



# U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS BRAND GUIDELINES

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July 2023



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# OUR BRAND

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**We all have an important role to play in amplifying and protecting our brand—it is an enduring asset that represents our core values and the promise of our service.**

- **Who are we?**
- **What is our purpose?**
- **What do we do?**
- **How are we different?**

The U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps is one of the nation's eight uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, NOAA Corps, USPHS, and Space Force) and we are the only one dedicated solely to protecting America's public health. As Public Health Service officers and America's Health Responders, we also stand ready to preserve the health and safety of our nation during national or global health emergencies.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps has a history that dates back over two centuries. On July 16, 1798, the Fifth Congress passed an Act, signed by President John Adams, providing for the care and medical treatment of merchant seamen and thus began the story of the Public Health Service. From the USPHS Commissioned Corps' work along coastal waters to a focus on the migration of diseases that spread inland, the Service began to grow its public health expertise and professionalism. On January 4, 1889, Congress created the U.S. Public Health Service in response to a shortage of health care providers in the Marine Hospital Service (to be renamed the Public Health Service in 1912).

Since its creation, the USPHS Commissioned Corps has become a public health leader by promoting prevention initiatives, health education programs, environmental health techniques, research, and treatment advances that have increased life expectancy by over 30 years.

Today, Public Health Service officers also serve throughout the nation in communities that are most in need by providing essential health care services to underserved and vulnerable populations.

Our men and women who wear the uniform of the Public Health Service place themselves in harm's way to counter emerging and chronic threats to health and wellness. When disasters strike, the USPHS Commissioned Corps is there. When new health threats demand rapid and precise answers, Public Health Service officers are there. When illnesses spread, Public Health Service officers are there. When remote locations, sparse population, or poverty leave people medically underserved, Public Health Service officers are there. To us, there is no greater honor than serving in America's Premier Public Health Force.

**We are America's Health Responders.  
We are the first in line to defend our nation's public  
health against threats large and small.**

# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

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These branding guidelines seek to support a strong brand identity based on the **USPHS Commissioned Corps** brand promise and brand image, with the goal of increasing awareness and cohesive communications about and throughout the **USPHS Commissioned Corps**.

Implementing these guidelines across all internal and external materials and communications will serve to unify the **USPHS Commissioned Corps** with consistent tone, messaging, and core values, thereby strengthening the **USPHS Commissioned Corps** image and culture.



# U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS MISSION AND VALUES

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The mission and core values should be consistent with and clearly recognizable within the brand, brand promise, tone, and image of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

The mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our nation. As America's uniformed service of public health professionals, the USPHS Commissioned Corps achieves its mission through:

- Rapid and effective response to public health needs
- Leadership and excellence in public health practices
- Advancement of public health science

The core values of the USPHS Commissioned Corps are:

## LEADERSHIP

that provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty.

## SERVICE

that demonstrates a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents.

## INTEGRITY

that exemplifies uncompromising ethical conduct and maintains the highest standards of responsibility and accountability.

## EXCELLENCE

that engenders superior performance and continuous improvement in knowledge and expertise.



# BRAND PROMISE

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The USPHS Commissioned Corps offers rewarding careers for public health professionals and service-driven individuals who have a desire to protect our nation's health and serve those most in need.

# BRAND MESSAGING

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Brand messaging serves as the anchor for all branded content and materials.

- As America's Health Responders, we are the first in line to defend our nation's public health against threats large and small.
- Public Health Service officers serve our nation's health every day, as well as during times of public health emergencies.
- For more than two centuries, our highly trained active duty officers have stood ready to face all challenges to protect our nation's health.
- The USPHS Commissioned Corps is for those individuals who place service over self and value leadership, integrity, adventure, and helping those in need.



# BRAND IMAGE AND TONE

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**Our brand image describes a consistent tone and voice for communications. These elements contribute to the overall sense audiences get about the USPHS Commissioned Corps when they are exposed to information about us.**

The image of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is **confident**, **compassionate**, conveys a **sense of pride**, and is **service driven**. Supporting this image through all communications products and activities ensures a consistent emotional connection with the target audience. The image is incorporated into all visual typography and content language of our brand but is not necessarily featured in external-facing language.

