



JAY INSLEE  
GOVERNOR

# **Executive & General Correspondence Guidelines**

# Introduction

Welcome to the Executive and General Correspondence Guidelines.

Historically, there have been two sets of guidelines. One set was authored by the Executive Assistants Group (EAG) and one by the Office of the Governor (GOV). In an effort to streamline efforts, make work more efficient, and simplify your work product, EAG and GOV have collaborated and combined the guidelines.

- **SECTION 1** contains information about correspondence format, addresses and salutations, and mailing and writing tips.
- **SECTION 2** provides references for style, grammar, and usage.
- **SECTION 3** describes the Governor's correspondence and referral process.

In addition to these guidelines, you can find helpful information in the *Gregg Reference Manual* and the Governor's [Plain Talk](http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/efficient-government/plain-talk) webpage: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/efficient-government/plain-talk>. We follow the *Gregg Reference Manual*.

We hope you will find this document useful. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact EAG at [eag@executiveassistantsgroup.org](mailto:eag@executiveassistantsgroup.org). If you have a question regarding the Governor's Constituent Service Unit, contact Jeanne Colvin at [Jeanne.colvin@gov.wa.gov](mailto:Jeanne.colvin@gov.wa.gov).

Thank you for all of the good work you do for the residents of the state of Washington.

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# SECTION 1

## Correspondence Formats and Tips

### Letter Format



#### AGENCY LETTERHEAD

February 7, 2015 **4 Returns**



The Honorable John Doe  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1234 Wisdom Street  
Anytown, DC 99546 **2 Returns**

Re: Anytown **2 Returns**



Dear Congressman Doe: **2 Returns**



Thank you for contacting my office. I appreciate hearing from you. **2 Returns**



Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. **2 Returns**



Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. **2 Returns**



Sincerely, **4 Returns**



Joe Director (Do not type name in all caps)  
Title **2 returns**



Enclosures (2) **2 returns**



cc: Jane Doe, President, DOE Enterprises

- Full-block style.
- First page top margin: 2.25 inches.
- Bottom, left, right margins: 1 inch.
- Right margin not justified.
- Single space.
- Font: 12 point.
- For letters to be signed by the Governor, use Times New Roman.
- For letters to be signed by the Governor, use one space after punctuation.
- The Washington-shaped logo is only used for Governor's Office correspondence.

- For letters to be signed by the Governor, he prefers:  
Very truly yours,
- For signature use:  
Jay Inslee  
Governor
- A letter to be signed by the Governor should not contain the initials of the person who typed it.

- Enclosure is used for letters.
- Attachment is used for memos.
- In *Gregg*, the *re:* line is below the salutation – we show it above the salutation, which is the common practice.

## Continuation Pages

The Honorable John Doe

February 7, 2013 (Make sure date is before the page number)

Page 2 (Page number should be in numeric format) **2 Returns**

¶

(In *Gregg*, the positions of the date and page number are reversed. Our example shows the common practice.)

- Use plain paper (not letterhead).
- Top margin: 1 inch.

## Memo Format

Depending on the degree of formality, letters and memos may be used interchangeably within Washington State government agencies. Memos should not be sent outside Washington State government agencies.



AGENCY LETTERHEAD

February 7, 2015 **4 Returns**

¶

¶

¶

**TO:** State Agency Directors **2 Returns**

¶

**FROM:** Joe Director, Title **2 Returns**

¶

**SUBJECT:** 2013 Washington State Employee Appreciation **3 Returns**

¶

¶

Thank you for contacting my office. I appreciate hearing from you. **2 Returns**

¶

Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. **2 Returns**

¶

Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. **4 Returns**

¶

¶

¶

¶Attachments (3) **2 Returns**

cc: Jane Doe

- First page top margin: 2.25 inches.
- Bottom, left, right margins: 1 inch.
- Right margin not justified.
- Single space.
- Font: 12 point.
- For Governor's correspondence, use Times New Roman.
- For Governor's correspondence use one space after punctuation.
- The Washington-shaped logo is only used for Governor's Office correspondence.

- Enclosure is used for letters.
- Attachment is used for memos.

## Address/Salutation Formats

Do not abbreviate a person's title – use Chief Executive Officer instead of CEO; Corporal Jack Jones, not CPL Jack Jones, etc.

Envelopes should be printed in the same font as the letter, directly on the envelope or on a label.

### **City**

---

The Honorable John Doe, Mayor  
City of Olympia

Dear Mayor Doe:

The Honorable Mary Doe  
Olympia City Council

Dear Councilman/woman Doe:

Chief John S. Doe  
Olympia Police Department

Dear Chief Doe:

### **County**

---

The Honorable John Doe  
Thurston County Commissioner

Dear Commissioner Doe:

The Honorable John Doe  
King County Executive

Dear Executive Doe:

Sheriff Jane Smith  
Thurston County Sheriff's Office

Dear Sheriff Smith:

### **State**

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The Honorable Suzie Smith  
House of Representatives

Dear Representative Smith:

The Honorable John Doe  
State Senate

Dear Senator Doe:

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Governor of Washington

Dear Governor Inslee:

