Forms Coordinator Handbook

Indiana Archives and Records Administration

Forms Management Program

Revised June 2022

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WHAT IS A FORM?

A form is a basic business tool (whether printed, electronic, or web-based) for collecting and documenting transactions.

WHAT IS A *STATE* FORM?

According to IC 5-15-5.1-1, a State Form is:

> "…every piece of paper, transparent plate, or film containing information printed, generated, or reproduced by whatever means, with blank spaces left for the entry of additional information to be used in any **transaction** involving the state."

Forms that are not used to exchange goods, services, or financial assets would not be considered a State Form. Many internal forms, for example, do not meet this definition. Forms that are primarily instructional, preparatory, documentative (unless tied to a retention schedule), or that are utilized by one party only would not constitute a transaction.

When determining if a form needs to be considered a State Form, ask the following questions:

1. Was a decision made on which the agency needs to act (e.g., contract, license, et cetera)?
2. Were money or resources spent, and why (invoice, emergency, budget, et cetera)?
3. Is the form required by statutory authority?

Forms require action. They instruct, communicate, record, transmit, and standardize business transactions. Forms record compliance with regulations and are the first component in the life cycle of a record.

Types of forms may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Single (flat or cut) sheets
- Continuous forms
- Certificates / licenses
- Examinations / tests
- Unit sets (carbonless forms)

NON-FORMS

Many items do not fall within the standard definition of a form. These miscellaneous products and publications include posters, envelopes, engraved items, stickers, letterhead, checklists, mailing labels, business cards, newsletters, maps, logo decals, brochures, booklets, packets, annual reports, directories, instructional sheets, and handbooks. Because they do not transact business information, these items do not need a control number and are not subject to Forms Management requirements.

FORMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Forms Management program is defined by IC 5-15-5.1-1 as: "…the program maintained by the administration to provide continuity of forms design procedures from the form's origin up to its completion as a record by determining the form's size, style, and size of type; format; type of construction; number of plies; quality, weight, and type of paper and carbon; and use of the form for data entry as well as the distribution."

The Forms Management program operates within the Indiana Archives and Records Administration (IARA) and is charged with the establishment of a central State Form numbering system and a central cross-index filing system for all State Forms. This involves standardization, consolidation, and elimination, wherever possible, of State Forms.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORMS MANAGEMENT

Indiana Code 5-15-5.1-6 gives IARA authority to

> design and redesign; number; standardize; consolidate; or eliminate when obsolete; all forms used by state government, and apply the definition of record to any governmental materials so questioned. In performing these functions, IARA shall consult with each affected agency and local government and shall consider each agency's and local government's statutory responsibilities, its relationships with federal or other governmental agencies and the requirements of state law.

Some of the tangible benefits provided by the Forms Management program:

- Creates a centralized reference point for information regarding all State Forms.
- Controls and assists in the elimination of unneeded recordkeeping by providing professional analysis and design services.
- Offers training for agency personnel involved directly in the operation of designing forms.
- Encourages the elimination of wasteful and ineffective procedures in information processing.

Forms Management is responsible for:

- Reviewing all requests for new State Forms and revision of existing State Forms
- Providing standards for the design and analysis of State Forms
- Assisting in the process of printing State Forms
- Maintaining an online Catalog for agencies and the public to access State Forms
- Maintaining a record of the history of each State Form
- Maintaining a centralized numbering system for State Forms

AGENCY FORMS COORDINATORS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

All State agencies are required (IC 5-15-5.1-10) to appoint a representative from their staff to serve as a liaison between the agency and the Indiana Archives and Records Administration.

Large agencies usually appoint separate *Records Coordinators and Forms Coordinators.*

- The *Records* Coordinator works with multiple IARA divisions to manage the agency's records and Records Retention Schedules.
- The *Forms* Coordinator works with IARA's Forms Management Program to process, develop, and design forms that suit the agency's needs.

Forms Coordinators are an integral part of successful forms management. A Forms Coordinator should be familiar with their agency's forms needs, their agency's internal forms processes, and the Indiana Archives and Records Administration's processes and standards (found in the Forms Coordinator Handbook).

Each Coordinator should work with the Forms Management program to process, develop, and design State Forms that meet the agency's needs. The Forms Management program will look to Forms Coordinators to provide leadership to the agency in assuring that processes and standards are adhered to, and State Forms meet the agency's needs.

There are five essential duties of a Forms Coordinator:

- To review and sign all form designs prior to sending them to Forms Management.
- To forward all requests for both new and revised forms in their agency to Forms Management.
- To assist in answering questions regarding these requests.
- To inform Forms Management of any changes to existing forms.
- To inform Forms Management of any forms which should/will be discontinued.

