



BRANDING GUIDELINES

COMMUNICATIONS, STYLE & MEDIA GUIDLINES

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INTRODUCTION

This Brand Guide is intended to serve as a reference for staff, board members, committees, partners, and contractors who create materials on behalf of the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA). It provides guidance to ensure that all communications and visual materials representing NAPSA reflect a consistent, professional, and recognizable identity.

This guide should be used whenever you are working on a project that includes a communication or design component. Examples include:

- Developing conference or training materials
- Preparing presentations or educational resources
- Creating reports, publications, or research summaries
- Promoting NAPSA events, initiatives, or announcements
- Maintaining or contributing to NAPSA's website or digital platforms
- Creating social media content or outreach materials
- Producing materials for committees, task forces, or partner collaborations

NAPSA staff and leadership are committed to maintaining a clear and unified voice that reflects the organization's mission and leadership in advancing fair and effective pretrial justice. When developing communications or design materials on behalf of NAPSA, please follow the standards outlined in this guide.

These guidelines are designed to ensure that all NAPSA communications maintain a high standard of professionalism, strengthen the organization's brand identity, and clearly communicate our role as a national leader in pretrial services. Consistent use of these standards helps reinforce trust, credibility, and recognition across the courts, practitioners, policymakers, and communities we serve.

Thank you for helping ensure that every NAPSA communication reflects the professionalism, integrity, and leadership of our organization.

BRAND IDENTITY

Vision Statement

Setting the Standard in Pretrial Justice

Mission Statement

Promoting pretrial justice and public safety through legal and evidence-based pretrial practices and decision making

Core Strategic Approach

Provide legal and evidence-based standards and education to individuals and agencies.

Supporting strategies:

Standards, Annual Conference, Certification, Accreditation, Diverse Education, Publications, Professional Development, Partnerships

Values

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Integrity
- Non-partisan
- Transparency

Brand Personality

- Professional but approachable
- Honest, trusted broker of information related to pretrial justice
- Forward-thinking
- Inclusive
- Clear, concise, educational

Brand Positioning: Who We Serve

Primary Audiences

- Pretrial services professionals
- Courts and judicial leaders
- Justice system stakeholders
- Researchers and policy leaders

Secondary Audiences

- Legislators and policymakers
- Community partners
- Media and public audiences
- Funders and national partners

WRITING GUIDELINES

Clear, thoughtful communication is essential to how the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA) shares information, promotes best practices, and supports professionals across the pretrial field. These guidelines are intended to help ensure that written materials representing NAPSA are clear, professional, and accessible to a wide audience.

Know Your Audience

Before you begin writing, consider who will be reading the material and the context in which they will encounter it. NAPSA communicates with a broad audience that includes judges, pretrial practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and community partners. Each group brings different levels of experience, education, and familiarity with pretrial practices.

For example, a research report or policy brief may require a more detailed and technical tone, while conference materials, website content, or announcements should be written in a way that is clear and accessible to a broader audience. Always consider how the reader will interact with the information and tailor your approach accordingly.

Use Engaging Titles

Titles should capture the reader's attention while clearly reflecting the content of the material. Short, focused titles are usually the most effective. If additional explanation is necessary, pair a concise title with a descriptive subtitle.

Organize Content with Headings

For longer documents, headings and subheadings help organize information and guide readers through the content. They break up large blocks of text and make material easier to scan.

When drafting documents in Microsoft Word, use built-in heading styles whenever possible so an automatic table of contents can be generated if needed.

Keep Paragraphs Concise

Short paragraphs improve readability, especially for digital content. Aim for paragraphs of three to four sentences when possible. This helps readers stay engaged and makes text easier to follow on screens or in formatted reports.

Use Lists When Appropriate

Bulleted or numbered lists are often easier to read than long sentences or dense paragraphs. Use them to highlight key points, steps, or grouped information.

When using lists:

- Avoid embedding lists inside paragraphs
- Keep punctuation simple
- Do not add commas or semicolons at the end of each item

Use Plain Language

Whenever content will be published online or viewed by the public, use plain language principles to make information easier to understand.

Plain language helps ensure that NAPSA communications are accessible to people with a wide range of reading levels and professional backgrounds.

