



Brand Style Guide

Introduction

A strong and recognizable brand identity helps an organization build recognition and awareness. It is the “face” that the organization presents both internally and externally. It represents what the organization does and creates an emotional connection for the people that interact with it. One of the key elements of a brand identity is how an organization visually and verbally presents itself.

For the Family Resource Centers, it is important that our families and partners recognize that we are a resource to help and support them. As a network, a consistent look and feel in our communications can help show this.

This brand style guide provides information and tools to help you with your visual and verbal communication. There is information on logos, colors, fonts and imagery that best represent the FRC brand. There are also guidelines on language – from recommendations on punctuation to using plain and person-first language.

If you have any questions, please contact FRChelp@umassmed.edu.



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Visual Identity

Logo

Our logo consists of our logotype and icon, which have been specifically designed to work together. Please use the files available to you on FRConnect (<https://www.frma.org/intranet/resources/frc-brochure-logo-and-brand-identity>) and do not recreate the logo.

Logo Files

The following logo files have been created for your use in various media.

- **4-Color (CMYK – Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black):** Use for printed documents.
- **Full Color (RGB – Red, Green, Blue):** Use for web or screen (such as PowerPoint).
- **Black:** Use when printing in black and white (such as a newspaper).
- **White:** Use when the logo is on a dark-colored background.

For high resolution logos for printing or signage, please contact frchelp@umassmed.edu for an appropriate logo file.



Visual Identity

Using the Right Files

A number of different versions of the logo have been created in appropriate formats for print and web use. Refer to the chart to determine which version to use.

Logo Clear Space

- Always position the logo for maximum impact and give it plenty of room to “breathe” to ensure its visibility and legibility.
- A minimum amount of clear space must always surround all versions of the logo. This space is equal to the height of the capital F in “Family.”

Minimum Size

- For logos 1.125 inches and larger, you can use the color logo.
- If the logo needs to be used smaller than 1.125 inches, use the black logo without the tagline.



USE	FILE TYPE	NOTES
Print documents, banners, signs	EPS* or PDF	These files are CMYK vector files and can be reduced or enlarged without a loss of resolution.
WORD Documents	JPG or PNG	JPG files are RGB and have a white background. PNG files are RGB files and have a transparent background.
PowerPoint, web or other screen uses	JPG or PNG	These are RGB files. JPG files have a white background. PNG files have a transparent background.

* Please contact frchelp@umassmed.edu if you need this type of logo.

Download logos at:

<https://www.frcma.org/intranet/resources/frc-brochure-logo-and-brand-identity>

Signage

Many FRCs have exterior signs. These should include the FRC logo but the logo should not be modified to include other information besides the FRC location. It is recommended that the location of the FRC be included below the logo; see this included example. These signs should follow all logo guidance, including the clear space instruction.

Any signage should be reviewed by UMass Chan’s communications team; please send review requests to frchelp@umassmed.edu.



Font: Frutiger LT Std - 45 Light

Color: FRC Dark Green

Size: equal in height to the lower case letter (“e”) in the logo




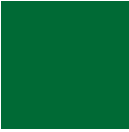
Color

Color Usage

Color is an important part of the Family Resource Centers' visual identity. We have a specific palette of colors that are used to help our audiences recognize our communications and connect our programs to our organization.

Different uses require different color systems.

Family Resource Centers' colors have been coordinated for four systems: PMS (single or multiple color printing), CMYK (full color printing), RGB (screen display), and hexadecimal (web). Select the appropriate color codes for your specific use.

			
FRC Lt. Blue	FRC Blue	FRC Lt. Green	FRC Dark Green
CMYK 93 / 2 / 15 / 7	CMYK 100 / 13 / 10 / 41	CMYK 65 / 0 / 100 / 0	CMYK 90 / 12 / 95 / 40
RGB 0 / 147 / 178	RGB 0 / 95 / 131	RGB 120 / 190 / 32	RGB 0 / 106 / 56
WEB #0093B2	WEB #005F83	WEB #78BE20	WEB #046A38

- **CMYK** – The CMYK (4-color) system is used for full-color printing, also known as 4-color Process printing.
- **RGB** – The RGB (Red, Green, Blue) color system is meant specifically for screen display. (ex: PowerPoint).
- **WEB** – The hexadecimal (#) color system is used online, such as on a website.