The Honorable Kim Wyman  
Secretary of State

Dear Secretary Wyman:

### **Federal**

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The Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate

Dear Senator Murray:

The Honorable John Doe  
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Congressman/woman Doe:

### **Tribal**

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The Honorable John Doe  
Quinault Nation

Dear Chairman/woman Doe:

## Mailing Tips

### Envelopes

- Envelopes should be printed in the same font as the letter, directly on the envelope or on a label.
- The United States Postal Services provides these guidelines:
  - All capital letters
  - No punctuation
  - At least 10-point type
  - One space between city and state
  - Two spaces between state and ZIP Code
- Consolidated Mail Services provides these guidelines:
  - The individual's name: MR JOHN SMITH
  - The division or work unit: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
  - The department: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
  - The PO Box number: PO BOX 42565
  - The city, state, and ZIP+4: OLYMPIA WA 98504-2565

OR

The individual's name: MR JOHN SMITH  
The division or work unit: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
The department: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
The street address: 123 ANY STREET  
The PO Box number: PO BOX 42565  
The city, state, and ZIP+4: OLYMPIA WA 98504-2565

Do not type a person's title and office on the same line.

Do	Don't
John Doe Chief of Staff Office of the Governor  <b>OR</b>  John Doe, Chief of Staff Office of the Governor	John Doe Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

- For District of Columbia, use DC (USPS, Appendix B).
- In order to determine whether to use No. or the pound sign (#). If using the pound sign there should be one space between the symbol and the number.
  - 618 OHIO AVENUE # 513**
- Spell out numbers 1 through 10
  - 177 SECOND AVENUE**

- Use numerals for numbers over 10  
**144 65th STREET**
- If an address contains a string of numbers, do not put a dash between them:  
**12345 14th AVENUE**

### Window Envelopes

Leave a clear space of at least 1/8 inch between the address and all edges of the window of an envelope.

State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING  
PO Box 9020  
Olympia WA 98507-9020

MR/S STATE EMPLOYEE  
AGENCY/BUSINESS NAME  
MAILING ADDRESS  
CITY STATE ZIP CODE+4

### Campus Mail

FORM S.F. 7 (10/95) STATE OF WASHINGTON INTER-OFFICE MAIL

	MAIL STOP	
Jane Doe	40001	
John Smith	42422	

### Foreign Mail

Include the name of the country on all mail sent outside the United States. Separate it from other mail because it will require additional postage. Mark the pink slip as “International” and address the envelope using either of the following formats:

Foreign Country

**MR/S CUSTOMER  
123 JONES STREET  
BOTUCATU SAO PAULO  
BRAZIL**

Canada

**MR/S CUSTOMER  
123 JONES STREET  
VICTORIA Z4C 286  
CANADA**



## Tips for Letter-Writing

### General Guidelines

- State the purpose of the letter in the first paragraph.
- Double check spelling of names and addresses.
- Be conservative in the use of acronyms. When using, spell out the name or phrase the first time used (e.g., Office of Financial Management (OFM)).
- Keep letters to one page if at all possible. The Governor prefers Times New Roman 12 font, side and bottom margins of 1 inch, and a top margin of 2.25 inches. However, you can revert to 11.5 font, side margins of .75, a top margin of 2, and a bottom margin of .5 in order to fit a letter on one page.
- Plurals Agreement: Your dedication to children, families, and your community **is** greatly appreciated. Your energy and dedication to your community **are** greatly appreciated.
- Double check subject-verb agreement.
- Redundancies: Do not repeat the same word or phrase several times in the same sentence, paragraph, or letter, if at all possible.
- Use the active voice. Avoid the passive voice.

*Active:*            **I believe . . .**  
*Passive:*          **It is believed . . .**

### Courtesy Copy Notations

- Type *cc* at the left margin, followed by a colon. Your word processing program may automatically change it to a *Cc*. Make sure you use two lowercase letters.
- If you are sending a copy to only one person, insert 2 spaces between the colon and the person's name.

**cc: John Doe**

- If you are sending copies to multiple people, insert a tab after the colon in order to start all the names at the same point.

**cc:     John Doe  
       Jane Doe**

Followed by name, title, and agency (title isn't always necessary, but the rest are). An example of a correct notation is:

***cc: David Postman, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor***

- Courtesy copy notations should be listed in this order:
  - U.S. Senators & Representatives
  - Governors
  - State Senators
  - State Representatives
  - Other Elected Officials
  - Agency Directors (secretaries or commissioners)
  - Private Citizens
  - Governor's Staff
- "In care of" notations should contain a lowercase *c*, slash, and lowercase *o*. (Word processing programs will incorrectly auto-capitalize the *c*.)

**Professor James Smith  
c/o Mr. Henry Jones**

## Preparing a Letter for the Governor's Signature

- The Governor prefers certain openings and closings to a letter:

### **Examples of preferred openings include:**

Thank you for your recent letter regarding . . .  
I respectfully request your consideration of . . .  
I support Washington State's application for . . .

### **Examples of preferred closings include:**

Again, thank you for contacting me about . . .  
Thank you for your consideration.