Key principles include:

- Use clear, straightforward language
- Keep sentences and sections concise
- Write in a human, professional tone
- Define acronyms on first use
- Avoid gendered pronouns when possible by using **“you,” “they,” or role titles** instead of “he” or “she”

Additional guidance can be found through the **Plain Language Action and Information Network** at plainlanguage.gov.

Check Facts and Links

Accuracy is critical in all NAPSA communications. When preparing content for publication, verify that all information has been reviewed and confirmed.

Before submitting content:

- Check the spelling of names and titles
- Verify web addresses and hyperlinks
- Confirm contact information and data points
- Ensure statistics or research findings are accurate and properly cited

Small errors can reduce credibility, so careful review is important.

Prevent “Link Rot”

Online resources can change or disappear over time. If you reference an external website or document, consider preserving a stable version of the source.

Tools such as **Perma.cc** allow you to archive a webpage so readers can still access the referenced content even if the original link changes or is removed.

Avoid Passive Voice

Whenever possible, write in active voice. Active voice makes writing clearer, more direct, and easier to read. Passive voice often places the subject after the verb and can create longer, less engaging sentences.

Passive Voice

A new program was launched by the agency.

The event had staff from 20 states in attendance.

A statement has been issued by the NAPSA President.

Active Voice

The agency launched a new program.

Staff from 20 states attended the event.

The NAPSA President issued a statement.

If you find yourself writing a passive sentence, try reversing the structure so the subject performs the action.

Support Content with Data

Whenever possible, include relevant data to support reports, articles, or publications. Data strengthens credibility and can help illustrate trends or outcomes.

In many cases, data can also be visualized through charts or graphics, which can make complex information easier for readers to understand and engage with.

Following these guidelines helps ensure that all NAPSA communications remain clear, professional, and consistent while supporting the organization’s leadership in advancing effective and fair pretrial practices.

VOICE AND TONE

Professional but accessible, plain language, emphasize collaboration and equity, optimistic and motivational tone.

Overall Tone

NAPSA communications should be:

- Clear and plain language
- Professional and measured
- Neutral and non-punitive
- Research-informed
- Respectful and inclusive
- Confident but not advocacy
- Non-partisan

Tone by Communication Type

Context

Research Reports, Publications
Standards & Guidance
Member Communications
Social Media
Public Education
Training Materials

Tone

Formal, precise
Authoritative, clear
Professional, supportive
Professional, approachable
Informational, accessible
Clear, practical

Person-First & Justice Language Standards

Use:

- "Person charged with..."
- "Pretrial participant"
- "Individual awaiting trial"
- "Court appearance"
- "Substance use disorder"

Avoid

- Offender
- Criminal (unless legally necessary)
- Addict / alcoholic
- Non-compliant (use: “did not complete”)
- Failure to comply language when avoidable
- Punitive framing in neutral materials

Presumption of Innocence Standard**All NAPSA materials must:**

- Distinguish allegation vs. conviction
- Avoid language implying guilt
- Maintain neutral descriptions of behavior
- Reinforce due process principles

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility should be considered in every communication and design choice NAPSA makes. Good design is not only visually appealing, but also readable, inclusive, and usable for as many people as possible. This includes individuals with low vision, color blindness, reading challenges, or those using assistive technology.

Creating accessible materials helps ensure that NAPSA's publications, presentations, digital content, and branded materials can be understood and used by a broad audience.

Color Contrast

Contrast is the difference in color and brightness between two colors. Strong contrast improves readability and helps ensure content is accessible.

When choosing colors for text, graphics, and design elements, make sure there is enough contrast between the background color and the text or object placed on top of it. Low-contrast combinations may look appealing in some settings but can be difficult or impossible for some users to read.

Use high-contrast combinations whenever possible, especially for:

- body text
- headings
- charts and graphs
- buttons or calls to action
- text placed over colored backgrounds or images

As a general rule, dark text on a light background or light text on a dark background is the safest choice.

Accessible Typography

Typography plays an important role in accessibility. The fonts used in NAPSA materials should be professional, easy to read, and widely available across common platforms and devices.

Recommended typefaces should include clear letterforms and simple, familiar characters. Avoid decorative, novelty, or highly stylized fonts that may be difficult to read.