TYPES OF STATE FORMS

Unauthorized State Forms

Unauthorized State Forms are those that have not been approved by the Forms Management program, so there are no records of the form's authorization, purpose, or history of revision. Unauthorized forms may be duplicates of existing approved forms, which may cause confusion for the public. Unauthorized forms may also contain incorrect information or make unlawful requests, which are liabilities for the State. Unauthorized forms must be identified and eliminated, either by deleting them or bringing them into compliance with IC 5-15-5.1-10. The Forms Coordinator should be on the lookout for unauthorized forms and bring them to the attention of the form's originator and the Forms Management program.

Temporary Forms
Forms needed for 180 days or less do not require approval of the Forms Management program for either use or design so long as the State Form Design: Standards are met.

State Forms Granted Emergency Approval
An agency may develop and use a form in response to an emergency or a court or administrative order without prior approval of IARA. The agency shall notify IARA immediately of the need for an emergency form and shall submit a copy of the form with a full explanation of the circumstances in writing within 10 days of implementation. The form will then be immediately studied by IARA and uploaded to the online repository. A permanent format, if necessary, will be devised within six months of implementation.

Can Anyone Design a State Form?

Yes! Simply refer to our State Form Design Standards and Best Practices. However, all State Forms (whether IARA or agency designed) must be sent to Forms Management by the agency Forms Coordinator for review and approval before distribution.

INSTRUCTIONS AND STATE FORMS

There are two categories of instructions for State Forms:

1. Instructions that are embedded in the form, including instructional text at the top or bottom of the form, instructional text in the header of a form table, and instructional text in parentheses accompanying cell titles.
2. Instructions that are on a page or pages distinct and separate from the form. These are often cover sheets, grant application instructions, and similar.

Instructions that fall into the second category should not have the State Form header (State Seal, Title, State Form number, revision code, and agency name) and do not need to use the table format as described in State Form Design: Standards. Instructions that fall under the second category will not be analyzed by IARA and it is the agency's responsibility to ensure all grammar, spelling, et cetera are finalized prior to submitting.

IARA will publish these as part of the State Form's electronic file if requested, but agencies are encouraged to consider maintaining them as a separate file on your agency website, which can be updated by the agency at any time, and doesn't require going through the Forms Management process.

REVISION FREQUENCY

Individual forms requests may only be submitted to IARA once per six months. Exceptions will be granted when agencies are requesting the changes in response to statutory or other legal requirements placed on the form owner/agency. Please clearly communicate to Forms Management when this is the case. Forms requests for the same State Form submitted multiple times within one year that do not have a statutory impetus behind them may be reviewed by Forms Management staff as time allows. If six months has passed since the last form revision, the form request will be considered new and added to the Forms Management program queue.

It is a best practice for agencies to avoid submitting a State Form for revisions shortly before legislative changes may go into effect, and then submitting it again when the changes go into effect. For example, submitting a State Form for minor revisions in April and then again for a July 1 deadline would not be considered a best practice. It would be better to submit all requested revisions for the July 1 deadline.

CHOOSING AGENCY OR IARA DESIGN FOR A NEW OR EXISTING STATE FORM

You have a choice as to who will design any new State Form, or make any revisions to an existing State Form. Please read the explanation below to better understand the two types of requests.

> **NOTE:** If you need to make the same change to multiple State Forms (e.g., a change of address), you may complete State Form 53963, Request for Comprehensive Revision of Multiple State Forms, instead of State Form 36040 as described below, and use it to submit all affected State Forms to Forms Management.

AGENCY DESIGN INSTRUCTIONS

If your agency has created a draft with all revisions already made, or has created an electronic version of a new State Form, please follow these procedures.

A. <u>New State Form</u>

1. If your agency designed a new State Form, submit the following to fmd@iara.in.gov:
   - i. A completed SF 36040 with "Agency" checked under "Form to be designed by."
   - ii. A final, clean, unlocked Word and/or PDF file of the newly designed form.
   - iii. A fillable Word and/or PDF file of the new form.

     NOTE: if you wish to submit the fillable versions of your form after Forms Management has analyzed it, that is acceptable.
2. Forms Management will review your new State Form request and determine whether it meets the following qualifications: it is not similar to an existing form; it meets the definition of a State Form; all paperwork is in order (See A 1).
3. If the new State Form meets these qualifications, Forms Management will analyze your proposed design against the State Forms Standards and provide either a marked up copy or list of corrections.
4. The person in your agency who requested the form will then make the corrections and provide all final formats (fillable and/or non-fillable) to Forms Management.
5. Forms Management will upload all final formats to the Catalog.