- Avoid the phrases "I feel" and "I think." The Governor prefers "I believe" and "I am confident."
- Watch out for the collective "we." Letters should sound as if the Governor wrote them himself. In general, "I" is preferred. Also, "I understand" should be used when an agency has provided the Governor with certain information or statistics.
- Avoid passive/weak voice.

**PASSIVE:** Tomorrow, I will be announcing a revolutionary new program.

**PREFERRED:** Tomorrow, I will announce a revolutionary new program.

**PASSIVE:** I am hoping to visit Spokane next week.

**PREFERRED:** I hope to visit Spokane next week.

**WEAK:** I wanted to tell you that our meeting has been canceled.

**PREFERRED:** I regret to inform you that our meeting has been canceled. **OR** Our meeting has been canceled.

**WEAK:** I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your many valuable contributions.

**PREFERRED:** I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank you for your many valuable contributions. **OR** Thank you for your many valuable contributions.

When including a phone or fax number, it is acceptable to use any of these styles.

*Examples:*

(360) 123-4567 (*Gregg* recommends use of hyphens)

360.123.4567

360/123-4567

360 123 4567

## Tips on Professional E-mail Etiquette

The purpose of e-mail, like all writing, is to communicate. If you prioritize speed at the expense of correctness, you will make your e-mail recipient spend needless time trying to decipher what it is you want to communicate.

1. Include a clear, direct subject line.

Examples of a good subject line include "Meeting date changed," "Quick question about your presentation," or "Suggestions for the proposal."

People often decide whether to open an e-mail based on the subject line. Choose one that lets readers know you are addressing their concerns or business issues.

2. Use a professional e-mail address and e-mail background.

If you work for an agency, you should use your agency e-mail address.

You should always have an e-mail address that conveys your name so that the recipient knows exactly who is sending the e-mail.

Using an Outlook stationary for your e-mail background is not recommended.

3. Think twice before hitting 'reply all.'

No one wants to read e-mails from 20 people that have nothing to do with them. Ignoring the e-mails can be difficult, with many people getting notifications of new messages on their smartphones or distracting pop-up messages on their computer screens. Refrain from hitting "reply all" unless you really think everyone on the list needs to receive the e-mail.

4. Include a signature block.

Provide your reader with some information about you. Generally, this would state your full name, title, the agency name, and your contact information, including a phone number. It is advised that "replies" should also contain the same information so that the reader does not have to scroll down to find your information.

Use the same font, type size as the rest of the e-mail. Black is the preferred color of the font.

You may also want to include pronouns in your signature block. Including your preferred pronouns in your e-mail signature is an important move towards inclusivity, no matter what your gender is.

What are Pronouns (or "Gender Pronouns" / "Preferred Gender Pronouns")?

Pronouns are used in language all the time when referring to ourselves or other people. Examples of pronouns you might use to refer to others are: he/him/his (for someone who might identify as male), she/her/hers (for someone who might identify as female), they/them/their (for someone who might not identify strictly as male or female, these

pronouns are considered “gender neutral.” They are also used when referring to multiple people).

**5. Use professional salutations.**

Do not use laid-back, colloquial expressions like, "Hey you guys," "Yo," or "Hi folks."

The relaxed nature of our writings should not affect the salutation in an e-mail. "Hey is a very informal salutation and generally it should not be used in the workplace. “Yo” is not okay either. Use “Hi” or “Hello” instead.

Do not shorten names. The recommendation is to write "Hi Michael," unless you are certain he prefers to be called "Mike."

**6. Use exclamation points sparingly.**

If you choose to use an exclamation point, use only one to convey excitement.

People sometimes get carried away and put a number of exclamation points at the end of their sentences. The result can appear too emotional or immature.

**7. Be cautious with humor.**

Humor can easily get lost in translation without the right tone or facial expressions. In a professional exchange, it is better to leave humor out of e-mails unless you know the recipient well. In addition, something that you think is funny might not be funny to someone else.

Something perceived as funny when spoken may come across very differently when written. When in doubt, leave it out.

**8. Know that people from different cultures speak and write differently.**

Miscommunication can easily occur because of cultural differences, especially in the writing form when we cannot see one another’s body language. Tailor your message to the receiver’s cultural background or how well you know them.

Individuals from high-context cultures (Japanese, Arab, or Chinese) want to get to know you before proceeding. Therefore, it may be common for associates from these countries to be more personal in their writings. On the other hand, people from low-context cultures (German, American, or Scandinavian) prefer to get to the point very quickly.

**9. Reply to your e-mails--even if the e-mail was not intended for you.**

It is difficult to reply to every e-mail message ever sent to you, but you should try to. This includes when the e-mail was accidentally sent to you, especially if the sender is expecting a reply. A reply is not necessary but serves as good e-mail etiquette.

Here is an example reply: "I know you're very busy, but I don't think you meant to send this e-mail to me. I thought you should know so you could send it to the correct person."

**10. Proofread every message.**

Your mistakes will not go unnoticed by the recipients of your e-mail. Depending upon the recipient, you may be judged for making them.

Do not rely on spell-checkers. Read and re-read your e-mail a few times, preferably aloud, before sending it.