Fonts

Font Usage

Typefaces are an essential part of Family Resources Centers' visual identity because they create a distinctive look for the organization. In order to maintain a consistent and easily recognizable image, the typeface families listed here should be used for all materials. Recommended substitutes for these fonts are listed below.

Font Substitutes

In situations where the brand fonts are not available, replace with the following:

- Substitute Caslon or Sabon for Minion Pro
- Substitute Humanist 777 for Frutiger

System Fonts

When text has to be set to a system font (i.e. email templates, or shared editable documents), you may replace with the following:

- Substitute Georgia for Minion Pro
- Substitute Calibri for Frutiger

For Logo:

Minion Pro - Semibold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

General guideline for font use:

For Headlines:

Minion Pro - Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

For Body copy:

Frutiger LT Std - 45 Light

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

For Body subheads & call outs:

Frutiger LT Std - 65 Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Recommended minimum font sizes for documents:

Headlines: 14 pt. text size with 16 pt. leading

Body Copy: 10 pt. text size with 12 pt. leading

Body Subheads: 12 pt. text size with 14 pt. leading

Design Examples

Trifold Brochure

The design of collateral materials is an important part of maintaining the Family Resources Centers' brand identity. Use the recommended fonts and colors listed as much as possible.

Images

Photography used in the materials for print, web, and email purposes should reflect the diverse nature of our clients and their families. Images should be royalty-free and can be purchased from Gettyimages.com or similar stock photography sites.

If using photographs of staff, clients, or their families, you must get their permission first.

(See pages 12-14 for more information.)



FONT USED IN BROCHURE:

COVER:

Headline: Minion Pro - Bold

Cover text: Minion Pro - Regular

INTERIOR SPREADS:

Headline: Minion Pro - Bold

Body copy: Frutiger LT Std - 45 Light

Body subheads & Call outs:

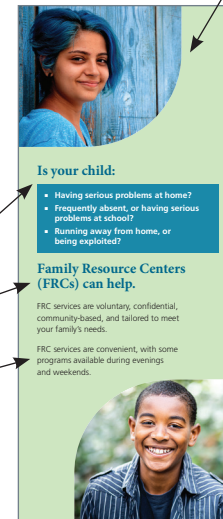
Frutiger LT Std - 65 Bold

COLORS used in brochure:

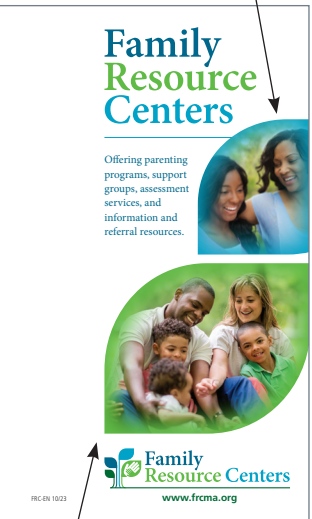
Same colors used in the logo are used in the brochure. Tints of those colors were used as backgrounds on two panels and a box with reversed copy.

- 30% tint **FRC Lt. Green**
- 20% tint **FRC Lt. Blue**
- 70% tint **FRC Blue**

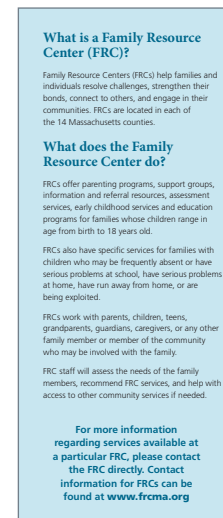
Getty Images # 40129104



Getty Images # 42552986



Getty Images # 964689674



Getty Images # 42177118



Getty Images # 57458202

Design Examples

Trifold Report Brochure

This is another example of how the brand identity can be used in a print piece.

