



# **IN.gov Web Design Standards & Requirements**

**Version 0.07**

**Drafted by IN.gov Program Staff & IN.gov Governance Council**

## 1. HOW THESE WEB DESIGN REQUIREMENTS & STANDARDS WERE CREATED

Though standardization of Web design across an entire Web site (regardless of internal divisions of an entity) is found across the thousands of Web sites of private sector entities, governmental entities are notoriously bad at securing executive support and reaching consensus on a standard design. This was certainly true for the state of Indiana, which once had more than 75 different agencies with different looking Web sites. As a result, sites were agency-focused, not customer-focused; confusing due to lack of consistency; presented the same types of information and functions (*e.g.*, navigation and search) differently; usually had a stale design and illogical structure; with pages often out of date. All this, despite the fact that external customers demand an easy-to-use Web site and do not care whether the Web site is supported by the private or public sector.

To meet the expectations of its external customers, the governor's office and the IN.gov Program took on the bold initiative to become the first state in the nation to implement a common set of design requirements and standards. These requirements and standards are derived from the work of a multi-agency task force that was established in 2007 to create a standard "look and feel" for state agency Web sites.

These Web Design Requirements and Standards:

- Help ensure that IN.gov is consistent and customer-focused;
- Reinforce the IN.gov brand, which communicates trust, security, and ease-of-use;
- Reinforce that Indiana's entities are part of a larger state government while still allowing those entities to communicate their own message; and,
- Improve usability and accessibility.

### *1.1 Changes to these Web Design Requirements & Standards*

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The effort to standardize across IN.gov is a difficult balance between the state and agency identity, but the multi-agency redesign team struck a good balance with which to start. That said, nothing is perfect; so improvements to the design are encouraged. Suggestions should be submitted to [webmasters.IN.gov](mailto:webmasters.IN.gov) for review by the IN.gov Governance Council.

Major IN.gov redesigns, akin to that in 2007-08, should not occur regularly, as users should enjoy consistency for a reasonable period of time. That said, a site-wide redesign will be much easier in the future given the common foundation sites are built on with the CMS. Requests for a major redesign should be submitted to [webmasters.IN.gov](mailto:webmasters.IN.gov) for review by the IN.gov Governance Council.



## ***1.2 Which Agencies Are Required to Comply with the Web Design Requirements & Standards?***

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All state agencies are required to use the CMS to develop and deliver Web content as directed by the IN.gov Program. All state agencies, other than excepted agencies, are required to comply with the Web Design requirements and standards detailed in this document. (Put another way, while excepted agencies are required to leverage the CMS, they are not required to follow the *Web Design* requirements.)

The excepted agencies were granted permission to not comply with the Web Design requirements outlined in this document because those few agencies have an expressly commercial appeal, where the appearance of separation from the rest of state government is an important factor to the success of their programs.

Exempted entities are invited to work with the IN.gov Program to jointly determine how the exempted entity's design will be migrated and supported in the CMS. To ensure consistency and to avoid user confusion, exempted entities that desire to use the IN.gov Design must agree to comply with the all the requirements outlined in this document. The IN.gov Design, in whole or any part thereof may not be used on any other Web site other than Web sites on IN.gov maintained in and published by the CMS.

## ***1.3 Design Complies with Best Practices of Modern Web Design***

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The IN.gov design is built based on today's modern Web design standards. Content is marked up semantically so that the underlying HTML markup properly designates the content displayed. Additionally, content and design are separated in accordance with modern Web design standards. This separation of content and design has many benefits, which include:

- making it easier to make enterprise style changes across the entire site with the change of one cascading style sheet (CSS);
- faster page load times;
- pages that are more accessible to impaired users who use alternative devices; and,
- allowing the same content to be appropriately formatted for other devices, such as handhelds and printers, with only a different style sheet.

With the work that has gone into building the new IN.gov design, the next redesign of IN.gov will be much easier.

## ***1.4 A Note from the Designer, Ben Roe***

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Though the final result is a collaborative effort, the primary designer of the IN.gov Design summarizes it as such:

IN.gov Web Design Standards & Requirements  
Version 0.07  
Last Updated: April 22, 2008



The overall greatest benefit of the new design is the unity it emotes. Each agency, while having its own identity through the use of color, logos, imagery and navigation, appears to be part of the whole. The message of oneness and cooperation is one that businesses and especially government can use to their advantage to relieve customers/citizens and relate an impression of a strong unified entity.

Using the “F-Pattern” as a framework for how a user sees the page, a visitor to the site is immediately presented the upper-level navigation and search, which remains dominant across the portal, and tends to encapsulate the agency information inside of it, further strengthening the previous point. It remains light and neutral, allowing each agency page to differentiate itself with a vibrant and strong title banner and logo.

The same can be said for the left navigation: being mostly whitespace and accentuating its headlines, it allows the central billboard to pop from the page and pushes focus inwards. The billboard, which is the most dominant feature in the design, is positioned in the center of the page so the user’s eye will end on it as the page is scanned, creating a valuable platform to promote important news and information, services, products, programs and initiatives. Because this is the most obvious feature of the site, maintaining the strength of unity by promoting a singular image with singular purpose further reassures the core philosophy to the user.