You have more options with e-mail closings than openings. If you are making a request or filing a complaint, "Thank you" works well. "Best" is a good all-around ending. Some letter closings also work well with e-mail, including "Sincerely" and "Regards."

**11. Add the e-mail address last.**

You do not want to send an e-mail accidentally before you have finished writing and proofing the message. Even when you are replying to a message, it is a good precaution to delete the recipient's address and insert it only when you are sure the message is ready to be sent.

**12. Double-check that you have selected the correct recipient.**

Pay careful attention when typing a name from your address book on the e-mail's "To" line. It is easy to select the wrong name, which can be embarrassing to you and to the person who receives the e-mail by mistake.

**13. Keep your fonts classic.**

Purple Comic Sans has a time and a place, but for business correspondence, keep your fonts, colors, and sizes classic.

The cardinal rule: Your e-mails should be easy for other people to read.

Generally, it is best to use 10- or 12- point type and an easy-to-read font such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman. As for color, black is the safest choice.

**14. Keep tabs on your tone.**

Just as jokes get lost in translation, tone is easy to misconstrue without the context you would get from vocal cues and facial expressions. Accordingly, it is easy to come off as more abrupt than you might have intended--you meant "straightforward;" they read "angry and curt."

To avoid misunderstandings, read your message aloud before sending. If it sounds harsh to you, it will sound harsh to the reader.

For best results, avoid using unequivocally negative words ("failure," "wrong," or "neglected"), and always say "please" and "thank you."

**15. Nothing is confidential—so write accordingly. Public Records Act Chapter 42.56 RCW**

E-mail is included in the Public Records Act. Be very careful in creating and responding to e-mail. Always remember every electronic message leaves a trail.

A basic guideline is to assume that others will see what you write. Do not write anything you would not want everyone to see. A more liberal interpretation: Do not write anything that would be ruinous to you or your agency. After all, e-mail is dangerously easy to forward, and it is better to be safe than sorry.

## SECTION 2

### References

#### Introduction

This section contains references for common questions regarding style, grammar, and usage. For more references, see:

- *The Gregg Reference Manual*
- *The Bluebook, a Uniform System of Citation*
- Governor's Plain Talk Website: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/efficient-government/plain-talk>

#### Word Usage

Word Usage	Examples
<b>Agencywide</b> is one word, not hyphenated.	
<b>A lot</b> (NOT alot) Many or much.	Thanks <i>a lot</i> for your help.
<b>Affect-Effect</b> <i>Affect</i> vt. To influence. <i>Effect</i> n. Result; vt. To bring about.	The storm may <i>affect</i> our schedule. It will be months before we can assess the full <i>effect</i> [result] of the new law. It is essential that we <i>effect</i> [bring about] an immediate improvement in sales.
<b>Allot</b> vt. To assign a portion for a particular purpose.	You will have to <i>allot</i> a portion of the budget to cover unforeseen expenses.
<b>a.m./p.m.</b> Always lowercase with periods.	
<b>Assure</b> vt. To inform confidently; to cause to feel sure. <i>Assure, ensure, and insure</i> all mean "to make certain." Only <i>assure</i> is used to refer to a person in the sense of "set the mind at rest."	I want to <i>assure</i> you that nothing will go wrong.
<b>Ensure</b> vt. To make certain.	I want to <i>ensure</i> that nothing can go wrong tomorrow.
<b>Insure</b> vt. To cover with insurance; to make certain or secure.	I want to <i>insure</i> this necklace for \$5,000.
<b>In regards to.</b> Substitute <i>in regard to, with regard to, regarding, or as regards</i>	I am writing <i>in regard to</i> your letter of May 1.
<b>Its-it's.</b> <i>Its</i> is a possessive pronoun. <i>It's</i> stands for "it is" or "it has."	The company must protect <i>its</i> assets. <i>It's</i> time to go to the meeting.
<b>Per-a.</b> <i>Per</i> is often used to mean "by the," as in <i>28 miles per gallon</i> . Whenever possible, substitute <i>a</i> or <i>an</i> ; for example, <i>\$8 an hour</i> .	
<b>Percent</b> is always spelled out as one word.	
<b>Principal-Principle.</b> <i>Principal</i> adj. Foremost in importance; n. One who holds of post of presiding rank; sum of money invested. <i>Principle</i> n. A basic law or rule; Moral or ethical standards	adj. My <i>principal</i> reason for quitting n. The <i>principal</i> of the school; receiving an excellent return on my <i>principal</i> A key <i>principle</i> of economics; a person of <i>principle</i>

<b>Statewide</b> is one word not hyphenated.	
<b>Which-that.</b> <i>Which</i> and <i>that</i> are used when referring to places, objects, and animals. <i>Which</i> is always used to introduce nonessential clauses, and <i>that</i> is ordinarily used to introduce essential clauses.	
<b>Who-that.</b> <i>Who</i> and <i>that</i> both may be used when referring to persons. Use <i>who</i> when the individual person or group is meant. Use <i>that</i> when the collective class or type is meant.	
<b>Who-whom.</b> <i>Who</i> is used when <i>he, she, they, I,</i> or <i>we,</i> could be substituted. <i>Whom</i> is used when <i>him, her, them, me,</i> or <i>us</i> could be substituted.	
<b>Who's-whose.</b> <i>Who's</i> stands for "who is" or "who has." <i>Whose</i> is the possessive form of who.	<i>Who's</i> going to the meeting? <i>Whose</i> notes are these?