Images

Photography used in the materials for print, web, and email purposes should reflect the diverse nature of our clients and their families. Images should be royalty-free and can be purchased from Gettyimages.com or similar stock photography sites.

If using photographs of staff, clients, or their families, you must get their permission first.

(See pages 12-14 for more information.)

Serving Families with Children Requiring Assistance (CRA)

A CRA is a child, age 6-17, whose parent, guardian, or school official has requested court assistance in supervising the child. Parents and schools may also seek FRC assistance for a child who has a CRA filing or is at risk of a CRA filing, such as a child who consistently misses school, runs away, or has difficulty following rules at home. From January through June 2023, the FRCs served 3,541 children aged 6-17. Of those, **383 (11%) had a CRA application filed, and 877 (25%) were indicated as meeting CRA at-risk guidelines.** More than half (57%) of the children served did not have a CRA application filed and were not deemed as being at risk for a CRA. Data on CRA status was missing for 246 (8%) of the children served in this period.

When looking across the Commonwealth, the Central and Southeast regions had the highest proportion of children with a CRA filing (15% and 14%, respectively) and children at risk of a CRA filing (50% for both regions). The Northeast region had a higher proportion of children with a CRA filing than the Western region (20% and 5%, respectively) but had a smaller proportion of children at risk of a CRA filing (15% and 24%, respectively). The Boston region had the smallest proportion of children with a CRA filing (8%) or at risk for a CRA filing (9%). These regional differences may be attributable to variations in local processes for determining CRA status by schools and courts.

Race	CRA	At Risk	Non-CRA
White	15%	4%	10%
Black	21%	3%	33%
Other	21%	2%	7%
Hispanic	15%	1%	26%
Missing	13%	0%	0%

Responding to the Needs of Migrants and Refugees

The FRCs continue to go above and beyond in responding to the urgent needs of new arrivals to Massachusetts. As families, particularly pregnant women, new mothers, children, and infants, arrive in Massachusetts, FRCs are providing them with everything from basic material goods to evidence-based programming. Some exemplary FRC responses to this crisis are highlighted below but are by no means exhaustive of the tremendous work being done across the FRC network.

Taunton
The Taunton FRC has collaborated closely with the community of Taunton to provide much-needed support and services to families staying at local hotels. The FRC's parent agency, Old Colony YMCA, recognized the Family Partner for her response to a call to action involving the support of refugee families in the area. She exemplified core values of caring, respect, and honesty through her dedication to providing families with a sense of normalcy and dignity during an extremely difficult time.

Fitchburg
The Fitchburg FRC assisted a Haitian family placed in a shelter in Concord with basic needs services. The family will soon move into their own apartment, and the father of this family was able to work at a job to support other families.

Barnstable
In August, the Barnstable Family Resource Center assisted migrant families moving to Joint Base Cape Cod with basic needs and services. The FRC provided several fresh, frozen, nutritious, organic, and formula for their arrival, and continues to provide supplies and support to the families and base personnel.

Greenfield
All the Greenfield FRC families housed at a local hotel engaged in FRC programming, playgroups, time in the Stop & Play room, diaper banks, and family support services.

Worcester
The Worcester FRC School Liaison's persistence enabled her to acquire emergency assistance shelter placement for a Haitian family she has been working with. She plans to continue working with the family to ensure their needs are met. The FRC also participates in the City's Fitness in the Park program and helped to plan Haitian Family Day.

Family Resource Centers
To learn more about the FRCs or find the location nearest you, their hours of operation, and services available, please visit www.frcoma.org

Massachusetts Family Resource Center Network

2023 Mid-Year Evaluation Report

October 2023

Across the Commonwealth, the 23 Massachusetts Family Resource Centers (FRCs) connect families to needed resources and support, offer evidence-based parent education classes and support groups, provide school-related educational support, and offer recreational and other activities. As established by the legislative requirements of Chapter 24B of the Acts of 2012 to support Children Requiring Assistance (CRA), the FRCs provide a low-barrier, free resource for families with children at risk of a CRA filing or with an existing filing with a juvenile court. FRCs work to strengthen relationships between children and their families so that both can thrive. The FRC network is overseen by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), with administrative support provided by the UMAss Chan Medical School.