The “widgets” are pushed towards the bottom of the left and right navigation to cause much less distraction for the overall effect, but still play a significant role in the ease of user accessibility. Online services play a very important role for the portal, so the top right corner of the agency page is reserved for them. The fact that they are always in the same spot on every page is helpful when navigating from agency to agency, and likewise with the FAQ/Info box.

## 2. WEB DESIGN REQUIREMENTS & STANDARDS

*Unless otherwise expressly stated, there are no exceptions to these Requirements & Standards.*

### 2.1 XHTML 1.1 Transitional

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Every effort has been made to comply with the W3C's XHTML 1.1 Transitional specification. All tradeoffs against this specification are contained in the universal templates so that as opportunities for improvement are identified, they can be rolled out across IN.gov.

The uppercase HTML produced by the CMS is a known limitation and the IN.gov Program has formally requested that lowercase HTML be produced in the next version of the CMS. Other than the uppercase setting, the CMS generally produces clean, compliant XHTML. Users who edit the source code should make every effort to comply with XHTML 1.1 Transitional (or higher).

XHTML 1.1 Transitional was selected because the IN.gov Program does not yet believe there is a reasonable alternative to account for the removal of target attribute in links in the XHTML STRICT specification.

### 2.2 Overall Structure

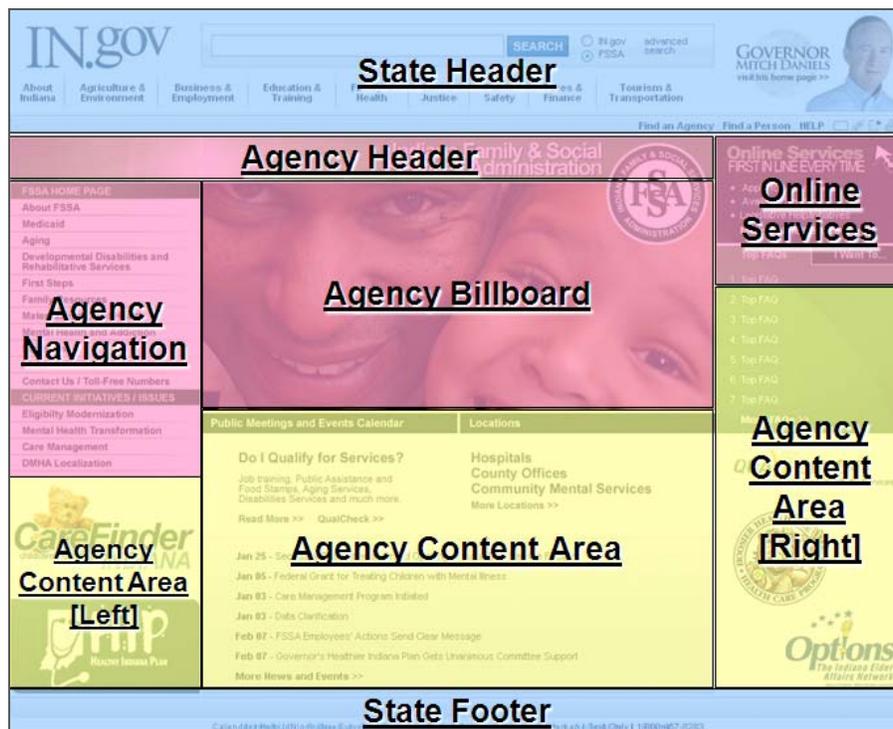
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To ensure that a minimum number of templates are created, which ensures enterprise "updatability" in the future, all template creation is controlled by the IN.gov Program. A "global" cascading style sheet (CSS) file controls the styles for the state header, state footer, and the structural design of the entire Web site. Each project (typically an agency site) has its own CSS file that includes the colors and background images for that project.

To ensure compliance with these Web Design Requirements and Standards, the IN.gov Program controls the global and project CSS files. No styles are permitted to override the global or project CSS files. (To request a change to a style, initiate a Content Management System change request via [Webmasters.IN.gov](http://Webmasters.IN.gov). All suggestions will be reviewed by the IN.gov Governance Council.)

The width of the IN.gov Design is fixed at 1024 X 768 pixels.

Section 2.2, is divided into sub-sections that address each of the areas in the graphic below.



## 2.2.1 State Header & State Footer

The style of the state header and state footer is controlled by the IN.gov Program.

The state header includes three primary functional areas: (1) search; (2) site-wide navigation; and (3) site-wide options. No edits can be made without approval from the IN.gov Program (which works with the IN.gov Governance Council).

## 2.2.2 Search

On all Web pages, the search consists of a search input field and link to a page with “advanced search” options. On the IN.gov top level, search includes the option to search all of IN.gov and to search the Web. By default, a user searches IN.gov only.

On pages that are not located on the IN.gov top level (e.g. agency sites), search includes the option to search all of IN.gov and to search the agency. By default, a user searches the agency.



### ***2.2.3 Site-Wide Navigation***

The IN.gov logo, found on all pages in the upper left, will link to the IN.gov home page.

All state agencies and the lieutenant governor's office will have the picture of the governor on the top right of the page; the image of the governor will link to the governor's Web site. (The image is selected by the governor's office.) Exempted entities will have the picture of their elected official; the image of the elected official will link to the elected official's Web site. (The image is selected by the elected official or his or her authorized representative.)