### Capitalization

Refrain from over-capitalization, especially in instances such as "This program has proved to be extremely valuable." Do not capitalize "program" in that sentence.

- **biennium:** capitalized only when referring to a specific biennium.  
**2001-03 Biennium**  
**The funds appropriated for this biennium**
- **committee, commission, board, department, director:** capitalized only when referring to a specific body already mentioned by its full name.
- **federal:** capitalized only when it is part of the official name of a federal agency.  
**the Federal Reserve Board**  
**subject to federal, state, and local laws**
- **Governor:** always capitalized.
- **Governor's Mansion:** always capitalized.
- **Legislature, 2010 Legislative Session, Congress, Senate, House, House of Representatives:** always capitalized.
- **legislative, legislator, legislation:** not capitalized.
- **senator, representative:** Do not capitalize unless senator and representative precede a name.
- **state: capitalize only when it follows the name of a state.**  
**Washington State**  
**the state of Washington**



## **Citations**

Follow the guidelines set by the *Revised Code of Washington*, *Washington Administrative Code*, and the *Office of Reporter of Decisions*, which prepares the decisions and opinions of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals for publication.

### **RCW Sections**

RCW 1.08.010  
RCW 1.08.010(3) -- not "subsection (3) of RCW 1.08.010"  
RCW 1.08.010(3)(a)(ii)  
RCW 1.08.010(3) and (5)  
RCW 1.08.010 and 1.08.015  
RCW 1.08.010, 1.08.016, and 1.08.037  
RCW 1.08.010 through 1.08.140 for an inclusive string

### **RCW Chapters**

chapter 34.05 RCW  
chapter 24.03 or 24.06 RCW  
chapter 24.03 and 24.06 RCW  
chapter 24.03, 24.06, and 34.05 RCW

### **RCW Titles**

Title 43 RCW  
Title 43 and 44 RCW  
Title 34, 43, and 90 RCW

### **WAC**

WAC 296-34-020  
chapter 296-34 WAC  
Title 296 WAC

### **Session Laws**

Session Laws	Laws of 2002, ch. 107 § 3
Special Sessions	Laws of 1995, 2d Spec. Sess., ch. 14, § 21
Extraordinary Sessions	Laws of 1963, 1st Ex. Sess., ch. 26



## Clock Time

- Always use figures with *a.m.* or *p.m.* For time "on the hour," zeros are not needed. Do not use *a.m.* or *p.m.* with *o'clock*.

**4:30 p.m.**

**3:30 to 6 p.m.**

- Noon* and *midnight* may be expressed in words alone. However, use the forms *12 noon* and *12 midnight* when the times are given with other times expressed in figures.

**12 noon**

**4:30 p.m.**

## Plurals

Do	Don't
Sixes and Sevens 6s and 7s	6's and 7's

## Fiscal Years

**Fiscal Year 2005-06**

**2005-2006 fiscal period**

## FTE Staff Years

**3.1 FTE staff years**

**3.1 FTEs**

## Americans with Disabilities Act

Under the ADA and the Governor's Executive Order on Implementing EO 96-04, public documents must be made available in alternate format, upon request, to people with disabilities to ensure effective communication.

Types of alternate format include Braille, large print, readers, audio tape, and computer disk. When producing a brochure or other publication for distribution, include a statement with directions on who to contact, such as the agency's ADA coordinator, to obtain the information in an alternate format.

Other resources include:

Americans with Disabilities website: [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

Washington School for the Blind, Braille Access Center: [www.wssb.org](http://www.wssb.org)

## SECTION 3

# Governor's Office Correspondence and Referrals

### Introduction

The role of the Governor's Constituent Services Unit (CSU) is to receive comments, questions, concerns, and complaints made to the Governor's Office and help expedite responses to constituents through appropriate and timely referrals to the state agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction.

The Governor's Office receives hundreds of thousands of inquiries every year regarding the business of the state (and sometimes other levels of government, as well) and depends on you to help respond to these inquiries. Governor Inslee believes that we should respond to as many people as possible in a timely, accurate, and efficient manner, with particular attention to addressing specific questions and concerns. Your cooperation and timely responses are vital to the Governor's CSU Team.

***THE GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE  
CANNOT BE USED WITHOUT THE  
APPROVAL OF CSU.***

The information that follows provides context around when and why a referral is being made to your agency; information on how referrals are made; and instruction on how to respond to referrals made to your agency through the Governor's database (Intranet Quorum, referred to as IQ). It also details how to make a request for a letter from the Governor, including what should be included in a letter for the Governor's signature.

If you have a question regarding a specific referral or have ideas or suggestions about how to improve our process, please feel free to contact the Director of Constituent Services, Jeanne Colvin, at (360) 902-0387 or [Jeanne.Colvin@gov.wa.gov](mailto:Jeanne.Colvin@gov.wa.gov).