## CONFIDENT

capable, professional, respected.

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## COMPASSIONATE

feeling or showing empathy and concern for others.

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## SENSE OF PRIDE

feeling deep pleasure or satisfaction as a result of one's achievements, qualities, or possessions or those of someone with whom one is closely associated.

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## SERVICE DRIVEN

highly motivated and ready to serve the public.



# U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS MOTTO

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Our motto is designed to unify and give special significance to internal presentation materials such as awards and commendations and recruiting materials that will help convey to potential recruits the sense of camaraderie and collegiality within the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The motto can also be used in other appropriate internal documents that build esprit de corps, such as official newsletters, bulletin boards, and digital communications internal to the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

The official motto of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is **“In Officio Salutis”** (In the Service of Health).

**In Officio Salutis**



# USPHS COMMISSIONED CORPS MASCOT

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LCDR Abigail serves as the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps' first official mascot. She is trained facility dog who will provide therapeutic care to patients and Public Health Service officers.

LCDR Abigail was named after the former First Lady of the United States, Abigail Adams, who has a historical connection to the service. The origin and history of the USPHS Commissioned Corps trace back to July 16, 1798, when Congress passed an Act, signed by President John Adams, creating the US Marine Hospital Service to protect against the spread of disease from sailors returning from overseas ports and thus began the story of the Public Health Service.

The concept of the service mascot originated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Public Health Service officers deployed to respond to the largest public health emergency in modern times. The mascot is intended to improve mental well-being, enhance camaraderie, and assist with public health messaging. When first appointed, the mascot receives an honorary rank in the USPHS Commissioned Corps equal to that of the primary handler. This honorary rank will not include any salary or retirement benefits.

LCDR Abigail, a Labrador Retriever, is a Warrior Canine Connection dog, who received special training to serve as a facility dog. LCDR Abigail will serve as a symbol of USPHS Commissioned Corps' commitment to the greater public and protecting the nation's health.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps mascot program is made possible by a memorandum of understanding between the USPHS Commissioned Corps and the PHS Commissioned Officer Foundation. The mascot will be used for ceremonial purposes and accompany our officers as they work to protect the nation's health. For event invitations and inquiries, please contact [CorpsComms@hhs.gov](mailto:CorpsComms@hhs.gov).



# COPY REFERENCE

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The copy reference identifies how the organization should be referred to.

## **U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps**

- To avoid confusion with the U.S. Marine Corps, which is frequently referred to as The Corps, we will no longer call ourselves the Corps. We will instead refer to ourselves on first use as the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, and on subsequent use as the USPHS Commissioned Corps. When referring to individuals within the USPHS Commissioned Corps, we will refer to them as Public Health Service officers.
- Even though brevity is highly valued in social media, it is important that social media posts refer to the U.S. Public Health Service appropriately. Accordingly, on first mention *in social media*, the U.S. Public Health Service should be referred to as the Public Health Service and the USPHS Commissioned Corps should be referred to as the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

## **AMERICA'S HEALTH RESPONDERS**

- The tagline should be written in title style – America's Health Responders – and can be used in both internal and external materials.

# COPY STYLE

These are editorial guidelines for terms commonly used by the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The guidelines include instructions on title usage for media materials.

## AP STYLE MILITARY STYLES

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) uses the AP Style Guide as its editorial guidelines. However, each service branch has its own systems of abbreviating ranks—e.g., COL for Army colonel, CDR for Navy commander—that vary from AP Style Guide.

Since the USPHS Commissioned Corps follows the Navy rank structure and HHS's editorial guidelines, we follow the AP Style reference for Navy ranks. This includes the following:

Capitalize a military rank when used as a formal title before an individual's name. For example,

- **Commander Sally Smith**

On first reference, use the appropriate title before the full name of a member of the military. In subsequent references, do not continue using the title before a name. Use only the last name. Spell out and lower a title when it is substituted for a name. For example,

- **Admiral Nimitz was one of the top U.S. commanders in World War II. The admiral is a popular subject for historians and military strategists.**

In some instances, it may be necessary to explain the significance of a title. For example,

- **Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy John Jones described the attack. Jones, who holds the Navy's highest rank for enlistees, said that it was unprovoked.**