Recommended Typeface Categories

Serif

- Garamond
- Bodoni MT
- Calisto MT

Sans Serif

- Segoe UI
- Arial
- Calibri

These fonts are readable, professional, and appropriate for most NAPSA communications.

Accessible Fonts

When selecting a font, the goal is not only to support individuals using screen readers, but also to make content easier to read for people with low vision, limited literacy, cognitive processing differences, or anyone viewing content quickly on a screen.

Accessible fonts typically:

- use clear, recognizable letterforms
- avoid decorative strokes or unusual shapes
- provide good spacing between letters and words
- remain legible at different sizes

For English-language materials, choose fonts that use familiar and uncomplicated characters. All recommended fonts in this guide meet that standard.

Fonts to Avoid

Avoid script, novelty, and display fonts in body copy or important communications. These fonts may appear decorative, but they often reduce readability and accessibility.

Examples of font styles to avoid include:

- script fonts
- handwritten fonts
- ornate or old-style decorative fonts
- novelty fonts such as Jokerman
- blackletter or Gothic-style fonts

These styles may be difficult to read and should not be used in standard NAPSA materials, especially in reports, digital content, presentations, or public-facing documents.

Additional Accessibility Considerations

When creating branded materials, also keep the following in mind:

- Do not rely on color alone to communicate meaning
- Use sufficient font size for readability
- Keep layouts clean and uncluttered
- Use clear headings and hierarchy to organize information
- Ensure digital documents include alt text, accessible headings, and readable hyperlink text when appropriate

Accessibility is part of professionalism. Thoughtful, accessible design helps NAPSA communicate clearly and inclusively while ensuring our materials are usable by the widest possible audience.

BRANDING: LOGO USAGE



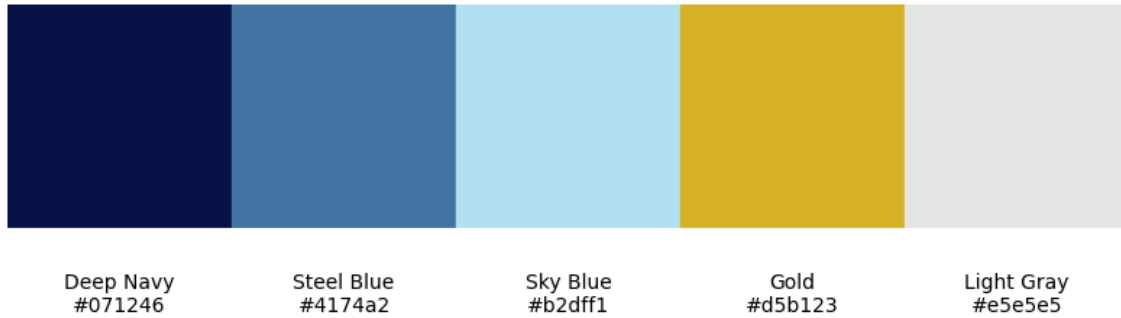
Primary Logo

Always use the full NAPSA logo with clear space. Do not stretch, distort, add shadows or effects, place on visually busy backgrounds, rotate, recolor the logo outside brand-approved colors or combine with other logos without approval. Logo should be legible at all sizes and high resolution. Use on white background.

Clear Space

Maintain a clear margin equal to the height of the "N" in NAPSA around the logo.

BRANDING: COLOR PALETTE



Core Brand Color

- Midnight Navy (#071246): Primary text, headers, backgrounds

Secondary Palette

- Steel Blue (#4174a2)
- Sky Blue (#b2dff1)
- Heritage Gold (#D5B123): Accent, buttons, icons
- Light Gray (#e5e5e5): Backgrounds, content sections

Accessibility Standard

NAPSA materials must:

- Meet WCAG contrast standards
- Avoid color-only meaning
- Ensure readability for all audiences

BRANDING: TYPOGRAPHY

Primary Font (Web & Print)

- Heading Font: Merriweather or Georgia (Serif, elegant and legible)
 - Usage: Titles, headers, callouts
- Body Font: Roboto or Open Sans (Sans-serif, readable and professional)
 - Usage: Reports, web body text
- Alternatives: Arial, Calibri, Segoe UI
- Acceptable Web-Safe Alternatives: Arial, Calibri, Helvetica

Usage Guidelines

- Headings: bold weights (600–700)
- Body text: regular weight (400)
- Line height: 1.5x font size
- Maintain hierarchy: H1 > H2 > H3, etc.