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

## Referrals from the Governor's Office

There are two main styles of referral that will come to your office:

- Casework Referral
- Executive Correspondence

An e-mail referral will come to you as “re: Governor Referral (Intranet Quorum IMA123456)” from govoutbound@gov.wa.gov. The process that agencies use to handle these referrals may vary. We rely on the correspondence/referral coordinator designated by your agency to assist us in getting the information we need from the appropriate unit or staff member. We ask that you let us know of any changes to your agency’s correspondence/referral coordinator information as soon as possible so that we may update our records.

### Overview of the Referral Sheet

Every constituent contact is tracked in a database called Intranet Quorum (IQ). An example of the referral sheet can be found at the end of this section.

**Contact Date:** The date the Governor's Office received the constituent contact (this information is listed on the top of the referral sheet).

#### **IQ ID:**

- All constituent contacts received by the Governor's Office are entered into the IQ system and receive a unique IQ identification number. The seven-digit Work Flow number appears in the **top left corner** of the referral cover sheet.
- If the Governor receives several constituent contacts on the same topic, we may "batch" them together in the database for ease of tracking and responding. There may be a notation in the Routing Instructions portion of the Referral Sheet indicating that CSU has multiple contacts on this issue. The Governor’s Office will hold the “batch” while awaiting draft language from your agency for the Governor’s response.

**Referred to:** Identifies the staff person or agency responsible for determining the appropriate response to the constituent.

**Routing Instructions:** A short summary of the subject matter or special directions.

### IMPORTANT NOTES

The IMA number is unique to each referral.

When responding via e-mail, please do not change the subject line on the e-mail.

The IMA number is necessary for IQ to automatically load your response into the appropriate record.

Without the IMA#, we do not automatically receive a notification that you have responded, and the information that you have provided to our office may get lost.

It is helpful if the e-mail address to which we send agency referrals is a shared box, to ensure that referrals are seen by a staff member and handled appropriately, even if the correspondence/referral coordinator is not available or leaves the agency.

**Action:** Designates the type of response needed (see below). If an agency believes an action different from the one designated is necessary, please contact the staff member who made the referral.

**CC:** Indicates other individuals/agencies who have received copies of this referral for informational purposes only. Those receiving copies are not required to respond to the referral unless language indicates otherwise since IQ only allows a message to be sent to one person/agency but unlimited people can receive a courtesy copy. Those receiving copies should contact the "referred to" individual or agency immediately if they have information they believe should be included or considered as part of the response.

**Message:** Either a copied and pasted excerpt from the incoming correspondence or a brief summary from CSU.

**Referral Date:** The date that the referral was made.

**Due Back:** Timely responses to correspondence are a priority for Governor Inslee. Due dates are two weeks from the referral date. If you need an extension of this due date, please contact the person who made the referral and provide information on the status of the referral as well as the reason why additional time is needed.

**Send Questions and Response to:** This is the name of the staff member who made the referral. The final agency response or information pertinent to the referral should be returned using "reply" to the original referral e-mail received from the Governor's Office staff member, remembering not to change the subject line! Occasionally, you may receive a referral from "Incoming Webform." This is unintentional. You can direct any questions you have about the referral to the CSU Caseworker or anyone else on the CSU Team.

**Contact Information:**

- From – Any contact information provided by the constituent, including their name, address, and/or telephone number(s).

## **Casework Referral**

### **Overview**

Casework referrals are generally the result of a phone call, personal visit to the Governor's Office, or a message through the Governor's website. These matters are assigned to the CSU Caseworker.

### **Referral Process**

After talking with the constituent (or based on the information left by a constituent on the CSU Casework line), the Caseworker decides whether it is more appropriate for an agency or the Governor's Office to respond. Even when the Caseworker takes the lead in handling the case, they may request information from an agency with which to respond. Because these requests are often time-sensitive, the Caseworker may call the agency to follow up after making the referral through IQ.

## Deadline

If the Caseworker asks the agency to respond directly to the constituent, the agency should make the initial constituent contact within 24 hours, with a follow-up call or a copy of a written response to the Caseworker.

## Responding to and Closing Out the Referral

See guidelines on responding to IQ referrals.

See guidelines on closing out an IQ referral.

## Executive (VIP) Correspondence Referrals

Executive Correspondence refers to postal mail, faxes, e-mails, hotlines, etc. received from:

- Current elected officials (the President, members of Congress, statewide officials, state legislators from Washington or other states, other governors, elected officials from cities or counties in Washington) and most former elected officials
- State or federal cabinet members
- Governors' associations
- Elected officials and dignitaries from foreign countries
- Significant state or national organizations (e.g., labor unions, business organizations, social services representatives, environmental groups, etc.)
- Recognized national, state, or community leaders
- Tribal members
- The Governor's family or personal friends
- Others, as deemed appropriate

All correspondence not defined as "executive" is considered **General Correspondence**.

