

Advertising with ArtsWA: Digital Media and Printed Collateral

Policy Number: 2018-01
Effective Date: 5/31/2018
Applies To: Applies to all employees of the Washington State Arts Commission.
Sources: [RCW 49.60.180\(4\) Unfair practices of employers](#)
[RCW 9.04.010 False Advertising](#)

Approved by:



Karen Hanan, Executive Director

Purpose – This Commission Policy informs employees about the agency’s guidelines for commercial advertising on its website, social media channels, and printed materials. Washington State Arts Commission operates a website and social media channels accessed by members of the public through the Internet. The agency also provides printed material available in hard copy. The Communications Manager is the designated lead, working with staff to ensure compliance, and consistent and fair application of the policy.

Definitions

- **Advertising** – The term advertising is defined as the activity of attracting public attention to a product of business through paid announcements. For purposes of this policy, advertising in digital or printed material produced by ArtsWA is permitted unless otherwise prohibited in policy, as part of an agency, or as part of a future Commission action.
- **Sponsorship** is a company’s or an individual’s financial donation in return for acknowledgement and/or recognition. For purposes of this policy, a sponsor’s print or digital messaging or marketing content agreed to as part of a sponsorship agreement with ArtsWA is subject to the same rules applied to advertising.

Agency Directive

Employees are directed to follow this digital and print advertising policy for the posting of all revenue-generating advertising through the agency’s websites and social media tools, and print pieces to the extent allowed by law and in accordance with this policy. This policy advances the advertising program’s revenue-generating objective by prohibiting advertisements that could detract from that goal by creating substantial controversy, interfering with and diverting resources from ArtsWA operations, and/or could be viewed as offensive, inappropriate or harmful to the general public.

Information to Carry Out this Policy

ArtsWA has established policies, rules, and procedures that are consistently and fairly applied to protect public and state resources.

Digital and Printed Advertising Goals

The digital advertising program must be sensitive to public perception and balance revenue-generating goals with public policy issues. The goals and implementation steps are as follows:

Goals:

1. Generate new revenue for ArtsWA through digital and printed advertising.
2. Protect the public, and state resources.

Advertising Review – to ensure that an agency review of an advertising proposal is fair and consistent, the Director will establish an advertising review process consistent with any legislation, state directives, sound business practices, and this policy.

1. Executive Director and or Designee will review and approve all advertising content. The agency retains the right to refuse any advertiser and any ad posting. The agency at any time may remove any advertisement it believes violates this policy.
2. Prior to placing an advertisement, ArtsWA staff will screen and evaluate the ad content to confirm compliance with the guidelines set forth in this policy.
3. On web pages, social media, or in printed pieces when advertising space is available, the agency shall include a clearly posted policy and a disclaimer disavowing any endorsement of products and services advertised.
4. The agency will strive to ensure the review process is consistently and fairly applied

Advertising Content – Advertising sold, solicited or allowed on the agency website and printed digital collateral shall be limited for specific programs. By offering advertising for this limited purpose, ArtsWA is not creating a public forum or designated public forum. ArtsWA staff retain the right to limit advertising to the purposes set out in this policy, or to discontinue the sale of commercial advertising at its discretion. By limiting the use of designated areas of the agency's website and collateral under this policy, the Commission does not limit its right to engage in speech on behalf of itself and the State of Washington.

1. No statements of public policy, opinion or public matters shall be permitted, whether or not in the form of an advertisement.
2. Content must be in keeping with contemporary community standards, and any standards for public area advertising
3. ArtsWA staff may use designated advertising space for ArtsWA information, including promotion of agency programs, projects, and services.

Prohibited Advertising Content

1. Content containing any of the following characteristics is not permitted
 - a. **Obscene or indecent**
 - b. **Discriminatory**
 - c. **Religious**
 - d. **Political** advertising promoting or opposing a political party; the election of any candidate or group of candidates to federal, state or local government offices; and initiatives, referendums and other ballot measures.
 - e. **Public issue** advertising expressing or advocating an opinion, position, or viewpoint on matters of public debate about economic, political, religious, or social issues.
2. Advertising that depicts or promotes the following products, services, or other material will not be permitted:
 - a. **Alcohol/tobacco/marijuana** products