BRANDING: ICONOGRAPHY & IMAGERY

Icons

Use flat icons with clean lines, preferably outlined or two-tone with primary colors. Avoid overly cartoonish or detailed icons.

Photography Guidelines

Photography plays an important role in telling the story of the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA). Strong images help illustrate the impact of NAPSA's work, highlight collaboration within the pretrial field, and bring energy and authenticity to our communications.

When photographing events, trainings, or meetings, focus on capturing the experience as it naturally unfolds. While posed group photos can be useful, candid images often better reflect engagement, collaboration, and the real moments that define NAPSA gatherings.

Whenever possible, photograph people interacting with one another—discussing ideas, participating in sessions, networking, or collaborating. These images help convey the purpose and atmosphere of the event more effectively than staged photos alone.

Capture Authentic Moments

When photographing people:

- Include a few posed group photos when appropriate
- Focus primarily on candid images of people interacting, learning, and engaging
- Capture presenters speaking, participants asking questions, and conversations between attendees
- Look for moments that reflect collaboration, professionalism, and community

The goal is to visually tell the story of the event rather than simply document attendance.

Photography Tips

To ensure images are usable across a variety of NAPSA materials—including reports, websites, social media, and promotional materials—keep the following tips in mind:

- Take photos both vertically and horizontally to allow flexibility in layout and design
- Take multiple photos from the same angle to increase the chance of capturing a clear, natural moment
- Avoid strong backlighting, which can create dark silhouettes

- Avoid direct, harsh sunlight, which can produce strong shadows and washed-out highlights
- Do not zoom in on a smartphone; instead, walk closer to your subject for a clearer image
- Line up the edges of your smartphone with a wall or straight line to keep the shot level and balanced
- “Live” and “HDR” photo settings are not recommended, as they can create inconsistent image quality or file formats that are difficult to use in publications

Composition Tips

Good composition helps produce images that are visually engaging and easy to use in publications.

- Frame subjects clearly without excessive background clutter
- Capture a mix of wide shots, mid-range shots, and close-ups
- Leave some space around subjects so photos can be cropped for different formats
- Look for moments of expression, discussion, or collaboration

Thoughtful photography helps strengthen NAPSA’s storytelling and ensures that visual content reflects the professionalism, engagement, and leadership of the pretrial community.

Stock Photo Style

In some cases, using a stock photo may be more appropriate than using photos taken at an event. Stock images can be useful when you need high-quality visuals, illustrative concepts, or imagery that represents broader ideas within the pretrial field.

Before searching for new images, review NAPSA’s internal stock photo gallery to see if a suitable image already exists. If additional images are needed, the following sources may be used:

- iStock
- Unsplash
- Creative Commons
- Wikimedia Commons

All proposed stock images should be submitted as links for review before use.

Do not search for stock photos through Google image search. Images found through general search engines are often copyrighted and may not be legally reused. If you are unsure whether an image requires licensing or purchase, consult the appropriate NAPSA staff responsible for communications or branding before using the image.

Photo Quality Requirements

Images used in NAPSA publications must meet minimum resolution standards to ensure they reproduce clearly in both digital and printed materials.

- Print materials: Images must be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch)
- Digital or screen use: Images should be 96 dpi

Images created for screen use typically cannot be enlarged for print without losing quality. Enlarging low-resolution images can result in blurry or pixelated visuals, which reduces the professionalism of NAPSA materials.

Whenever possible, choose high-resolution images so they remain flexible for both digital and print formats.

Preferred Image Style

The images used in NAPSA materials should reflect the professionalism, collaboration, and human impact of the pretrial field. All imagery should reflect fairness, professionalism, and respect for individuals involved in the justice system. When selecting stock images, prioritize visuals that feel natural, authentic, and current.

Preferred images should be:

- Professional, modern, and clean in style
- Natural and authentic rather than staged or overly posed
- Inclusive and representative of diverse communities
- Strength-based and respectful in tone
- Appropriate for justice system settings
- Focused on real people interacting in courtroom, professional, or community environments

Images that convey collaboration, engagement, and professionalism help reinforce the credibility of NAPSA communications.