B. **<u>Revisions to an existing State Form</u>**

1. If your agency revised an existing State Form, submit the following to fmd@iara.in.gov:
   - i. A completed SF 36040 with "Agency" checked under "Form to be designed by."
   - ii. A redlined (marked up) copy of the current revision of the form (the version currently in the Forms Catalog) showing where revisions were made.
   - iii. A final, clean, unlocked Word file of the proposed revised form.
   - iv. A fillable Word and/or PDF file of the revised form

     NOTE: if you wish to submit the fillable versions of your form after Forms Management has analyzed it, that is recommended for revisions which may alter the functionality or format of the form.
2. Forms Management will analyze your requested revisions against the State Form Design Standards and provide either a marked up copy or list of corrections.
3. The person in your agency who requested the form will then be responsible for making corrections and providing all final formats (fillable and/or non-fillable) to Forms Management.
4. Forms Management will upload all final formats to the Catalog.

IARA DESIGN INSTRUCTIONS

If your agency would like Forms Management to make all revisions to an existing State Form, or to create the electronic version of a new State Form for you, please follow these procedures. **Please note IARA designs take significantly longer than Agency designs. If you have a deadline or other timeline an Agency design may be more appropriate.**

> **NOTE:** All copy (language, content) must be in its final state prior to sending to IARA for design. Once an agency has reviewed a proof of an IARA design, agencies may only request one new change onto an existing request. More than one change will require the agency to submit a new SF 36040 and IARA may reassign the request to a lower order in the queue.

A. New State Form

1. If your request is for IARA to design a new State Form, submit the following fmd@iara.in.gov:
    - i. A completed 36040 with “IARA” checked under “Form to be designed by.”
    - ii. A mock-up, sketch, draft, or sample of the proposed form.
2. Forms Management will review your new State Form request and determine whether it meets the following qualifications: it is not similar to an existing form; it meets the definition of a State Form; all paperwork is in order (see A1).
3. If the new State Form meets these qualifications, Forms Management will review your proposed design and create an electronic proof and send to your agency to review and approve.
4. Once your agency has approved the proof, Forms Management will create all final formats you requested and upload to the Forms Catalog.

B. Revisions to an existing State Form

1. If you wish to submit a request for IARA to complete revisions of an existing State Form for your agency, please submit the following fmd@iara.in.gov:
    - i. A completed 36040 with “IARA” checked under “Form to be designed by.”
    - ii. A redlined (marked up) copy of the current revision of the form (the version currently in the Forms Catalog) showing revisions that need to be made.
2. Forms Management will review your requested revisions against the State Form Design Standards and will complete all requested revisions that adhere to the Standards.
3. Forms Management will create an electronic proof and send to your agency to review and approve.

Once your agency has approved the proof, Forms Management will create all final formats you requested and upload to the Forms Catalog.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF STATE FORM 36040

Take the time to complete the form correctly, as this will reduce the time it takes to fulfill a request. All forms requests must be submitted to the Forms Management Inbox at fmd@iara.in.gov for review. Agencies have full responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of spelling, grammar, punctuation and copy before submitting the form request to IARA.

Part One – Agency Information

All requests must be approved by the requestor, the Forms Coordinator, and the agency supervisor before submission to IARA.

A. **Printed name of requestor, signature of requestor, and Date.** The requestor is the person within the agency requesting that the form be created/revised. Please ensure these fields are complete prior to submission. If they are not, Forms Management will return the 36040 for completion prior to beginning work.

B. **Name of agency and Agency number.** Include a division name with agency name, if applicable. This facilitates IARA's research to see if the form already exists. The agency number is the Business Unit Number assigned to your agency by the Auditor of State.

C. **Printed name of agency Forms Coordinator, Signature of Forms Coordinator, and Date.** This is your agency's assigned Forms Coordinator.

D. **Printed name of agency supervisor, Signature of agency supervisor, and Date.** All State Form requests submitted to IARA require approval of the agency supervisor. The agency supervisor can be that of the requestor, a division head, or the agency head. This confirms to IARA that the agency design has been *vetted* by the agency prior to submission to IARA. Please encourage the supervisor to read and review the changes prior to submission.

Part Two – Form Information

A. **Type of request:** For new requests, check your agency records to see if the form already exists. This ensures the form is not being duplicated. For deactivation requests, provide the reason why the form is being deactivated. For reactivation requests, provide as much information as possible about the form. If you need to provide additional information about the form, use the Comments/special instructions section in Part Three or include the information in your email to fmd@iara.in.gov when you send the 36040.