The FRC 2023 Mid-Year Evaluation Report summarizes FRC activities from January 1 to June 30, 2023, including the numbers and characteristics of families served and the types of supports and services provided by the FRCs. Data for this report is collected by FRC staff at each site and entered into a secure, cloud-based database managed by the UMAss Chan team. The report also highlights recent FRC efforts to support the escalating migrant and refugee crisis.

Family Resource Centers
www.frcoma.org

Folding LEFT PANEL / BACK PANEL / COVER Spread

Families and Family Members Served by the FRC Network

In the first six months of calendar year 2023, FRCs served a total of **10,888 unique families**, suggesting that in 2023, FRCs are likely to exceed the number of families served in 2022 (10,464).

Among these families, **59% (6,341)** sought FRC support for the first time, and **41% (4,347)** were returning families.

Compared to the first half of last year, the percentage of returning families is higher, from **37% to 41%**, pointing to the efforts FRCs have continued to make to serve and build trusting relationships with families who need services and support in their communities.

Month	Families	Family Members
January	1,848	4,201
February	2,061	3,883
March	2,154	4,204
April	2,098	3,883
May	2,081	4,162
June	2,165	3,627

FRCs provide services to both adult and child family members. Between January and June of 2023, **16,132** individual family members served.

Among family members:

- 64% (10,330)** identified as female
- 28% (4,463)** identified as male
- 1% (131)** identified as another gender category or preferred not to answer
- 7% (1,199)** were missing data on gender

Serving Families with Multiple Needs

Families seeking FRC services often come to the centers with multiple needs. As in past years, housing, financial issues, and school-related concerns continued to be among the most common reasons new families sought FRC assistance in the first half of 2023. Although services for health and mental health-related concerns was the most common reason for the FRCs, there was a notable decrease in families seeking help for these concerns compared to last year: **33%** of new families in the first half of 2023 and **24%** in the first half of 2022. An analysis of the series in response for the "other" category found that many of the other reasons families come to the FRCs were for material goods, such as diapers and clothing, and for activities and events.

Reason	Percentage
Health/Mental/Health Concerns	24%
School Issues	22%
Housing	19%
Family/Health/Child Care	18%
Seeking Parenting/Child Services	12%
Two/Three/Adult Services	12%
DO/Professional Support	7%
Other	4%

Serving Families in Need

In the first six months of 2023, FRCs across the Commonwealth provided over **63,000** individualized services and supports to families.

Parenting and individual/family support continue to be some of the most common types of services FRCs provide. FRCs also continue to provide substantial services related to families' basic needs for material goods and food. Other services provided included school support, health/mental health support, recreational activities, housing, and CRA support.

FRCs offer group-based parenting education classes, support groups, recreational activities, and other events in addition to individualized services. In the first part of 2023, attendance at food and material drives was high, reflecting the ongoing need of FRC families for these basic. Although parenting class attendance has declined in the first six months of 2023 compared to 2022, attendance at recreational activities, mutual self-help groups, and youth support groups has increased. As the impacts of the pandemic have lessened, FRCs have seen an increase in attendance at classes, groups, and related programming.

Service	Count
Parenting	10,718
Equipment	7,793
Individual Family Support	5,511
Food/Material/Other	14,442
Recreational Activities/Other	12,011
Events	6,310
Mutual Self-Help Groups	3,375
Parenting Classes	3,461
Parenting Support Groups	3,253
Education	2,220
Job-Club	426

Activity	Attendance
Parenting Classes	10,718
Parenting Support Groups	7,793
Individual Family Support	5,511
Food/Material/Other	14,442
Recreational Activities/Other	12,011
Events	6,310
Mutual Self-Help Groups	3,375
Parenting Classes	3,461
Parenting Support Groups	3,253
Education	2,220
Job-Club	426

INSIDE Spread

Design Examples

Locations Directory with Map

This design for a locations directory with map uses a graphic element of the leaves and lines to add visual interest.