The primary navigation, located on all IN.gov Web pages, includes horizontal two-line menu items labeled as follows:

- About Indiana
- Agriculture & Environment
- Business & Employment
- Education & Training
- Family & Health
- Law & Justice
- Public Safety
- Taxes & Finance
- Tourism & Transportation

Clicking on one of the two-line menu items will take the user to a "second-level" page containing "deep" links to Web pages on other Web sites on IN.gov that are related to the two-line menu item category.

### ***2.2.4 Site-Wide Options***

The sub-header navigation structure in the horizontal line below the IN.gov Navigation includes:

- Find an Agency: Links to an index of state entities categorized by IN.gov's primary navigation categories
- Find a Person: Links to an online service that allows users to find a state employee by name, phone number and e-mail address
- HELP: Links to help.IN.gov, with content jointly administered between IN.gov and the Indiana Department of Administration's State Information Center.
- Page Options to Subscribe to IN.gov Updates, E-mail This Page, Suggest a Link, Rate This Page, and Print This Page.



### 2.2.5 State Footer

The state footer shall contain links to the following IN.gov pages:

- **Calendar:** link takes the user to an HTML simple list page of calendar events from the Press Releases & Events Application
- **Help** link takes the user to the State Information Center (SIC) site, Help.IN.gov
- **IN.gov User Survey:** link takes the user to the IN.gov User Survey page
- **Newsroom:** link takes the user to an HTML simple list page of press releases in date order starting with the most recent from the Press Releases & Events Application
- **Online Services:** link takes the user to a page with a list of all online services by type or topic
- **Policies:** link takes the user to a simple list page of policy links
- **Sitemap:** link takes the user to the IN.gov sitemap
- **Text Only:** link takes the user to a page that displays the Web site page in text format links

If state agencies have similar links as to the footer of IN.gov (Contact Us, Sitemap, etc.) that are unique to the agency's site, they must put them in the left column navigation or in a widget below the left navigation.

### 2.3 Agency Header (Welcome Banner)

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The style of the agency header is agreed to by the entity and controlled by the IN.gov Program.

The section directly above the agency navigation will primarily be "empty." (This area provides balance to the other areas that include text.) The IN.gov Program uses this area in extreme cases for alerts. *Amber Alerts receive priority over any other alert.* Content authors at the Indiana State Police have direct access to issue Amber Alerts. An additional example of a site wide alert includes Homeland Security's *Current Threat Level*.

On the IN.gov Top Level, the agency header with a state logo (image of Indiana) shall display on every page for the IN.gov "Top Level." On other Web sites, the agency header is displayed on every page within the agency's site and includes the agency's name and its logo, if any.

The substantive portion of the entity's name will be more prominent than organizational and operative words (*e.g., Public Employees' Retirement Fund: the words "Retirement Fund" will be more prominently displayed than the words "Public Employees."*)



If the logo in the agency header overlaps into the billboard section, the portion of the image in the agency header that overlaps the billboard must also be included in the billboard image. (In order to accommodate this situation, IN.gov offers, as a service, the creation of billboards.) In this case, the logo cannot exceed 94px in height (50% in header and 50% in billboard area) and is subject to IN.gov Program approval.



Only the IN.gov Program is able to update content in the agency header. If agencies wish to change the agency header, they will need to request a design change via Webmasters.IN.gov. The design change is subject to the review and approval of the IN.gov Program to ensure consistency.

## 2.4 Online Services

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This section displays on all IN.gov and agency pages unless the agency content area spans two columns, instead of the standard one column. The style of the online services area is agreed to by the entity and controlled by the IN.gov Program. An agency is able to populate the drop down list template or the simple bulleted list templates with the online services links associated with their agency.

“Online services” refer to external or stand-alone applications that the agency offers via the Web site. Beyond those obvious online services, entities are encouraged to use this space to include links to information where users can find something useful that may simply be a list, *e.g.*, “Locate an [Agency] Location.” Conversely, this section will not be used to link to other areas or documents (*e.g.*, strategic plans or contact us forms).



# IN.gov

The online services, “First in Line Every Time” image links to a page with links to all state online services. If your entity has an online service that is not included in the list of links to all state online services, notify the IN.gov Program via a “General Inquiry” request on [Webmasters.IN.gov](http://Webmasters.IN.gov).

If an agency does not have any services, the “First in Line Every Time” image will be displayed at the top of the agency content area (right), under the state header.



If an agency does have online services, the list of online services provided by the agency (or other relevant services provided by other agencies) will be presented.

The list of online services will not exceed ten (10) lines of services. If the list of online services exceeds the maximum lines allowed for this widget, services will be categorized with the categories clickable to expand and display the services in that category.

## 2.5 Agency Navigation

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Agency navigation is determined by the agency and is designed so that agencies can have two levels of navigation. When a first-level link has sub-links, it has an arrow next to it; when clicked on, the second-level navigation appears.



The limitation to two levels reflects the goal of the IN.gov Design to have no page more than four levels (or three clicks) away from the IN.gov home page. As additional levels of navigation may be necessary in a site and such navigation is appropriate an unordered list (<ul>) in the agency content area. Agencies also are permitted (but not encouraged) to include links within the body content by linking words contained in a sentence.

# IN.gov

Larger sites can have an additional level added by having a home page, then a second set of sub-site home pages for major programs or initiatives with their own left navigation, thus allowing for an additional level of navigation, as discussed in section 2.8 on billboards. Agency examples include FSSA's Division of Aging (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/da/>), Disability & Rehabilitative Services (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/>), Family Resources (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/>), Medicaid Policy & Planning (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ompp/>) and Mental Health & Addiction (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/dmha/>) sub-sites.