For plurals: Adds to the principal element in the title. For example,

- **Cmdrs. John Jones and Sally Smith; Rear Adms. John Jones and Sally Smith; CPOs John Jones and Sally Smith.**

For retired officers: A military rank may be used in first reference before the name of an officer who has retired if it is relevant to a story. Do not, however, use the military abbreviation Ret. Instead, use retired just as former would be used before the title of a civilian. For example,

- **They invited retired Navy Adm. Sally Smith.**

Here are examples of how to use Navy, Coast Guard, and Public Health Service officer ranks in media materials:

**Admiral** - Adm.

**Vice admiral** - Vice Adm.

**Rear admiral upper half** - Rear Adm.

**Rear admiral lower half** - Rear Adm.

**Captain** - Capt.

**Commander** - Cmdr.

**Lieutenant commander** - Lt. Cmdr.

**Lieutenant** - Lt.

**Lieutenant junior grade** - Lt. j.g.

**Ensign** - Ensign

In formal or e-mail communications, the proper use of abbreviation is to capitalize the entire abbreviated rank, not just the first letter, and condense to no more than four letters with no spaces as below:

**Admiral** - Adm. – ADM

**Vice Admiral** - Vice Adm. – VADM

**Rear Admiral (upper-half)** - Rear Adm. – RADM

**Rear Admiral (lower-half)** - Rear Adm. – RDML

**Captain** - Capt. – CAPT

**Commander** - Cmdr. – CDR

**Lieutenant Commander** - Lt. Cmdr. – LCDR

**Lieutenant** - Lt. – LT

**Lieutenant (junior grade)** - Lt. (j.g.) – LTJG

**Ensign** – Ensign – ENS

# BRAND ELEMENTS



# U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS SEAL USAGE

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The USPHS Commissioned Corps seal was designed and authorized before the development of the HHS Seal. The USPHS Commissioned Corps seal is restricted to certain types of health certificates and to materials pertaining to the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The USPHS Commissioned Corps seal can never be altered and must always be positioned with the caduceus at a 315 degree angle (clockwise) and the anchor at a 45 degree angle to the vertical.

Other logos, insignias, or non-official seals shall not be used to represent the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Seals and devices of the Federal Government, Departments, Bureaus, and Independent Agencies are not in the public domain and cannot be used for other than official business without specific authorization of the agency involved.

1. The USPHS Commissioned Corps seal is for the official use of HHS and the USPHS Commissioned Corps and is not for the use of the private sector on its materials.
2. To the public, such use would send a message that the HHS or USPHS Commissioned Corps favors or endorses an organization, its activities, its products, its services, and/or its personnel (either overtly or tacitly), which it does not and cannot do.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps seal shall not be used in a manner which will bring discredit upon the Department, or the Federal Government. Additionally, it may not be used:

1. By the private sector, including grantees, vendors, and contractors; and
2. Contractors may not use the USPHS Commissioned Corps seal on proposals or consulting deliverables.

If a contractor deliverable is camera-ready or other reproducible copy, for the express purpose of being an HHS or U.S. Public Health Service publication for HHS or U.S. Public Health Service distribution to the public, then and only then may the contractor affix the USPHS Commissioned Corps seal, under the direction and guidance of the project officer and as approved by the Office of the Secretary, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps components may not use private sector or contractor logos on Government publications or other Government communication products. Such use is prohibited. Whether or not the private sector organization is non-profit or commercial is not a factor.

**Note: Section 13 of the Government Printing and Binding Regulations, published by the Joint Committee in Printing, United States Congress, makes clear:**

“No Government publication or other Government printed matter, prepared or produced with either appropriated or non-appropriated funds or identified with an activity of the Government, shall contain any advertisement inserted by or for any private individual, firm, or corporation; or contain material which implies in any manner that the Government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.”

Information on approved usage of the seal is available at [usphs.gov](https://www.usphs.gov).

# CORRECT SEAL USAGE

A single color for the USPHS Commissioned Corps seal is authorized and shall appear in Flag Blue, white, or black. Flag Blue is RGB Numbers: (R1, G30, B65) or CMYK Numbers: (C100, M87, Y42, K52).