Family Resource Centers

The Family Resource Centers (FRCs) of Massachusetts provide community-based, multi-cultural programs, including: evidence based parenting classes, youth and parent support groups, grandparent support groups, information and referral services, early childhood services, assessment services, and education programs for families whose children range in age from birth to 18.

FRCs offer specific services for families with children who may be frequently absent from school, have serious problems at school or at home, have run away or are living on the streets, or are being exploited. Through the work of the FRCs, families can focus on strengthening their bonds, connecting to others, and engaging in their communities.

Family Resource Center Locations

<p>Amherst The Bridge Family Resource Center 101 University Ave., Suite A3, Amherst, MA 01002 (413) 549-0297</p> <p>Athol North Quabbin Family Resource Center 109 Lumber St., 2nd Flr., Athol, MA 01331 (978) 249-5070</p> <p>Attleboro Attleboro Family Resource Center 29 North Main St. Attleboro, MA 02703 (774) 203-1516</p>	<p>Barnstable/Hyannis Cape Cod Family Resource Center 29 Bassett Lane, Hyannis, MA 02601 (508) 815-5100</p> <p>Brockton The Family Center – Community Connections of Brockton 1041 Pearl St., Brockton, MA 02301 (508) 857-0272</p> <p>Chelsea Harbor Area Family Resource Center 95 4th St., Chelsea, MA 02150 (617) 694-3004</p>	<p>Everett Everett Family Resource Center 548 Broadway, Everett, MA 02149 (781) 581-4750</p> <p>Fall River Family Resource Center, Family Service Association 45 Rock St., Fall River, MA 02720 (508) 567-1735</p> <p>Fitchburg MOC Fitchburg Family Resource Center 49 Nursery Lane, Suite 201, Fitchburg, MA 01420 (978) 516-5042</p>
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www.frcma.org

FRONT side

Resource Center Locations (continued)

<p>Framingham Framingham Family Resource Center 100 Main St., Framingham, MA 01702 (508) 875-1313</p> <p>Framingham Family Resource Center 100 Main St., Suite 302, Framingham, MA 01702 (508) 875-1275</p> <p>Framingham Family Resource Center 100 Main St., Suite 302, Framingham, MA 01702 (508) 875-1275</p>	<p>Lower Roxbury Boston-Suffolk County Family Resource Center 56 Dimock St., Lower Level, Roxbury, MA 02119 (617) 469-8501</p> <p>Lynn Family Forward Resource Center – Centerboard, Inc. 103 Johnson St., Lynn, MA 01901 (339) 883-2401</p> <p>Nantucket Nantucket Family Resource Center 18 Freedom Sq., Nantucket, MA 02554 (508) 815-5115</p> <p>New Bedford The Family Resource and Development Center 128 Union St., 3rd Flr., New Bedford, MA 02740 (508) 994-4521</p> <p>North Adams North Adams Family Resource Center 61 Main St., Suite 218, North Adams, MA 01247 (413) 663-7588</p> <p>Oak Bluffs/Martha's Vineyard Island Wide Youth Collaborative 111 Edgartown Rd., Oak Bluffs, MA 02557 (508) 693-7900 x406</p> <p>Pittsfield 18 Degrees 480 West St., Pittsfield, MA 01201 (413) 442-5333</p> <p>Plymouth Plymouth Family Resource Center 430 Court St., Suite 3A, Plymouth, MA 02360 (774) 283-6531</p>	<p>Quincy Quincy Family Resource Center 1120 Hancock St., 1st Flr., Quincy, MA 02169 (617) 481-7227</p> <p>Salem Pathways Family Resource Center – Salem 27 Congress St., Suite 1211, Salem, MA 01970 (978) 296-8080</p> <p>Southbridge YOU Inc. – Southbridge Family Resource Center 328 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550 (508) 519-3590</p> <p>Springfield Gándara Center – Springfield Family Resource Center 18 Gaucher St., Springfield, MA 01109 (413) 733-7699</p> <p>Taunton Taunton Family Resource Center 37 Main St., Taunton, MA 02780 (774) 501-2633</p> <p>Ware Ware Family Resource Center at Behavioral Health Network 78 Main St., Ware, MA 01082 (413) 277-6601</p> <p>Westfield Westfield Family Resource Center 15 George St., Westfield, MA 01085 (413) 417-2020</p> <p>Worcester YOU, Inc. Worcester Family Resource Center 20 Cedar St., Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 796-1411</p>
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www.frcma.org