Images to Avoid: Certain types of imagery can unintentionally reinforce negative stereotypes or undermine the goals of the pretrial field. Avoid images that:

- Resemble mugshots or booking photos
- Imply guilt or criminality
- Depict individuals in incarceration or jail settings
- Use fear-based or sensationalized imagery

- Portray individuals in a stigmatizing or dehumanizing way
- Appear overly staged, artificial, or outdated

Diversity and Representation

NAPSA communications should reflect the diversity of the communities served by the justice system. When selecting images, make a conscious effort to include people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences.

Images should support the values of fairness, impartiality, and inclusivity while avoiding stereotypes or imagery that may unintentionally marginalize individuals or communities.

Accessibility

Accessible design requires that all non-text elements—such as photographs, charts, and graphics—include a written description. This description is called alternative text, or alt text. Alt text allows individuals using screen readers or assistive technology to understand the content and purpose of an image.

Effective alt text should:

- Be short and descriptive
- Provide the key context or meaning of the image
- Describe the purpose of the image within the document

For example: *“Pretrial professionals participating in a training session discussion.”*

If an image contains complex information—such as a chart or graph—alt text alone may not be sufficient. In those cases, the surrounding text must also include the data or information shown in the visual.

Most content platforms—including website content management systems, Microsoft Word, and PowerPoint—include a built-in field where alt text can be added to images.

Including alt text ensures that NAPSA materials remain accessible and usable for individuals relying on assistive technologies.

DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA STANDARDS

Digital communications play an important role in how NAPSA shares knowledge, promotes professional standards, and connects with the broader pretrial community. All digital and social media communications should reflect NAPSA's role as a national leader in evidence-based pretrial practice.

These standards help ensure that messaging, visuals, and engagement remain professional, consistent, and aligned with NAPSA's mission.

Brand Voice

All digital communications should reflect the organization's professional role within the justice system.

NAPSA's voice should be:

- Professional and credible
- Informational, not partisan
- Respectful in all engagement
- Consistent with NAPSA's national leadership role

Content should focus on education, research, and professional development while maintaining neutrality and professionalism.

Social Media Dos and Don'ts

Social media should be used to educate, inform, and highlight the work of the pretrial field.

DO

- Share research, publications, and professional resources
- Highlight the work and achievements of members and pretrial professionals
- Promote training opportunities, conferences, and standards
- Maintain a professional and respectful tone in all posts

DON'T

- Discuss individual cases or case outcomes
- Engage in political disputes or partisan debate
- Use inflammatory or sensational language
- Speculate on pending or unresolved cases

Co-Branding and Partner Use

NAPSA frequently collaborates with partner organizations, agencies, and training providers. When NAPSA's logo appears alongside another organization's branding, the following standards apply.

External partners must:

- Obtain written permission before using the NAPSA logo
- Use approved logo files only
- Follow established logo placement and clear space guidelines
- Include required funding acknowledgments, when applicable

Approval Contact: Executive Director

Hashtag Use

NAPSA uses hashtags to increase the visibility of educational content, connect with justice system professionals, and amplify evidence-based messaging. Hashtags also help highlight events, training opportunities, and national initiatives related to pretrial practice.

Core Branded Hashtags

These hashtags represent NAPSA's core brand and should be used consistently across most social media posts.

- #NAPSA
- #Pretrial
- #Diversion
- #Standards
- #Conference
- #PretrialServices
- #PretrialJustice
- #EvidenceBasedPretrial
- #PretrialProfessionals

Recommendation: Use one to two core branded hashtags per post.

Secondary Topic Hashtags

Additional hashtags may be used depending on the subject of the content.

Fairness

- #FairJustice
- #DueProcess
- #PretrialJusticeReform

Public Safety and Outcomes

- #PublicSafety
- #CourtAppearance
- #DataDrivenJustice

Training and Professional Development

- #PretrialTraining
- #JusticeEducation

- #ProfessionalDevelopment
- #ContinuingEducation

Research and Data

- #JusticeData
- #EvidenceMatters
- #ResearchInPractice
- #DataDriven

Platform-Specific Best Practices

Different social media platforms use hashtags differently. The following guidelines help maintain clarity and effectiveness across platforms.