The following are requirements for the agency navigation area:

- A link to the agency home page is always first. (On larger sites where there are sub-site sections, the home page of the sub-area must be the second link after the agency home page and will have a similar color background in either a lighter or darker shade.)

<b>FSSA Home</b>	
<b>OMPP Home</b>	
<b>Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP)</b>	
<b>Hoosier Healthwise</b>	
<b>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</b>	
<b>Care Select</b>	
<b>Medicaid Select</b>	
<b>MEDWorks</b>	
<b>Medicaid Waivers</b>	
<b>Provider Information</b>	
<b>Other Programs</b>	
<b>Medicare Assistance</b>	▼
<b>Hospital Care for the Indigent</b>	▼
<b>Indiana Chronic Disease Management Program</b>	
<b>Indiana Medicaid</b>	
<b>Rx for Indiana</b>	
<b>Data &amp; Statistics</b>	
<b>Contact Us</b>	

- The agency home page link (located at the top of the left navigation) must be “Agency acronym Home” (i.e. DNR Home) or “Agency common name Home” (i.e. Tourism Home) with the agency acronym in all capital letters and the agency common name and home in title case.
- The maximum number of first-level links in the agency navigation (without a link header divider) shall be fourteen (14). The maximum number of links in the agency first level navigation (with link header dividers) shall be twenty-six (26), which includes the link headers, unless agency gains approval from the IN.gov Program.
- Links to non-HTML pages (e.g., MS Word, PDF, etc.) are not included in the agency navigation (these are more appropriately linked to from the agency content area) and will launch in a new browser window.



- Sites off of IN.gov are not included in the agency navigation. (These are more appropriately linked to from the agency content area.)
- Agency navigation (when second-level navigation is collapsed) will never be so long as to cause a user with a standard screen size of 1024x768 to scroll down to see more navigation.

Other various best practices are recommended by the IN.gov Program when navigation is developed or changed:

- An agency should always include a Contact Us page with a form that allows for e-mail submission without an e-mail client.
- Links to IN.gov sites outside the agency site are discouraged from the agency navigation absent a link header indicating to the user that the site will take them away from the agency site.
- Navigation should be structured so that it is easily understood by any user. Government acronyms, except those of the agency name, are discouraged.
- With a large site, common navigational items should be grouped into second level navigation or into separate areas under a link header. (The Information For and Most Visited section on the IN.gov home page are examples of common navigational items grouped together for logical access.)

## 2.6 Agency content area (Left)

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Below the agency navigation, there should be room for at least one “widget.” Widgets can be as simple as an image inviting users to click to an important area on the site or the first step, through a Web form elements, to an interactive process (*e.g.*, the Who Are My Legislators and myLocal widgets on the IN.gov home page.) Widgets should be 209px wide and always have a 3px gutter around all four sides. (To assist agencies with creative widget designs, IN.gov offers, as a service, the creation of widgets.) The number of widgets permitted on each agency’s site should be determined by the agency content area (center) on the agency’s home page. Widgets should not lengthen the agency’s homepage and should be balanced on both the agency content area (left) and agency content area (right).

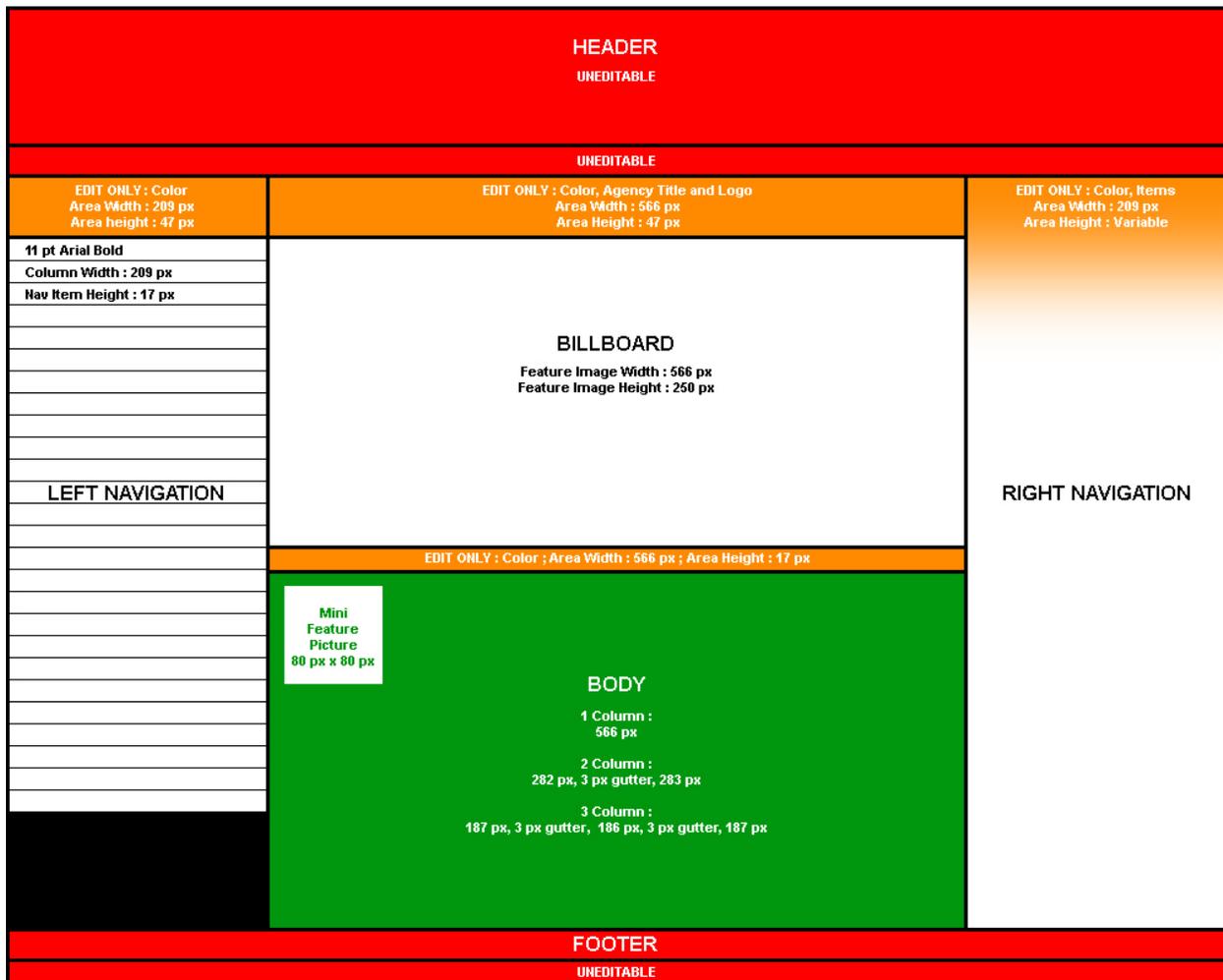
Widgets should very clearly indicate what will happen when clicked upon.