BACK side

Design Examples

Retractable Banner Stands



Massachusetts Family Resource Centers

A Statewide Network of Community-based Providers

- Offering families multi-cultural nurturing programs, support groups, early childhood services, information and referral resources, and education.
- We aim to empower, nurture, and support children and families to help them reach their full potential.
- Our centers are located across Massachusetts in a variety of communities.

Visit www.frcma.org to learn more.



The Family Resource Centers help families access a wide range of **programming and supports.**

- Parenting skills workshops
- Self-help groups
- Grandparents' groups
- Financial workshops
- Stress management workshops
- Education programs
- Family events and activities
- Playgroups and youth groups
- Arts, cultural, and sports events
- Help with accessing other services

Visit www.frcma.org to learn more.



www.frcma.org

Templates

Power Point Template

The design of Family Resource Centers PowerPoint template is based on the logo and incorporates graphic elements and colors that reinforce the brand look and feel.

Master Pages

Master pages are set up with the graphic backgrounds for all three pages. The blue underline on interior pages can be moved up and down to accommodate two line titles.

Titles for each slide should be done in the Georgia font – with the body copy either in Arial or Calibri. These are all PC/MAC friendly font options.

The gradient of blue at the top of the Section Divider slide can be changed to the other colors of the logos if additional section colors are desired.



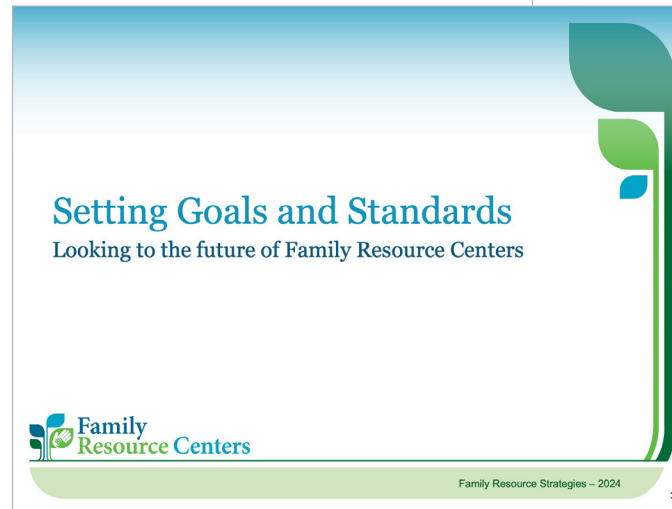
TITLE PAGE



INTERIOR PAGES



SECTION DIVIDER



Download templates at:

<https://www.frcma.org/intranet/resources/frc-brochure-logo-and-brand-identity>

Photography

Choosing Photos

Photography used in the materials for print, web, and electronic purposes should reflect the diverse nature of the clients we serve and their families. Pictures of diverse families (including those of different race and ethnic backgrounds, single parents, grandparents, or same sex parents) in settings that represent the community where the FRC is located are recommended.

Finding Images

Images should be **royalty-free** and can be purchased from [Gettyimages.com](https://www.gettyimages.com) or similar stock photography sites.

You can also try looking on **free stock photo websites** like [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com), [Pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com) or [Unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com).

Recommended Examples:



Photography

Avoid using photos that are NOT recommended for use

Try to avoid images with visible watermarks in the center of the photo. Often times, a visible watermark on a photo means the image was not downloaded with the permission of the person that took the photo.

Avoid images that feature lifestyles that might not be relatable to our clients or images of scenes that could make people uncomfortable.

Image Quality & Resolution

Try to avoid images with poor lighting, fuzzy focus, and too low resolution. The recommended resolution (dpi) for an image at actual size is 300 dpi.

For promotional pieces being printed by a commercial printing company, image resolution must be 300 dpi and usually in a CMYK format. Call your printer if you have any questions.