## Referral Process

The Deputy Director of Constituent Services will send all executive correspondence referrals to agencies as an e-mail referral through IQ, including a PDF copy of the executive correspondence and referral sheet. If you have questions about this referral or the status of an executive correspondence, please contact the Deputy Director of Constituent Services by e-mail, using "reply" to the original e-mail or by phone at (360) 902-4123. Please have the workflow number ready when inquiring about a referral (Example WF#: IMA1234567).

## Deadline

Agencies are given **two (2) weeks** to respond to executive correspondence referrals, unless otherwise indicated. **\*\*IF YOU NEED AN EXTENSION ON THIS TIME FRAME, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CONSTITUENT SERVICES\*\***. Unless directed by the referral sheet to prepare a response for the Governor's signature, agencies may respond in written form, via a telephone call, or through personal contact with the constituent.

## Letters for Governor's Signature

When an agency drafts a response for the Governor's signature, the agency correspondence/referral coordinator should send it to the Deputy Director of Constituent Services via "reply" to original e-mail as a Word attachment. The appropriate Policy Advisor will be asked to review the draft. The subject line should not be altered in any way; it should show as "Governor's Referral (Intranet

Quorum IMA123456)." The Deputy Director of Constituent Services will be responsible for moving the letter through the approval process.

After the Governor signs a document, it is returned to the Deputy Director of Constituent Services, who will e-mail and/or mail it and close the WF record. A copy of the signed response is then returned to the agency correspondence/referral coordinator.

### **Rush Referrals**

When a referral is labeled "RUSH," please work closely with the Deputy Director of Constituent Services to expedite the response.

### **General Correspondence Referrals**

All correspondence not defined as "executive" is considered **General Correspondence**.

### **Referral Process**

General correspondence referrals will be delivered via e-mail through IQ and will include a referral sheet as well as a scanned copy of the original correspondence, e-mail, or notes from a phone call or personal contact with the constituent. If you have questions about the referral, please contact the person who sent the referral by e-mail, using "reply" to the original e-mail (DO NOT CHANGE THE SUBJECT LINE.) or by phone. Please have the workflow number ready when inquiring about a referral.

### **Deadline**

Agencies are given **two (2) weeks** to respond to general correspondence referrals unless otherwise indicated.

**\*\*IF YOU NEED AN EXTENSION ON THIS TIME FRAME, PLEASE CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE MEMBER OF THE CONSTITUENT SERVICES STAFF\*\*.** Unless directed by the referral sheet or the Governor's staff to prepare a response for the Governor's signature, agencies may respond in written form, via telephone call, or through personal contact with the constituent.

### **Responding to an IQ Referral**

#### **Salutations**

- Executive Correspondence
  - For executive correspondence, the Governor prefers the use of a formal salutation (e.g., Dear Mayor).
- General Correspondence
  - Governor Inslee prefers the use of a first-name salutation in response to most general correspondence. Please use a first-name salutation unless the letter writer refers to himself/herself otherwise. Tone and content of the letter also can provide guidance that the writer would prefer to be addressed formally.

### **Style and Format**

See Section 1.



## **Quality of Correspondence**

Please be careful to ensure that the letter is accurate. Please use spell-check. Please confirm that the recipient's name, address, and salutation are correct. We recommend that any response prepared for the Governor's signature be reviewed by the agency's director or his or her designee.

## **Beginning a Response Letter**

When responding directly to a constituent, please make it clear that you are responding at the request of the Governor's Office. For example: "I have been asked to respond to your (letter/phone call) to Governor Inslee regarding . . ."

Occasionally, we will refer a letter that has been forwarded to us from a congressional office. In those cases, the congressional office has notified the constituent that the letter has been sent to the Governor. Therefore, you need to reference both the member of Congress and the Governor in your response letter. For example: "Governor Inslee has asked our agency to respond to the letter you sent to (name of U.S. Senator or Representative) regarding . . ."

## **Duplicate Letters**

Personal computers have made it easy for correspondents to personalize the same letter to many people. In addition, many constituents commonly fax and mail the same letter to the Governor.

If you receive a referral from the Governor's Office that is a duplicate of a letter that also was addressed to your agency, call the person in the Governor's Office who referred the letter to discuss the best way to avoid duplicating efforts. If you receive two referrals of the same letter addressed to the Governor (i.e., a faxed version and a mailed version), please call the person who made the referral and arrange to have one of the referrals deleted.

## **Multiple-issue Letters**

Many constituents who write to the Governor address more than one issue, relating to different state governmental agencies. Your agency may receive a referral asking you to respond to a highlighted section of a letter. Clearly indicate in your letter that you are responding only to the issue that is specific to your agency.

Also, as previously mentioned, we may ask for "draft language" to be included in a letter written by the Governor's Deputy Director of Constituent Services. Please send suggested language via e-mail concerning the issue we have asked you to address as soon as possible.

## **Dating Letters**

Letters for the Governor's signature must be dated for a day when the Governor is in the state and acting as Governor.

## **Enclosures, cc's, and bcc's**

Please include all pertinent enclosures. Limit the number of cc's to those absolutely necessary. When drafting letters for the Governor's signature, please provide the recipient's title, organization, and e-mail address so we may easily distribute cc's.