B. **Form title:** For existing forms, provide the title or a suggested title change. For new forms, provide a suggested title. Forms Management will later approve the final title.

C. **State Form number:** For new requests, leave blank. IARA will assign a State Form number. For revised requests, indicate the existing State Form number only (do not include a revision code).

D. **Form to be designed by:** Please also see Selecting Agency or IARA Design for a New or Existing State Form. Indicate by checking the appropriate box whether you wish "IARA" to create / revise your form, or if your agency is submitting your own design ("Agency").

E. **This form requires and has been granted the following approvals:** Please also see State Board of Accounts Approval. State Board of Accounts (SBOA) approval is required for some forms that have financial impact. (This does not apply to forms owned by the Indiana Department of Revenue or the Department of Local Government Finance.) If you are not sure whether your form requires SBOA approval, e-mail Formapproval@sboa.IN.gov and note "Form Question" in the subject line. If SBOA approval is required, the agency is always responsible for submitting their proposed updates to SBOA. Except in cases where a legal deadline is approaching, SBOA approval should be obtained *before* submitting your SF 36040 to Forms Management. Include their response with your SF 36040 so Forms Management is aware of their determination. Upon approval, SBOA will e-mail an approval letter to you and to Forms Management. SBOA approval is part of the form's permanent record, so approval must be received before the form can be finalized. If the State Form involves money paid by the State, it may also need to be approved by the Auditor of State. Refer to Appendix A for more information.

F. **Who should have access to this form?** Forms Management will automatically place an electronic copy of the form on the State Forms Catalog, which has four levels of search access.

- If the form should be searchable by everyone, select "General Public."
- If the form should be searchable by all State employees (but not to the public), select "State Employees."
- If the form should be available only to agency employees (not to the public or any other State employees), select "Agency Only."
- If the form should not be searchable by anyone, select "Not Searchable" and provide any relevant details.

G. **In what format(s) should this file be stored?** Select all formats in which the form should be available. Please be sure to specify fillable or non-fillable. You can always check the currently available formats by going to the Forms Catalog and searching the form number. All available formats will be listed in the search results.

H. **How is this form to be completed?** Check all that apply. This information helps Forms Management maintain an accurate record of the form.

I. **Type of signature.** Select wet (person must print to sign) or digital (person can sign in Adobe and does not need to print).

J. **Are you asking for Social Security Number?** Select Yes or No. If you select Yes, fill in the additional requested information.

- If a form requests a mandatory Social Security Number, it must include the statement: "This agency is requesting disclosure of your Social Security Number in accordance with IC 4-1-8-2; disclosure is mandatory and this record cannot be processed without it."
- If a form requests a voluntary Social Security Number, it must include the statement: "Your Social Security Number is being requested by this state agency to pursue its statutory responsibilities. Disclosure is voluntary and you will not be penalized for refusal."
- Some agencies have their own slightly different statements; if your agency already has one in place, it is acceptable.

K. **Are you asking for confidential information?** Select Yes or No. If you select Yes, fill in the additional requested information.

- If a form requests confidential information, defined by IC-4-1-6-1, it must include the statement: "This agency is requesting disclosure of confidential information in accordance with IC-4-1-6-2; disclosure is (mandatory / voluntary) and (this record cannot be processed without it / you will not be penalized for refusal)."
- Some agencies have their own slightly different statements; if your agency already has one in place, it is acceptable.
- Here are some example confidentiality statement templates:
    - ***Short Version:*** CONFIDENTIAL! PER IC X-X-X-X.X
    - ***Medium Version:*** This form seeks mandatory (OR voluntary) release of Confidential Information per IC X-X-X-X.X.
    - ***Long Version:*** This form seeks mandatory (OR voluntary) release of Confidential Information per IC X-X-X-X.X. The completed form will be treated as a matter of public record (OR as a confidential record).

Part Three – Printing Information

The following section is only necessary if you intend to have your form produced by a printing vendor. If you only need the form to be accessible electronically, you may skip this section.

A. **Form construction:** Check all that apply.

B. **Type of paper:** Indicate the weight and the type of paper (e.g., 20# bond).

C. **Ply sequence:** If form is a flat sheet, indicate the color of paper in the COLOR column, check appropriate Box F and / or B under COPY to indicate printing on the front and / or back of the form. If the form is a unit set, indicate the color and distribution of each ply and check the appropriate boxes regarding printing on the front and / or back of each ply.

