

CHAPTER VII – FORMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

7.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Forms Management Program is to reduce and simplify the number of forms used in State government. The program seeks to eliminate unnecessary forms, encourage the use of statewide forms and improve the design of required forms in accordance with established standards to include electronic forms.

7.2 State Records Management Division Responsibilities

- Develop and establish day-to-day operating procedures for support requirements to the Forms Management Program.
- Recommend policy, guidelines, regulations, rule changes or additions.
- Assist agencies in reviewing information gathering and disbursement requirements pertaining to necessary forms and assisting in the preparation of forms requests.
- Receive and review forms submitted by state agencies for authorization. Determine the need for existing as well as planned forms for the gathering of information based upon agency's programs or statutory requirements. Assign form authorization numbers. Maintain a list of approved forms.
- Notify agencies of action taken or pending action regarding forms request.
- Inform agencies of existing statewide forms. See Exhibit XIII.
- Establish basic state design and specification criteria for the standardization of all forms.
- Design and require the use of composite forms by agencies requiring similar information.
- Prepare reports as specified by statute.

7.3 Agency Responsibilities

- Maintain an active Forms management Program within the agency.
- Appoint a Forms Management Officer for the agency and notify the RMD in writing of the appointment and any changes that may occur.
- Establish an Agency Records and Forms Review Committee to evaluate forms submitted by the agency. Notify the RMD, in writing, of any changes that may occur.

7.4 Forms Approval by the Records Management Division

- Forms approved by the Agency Forms Management Officer will be submitted to the RMD for review. All forms submitted for approval must be accompanied by the Forms Justification and Approval Request (GS-0540).
- The RMD will review the draft of the form and the Forms Justification and Approval Request. Forms approved will be assigned a form number and returned to the Forms Management Officer with a copy of the Forms Justification and Approval Request.

- Forms determined to be duplicated, non-essential or suitable for statewide usage will be returned to the Forms Management Officer with a written explanation.

7.5 Numbering Forms

The RMD shall assign a number to each approved form. The form number will have a two (2) or three (3) character alphabetic prefix followed by a four (4) digit number. The form number is printed on the form, along with the revision date if applicable. Example: GS-0540 is the number assigned to the "Forms Justification and Approval Request". The assigned numbers follow in consecutive order.

7.6 State Operated Printshops

- Cooperation. All State operated printshops shall cooperate fully with the Records Management and Printing Divisions, Department of General Services, in meeting the purpose and intent of the statutes and rules governing the use and printing of forms.
- Printing. No form shall be printed or reprinted by any State printshop unless it has been approved in accordance with these procedures, including the assignment of an approved forms authorization number.

7.7 Non-State Operated Printshops

- Printing in Non-State Operated Printshops. No contract shall be entered into, nor requisition issued, nor acted upon, by any agency for the printing of any form, unless a form authorization number has been affixed in accordance with these procedures.
- Contracts with Non-State Operated Printshops. All State contracts for grant agreements, involving the printing of any form, shall contain a provision whereby the contractor agrees that no form shall be printed unless a form authorization number has been affixed as required by these procedures.

7.8 Forms Production Guidelines

- Adhering to Guidelines. The printing requirements and guidelines used by the Printing Division, agency printshops, and term contracts issued by the Department of General Services' Purchasing division shall be followed when designing or requesting approval of forms:
 - Information Required on Forms. All forms shall include the following information:
 - Name of the agency and division producing the form.
 - Forms Authorization Number in bottom left corner.
 - Title of the Form.
 - State seal on external forms. All forms appearing on the State's website are considered external forms.
 - RDA number or "RDA PENDING" notation in bottom, right corner.
- Pre-Printed Forms Acquisition. Pre-printed forms shall conform to all purchasing laws and rules, adhere to copyright and patent laws and regulations and be approved according to these procedures. Form authorization numbers are assigned to pre-printed forms for control purposes and do not have to be printed on the forms.
- Letterhead on Forms. The use of a letterhead format on forms shall conform to those approved in the Publication Authorization Guidelines, section VI.A.1.