If special circumstances require the use of a different color, only full, deep colors are acceptable. No partial colors or screen tints are allowed.

## Flag Blue

RGB: 1/30/65

Hex: 011e41

CMYK: 100/87/42/52

PMS: 282

## Black

RGB: 0/0/0

Hex: 000000

CMYK: 75/68/67/90

PMS: Neutral Black

## Gold

RGB: 245/198/93

Hex: f5c65d

CMYK: 3/22/75/0

PMS: 141

## Green

RGB: 73/118/41

Hex: 497629

CMYK: 74/32/100/19

PMS: 364



## CO-BRANDING



The HHS logo is the official logo for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. For official HHS communication products, the HHS logo should be used with the USPHS Commissioned Corps seal.

If a partner you are working with is interested in co-branding a program with the seal, please contact: [corpscomms@hhs.gov](mailto:corpscomms@hhs.gov).



# EXAMPLES OF INCORRECT SEAL USAGE



Do not remove department name and date from the seal.



Do not distort the seal.



Do not use any color other than one in the approved seal palette.



On white backgrounds, do not use a drop shadow behind the seal.



Do not add effects to the seal, such as bevel and emboss, etc.



Do not rotate the seal.



Do not use photography or graphics **in front** of or interacting with the seal.\*



Do not place the seal on top of patterns.

\*Seal may be placed **on top** of a photo with clear space. Photo should not distract from or compete with the seal.

# AREA OF ISOLATION

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The area of isolation is defined as the clear, unimpeded space surrounding the seal. The clear space should be proportional to a quarter of the width of the USPHS Commissioned Corps seal. Graphic elements that interfere with the clear recognition of the seal—including type, photographs or illustrations—should not be placed within this area or behind the seal. The area of isolation should be observed when placing the seal near the edge of the page canvas.



# MINIMUM SIZE

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The USPHS Commissioned Corps Official seal should never be reduced to a size of less than **5/8 inch** in diameter. page canvas.





# GRAPHIC ELEMENTS


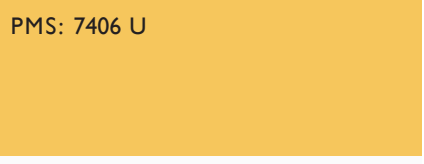
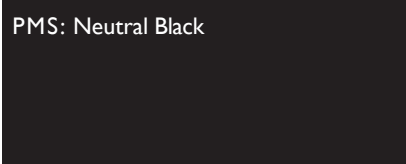


# COLOR PALETTE // PRINT

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The primary colors used for the USPS Commissioned Corps are blue, gold, and black. These should be used for type and shapes. A range of secondary colors have been selected to support the brand on digital platforms and marketing campaigns.

## PRIMARY COLORS

 <p>PMS: 282</p>	 <p>PMS: 7406 U</p>	 <p>PMS: Neutral Black</p>
<p><b>Flag Blue</b> RGB: 1/30/65 Hex: 044e41 CMYK: 100/87/42/52 Emotion: Trust, Honesty</p>	<p><b>Gold</b> RGB: 245/198/93 Hex: f5c65d CMYK: 3/22/75/0 Emotion: Positivity</p>	<p><b>Black</b> RGB: 0/0/0 Hex: 000000 CMYK: 75/68/67/90 Emotion: Authority, Elegance</p>