D. **Will the form be padded?** Check one. If yes, number of sheets per pad.

E. **Will the form be perforated?** Check one. If yes, type of perforation.

F. **Will the form be carbonless?** Check one.

G. **Will the form have carbon paper interleaves?** Black carbon paper is standard.

H. **Will the form be numbered?** Check one.

   1. Numbered on:
   2. Beginning number.

I. **Will the form have holes punched?** Check one.

   1. If yes, type of holes: indicate the type of holes needed and send sample to IARA.

J. **Comments:** Make any additional comments regarding the form.

PRINTING STATE FORMS

Post Masters / Blue Octopus Printing holds the printing contract for the State, and all printing orders must be placed directly through the Post Masters Online Store. The portal and login instructions can be found on the IDOA website: https://secure.in.gov/idoa/state-purchasing/printing-and-mailing-services/.

If you have any questions or need to request a login, please contact your agency's account representative.

When you place an order to print a State Form with Post Masters / Blue Octopus, your agency's account representative will request artwork and specs from IARA so they can proceed with pricing.

Before actual production of the print job, Post Masters / Blue Octopus will send a proof to both the agency's requestor and Forms Management to conform that the artwork and set-up for the job is correct. Both the agency and Forms Management will review and approve the proof, then Post Masters / Blue Octopus will proceed with production and delivery.

As soon as your agency's order is delivered, please check the print job and confirm that it is correct. If you find that it is not correct, contact Post Masters / Blue Octopus directly to resolve the issue.

STATE FORMS ONLINE CATALOG

The State Forms Online Catalog at forms.IN.gov is the central online repository for State Forms and is maintained by Forms Management. The State Forms Online Catalog groups forms first by agency, then by division. To ensure accurate display of the forms, agencies should include the division to which the form belongs on the SF 36040 under B. Name of agency.

There are four levels of search available in the Catalog:

- **General Public** – There is no restriction as to who may search for the form. It will show in search results for all users.
- **State Employees Onl**y – Only State employees may search for the form; it will not show in search results for the public.
- **Agency Employees Only** – Only employees of your agency may search for the form; it will not show in search results for the public or to any other State employees.
- **Not Searchable** – The form will not be searchable in the State Forms Online Catalog by any user, except a Forms Management staff member. This option is most generally selected either because the form is sensitive in nature (e.g., certificates and licenses), because it is only printed by a vendor, or because it is only available as part of a specialized program/database.

Forms Management has responsibility for maintaining the Forms Catalog. As such, Forms Management uploads new finalized form, uploads revised finalized forms, edits form access upon request from the agency, deactivates forms upon request from the agency, and reactivates forms upon request from the agency.

Logging into the Catalog

State employees can log into the Catalog using the same username and password they enter when logging into their State of Indiana workstation. For domain information, for security reasons please contact fmd@iara.in.gov.

Linking to State Forms

Agencies may obtain form URLs by searching for their forms on the Catalog, right-clicking on the desired link, and copying the shortcut. The resulting link must be used by agencies any time they make forms available on their websites, brochures, e-mails, etc.

Indiana Administrative Code 60 IAC 3, *Electronic Copies of Forms*, requires that agencies use direct links to the State Forms Online Catalog on their individual websites; agencies may not post form files (e.g. .pdf, .doc, .xls) directly to IN.gov pages. When copies of forms are posted on the internet independent of the State Forms Catalog, they are not connected to the central repository and will not update when the forms are revised. This results in additional work by agency web staff, as well as the ongoing availability of outdated copies of forms – which may contain outdated or incorrect information such as instructions, addresses, and fees.

To get a direct link to a State Form, search for it on the Catalog. When a dropdown list appears, right click the State Form you want a direct link to and select "Copy link address." Agencies may hyperlink to that address on their websites and other electronic platforms.

Forms Coordinators must instruct their webmasters to never post copies of State Forms onto the agency websites; webmasters should only post links to State Forms in the Forms Catalog onto the agency websites.

Web-based non-file forms such as HTML-created forms may be produced and published on IN.gov. However, web-based non-file forms are still considered to be State Forms and must go through the regular form approval process; in addition, the publishing agency must provide a link to Forms Management upon publication of the form.

STATE FORMS DESIGN: OVERVIEW

To go about designing a good form, there are three basic objectives:

1. Make it easy to enter data on the form.
2. Make it easy to read and use the data after it has been entered.
3. Avoid mechanical and clerical errors.

What follows is a general basis for a workable forms design. Most agencies use simple forms, usually [8.5 x 11-inch] single white flat sheets, printed by black ink by the agency's internal printing department or via a third-party vendor. The following standards and guidelines are intended for use on simple forms.

