations.	Supervisory examiners review these reports for clarity before they are issued.
Guidance documents for Farm Credit System institutions, including informational memorandums and bookletters	Management and board directors at Farm Credit System institutions review these documents. The number of readers ranges from 1,000 to 2,000. However, because these documents are posted on our website, the general public may also read them.	OCPA editors provide a comprehensive plain writing review of each of these documents before distributing and posting to the agency website.
News releases	The primary audiences include agricultural and finance reporters and representatives of the Farm Credit System. We send our releases to around 400 reporters in print and broadcasting.	OCPA editors work closely with subject-matter experts to ensure that our press releases are written clearly.
FCA website	The audiences for our website include the following: • Representatives of the Farm Credit System • Borrowers and potential borrowers • Members of the media • Members of Congress • The general public	In 2018, we revamped our website. We reviewed all the pages for plain writing and rewrote much of the content. The vendor that worked with us to revamp the site also provided some plain writing guidance.
FCA Today, the agency's electronic employee newsletter	The agency's workforce of more than 300 individuals constitutes the audience for the newsletter.	Individuals from across the agency submit content for the newsletter to the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs. OCPA editors provide plain-language edits to the articles and clear these edits with the article authors.

Recent plain language reviews

As noted in the table above, editors in the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs perform comprehensive plain language reviews for many of the documents that are posted on the FCA website or sent to the institutions we regulate. Over the past 12 months, OCPA editors reviewed three [informational memorandums](#), three [bookletters](#), and several memorandums. These documents provide information and guidance to the financial institutions we regulate.

When performing plain writing reviews, OCPA editors work closely with all content authors to ensure that the edits made to achieve clarity still convey the authors' intended meaning.

OCPA also uses the plain writing application StyleWriter to measure the effectiveness of their plain writing reviews. (See below for more information about StyleWriter.) OCPA editors run original versions of all documents through StyleWriter; after editing the documents and working with authors to finalize the content, they run the final versions through the application. According to StyleWriter metrics, the plain language reviews markedly improve the documents' "bog index," or readability, as well as other plain writing indices, such as jargon and grade level.

Other FCA documents undergo plain language reviews within their originating offices. Our Office of Examination has emphasized the importance of plain writing reviews by including plain writing guidelines in the internal control document that FCA examiners must use when they review reports of examination.

Over the past 12 months, OCPA editors also provided plain language reviews of the agency's three major reports:

- [FCA Annual Report (PDF)](#)

- [FCA Performance and Accountability Report (PDF)](#)

- [FCA Proposed Budget and Performance Plan (PDF)](#)

FCA's plain writing training program

Since starting the program in 2011, we have provided training in various ways. The table below shows training that has occurred since April 15, 2024.

| Type of training	Number of employees trained over the past 12 months
Online training for new employees, including summer interns. To provide plain writing training to new employees, we use a module available on Percipio.com. Titled "The Plain Writing Act," the course consists of approximately 40 minutes of instruction, knowledge checks throughout the course, and a five-question course test at the end.	42 employees
Self-study curriculum. Our Office of Examination provides a self-study curriculum — POWER Writing I and II. These courses, which were developed by a contractor in 2020, cover many of the principles in the Federal Plain Language Guidelines. These two courses are part of the mandatory training that all associate examiners receive when they join FCA.	Writing I— 11 employees Writing II— 12 employees

Although FCA's Office of Congressional and Public Affairs offered no formal agencywide plain writing training for FCA employees over the past 12 months, we did publish a short series of articles in the agency's employee newsletter on the topic of plain writing:

Article title	Publication date
Tips for plain writing: Be active	April 9, 2025
Tips for plain writing: Choose your words carefully	April 2, 2025
Tips for plain writing: Structure and organization	March 26, 2025
What is plain writing, and why does it matter?	March 19, 2025