- b. **Gambling**
- c. **Firearms** including ads promoting or soliciting the date, rental, distribution, or availability of firearms, or firearms-related products
- d. **Adult/mature rated films, television, or video games** or other products rated by the industry as only suitable for mature audiences
- e. **Adult entertainment or establishments**, including but not limited to adult book or videos, adult internet sites, adult telephone services, and adult escort services
- f. **False or misleading material** that the advertiser knows or would reasonably be expected to know is false, fraudulent, misleading, and deceptive or would constitute a tort of defamation or invasion of privacy.
- g. **Objectionable sexual or harmful subject matter** that is offensive based on contemporary community standards and would reasonably foresee harm to, disruption of, or inference with the operation of ArtsWA programs.
- h. **Insulting, disparaging or degrading material** directed at a person or group that is intended to be or could be interpreted as being disrespectful based on characteristics protected under federal or state law, or that is so offensive as to reasonably foresee that it will incite or produce imminent lawless action in the form of retaliation, vandalism, or other breach of public safety, peace and order.
- i. **Illegal activity**, including any advertising that promotes any activity or product that is illegal under federal, state, or local law or any advertising that contains material that is an infringement of a copyright or trademark, or is otherwise unlawful or illegal.
- j. **Profanity and violence**, including advertising that contains any profane language or portrays images or descriptions of graphic violence or intentional infliction of pain or violent action towards or upon a person or animal.
- k. **Products, services, or messages which might be contrary to the best interests of the agency**, including any advertisement that encourages or depicts unsafe behaviors or encourages unsafe or prohibited recreation activities

Additional Restrictions – in addition to general restrictions, the following guidelines apply to advertisements on agency websites and social media channels:

- a. The clarity and functionality of the websites and social media channels are paramount. Advertising interfering with this goal or distracting or interrupting the agency's information, will not be allowed.
- b. The agency shall specifically designate the advertising spaces available on its website. It is within the agency's sole discretion to determine which web pages, or portions thereof, shall be available.
- c. Advertising must not slow or degrade access to information.
- d. The advertising shall adhere to the agency's online privacy policy, internet security requirements and accessibility guidelines.
- e. All advertisements, including any JavaScript placed on any agency website must be served from a secure location/server. As applicable, ads shall be served through ad serving software. Advertisers must certify that content is free from any virus, infection, malware, or other code that places the website, its users, or any state resource in jeopardy.
- f. The advertising content must be clearly identifiable as an advertisement, distinctive from agency content. Advertisements cannot mimic news headlines or agency documentation in design, tone, third-person sentence structured or topic.

- g. Advertising content cannot mislead the user. For example, advertisements cannot be designed to appear as though they are a functional part of the agency's websites or mimic or resemble operating system or internet browser error messages or dialog boxes (dropdown menus, search boxes, etc.). Interactive advertisements must have the approval of ArtsWA staff.
- h. Audio events in advertisements must be initiated by a user click, must include a clearly labeled button or link to stop audio, and cannot loop.
- i. Advertisements that include links to websites outside of the agency's control must allow users to return to the agency's websites by using their browser's "back" button; trap door effects are not permitted. Advertisements cannot launch multiple browser windows upon a user click.
- j. All advertisers will execute contracts approved by the agency setting out the rights and liabilities of the agency and the advertiser. The contracts will include a requirement that the advertiser agrees to hold the State of Washington and the Commission harmless, and to indemnify the State of Washington and the Commission for any loss associated with the placement of an advertisement. ArtsWA staff will consult with the Office of the Attorney General regarding the appropriate form of such advertising contracts.

Primary roles and responsibilities for Advertising / Sponsorships with ArtsWA.

Role	Responsibilities
Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce advertising that conforms to ArtsWA Policy. • Appoint Communications Manager as current designee for purposes of implementing this policy and procedures.
Communications Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policy is consistently and fairly applied. • Ensure advertising adheres to the agency's online privacy policy. • The Communications Manager shall work collaboratively with the Managers to ensure advertisements in publications meet the policy. • Ensure advertisers execute contracts meeting the agency's policy and procedures.
Supervisor/ Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the Communications Manager to ensure advertisements meet the policy.
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the Advertising with ArtsWA Policy that may have impacts on any publications that can include advertisements.
Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ArtsWA does not endorse and makes no representations, explicit or otherwise concerning any advertiser on its print or digital platforms. Content contained in advertisements does not represent the views of ArtsWA.