Step 1: Identify Basics

- Determine the purpose of the form and intended user(s).
- Establish a form title.
- List all the data elements that the form will contain.

Step 2: Outline Key Sections

- Identify the locations for ease of reading by the user of this form.
- Categorize placement for ease of locating specific forms after submission.
- Plan instructions for completing the form.
- Look for ideas on other forms serving a similar function.

Step 3: Create a Rough Sketch

- Study the data for importance of the various factors considered in Step 2. Establish priorities.

Step 4: Create a Complete Sketch

- Study the data for natural grouping so that the form can be organized into sections.
- Compare related agency forms performing similar functions. Look for new uses of old ideas.

Step 5: Align Sketch with the IARA State Form Design Style Standards and State Form Style Guide

- Do the first complete sketch, based on what has evolved in steps 1 through 4, by incorporating the style standards and guidelines set forth by IARA. Forms should be easily distinguished from one another, yet have a cohesive agency look or style.

Step 6: Study the First Sketch For...

- The general appearance for a sense of balance and neatness
- Conformity to IARA style and standards
- Use of white space, area outlines, use of check boxes, etc.

Step 7: Finalize Draft

- The form is only complete when it contains the data to be entered on it. Consider a small test run to prove the final design.
- Incorporate steps 1 through 6 into a final draft to send to IARA with SF 36040.

STATE FORM DESIGN: STANDARDS

There are several standards that must be applied to all State Forms per 60 IAC 6. These standards help people quickly identify a State Form, and make State forms easy to read and easy to understand.

Software: State Forms should be designed in Word and later converted to a PDF. State Forms should not be designed in Excel unless the final format will be in Excel OR the final format requires formula calculations.

Header Standards

The header must appear at the top of all Indiana State Forms.

1. The Indiana State Seal must be on the form in the upper left-hand corner. Size must be .625".
    a. Exceptions are granted for quasi-agencies only. To change the size of the Seal in Word:
2. The title block must be to the right of the State Seal, left aligned and centered on the State Seal. The title block consists of the title of the form, the State Form number followed by the revision code, (optional) the agency name, and (if applicable) State Board of Accounts approval statement.
    a. The State Form title must be in 11-point bold Arial in all CAPITAL letters,
    b. the State Form number and revision code must be in 7-point plain Arial,
    c. the agency name must be in 7 or 8 point plain Arial in all capital letters.
    d. the State Board of Accounts approval statement must be 8-point Arial plain.
3. Instead of the agency name in the title block or in addition to, the agency may choose to place all their contact information in an **agency information box** in the upper right corner.
    a. Agency name blocks are discouraged unless it is needed for return address or a source of information (such as e-mail addresses or phone numbers). It may limit the use of the form to one specific division, and any time there is an agency name change or address change, it renders the form obsolete and necessitates redesign and reprinting.
    b. Employee contact information is highly discouraged as it limits the use of the form to one specific person, and any time there is a staffing change, renders the form obsolete and necessitates redesign and reprinting.
    c. If Agency name blocks are used, they must appear in the upper right-hand corner of the form. The name of the agency must be 8-point Arial bold in all CAPITAL letters and appear centered in the box. If an address is needed, it will be 8-point Arial plain, centered under the agency name.
    d. *Agency Name Block example:*

HOME INSPECTORS LICENSING BOARD
PROFESSIONAL LICENSING AGENCY
402 West Washington Street, Room W072
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Telephone: (317) 234-3031
E-mail: pla12@pla.in.gov
www.pla.IN.gov

4. The **title of the form** should clearly and concisely state the function of the form; the word "form" or "sheet" should not be included.
5. If an agency wants to use their logo, they may not use it in place of the State Seal. Instead, their logo should be placed in the upper right corner.
    a. Exceptions are granted for quasi-agencies.

Body Standards

The body of an Indiana State Form must comply with the following:

1. Any list of races must include *Multiracial* as a choice per IC 5-15-5.1-6.5(c) unless the user may select all races that apply.
2. When a State Form has other parts to it that are indicated by a new title and "Part of State Form XXXX," be sure to include the revision number there as well.
3. State Forms should be designed using a *table format*, which presents information in the form of a table with rows and columns. Similar to Excel, table format allows a form's content to be easily organized. It is modular which simplifies the process of editing or revising the form in the future. CREATING FORMS OUTSIDE OF THE TABLE FORMAT IS NOT ADVISABLE.

