**2016 Federal Plain Language Report Card: Best and Worst Government Forms**

*Center for Plain Language issues grades to government agencies*

WASHINGTON, DC, January 10, 2017— The Center for Plain Language issued its annual Federal Plain Language Report Card today, grading government agencies on how well they communicate with the nation’s taxpayers. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor tied for top grades. The Department of Justice received the lowest grade. The Department of State made the greatest leap forward, jumping from the bottom of last year’s list with a C to earn an A this year.

The annual evaluation, announced by Congressman Dave Loebsack (D-IA), grades federal government agencies on their adherence to the Plain Writing Act of 2010. The yearly Federal Plain Language Report Card shows how well the agencies are doing, giving grades from A to F on writing & information design. This year the Center evaluated high-use forms and their instructions from each agency.

“Ensuring clear communication between the American people and the government should be a top priority for our federal agencies,” said Congressman Dave Loebsack. “Federal agencies have a responsibility to provide clear and precise communication, but for years we’ve been bogged down by bureaucratic gibberish. I have long been a vocal supporter of simplifying the way Americans receive information from their government and improving transparency. I am proud to be a voice in ensuring our federal agencies are communicating in plain language and to once again announce this year’s Plain Language Report Card.”

[View the 2016 report card and criteria for the grades](http://centerforplainlanguage.org/2016-report-card/)

"This year's results show a modest, overall improvement in agencies' grasp and use of Plain Language,” said Chip Crane, PhD, Center for Plain Language Board Member and Report Card Analysis Lead. “Several made great gains, yet somewhat surprisingly, several also went down from last year. Our assessment of forms rather than more general, public information challenged the agencies a bit and revealed some areas needing attention for some. I am especially pleased to see that last year's lowest scoring agencies made the greatest improvements. Changes like that show us at the Center that our—and the government's— continued efforts really are making a difference. "

 “If you think about red tape, you probably automatically think about government forms,” said Susan Kleimann, PhD, Center for Plain Language Chair. “This year, the Center reviewed some of the most used government forms. Good news! Many agencies are using plain language and information design skillfully in their forms. However, forms are the voice of an agency, and clearly more work needs to be done for many agencies. The Center knows how hard this can be and is pleased to offer guidance. “

**The Center for Plain Language**, a non-profit organization, supports those who use plain language, trains those who should use plain language, and urges people to demand plain language in all the documents they receive, read, and use. For more information and to become a member, visit [www.centerforplainlanguage.org](http://www.centerforplainlanguage.org).

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