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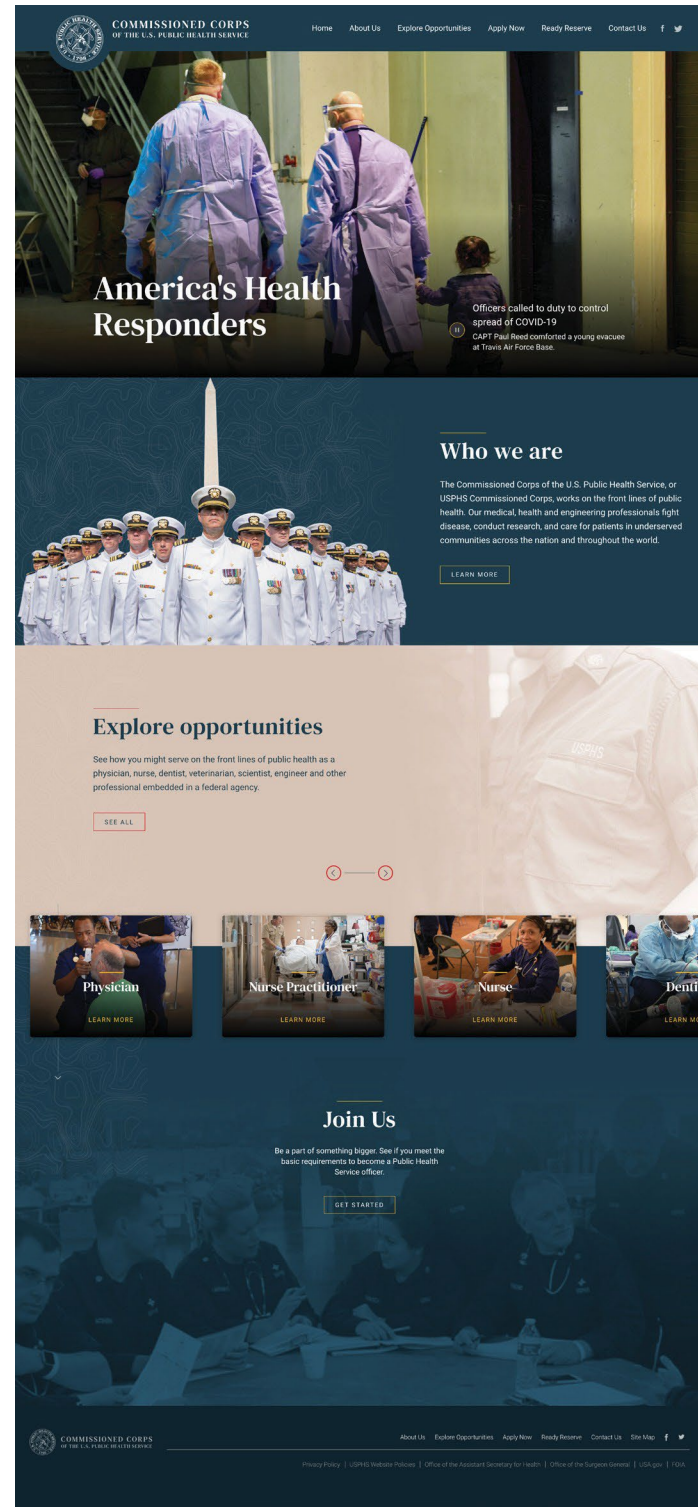
A secondary color palette is provided to complement the primary colors and reflect our brand image and voice. Use these colors in marketing and communications to complement our core colors – not in place of our core colors.

## SECONDARY COLORS

 <p>PMS: 5463 U</p>	 <p>PMS: 5425 U</p>	 <p>PMS: 5455 U</p>	 <p>PMS: 7713 U</p>	 <p>PMS: 4755 U</p>
<p><b>Navy Blue</b> RGB: 24/52/67 Hex: 183443 CMYK: 91/69/51/49 Emotion: Trust, Honesty</p>	<p><b>Steel Gray</b> RGB: 113/141/155 Hex: 718d9b CMYK: 60/36/31/2 Emotion: Trust, Durable</p>	<p><b>Steel Gray Light</b> RGB: 193/213/223 Hex: c2d6df CMYK: 23/8/8/0 Emotion: Trust, Durable</p>	<p><b>Turquoise</b> RGB: 11/141/148 Hex: 0b8d94 CMYK: 83/27/41/3 Emotion: Serenity</p>	<p><b>Beige</b> RGB: 221/198/186 Hex: ddc6ba CMYK: 13/21/23/0 Emotion: Dependable</p>

# COLOR PALETTE // DIGITAL AND WEB

A web color palette is provided to create an online experience that is both vibrant and engaging for the user. The subtle blues and beige tones help make the content more prominent without distracting from the messaging. Color combinations are meant to complement one another while adhering to 508 compliance standards (see next page).



# 508 GUIDANCE- COLOR CONTRAST RATIO

The contrast ratio refers to the brightness (or luminance) between the two colors.