STATE FORM DESIGN: BEST PRACTICES

The following are best practices for creating and revising Indiana State Forms. These are not requirements but are strongly recommended. Along with the State Form Design Standards, these best practices help people quickly identify a State Form, and make State forms easy to read and easy to understand.

GENERAL FORMATTING BEST PRACTICES

- Arial is the standard font for State Forms; agencies may use other fonts, but they must be readable and used throughout the form.
- Standard margins are two pica (.32"). Agencies may use different margins, but they must not be too large and must be consistent throughout the form. See tutorial.
- **General instructions** are to be put at the top of the form, below the state seal and title, where the user can see them before they start using the form. Instructions should be in 8-point Arial italics with the word "*INSTRUCTIONS*" in all caps and should be started 2 pica from the left. Instructions should contain such information as:
    - How to fill out the form
    - When and where it is to be submitted, if a check is to accompany the form, to whom the check is payable, etc.
    - When instructions are necessary, list as numbered items or sections. If instructions apply to a specific item, place them as near to the item as possible in the size type as the surrounding format. If the form instructions are very long and detailed, they may be placed at the end of the form.
- If there is a **distribution list** for the plies / copies of a form, it should be placed in the bottom margin and left aligned.
- If the form has multiple pages, they should be numbered. Page numbering is 8-point Arial plain, centered on the bottom margin. Format is Page # of ##.

TABLE FORMATTING BEST PRACTICES

Tables consist of rows, columns, and cells. The explanatory or instructional text within the rows, columns, and cells is called the “caption.” Some tables include headers to introduce new sections.

- Table rows are generally .32” high.
- If the row or cell does not have a caption, the height can be shorter than .32”. .22” is the average.
- Table cell headers are generally .16" high, use bold, 8–9-point font, and font is vertically and horizontally centered.
- When cells have an area below the cell caption for the user to fill in text, use 7-point font for the title of the cell and instructions.
- Instructions on a separate row have a row height of .16" and generally 8-point font and are centered in the table row.
- Text that comes after a checkbox is generally 8pt.
- When space permits, add a 2–6-point space before and/or after text in a cell or row.
- When space permits add a 6–8-point space between tables.
- Avoid connecting all tables in a form as this may make it harder to revise later.

STYLE BEST PRACTICES

- **Instructions** on how to fill out the form should be italicized, which draws the user’s attention to the instructions.
- A **date caption** should include the parenthetical instruction *(month, day, year)* or equivalent such as *(mm / dd / yyyy)*.
- An **address caption** should always include the parenthetical instruction *(number and street, city, state, and ZIP code)*. This may be edited to include PO Boxes and Rural Routes.
- **ZIP** is an acronym and should always be in all capital letters.
- **Ampersands (&)** should be avoided and instead spelled out as "and" (unless there are spatial limitations).
- **Contractions** should be avoided.
- **Numbers under 100** should be spelled out with the numerals in parentheses, e.g., twenty-five (25). Numbers 100 and over are acceptable as numerals only. Exception stands when policy or code or similar is cited.
- **Abbreviations, symbols, and undefined acronyms** should never be used because their meanings are not always clear to all users. Abbreviated words and symbols should always be spelled out (e.g., No. and # should be Number). An acronym may be used in the form after it has been spelled out and defined in its first occurrence, e.g., Indiana Archived and Records Administration (IARA). Exceptions can be made in instances of extremely limited space, but this is not recommended.
- Put a space before and after a slash. Like / this.
- Hyphens for words like "e-mail" are optional, depending on the agency’s wishes.
- Harvard/Oxford commas are optional, depending on the agency’s wishes.
- Be consistent with capitalization. If elsewhere two consecutive cell titles are not capitalized, do not start capitalizing the second word. As in, "Telephone Number" vs "Telephone number," unless it is a formal phrase like "Social Security Number."

FILLABLE FIELD BEST PRACTICES

- **Fillable text field:**
  - Font size should be 9 or 10 point.
  - In Adobe, be consistent with font type.
  - In Adobe, ensure text wraps or scrolls as needed to make it easier to fill out your form.
- **Checkboxes:**
  - Checkboxes are preferred when there is a list of selections, primarily because users cannot circle a selection in a fillable form. Checkboxes should always be placed in front of their selections: ☐ Female ☐ Male
  - When providing the option, Yes always comes before No.
  - Place check boxes well over from the question or on the next line down.
  - Agencies generally prefer a 10-point size check box, and 10-11 point translates well to Adobe for fillable PDFs.
  - When cells have multiple choice check boxes, you can use 8 point next to the check boxes but still use 7 point for the cell title. This is also the case for a "**From** **To** " construction. The **From** and **To** will be at least 8 point.