**If you are including the CSU staff person as a cc to a response, please show it as: "cc: Governor's Office" or "cc: Governor's Office, CSU." Please do not include the original referral from our office with the response to the constituent since it identifies staff members.**

## **Form Letters with Multiple Addressees**

Use mail merge format for any letters to be sent to three or more addressees. Electronically forward to CSU the following attachments: template letter, database, and merged letters, as described below. Please follow guidelines for letter format, address/salutation format and correspondence preferences, as described in these guidelines.

- **Template Letter** – The actual letter to be merged, including properly placed data fields.
- **Database** – At minimum, include separate fields for Firstname, Lastname, Title, Address1, Address2, City, State (if letters will be sent to different states), and Zipcode. (Note: if the field name contains more than one word, do not insert a space between words.) When inputting data, be careful not to inadvertently insert spaces after the entry as this will show up as a double space in the merged letters.
- **Merged Documents** – Proofread your merged documents for typographical and spacing errors before forwarding them to the Governor’s Office for approval and/or distribution.

## **Closing out an IQ Referral**

After you have responded to a constituent referral, providing this information to CSU allows us to close out the WF.

- 1. If a letter was sent directly to the constituent from someone in your agency, send to CSU using “reply” to the original referral e-mail from the Caseworker or Deputy Director of Constituent Services:**
  - An electronic copy, in Word or PDF, of the response letter.
- 2. If an e-mail was sent directly to the constituent from someone in your agency, “reply” to the original e-mail and attach an electronic copy of the e-mail response.**
  - DO NOT add the constituent services staff person as a cc to your original response to the constituent. You can bcc the staff member, if necessary.
- 3. If a letter was drafted for the Governor's signature, send the following via e-mail through IQ, replying to the original e-mail. (If the IQ referral process does not work, you may send these items through MS Outlook):**
  - The proposed response letter saved as a Word attachment. (A signed PDF copy of the final letter will be returned to your agency.)
  - Electronic versions of enclosures, if applicable.
  - A Word document in merge format containing the data needed to print letters and envelopes if a letter has multiple addresses, cc's, or bcc's.
  - An electronic copy of the original letter.
- 4. If we requested draft language, send:**
  - The draft language via “reply” e-mail, in Word format, so that we can easily incorporate it into the Governor’s response.
- 5. If a response was made by telephone:**
  - Record the date and time the call was made, as well as a summary of the conversation. If the issue required multiple conversations or contacts, be sure to record the date and time of each contact. Send this information to CSU via “reply” e-mail to the person who made the referral to your agency.

## Requesting a Letter for the Governor's Signature

When a state agency requests a letter for the Governor's signature, it should be sent to the Deputy Director of Constituent Services via e-mail as a Word attachment to [VIPCorr@governor.wa.gov](mailto:VIPCorr@governor.wa.gov). The subject line should read "Governor's Correspondence, Agency-Initiated." Attach background information and a brief memo from the agency's director to the Governor's Chief of Staff explaining the need for the requested letter. The Deputy Director of Constituent Services will log the agency-initiated letter request into IQ (assigning it a WF number), route it to the appropriate Policy Advisor for approval, and track the letter through the approval process, assuming that the Policy Advisor approves the request.

*NOTE THE "GOVERNOR.WA.GOV"  
EXTENSION (INSTEAD OF  
"GOV.WA.GOV)."*

The Governor's Office requires at least two weeks to complete agency-initiated letters and other documents for the Governor's signature. In the event that a letter is needed sooner, label it "RUSH" and include an explanation for the letter's RUSH nature in the memo to the Chief of Staff. Please set clear deadlines for completion in your memo and work with the Deputy Director of Constituent Services to ensure that your deadlines are met.

## Governor's Office Letterhead

The Governor's Office letterhead was revamped in 2019. Please see Appendix A for the Governor's Office letterhead.

## Review Process

Correspondence for the Governor's signature is edited and reviewed for content by Policy staff, the Deputy Director of Constituent Services, the Director of Constituent Services, the Deputy Chief of Staff and, as needed, other senior management staff. If questions arise during this process, we will contact you for additional clarification or information.

We strongly encourage a review process within each agency for all letters for the Governor's signature, within the parameters of the two-week response deadline. Letters to constituents reflect not only upon the Governor, but upon all of state government, so please be mindful of appropriate tone, grammar, word choice, sentence structure, clarity, implications of content, punctuation, spelling, etc.

## Example of Referral Sheet

Generated from CSU

Office of the Governor

5/30/2019

IQ ID: 2013784

Mail Stop: 40002

***When responding to this e-mail, please do not change the subject line.***

### REFERRAL DIRECTIONS

Referred To:	Charles Knutson Office of Governor Jay Inslee, Policy
Routing Instructions:	Please advise whether a response is necessary.
Action:	Please Advise
CC:	sheri.sawyer@gov.wa.gov;
Message	Letter requesting Real ID compliance assistance from various Airline trade groups.
Referral Date:	May 30, 2019
Due Back:	
Send Questions and Response To:	Maverick Ryan

### CONTACT INFORMATION

From: Airlines for America

Phone(s):

Business: 1275 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 1300, Washington, DC 20004

Cell:

Home:

Fax:



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

# Appendix A