## 2.7 Two & Three Column Designs

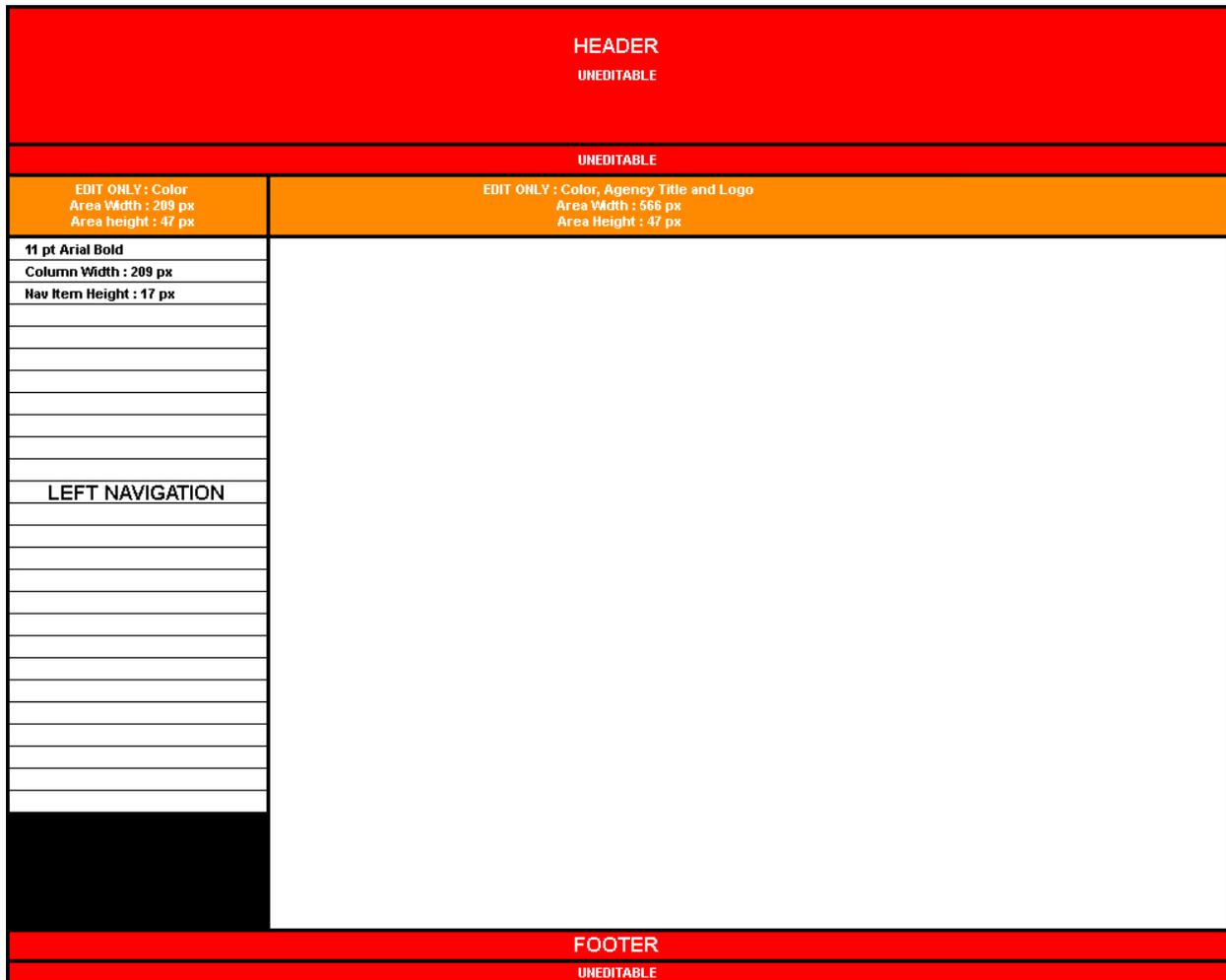
The IN.gov design accommodates two and three column designs. Three columns should be used in every instance, except in the very limited instances when the width of the content in the agency content area cannot fit in the agency content area with three columns.