- Production and Printing Guidelines. The following are guidelines which shall be used during the design of any form. Any form designed outside these guidelines will be disapproved.
 - Design the form to fit the capabilities of State printshops or standard formats available on term contracts.
 - Provide enough lead time to avoid unnecessary and costly rush jobs. Coordinate printing requirements early with the Records Management and Printing Divisions.
 - Request quality based on the use of the form.
 - Forms shall be designed to utilize standard sizes of paper stock available to the printshops (5 ½" x 8 ½", 8 ½" x 11, 11 x 17, 17 x 22, etc.) and should not exceed a finished product size of 8-1/2 x 14 inches.
 - Use paper stock that is available on contract to state printshops, normally 20 pound white stock or carbonless paper stock. Any other weight or color must be justified on the Forms Justification and Approval Request - (GS-0540).
 - Forms will be printed in black ink only. Black ink is the most economical and produces legible negatives for microfilming or other media duplication. Justification is required for the use of any color ink other than black. The only exception to this policy is printing of certificates which may have two (2) ink colors.
 - Print on both sides of paper, where practical.
 - Avoid the use of artwork and logos. Justification for the use of artwork or logos must be included on the Forms Justification and Approval Request (GS-0540).
 - Condense the form's text as much as possible.
 - Prepare the text of the form as "camera ready".
 - Avoid printing an excessive number of copies. However, it is more economical to provide for a small overprinting than an under printing since reprints are expensive.
 - NOTE: If an RDA is pending for the form, request only the number of copies required until the RDA number can be assigned.
 - Delay or accumulate revisions or changes to forms until necessary for proper administration of the affected areas.
 - No form shall be printed on an office copier or duplicating machine or personal computer without prior written approval of the RMD.
 - Margins. A border of at least ½" must be allowed on all four sides of a form for gripping and cutting requirements.

A requested form may be disapproved when:

- It is not required to conduct official State business.

- It cannot be produced and distributed in time to serve its purpose.
- It duplicates the gathering of information which is available from other State sources or agencies.
- It modifies or revises a form controlled by another State agency or would create duplicate forms serving the same purpose.
- It does not include an RDA number or does not have a pending RDA included in the request.

7.9 Forms Design Standards

- Form Number. The state form number is printed in the lower left corner of the form. The state form number must be on all sheets of a multi-page form.
- RDA Number. The state RDA number is printed in the lower right corner of the form. The RDA number shall have the following construction: RDA NNNN (four or five digit number) or the notation "RDA PENDING" if the RDA is in the approval process.
- Dates. Revision dates are placed on all forms immediately following the state form number, i.e., GS-0704 (Rev.5/99).
- Form Title. The title for a form should be brief and clearly state the function or purpose of the form. Words such as "form" or "sheet" are not used in the title of a form.
- Box Design. The box design arrangement is the most efficient design for variable data entry. The captions should be in the upper left corner of each box.
- Column Headings. These should be in all caps.
- Ballot Boxes. This feature should be used when the information requested can be answered in one word. The ballot box precedes the answer and should be aligned with other ballot boxes for ease of entry.
- Spacing. Spacing design must be compatible for efficient forms completion.
- Instructions. Instructions should be printed on the form. These should be brief but leave no doubt about what is to be done and by whom.
- Distribution. Forms parts distribution is printed at the bottom of the form and printed on every copy of the form.
- Personalization. Agencies shall not print names of individuals on forms (exceptions are the Governor and Commissioners). Print the names of departments and division or titles.
- Prenumbered Forms. Use prenumbered forms only if control is essential to the system. Allow a space of 1 ¾ " x 1 " to accommodate the numbering head on the press. Recommended position is upper right corner.

7.10 Electronic Form Standards

- An electronic form is a document, in machine-readable format with blank fields, used to collect original information. The form should be considered a "source document" since it initiates the process

of collecting data. The data maybe entered directly or indirectly into a forms processing application which enters the information into a database.

- When implementing the use of electronic forms, where applicable, all provisions of this chapter apply.
- Agencies intending to use electronic forms must first consult with the agency forms officer. (See Section 7002).
- Electronic forms may be created and maintained in an electronic environment as long as the integrity and conformity of the design and information is intact.
- The electronic form must be an exact reproduction of the currently approved form.
- Electronic forms reproduced from the Federal government or other states, counties or municipalities may be utilized as long as their form(s) is maintained in their original format and permission to use the form(s) is granted and proper credit is given to the originating agency.

7.11 Electronic Forms on Desktop Computers, File Servers, Main Frame Applications

- Standards and approval for forms created and/or maintained on desktop computers, file servers, mainframe applications or other relevant electronic format will meet the same form guidelines as stated previously in this chapter.

7.12 Electronic Forms on the State of Tennessee Website

- Since forms become public when placed on the State of Tennessee's website, all standards previously mentioned for external forms are applicable.
- "Data input screens" are defined as screens designed to enter existing data into a database. Data input screens as defined under this definition do not require forms approval. (example: spreadsheets, Data Capture Payroll)
- Any format that insures the integrity and design standards of the form is acceptable for maintaining electronic forms on the website.