

# Plain Writing Act of 2010

## Compliance Report

President Barack Obama signed the Plain Writing Act of 2010 into law on October 13, 2010. The law requires public communications by federal agencies to adhere to clear and concise “plain writing” principles.

The new law also requires federal agencies like the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) to post a compliance progress report for public viewing on their website. NCUA is pleased to report that 100% of the employees completed on-line, basic plain writing training before the May 1, 2012 deadline.

There are ten total requirements in the law for federal agencies. This compliance report details NCUA’s compliance progress for each of those ten sections.

As detailed in Section 4(a)(1) of the Act, “not later than nine months after the date of enactment of the Act,” federal agencies should accomplish the six actions italicized below.

***First, designate one or more senior officials within the agency to oversee the agency implementation of the Act.***

- ✓ NCUA has designated the Deputy Executive Director as the primary senior official responsible for implementing the Act agency-wide. The Deputy Executive Director then formed a working group from representatives of each central and regional office, to ensure agency-wide inclusion to implement the Act.
- ✓ Each agency office has identified which written and electronic files are “covered documents” to meet plain writing parameters, and has determined where to focus future training.
- ✓ NCUA then created a [Plain Writing Implementation Plan](#). The plan lists the roles and responsibilities of each office.

***Second, communicate the requirements of this Act to the employees of the agency.***

- ✓ The Executive Director has issued an internal memo outlining the implementation roles and responsibilities to each office. All agency employees received a copy of the agency’s Plain Writing Implementation Plan.
- ✓ NCUA notified all agency employees of a mandatory, on-line plain writing training course to educate them on the new law and the principles of plain writing.
- ✓ NCUA began the process of revising the Correspondence Manual that guides agency external communications, adding a new chapter specifically on plain writing.

***Third, train employees of the agency in plain writing.***

- ✓ To ensure compliance with the Act, NCUA reviewed existing training courses with writing components and modified the courses, if needed. The review found the pre-existing writing courses for supervisors and staff generally consistent with plain writing principles and required only slight modifications.
- ✓ All available employees completed the on-line basic, plain writing training before the deadline of May 1, 2012. NCUA will also train identified employees with a need for further specialized training during 2012.
- ✓ In 2013, NCUA will routinely require both basic and more specialized plain writing training courses for staff.

***Fourth, establish a process for overseeing the ongoing compliance of the agency with the requirements of this Act.***

- ✓ At the central office, either the Office of the Executive Director or the Public Congressional Affairs (PACA) Office will review official documents prepared for external audiences, such as Board Action Memorandums, press releases, publications, reports, and correspondence. The document review process conducted by the Deputy Executive Director or the PACA Director includes an assessment of compliance with the Act.
- ✓ First-line supervisors will review the examination reports issued directly by the examiners to credit unions, with some reports reviewed by higher supervisory levels.
- ✓ The review of plain writing principles will become a regular part of the examination quality control process in 2013.

***Fifth, create and maintain a plain writing section of the agency's website that is accessible from the homepage of the agency's website.***

- ✓ NCUA launched a plain writing webpage found at the bottom of the agency's homepage in September 2011. The page is available [here](#).

***Sixth, designate one or more agency points-of-contact to receive and respond to public input on agency implementation of this Act and the agency required reports.***

- ✓ The Office of the Executive Director is NCUA's public point of contact. The public can submit comments or input through the established plain writing webpage or by sending an email to [plainwriting@ncua.gov](mailto:plainwriting@ncua.gov).

Here are four other requirements of the Plain Writing Act of 2010, and NCUA's compliance report for each.

***The plain writing website for the agency shall (A) inform the public of agency compliance with the requirements of this Act; and (B) provide a mechanism for the agency to receive and respond to public input on agency implementation of this Act; and required reports.***

- ✓ NCUA launched a plain writing webpage in September 2011. The webpage covers the Act, details the implementation plan, explains plain writing, provides links to various sites addressing plain writing, and provides an area for submitting public comments.

***Beginning not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, each agency shall use plain writing in every covered document of the agency that the agency issues or substantially revises.***

- ✓ NCUA is achieving compliance by continuing to educate and emphasize plain writing to staff, management, and review offices. In 2012, NCUA continues to emphasize the use of plain writing in every covered document. This includes all documents released outside the agency.

***Not later than nine months after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency shall publish on the plain writing section of the agency's website a report that describes the agency plan for compliance with the requirements of this Act.***

- ✓ NCUA posted a [Plain Writing Implementation Plan](#) in September 2011.

***Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the head of each agency shall publish on the plain writing section of the agency's website a report on agency compliance with the requirements of this Act.***

- ✓ NCUA posted this report on April 30, 2012. This report is the first annual review of NCUA's compliance.