- For text that is below 14 pt bold or 18 pt regular the contrast ratio needs to be at least 4.5:1
- For text that is 14 pt bold/18 pt regular or larger the contrast ratio needs to be 3:1

See example below:

**Left Interface (Passing):**

- Contrast ratio: 11.8:1
- Foreground colour: #000000 (black)
- Background colour: #EABC47
- WCAG 2.1 results:
  - 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) (AA): Pass for large and regular text
  - 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced) (AAA): Pass for large and regular text
  - 1.4.11 Non-text Contrast (AA): Pass for large and regular text
  - Pass for UI components and graphical objects

**Right Interface (Failing):**

- Contrast ratio: 1.8:1
- Foreground colour: #FFFFFF (white)
- Background colour: #EBBC48
- WCAG 2.1 results:
  - 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) (AA): Fail for large and regular text
  - 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced) (AAA): Fail for large and regular text
  - 1.4.11 Non-text Contrast (AA): Fail for large and regular text
  - Fail for UI components and graphical objects

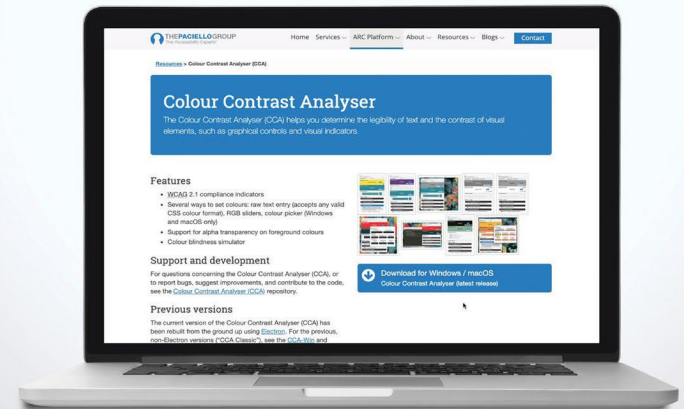
**Sample Text:**

- 10pt: Aa - 10pt (black on yellow) vs Aa - 10pt (white on yellow)
- 14pt bold: Aa - 14pt bold (black on yellow) vs Aa - 14pt bold (white on yellow)

508

We are committed providing an accessible product which aligns to Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards.

In accordance with WCAG 2.0 AA [Success Criterion 1.4.3](#) text and images of text must have a proper contrast ratio with their background. This ensures that people with visual disabilities can clearly read all text.



To verify that the contrast between text and background colors are within the correct ratios you can download the [Colour Contrast Analyser \(CCA\)](#).

# TYPOGRAPHY // PRESENTATIONS

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**Arial**, sometimes marketed or displayed in software as **Arial MT**, is a sans-serif typeface and set of computer fonts. This font is easy to read on large and small screens.

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**ARIAL**     **Aa**     *Aa*     *Aa*  
Arial Bold     Arial Regular     Arial Italic

---

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890

HEADER - 32PT

**The quick brown fox  
jumps over the lazy dog**

SUBHEAD - 24PT

**The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog**

18PT - Copy Regular

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

**WHEN TO USE:** in PowerPoint presentations.

Fonts from the Garamond family are packaged with all versions of Microsoft Windows, some Microsoft software applications, and Apple Mac OS X. **If this font is not loaded on your machine, please contact your IT administrator.**

# TYPOGRAPHY // LONG-FORM PRINT

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For longer print pieces, **Garamond** is ranked as the second most popular serif font today. It is best known for its graceful curvature and easy long-form legibility. These attributes are credited for making heavy content pieces easier to read.

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GARAMOND

**Aa**

Garamond Bold

Aa

Garamond Regular

*Aa*

Garamond Italic

---

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

HEADER - 16PT Bold

**The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog**

12PT - Copy Regular

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

**WHEN TO USE:** in business documents, emails, memos, and internal communication.

Fonts from the Garamond family are packaged with all versions of Microsoft Windows, some Microsoft software applications, and Apple Mac OS X. **If this font is not loaded on your machine, please contact your IT administrator.**

# TYPOGRAPHY //

## SHORT- FORM, PRINT AND WEB

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The body copy typeface for our brand is **Roboto**. Roboto is both bold and condensed, allowing more characters to fit on one line. Roboto is an open source project, created by Google designer Christian Robertson.