### Three Column



If they agency content does not fit properly in the three column template, a two column template exists that omits the online services and agency content area (Right) areas. For example, Maps.IN.gov requires the use of an I-Frame (see <http://www.in.gov/gov/2950.htm>.)

## Two Column



## 2.8 Agency Billboards & Bumper Stickers

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Billboards and bumper stickers are only used on three column designs and can be jpg, gifs, or Flash files. (PNG files with transparency are not supported by IE 6 and thus not used on IN.gov currently.)

Billboards are intended to market major initiatives, services, events, and online services. Billboards are a fixed width (566px) and height (250px) and should include a 3px white space on the bottom to create the image gutter. These are used on major “landing” pages (like the agency home page), not all pages.

(To assist agencies with creative billboard and bumper sticker designs, IN.gov offers, as a service, the creation of billboards and bumper stickers.)

Bumper stickers are used sparingly to carry on a specific sub-brand within the site. Bumper stickers are a fixed width (566px) and height (47px) and should include a 3px white space on the bottom to create the image gutter.



Billboards and bumper stickers are always followed by an <H3> with a header to provide a break in the content and textual indicator of what the following text is intended to mean.

## 2.8.1 *Billboard & Bumper Sticker Dos*

- **Do** stay within the specified measurement requirements: 566px by 250px for billboards and 566px by 47px for bumper stickers.
- **Do** ensure your billboard or bumper sticker promotes an agency program, initiative, event or online service.



- **Do** link to more information or an application from your image using the “learn more” and “get started” buttons, which indicate the user should take action:

learn more

get started

- **Do** include standard IN.gov Flash navigation for all three (3) or five (5) Flash slide files.
- **Do** consider searching online stock photos sites such as <http://www.luckyoliver.com/>, <http://istockphoto.com/> or <http://www.sxc.hu/>. All these sites have high quality photos that are either free or can be purchased for a nominal cost. Ensure the agency has ownership of the photo or purchased licensing to use it. Unless explicitly stated on the photo site that the photo is FREE, licensing must be purchased.
- **Do** use flash, if possible, when shooting live action shots. The red-eye effect can be corrected after the fact, but digital grain and blurriness cannot, which is commonly a symptom of inadequate light.
- **Do** ensure your logo is properly placed on the billboard. The agency logo cannot exceed 94px in height and no more than 50% should fall in billboard area.

- **Do** submit your billboard and bumper sticker images for IOT approval.

## 2.8.2 *Billboard & Bumper Sticker Don'ts*

- **Don't** create photo “montages.” Consider using three (3) or five (5) slide Flash files to communicate multiple messages or promote multiple initiatives, programs, etc.



- **Don't** use ambiguous, vague photos. Online services are clearly technology-related so agencies are quick to use photos of a computer screen, mouse, keyboard, etc. Focus more on the service than the fact that it is online.



- **Don't** over-animate. Some movement is eye-catching; too much movement is irritating. Animation should be limited to Flash billboards only. At this time, animation is not permitted in the left, right or center content areas.
- **Don't** have billboard images appear on more than one page of the site. If an image appears on the homepage Flash or is the homepage billboard, it cannot be used as the billboard or bumper sticker for a sub-site homepage.
- **Don't** try to cram a portrait (vertical) photo in to the landscape (horizontal) billboard and bumper sticker templates. Live action photography from an event should always be shot landscape (wider than it is tall) rather than portrait (taller than it is wide).
- **Don't** use blurry photography. It distracts from the photo and the message.

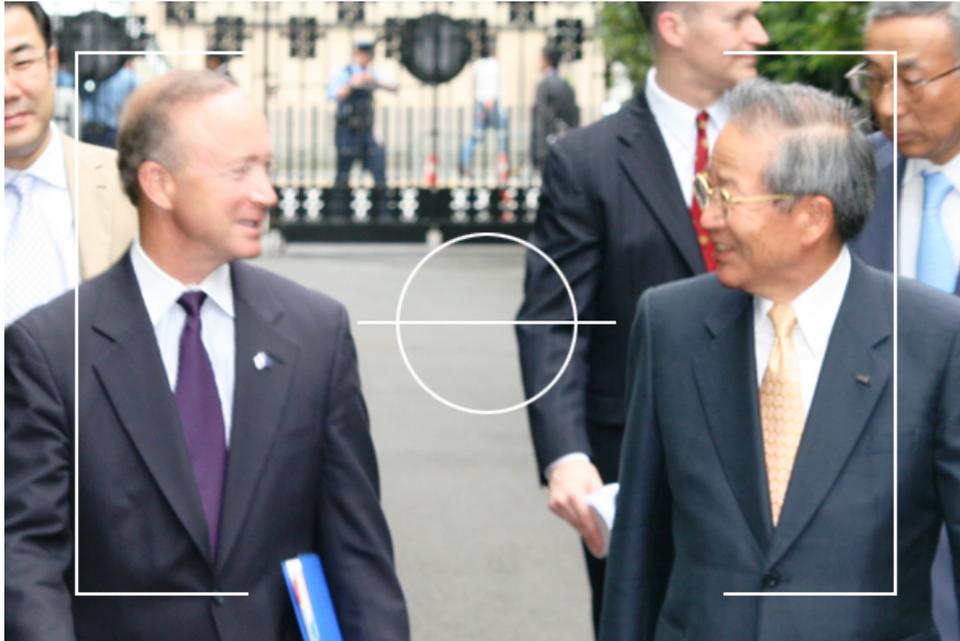
### ***2.8.3 Billboard & Bumper Sticker Avoids***

