

Government of Alberta

Advertising Standards Policy

As approved by the Managing Director of Communications and
Public Engagement on March 1, 2019

For more information on this policy, please contact the Government of Alberta's Communications and Public Engagement Office (CPE).
Communications and Public Engagement Office, Government of Alberta

March 2019

Government of Alberta Advertising Standards Policy

Table of Contents

1. Purpose	4
2. General statement	5
Government advertises to inform	5
Definition of advertising	5
3. Overview	6
Campaign and concept approval	6
Creative artwork approval	6
Media purchasing budget	6
Media plan approval	6
4. Division of responsibilities	7
CPE managing director	7
CPE marketing services	7
CPE communications branches	7
Program areas within Government of Alberta	7
5. Creative product standards	8
Advertising product standards	8
Campaign considerations	9
6. Vendor contracts	9
Creative and media planning	9
Media buying	9
Recruitment and legal/tender advertising	9
7. Advertising during elections	10
8. Marketing services contact information	10

Government of Alberta

Advertising Standards Policy

1. Purpose

The Government of Alberta uses advertising to communicate directly with the people of Alberta and other relevant audiences. Government advertising must align with government priorities, meet the needs of the public, comply with all relevant legislation, regulations and policies and provide value for money. Specifically, advertising is used to:

- share information about government policies, programs, services and initiatives
- inform individuals about environmental, safety and health issues
- notify individuals about their legal rights
- advocate for the province's interests outside Alberta (e.g., tourism, economic development, pipeline infrastructure)

Advertising must comply with the Government of Alberta's Communications Policy and with Government Identity and Voice, Tone and Style policies. The Advertising Standards Policy applies to all provincial government ministries, all employees and all external service providers contracted by the government.

This policy is administered by the marketing services branch of the Communications and Public Engagement Office (CPE). For further information on marketing and advertising processes, contact marketingservices@gov.ab.ca.

2. General statement

The government advertises to inform about government policies, programs and services, or about dangers or risks to the public health, safety or the environment, or about individual rights or responsibilities.

Advertising covers the distribution of any government message, communicated in any jurisdiction (Alberta, Canada or internationally) through a medium that has a placement cost or would normally have a placement cost. This includes, but is not limited to:

- broadcast (radio, television, etc.)
- print (newspaper, magazine, inserts, etc.)
- online (display, social, search engine marketing, etc.)
- out of home (billboards, transit ads, etc.)
- marketing and promotion events (i.e., street teams, handing out information in a public space, etc.)
- sponsorships and free advertising opportunities (program guides, co-operative partnerships, etc.)
- direct mail (flyers or letters delivered to homes)

The decision to advertise should be made only after a creative brief has been completed, value for money is understood and alternative options have been considered. Campaign objectives, target audience, planned measurement and alternative options must be clearly documented before proceeding with a decision to advertise.

All advertising campaigns must be approved in advance by CPE marketing services.

3. Overview

Unless otherwise specified under formal agreement, all government advertising campaigns must be approved in advance by CPE marketing services.

- Creative products may be developed with CPE resources or sourced through the government procurement process. The approach must be cleared by CPE marketing services before any development begins.
- All creative concepts must be approved by CPE marketing services before moving forward to final artwork development.
- All final artwork must be approved by CPE marketing services before moving into market.
- Media buys with a value of \$200 or greater must be approved by CPE marketing services.
- Media planning may be completed in house or by an external vendor, but initiatives with a budget greater than \$1,000 must be purchased through the government's agency of record for paid media (via CPE marketing services).
- Media plans must be approved by CPE marketing services prior to purchase.

4. Division of responsibilities

CPE managing director

- Creates, enforces and approves any changes to the Advertising Standards Policy.

CPE marketing services

- Creates awareness and understanding of the Advertising Standards Policy within CPE and throughout the broader public service.
- Provides audience-focused marketing and advertising services (planning and consultations, strategy development, execution and delivery, as well as monitoring and reporting) to CPE and other government departments.
- Specialty marketing and advertising services, including multicultural strategy, translation and adaptation services.
- Approves marketing and advertising strategies and products as compliant with this policy.
- Works with communications branches and program areas on negotiating agreements or opportunities that involve advertising.
- Directs the activity of agencies contracted to provide marketing and advertising services.
- Maintains a list of pre-qualified advertising agencies to provide services, including creative development, strategy and production services.
- Reports on advertising spending and activity for the government.

CPE communications branches

- Build awareness of the Advertising Standards Policy and associated processes.
- Work with CPE marketing services on marketing and advertising projects.
- Work with client areas to identify marketing and advertising needs.
- Liaise between client areas and CPE marketing services by consolidating feedback, navigating approvals and facilitating effective collaboration.
- Coordinate approvals and sign-off on paperwork and financial documents.
- Ensure that marketing tactics align with communications plans, messaging and initiatives.

Program areas within Government of Alberta

- Work with communications branches to coordinate marketing and advertising efforts through CPE marketing services.

5. Creative product standards

Advertising product standards

All advertising products developed must adhere to advertising product standards. Deviations from these standards must be approved by CPE's managing director, who will document exemptions and rationales and release this information to the public on a quarterly basis through the Government of Alberta's open data portal.

- The sponsor must be identified as the Government of Alberta.
- Creative assets must adhere to guidelines laid out in the Government of Alberta's Government Identity and Voice, Tone and Style policies.
- Creative assets must be clear of copyright permission issues.
- Photo and video images meant to depict Alberta locations must be shot in Alberta.
- Where possible, individuals depicted as people of Alberta must be Albertan.
- Where possible, talent selection must reflect Alberta's diversity.
- Advertising campaign creative assets must not include the name, voice or image of a member of the legislative assembly, or a declared candidate for provincial office, with the following exceptions:
 - In advertising for a major province-wide address by the Premier of Alberta, the name, voice and/or image of the Premier may be used.
 - In advertising for an event, such as a public engagement session or town hall, held by the Premier or a minister to consult on government business with the public or stakeholders, the host's name, voice and/or image may be used.
- Paid social media promotions (boosts) occur on Government of Alberta-owned channels only. The decision to boost rests with the executive director of Outreach.
- Photographs, graphics and videos created for government advertising are the property of the government. Vendors must be informed of this prior to contracting services.
- Paid actors and voice talent must be fairly compensated for their work and will receive, as appropriate, industry-standard pay or better, an industry-standard working environment or better, and residuals for the ongoing use of their voice or likeness.
- All talent must sign a non-disclosure agreement before viewing scripts.
- Unpaid talent must sign release forms giving permission to use their image, voice or quote in advertising.

Campaign considerations

Campaigns are considered based on:

- benefit and relevance to the people of Alberta
- budget, timing and scope of requirements
- alignment with government priorities and support of government's key themes and messages
- adherence to the general guidelines in this document

6. Vendor contracts

External contracts are in place for each of the services listed below:

- **Creative and media planning**
 - Marketing services manages and assigns advertising projects to agencies on our master-agreement list or through competitions.
- **Media buying**
 - All paid advertising more than \$1,000 must be purchased through the government's agency of record for paid media.
- **Recruitment and legal/tender advertising**
 - Separate contracts exist for recruitment and legal/tender advertising. Contact CPE marketing services for process information.

7. Advertising during elections

Advertising activity is restricted during a byelection and general election period. Refer to the Government of Alberta Election Communication Policy for more detailed guidelines.

8. Marketing services contact information

For further information on marketing and advertising processes contact marketingservices@gov.ab.ca.