If you are printing in-house on an office printer, resolution should be no lower than 150 dpi and can be either RGB or CMYK format.

NOT Recommended Examples:



Image still has an unpurchased **watermark**



Does **NOT** reflect our clients or their **lifestyle**



Image resolution is **TOO low** or is **out of focus**



Might be **uncomfortable** to people

Photography

Getting permission to take photos of FRC clients

If you would like to use a picture of an FRC client in a brochure or news story, you must get their permission first. Privacy could be very important to some of our clients, and it is vital we respect that.

You can find the permission form on the **FRCMA.org** website in the "Resources" section of FRConnect within the FRC Brochure, Logo and Brand Identity section. The file is titled "Consent to Publish form."

You can also use the following link:

<https://www.frcma.org/intranet/resources/frc-brochure-logo-and-brand-identity>

The permission form should stay on file as long as the photo is in use.

Please send UMass Chan a copy of the form if the photo is shared with UMass Chan.



Language Guidelines

Quick Tips & Clarification

Language is also a critical component of a strong brand identity, and consistent grammar usage and language style can help build recognition. In this section, we provide a number of tips for language style, as well as phrasing in plain and people-first language.

About this Guide:

This guide uses the AP Style, short for Associated Press Stylebook, which is a useful reference for writers, editors, students and professionals. It provides a universal guide for spelling, language, punctuation, usage and style. The guide was originally created by and for journalists so they could have a set standard for grammar and style in all of their writing.

Acronyms, Initialisms

Avoid unnecessary or excessive acronym use.

In general, acronyms or initialisms should be easily understood on second reference without including the acronym or initialism in parenthesis after first reference (AP).

Exception: For longer materials or materials that require several acronyms or initialisms, it is permissible to include the acronym or initialism in parenthesis on the first reference.

Addresses

Abbreviate only Avenue (Ave.), Boulevard (Blvd.) and Street (St.) for numbered addresses.

For mailing addresses, include a ZIP code and use the postal abbreviation for the state (e.g., TX).

Exception: For numeric streets only, to avoid confusion, spell out "Street."

Example: 701 W. 51st Street.

Age

Always use figures.

If the age is an adjective or a substitute for a noun, hyphenate it.

Clarification: When expressing age ranges using "younger" or "older," include the minimum or maximum age (not "older than 17" but "18 and older")

Examples: A 21-year-old client. The client is 21 years old. The boy, 6, has a sister, 3. The program is for 18-year-olds. She is in her 50s. Only youth 20 and younger qualify.

Dates

For dates and years, use figures.

Do not use st, nd, rd, or th with dates.

Spell out the month unless it appears with a date. If used with a date, abbreviate the following months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.

Examples: The webinar will take place in February. The meeting is May 23. The event happened Dec. 15.

Lists

Use bullets instead of dashes in a list and preferably indent the list.

Always use a colon after the element that introduces a list.

Capitalize the first letter of each item.

The list should have parallel structure, meaning each item uses the same pattern of words (all nouns or all verbs, etc.).

Use periods when the items in the list are complete sentences or complete the introductory phrase. No periods are needed if the introductory element is a complete sentence or if the listed items are like an inventory sheet or shopping list.

Language Guidelines

Numbers

In general, spell out one through nine.

Example: She won first place four years in a row.

Spell out numbers at the start of a sentence, except years.

Use figures for 10 or above and whenever preceding a unit of measure or referring to ages of people, animals, events or things.

Example: According to a CDC study, more than one in 10 children ages 8 to 15 have been diagnosed with a mental illness.

Use figures for addresses, dates, years, decimals, percentages, millions, billions, trillions and page numbers.

Percent

Use figures and spell out the word.

Example: The profit margin was 40 percent.

Exception: The percent symbol can be used in tables, charts and graphs when space is limited. For visual communications when quick comprehension is necessary (posters, videos, presentation slides, etc.), the percent symbol may be used in text.

Punctuation

Use a single space after a period.

Do NOT use periods in abbreviations

of organization names, professional certifications, or academic degrees.