LinkedIn (Primary Professional Platform)

- Use **3–5 hashtags**
- Focus on professional and topic-specific hashtags
- Place hashtags **at the end of the post**

Example:

Advancing evidence-based pretrial practices nationwide.

#NAPSA #PretrialServices #EvidenceBasedPretrial #JusticeData

Facebook

- Use **1–2 hashtags**
- Prioritize readability
- Hashtags may be omitted when posts are narrative-heavy

Instagram

- Use **5–10 hashtags**
- Combine branded, topical, and broader hashtags
- Place hashtags at the **end of the caption or in the first comment**

Hashtag Tone

Hashtags should reflect NAPSA’s professional and nonpartisan role.

Always

- Use professional language
- Maintain alignment with NAPSA’s nonpartisan stance
- Reinforce evidence-based messaging
- Use person-first language in accompanying text

Avoid

- Politically partisan hashtags
- Inflammatory or extreme advocacy tags

- Excessive or spam-style tagging
- Hashtags that conflict with the presumption of innocence

Recommended Hashtag Structure

Most NAPSA social media posts should include:

- **One branded hashtag**
- **One topical hashtag**
- **One audience or professional hashtag**

Example:

#NAPSA #PretrialServices #EvidenceBasedPretrial

Social Media Graphics and Blog Visuals

Using consistent image sizes helps ensure graphics display properly across platforms.

Instagram / Facebook Feed

- 4:5 (Portrait) — **1080 × 1350 px** (*best for mobile engagement*)
- 1:1 (Square) — **1080 × 1080 px** (*versatile for carousels*)

Stories, Reels, TikTok

- 9:16 (Vertical) — **1080 × 1920 px**

LinkedIn / Twitter (X)

- 16:9 — **1200 × 675 px**
- 1:1 — **1080 × 1080 px**

Facebook Cover Photo

- **820 × 312 px** (*approximately 4:1 ratio*)

Pinterest Pins

- 2:3 — **1000 × 1500 px**
- 1:2.86 — **1000 × 1800 px**

Blog Images

- Ideal ratio: **16:9 or 1.91:1**
- Minimum width: **1200 px**

Graphic Design Best Practices

To maintain consistency and clarity across digital platforms:

- Keep text, logos, and key visuals within safe zones to avoid cropping
- For 9:16 graphics, keep critical content within 1080 × 1420 px

- Use 1080 px width as the standard minimum for clarity across platforms
- 4:5 graphics (1080 × 1350) generally provide the best mobile performance
- Avoid covering more than 20% of the image with text, which may reduce reach on some platforms
- For blog graphics, use simple visuals such as charts, callouts, and pull quotes to break up text
- Maintain consistent brand colors, fonts, and logo placement across all graphics

These standards help ensure NAPSA's digital communications remain professional, visually consistent, and aligned with the organization's national leadership in the pretrial field.

BRAND GOVERNANCE & APPROVAL

Maintaining a strong and consistent brand requires clear oversight and coordination. Brand governance ensures that all materials representing NAPSA reflect the organization's mission, professionalism, and national leadership in pretrial practice.

All official NAPSA communications and branded materials should follow the standards outlined in this guide.

When Approval Is Required

The following materials should be reviewed before publication or distribution:

- New publications, reports, or white papers
- Conference or training materials using the NAPSA logo
- Public-facing presentations or educational resources
- Social media campaigns or large announcements
- Co-branded materials with external partners
- New graphic templates, promotional materials, or branded merchandise

Review helps ensure that branding, tone, and messaging remain consistent across all communications.

Approved Brand Assets

To maintain consistency, only approved brand materials should be used, including:

- Official NAPSA logo files
- Brand color palette
- Approved fonts and typography
- Graphic templates
- Standard presentation formats

Do not recreate or alter NAPSA brand elements. If new design materials are needed, contact the appropriate NAPSA staff for guidance.

Brand Stewardship

Everyone who creates content on behalf of NAPSA plays a role in maintaining the organization's brand. Consistent use of these standards helps ensure that NAPSA communications remain clear, professional, and recognizable across publications, training materials, digital platforms, and partner collaborations.

Questions regarding brand standards or approvals should be directed to the Executive Director.