



Public Service Committee

What do we do? And when do we get involved?

The purpose of the Center's Public Service Committee is to advance the cause of plain language. We do this by offering expert advice to governments and non-profit organizations that are trying to communicate more clearly.

We explain below when and why we may get involved.

Our advice takes different forms

Past examples of our involvement give you some idea of the kind of advice the Public Service Committee offers. We have:

- Provided public comments on draft legislation and regulations.
- Appeared as witnesses before legislative bodies.
- Provided written advice to governments on draft reports and other public-facing communications.
- Provided advice to non-profit organizations on plain language programming.
- Provided analysis and comments to journalists writing about plain language issues.

The Public Service Committee provides impartial, non-partisan advice that is limited to examining the clarity of communications.

When we comment on draft legislation or regulations, we only do so to advance the cause of plain language. We do not engage in lobbying.

When we provide advice to government departments and agencies, or non-profit organizations, we do not comment on the content of the communication. We only comment on whether it is expressed in a way that readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.

At times, government departments and agencies have asked us not to disclose our advice to them. If we take on a project that the requesting organization wants to keep confidential, we will respect that request.

We may not always be able to help, even if we would like to

The Center is a non-profit organization. We have no paid staff. Directors and members volunteer their time and effort. So the Public Service Committee has limited capacity to provide advice when organizations seek our assistance. We will only take on projects where we have the capacity, and where the project is consistent with the Center's overall objectives.

In practice what that means is that:

- We will not take on projects by for-profit corporations or industry organizations. There are many plain language experts who offer their services to these groups.
- We will only take on projects that are public-facing. That means the project must have a direct impact on the public at large. For example, we will not provide advice to government organizations that are trying to improve their internal communications.
- We will look at the size of the potential public impact of a project before we take it on. The bigger the potential impact, the more likely we are to help out.
- We will not charge for our advice when we take on a project, but we will consider whether the requesting organization is able to make a donation to the Center to help offset our operating expenses.

Contact us to find out more

If you want our advice, and your project meets the criteria above, please get in touch.

You can contact the Public Service Committee by email: info@centerforplainlanguage.org.

We then may reach out to you if we need more information. And we will let you know whether we can take on your project or not.