FORMS TUTORIALS

TUTORIALS SPECIFIC TO INDIANA STATE FORMS

Visit our Microsoft Stream Channel State Forms Tutorials for tips and tricks specific to the creation and revision of Indiana State Forms. We update this Channel regularly, so if you have an idea for a 1-5 minute tutorial please let us know.

DESIGNING IN WORD

The following resources and tutorials are available to help novice designers learn the basics of designing in Word.

(This list is not comprehensive and will be added to ongoingly.)

- Microsoft Word Quick Reference
- How to Enable the Developer Tab
- How to Make a Table
- Changing Column Width in Table
- Table Borders and Shading
- Positioning a Table
- How to Merge and Split Cells
- How to Create Fillable Form
- How to Change Margins
- Formatting Text
- How to Change Page Size
- Headers and Footers
- Add Page Numbers
- How to Add Links

CREATING A FILLABLE PDF

The following resources and tutorials are available to help novice designers learn how to create a fillable PDF after initially designing a Form in Word.

- Creating Fillable Forms Using Adobe Acrobat Video
- How to Create a Fillable PDF Step by Step

How to create fillable PDF files:

1. Open Acrobat: Click on the **"Tools"** tab and select **"Prepare Form."**
2. Select a file or scan a document: Acrobat will automatically analyze your document and add form fields.
3. Add new form fields: Use the top toolbar and adjust the layout using tools in the right pane.
4. **Save** your fillable PDF: You can also share it with others or click **Distribute** to collect responses automatically.

After you have converted your Word document to a fillable PDF, ensure that:

1. All fillable fields align with any text boxes, lines, and text. When Adobe auto prepares a form, the boxes do not always align. The same goes for check boxes.
2. All fillable fields created by Acrobat are not necessary. Acrobat may create fillable fields where they do not need to go, and these can be deleted.
3. Some forms require a "wet" signature. For these forms, ensure signature fields are not fillable by deleting the fillable field box if Adobe has auto generated one during the preparation of the form.
4. The form should have a Reset Form button that corresponds to the following specifications:

a. **General Tab**: Name = Button1; No tooltip; Visible but doesn't print; 0 degrees
b. **Appearance**: Border color black; fill color grey; line thickness thin; line style solid; text 10pt; text color black; font Arial bold
c. **Position:** Place it in the upper right corner when you initially make the button; upper left corner or middle are acceptable if form design doesn't allow the button to fit in the upper right corner.
d. **Options**: Layout = label only; behavior: invert; state: up; label: Reset Form
e. **Actions:** Trigger: mouse up; action: reset a form. Click Add, ensure all are checked, close

STATE BOARD OF ACCOUNTS APPROVAL

If the State Form involves money paid to the State, it may need to be reviewed and approved by the State Board of Accounts (SBOA). This does not apply to forms owned by the Indiana Department of Revenue or the Department of Local Government Finance.

If the request is for a new State Form that is collecting money, the agency contacts SBOA to request a SBOA review and determine if SBOA approval is required. If the request is for an existing form that was approved by SBOA in the past, the agency contacts SBOA to request an SBOA review and determine if SBOA approval is required.

Requesting approval from SBOA is the responsibility of the agency requesting the design / analysis and the following steps should be followed:

New State Forms

1. Agency requests a new State form number from Forms Management
2. Agency should submit SF 56162 with the design and a marked up copy of the proposed form to SBOA for review.
3. Agency may supply a cover letter to SBOA if they wish.
4. Once SBOA has given approval, agency should submit SF 36040 to Forms Management - if agency has already submitted the 36040 and draft form, agency should just email fmd@iara.in.gov to say it is OK to proceed with the form.
    a. Please note: If the agency is working under a tight deadline they may submit the 36040 to Forms Management in Step 1. Forms Management will then work the analysis/design while SBOA reviews.
5. Forms Management finalizes the form and ensures that all relevant paperwork is added to the folder.

Revised State Forms

1. Agency should submit SF 56162 with the design and a marked up copy of the current form (the one available in the catalog) to SBOA for review.
2. Agency may supply a cover letter to SBOA if they wish.
3. Once SBOA has given approval, agency should submit SF 36040 to Forms.
    a. Please note: If the agency is working under a tight deadline they may submit the 36040 to Forms Management in Step 1. Forms Management will then work the analysis/design while SBOA reviews.
4. Forms finalizes the form and ensures that all relevant paperwork is added to the folder.

REVISION HISTORY

Date Revised	Revision Number	Person Revising
April 2022	Second Revision	J. Swihart
June 2022	Third Revision	M. Fukunaga