- **Avoid** linking directly to media files (e. g. a file that requires an audio or video player to launch) directly from billboards and bumper stickers.
- **Avoid** live action shots from events. Oftentimes these photos are not taken in a manner that allows for room to add text, links, buttons or Flash navigation. If you do use live action photos, ask the photographer to “overshoot” to allow for excessive empty space around the subjects for cropping. The first photo was taken too “tight” while the second was shot wider, allowing the designer to crop the image.

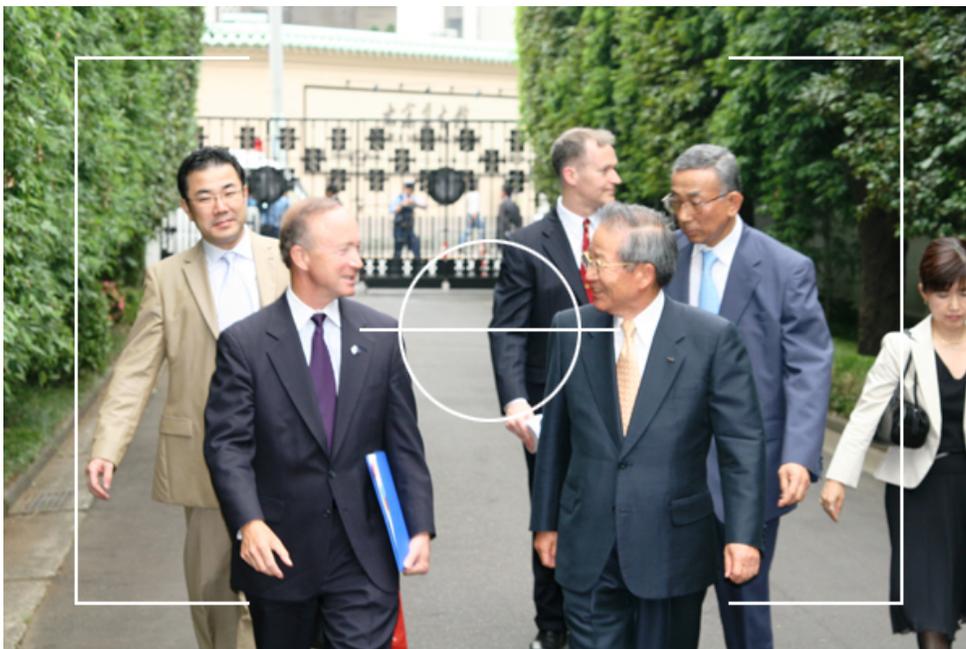
# IN.gov

- Avoid, as much as possible, using the zoom function since it allows for less focus capability. It also encourages “overshooting” for cropping and design purposes.

**WRONG – Too close.**



**CORRECT – Allows room to crop.**



## 2.9 Agency content area (Center)

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This area is the primary area for content. Because the three-column design, more specifically the left and right content areas, allows agencies to “advertise” and use images throughout the site, agencies should focus mainly on informational, static content in the center content area. Animated imagery distracts from informational content and detracts from the intended purpose of the site.

When the page does not include a billboard, it always includes an H2, which is the primary heading for the page.



*IN.gov >> Governor Daniels >> First Lady Cheri Daniels >> Heart to Heart*

### Heart Healthy Tips

**Get annual check-ups.** Check your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose. Ask your doctor what each number means and make sure they're in the healthy range.

**Don't smoke.** Women who smoke are two to six times more likely to suffer a heart attack than non-smoking women. For more information on how to quit, visit <http://www.in.gov/inshape/tobacco/> 

**Exercise regularly.** 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity will help to strengthen your heart. The heart is a muscle- it needs exercise! There are lots of things you can do to get your heart pumping!

H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7 should be used to further outline content in this area. Typically, H3 and H4 will be sufficient, but more detailed documents may require “deeper” (higher numbered) levels of headings.

## H3 Headers (Welcome and Latest Headlines & Events)

H3 headers should be used to title a content section of a page.

### Welcome

#### Welcome to the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs

Since its establishment in 1945, the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) has remained focused on aiding and assisting "Hoosier" veterans, and qualified family members or survivors, who are eligible for benefits or advantages provided by Indiana and the U.S. government.

[Read More >>](#)

### Latest Headlines & Events



In my office, we have a small staff with a particularly strong military presence. I've got an Army wife, a Navy officer, an Air Guard Reservist and the girlfriend of a National Guardsman on staff. So supporting our military is a big priority for us - it's personal...

[Read More >>](#)

## 2.10 Agency content area (Right)

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Below the online services area, there should be room for additional "widgets."