Further resources to support plain writing at FCA

Plain writing intranet site

OCPA maintains a plain writing page on the FCA intranet site in SharePoint. As the screenshot below shows, this page provides FCA employees with information about training, the FCA plain writing award, and links to numerous plain writing resources, including the agency's style guide. It also encourages employees to reach out to OCPA for grammar or writing style questions.
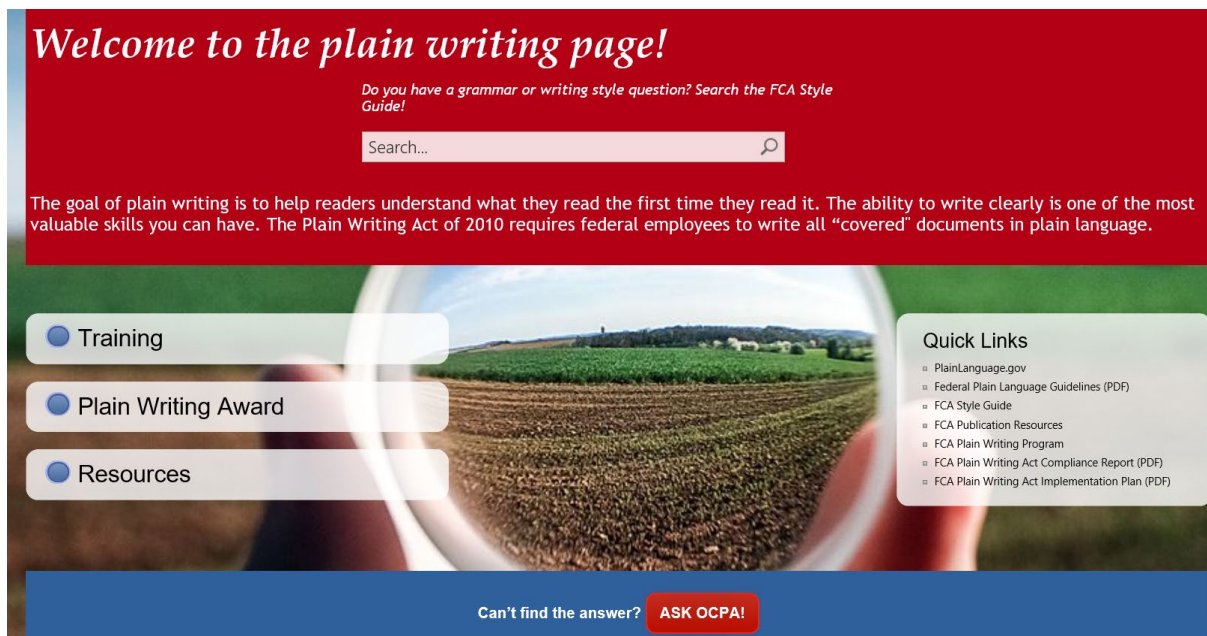
FCA style guide

In late 2015, OCPA worked with plain language consultant Ginny Redish to finalize a style guide for the use of all FCA employees. We modeled the style guide after the National Archives' guide. For the most part, our guide follows the style conventions of the Associated Press. In addition to providing guidance on punctuation, capitalization, and other style issues, the guide contains a section on plain writing. It includes many examples from FCA documents.

A plain writing technology tool: StyleWriter

FCA holds an enterprise-wide license for StyleWriter, an application that FCA writers can use to measure and improve the clarity of their writing. Among other measures, StyleWriter provides a "bog index." This measure considers sentence length, word difficulty, the use of abbreviations, passive verbs, and other variables. OCPA periodically publishes reminders in the employee newsletter to encourage FCA writers to take advantage of this resource.

FCA publication resources

In 2016, we launched a publication resources SharePoint site. As the screenshot below shows, we also offer numerous Word templates for common agency documents. These documents facilitate 508 compliance and ensure formatting consistency in our written materials.

Style guide	Templates	Photos and videos	FCA logos and seals	Other resources
FCA Style Guide *Questions? Comments? Additions to suggest?* *We welcome your feedback.*	Word templates for standard FCA documents are available in your Word software. Click **File**, **New**, then select the "Shared" or "Custom" tab	Be careful about using an image from the internet because it may be copyrighted. You can use clip art or photos in any program on your agency laptop.	FCA publications, both internal and external, use the official FCA logo or seal. Producing materials bearing nonstandard logos and seals undermines the consistency	Editorial Policy and Submission Guidelines for FCA Today articles "Ask the Editor" series in FCA Today

FCA's plain writing website

Plain Writing at FCA is the agency's official plain writing web page. A link to the page is available from our homepage. To give the public an opportunity to report FCA documents that are difficult to understand, the agency's plain writing web page provides contact information for Emily Yaghmour, the agency's plain writing coordinator. As of yet, we have received no feedback from the public through our plain writing web page.

For more information

If you have any questions about FCA's plain writing activities, please contact one of the following individuals:

- Ben Mosely, director of the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, who also serves as FCA's senior agency official for plain writing. His email address is moselyb@fca.gov.
- Emily Yaghmour, deputy director of the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, who serves as the agency's plain language coordinator. Her email address is yaghmoure@fca.gov.