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<b>ROBOTO</b>	<b>Aa</b>	<b>Aa</b>	<b>Aa</b>	<b>Aa</b>	<b>Aa</b>	<b>Aa</b>
	Roboto Black	Roboto Bold	Roboto Medium	Roboto Regular	Roboto Light	Roboto Thin

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H1/32PT - All Caps

**THE QUICK BROWN FOX  
JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG**

H2/24PT - All Caps

**THE QUICK BROWN FOX  
JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG**

SUBHEAD - 16PT Medium

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Copy Regular- 12PT

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

**WHEN TO USE:** As a subhead and body copy font for web and digital content.

Download the free font here:  
<https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Roboto>

# TYPOGRAPHY //

## WEB AND DIGITAL HEADERS

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Typography is a key component that helps maintain the integrity of our visual brand and creates a distinctive style for our marketing communications and web.

The primary header typeface for our web brand is **DM Serif Text**. DM Serif Text is a lower-contrast counterpart to the high-contrast DM Serif Display. While the serifs remain delicate, the DM Serif Text family is a more robust variant of the Display sibling.

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DM Serif TextA Aa  
DM Serif Text Regular

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H1/32PT

The Quick Brown FoxA  
Jumps Over the Lazy DogA

H2/24PT

The Quick Brown FoxA  
Jumps Over the Lazy DogA

H3/16PT

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dogA

**WHEN TO USE:** As a header font for web and digital content.

Download the free font here:  
<https://fonts.google.com/specimen/DM+Serif+Text>



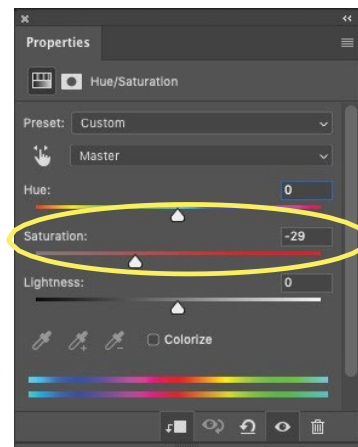
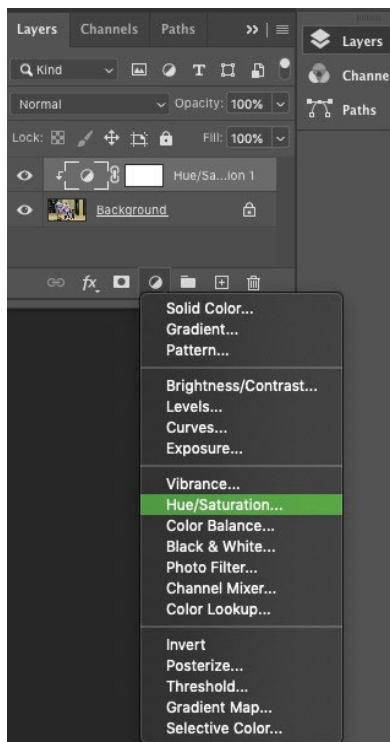
# PHOTOGRAPHY



# THE LOOK

The enhanced image treatment is high contrast and slightly desaturated—reducing yellow/redness in skin tone and creates a more consistent photo style when compiling photos from the field. Imagery should always be optimistic and organic without coming across as posed.

In order to achieve this look, it is recommended to use photo editing software, such as Adobe Photoshop. Below is an example of how a photo's saturation can be decreased within Adobe Photoshop, however, alternative programs with similar functionalities may be used to achieve this look. Please use the example images on the right as a model for adjustments to saturation.



# THE FEEL // EDITORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

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The goal is for the image to capture an authentic moment in time. Beyond key visuals, photography should feel as though the images are documenting events as they really happened. Using dynamic pictures where people are pictured in motion can help achieve this style.



Do emphasize the human side of U.S. Public Health Service life.



Do think about scale and composition.



Do not use overly staged setups.

# USPHS COMMISSIONED CORPS BRAND GUIDELINES CONTACT INFORMATION

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For additional information on this branding guide, please contact:

[corpscomms@hhs.gov](mailto:corpscomms@hhs.gov)