The number of widgets permitted on each agency's site (in the agency content area (left) and the agency content area (right) should be determined by the agency content area (center) on the agency's home page. Widgets should not lengthen the agency's homepage and should be balanced on both the agency content area (left) and agency content area (right).

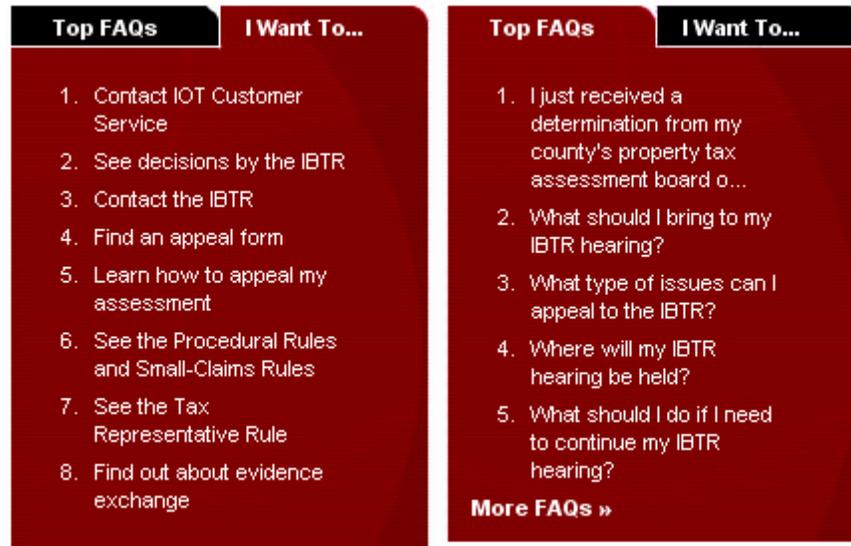
The two most common widgets in this area are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and "I Want Tos." Other enterprise widgets have been developed as well.

## 2.11 Frequently Asked Questions & I Want To Widget

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FAQs are entered into the IN.gov Program's enterprise FAQ system. This system dynamically sorts the list so the FAQs are sorted from most frequently clicked to least frequently clicked. Only the agency FAQs are included on the agency's site; however, all FAQs are available for users to search at [www.in.gov/faqs.htm](http://www.in.gov/faqs.htm). (The top most frequently clicked FAQs in the system are presented on the IN.gov home page. On the top level IN.gov pages, FAQs are presented with the relevant FAQs on each "top level" page.) To add, edit, or remove FAQs, download the FAQ template from the IOT Web site and submit the completed template via [Webmasters.IN.gov](mailto:Webmasters.IN.gov).

With the Frequently Asked Questions, “I Want Tos” are available as well. These are short statements from the point of view of the user that link to pages.



## 2.12 Homeland Security-Related Widgets

A *Current Threat Level* widget, which reflects the Federal Department of Homeland Security’s assessment of the threat level, and a *Report Suspicious Activity* widget, which links to the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center, are available for use on any site.

## 2.13 Other Page Standards

In addition to the foregoing requirements and standards, the following are recommended:

- Agency homepages should not require a scroll and certainly not more than a half page scroll.
- Agency sub-pages should attempt to limit the amount of content in the agency content area (center) to less than two scrolls. If two scrolls are necessary, the page should contain jump links that take the user to content further down on the page. Jump links should be listed in a simple bulleted list at the top of the agency content area (center) below the page name. For example, on the IOT Web site’s Security “Matters of Interest” page (<http://www.in.gov/iot/2588.htm>) users can click on one of four links at the top of the page (SPAM, Phishing, Protecting Your Laptop or Password Management) to “jump” to that content further down on the page.

- On three column pages, agency home pages and other landing pages should balance, so that the content in the left column and in the right column balance.
- Agency home pages should urge users to learn the most important initiatives and direct users to the online services offered by the agency. The home page should also reflect the most recent important actions the agency has taken (*e.g.*, through dynamic press releases or events calendar).
- The initial levels of an agency site, most importantly the home page, should be concise and drafted so that any user can understand the material presented without knowing or understanding government terminology.
- Contact Information: Each agency's Web site will have either: a) a "Contact Us" page easily accessed from the home page, or b) a contact information area on the home page. Contact information should include: Mailing address, fax number, phone number, toll free number and TTY number if available and an email address and/or Web response form.
- Agency Information: Each agency should have an "About [Agency]" page or section that describes the functions of the agency and may include the agency's mission, vision, and organizational structure.
- Avoid use of "click here" in-text links – use more descriptive link text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, instead of "Click [here](#), to view the presentation," use "Please view the [presentation](#)."
- Spell out abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used, followed by the abbreviation. Use <abbr> tag where appropriate.
- Use exclamation marks sparingly and avoid all caps.
- Break up paragraphs into easily digested "chunks". Provide informative headings (using <H3>, <H4>, etc.) and sub-headings within text to help users scan. Use bulleted or numbered lists where appropriate to allow visual scanning.
- Adopt a consistent writing style throughout the site.

## 3. ALTERNATIVE DEVICES

The separation of content (with semantic markup) and design allows content to be delivered on alternative devices and browsers with different styles. The IN.gov Program controls the styles for handheld and print style sheets and will readily create other style sheets to accommodate other devices as the support and use of style sheets for alternative devices grows.