Example: EOHHS, SSI, MD, RN, PhD

Periods and commas remain INSIDE the closing quotation marks, whether double or single.

Example: The article explained “the necessity of researching the data prior to the next phase of the project.”

Telephone numbers

Use figures and hyphens, not periods.

Example: 212-621-1500 or 800-111-1000 for toll-free numbers.

In the case of vanity phone numbers, present the digit-only version first.

Example: 877-847-8377 (877-THSTEPS)

Exception: Include the “1-” in phone numbers on Spanish materials. When English and Spanish text appear side-by-side, retain the 1- in the phone number in English as well.

Titles

Capitalize a formal title if it is used immediately before a person’s name.

Titles are lowercase if they follow the name or no name is present.

Examples: Executive Commissioner Charles Smith. Charles Smith, executive commissioner, spoke at the meeting. The commissioner met with stakeholders.

Abbreviate titles when used before a full name: Dr., Gov., Rep. and Sen. (AP).

Language Guidelines

Plain Language Terms & Phrases

It's important to be careful in the language we use to ensure that it can be understood at all levels. When you develop content for print and electronic materials, consider the examples below for word choice.

Instead of	original	use	substitute
	refugee		new arrivals
	adolescent		teenager
	assist		help
	demonstrate		show
	case		person
	communicate		talk
	consent		agree to
	determine		find out
	discontinue		stop
	disenroll		leave the program
	eligible		able to get
	fundamental		basic
	head of household		contact person
	make sure to		apply for
	notification		notice
	occur		happen

Instead of	original	use	substitute
	opportunity		chance
	option		choice
	permission		allow or agree to
	person on Medicaid		Medicaid member
	process		to work on
	qualified		able to get
	request		ask for
	required		need or needed
	select		pick
	using '/'		and or 'or'
	understand		know
	utilize		use
	you are required to <i>or</i> you are responsible for		you must

Language Guidelines

Preferred Social & Program Terms

It's important that when we speak about our own program we are using language that is easy for people to understand no matter how much they know about our program. It is also important that people know they are working with our program which is why you should use the following language when talking about your Family Resource Center.

Program Description:

If you do not already have a description of the FRC program, copy the following to make sure visitors understand your programs relationship to the broader Family Resource Center Network.

"Our program is a part of the Massachusetts Family Resource Center network – a statewide network of community-based providers offering multi-cultural parenting programs, support groups, early childhood services, information and referral resources and education for families whose children range in age from birth to 18 years of age. Learn more about our programs services and partners by visiting www.frcma.org."

For example:

Instead of using the	Center name	use	FRC name
	The Bridge Family Resource Center		The Amherst Family Resource Center
	The Family Center – Community Connections of Brockton		The Brockton Family Resource Center
	The Family Service Association		The Fall River Family Resource Center

It is recommended that each FRC be referred to by it's location name, rather than the Center name, to help people connect the FRC with the town/city. We understand it may be noted differently in your contract language. In the next procurement, we will standardize the naming convention in the contract language.

Language Guidelines

Using Person-First Language

People with disabilities are – first and foremost – people who have individual abilities, interests and needs. One of the major improvements in communicating with and about people with disabilities is “People-First Language.”

People-First Language emphasizes the person, not the disability. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual, but one of several aspects of the whole person. People-First Language is an objective way of acknowledging, communicating, and reporting on disabilities. It eliminates generalizations and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability.
Definition from TheARC.org

However, some people with disabilities do not like People-First Language, so if possible, ask the person what language they prefer to describe their condition or disability. The Disability Language Style Guide (<https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>) is a good reference tool.

For example:

Instead of	original phrase	use	person-first substitute
	autistic child		person who has autism
	dependent		individual that depends on a person
	blind person		a person who is blind or visually impaired
	the disabled		a person with a disability
	special ed student		a student who receives special education services
	a mute person		a person who is unable to speak
	a deaf person		a person who is Deaf or hard of hearing*
	drug addict		a person with a substance use disorder

* Capitalize “Deaf” when referring to a person and use lowercase (“deaf”) when referring to the hearing level.