

Government of Alberta

Web Governance Policy

As approved by the Managing Director of Communications and
Public Engagement on December 7, 2018

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

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Web Governance Policy

1. Purpose

This policy provides the rules governing Government of Alberta staff for the creation, maintenance, review and decommissioning of public-facing web properties. Proper application of this policy reduces public sector costs and provides a consistent experience to the public, facilitating their ability to find information about their government.

The Web Governance Policy applies to all departments. Unless indicated otherwise by legislation, regulation or a formal agreement, Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) of the Government of Alberta are also subject to this policy.

This policy is administered by the Outreach division of the Communications and Public Engagement Office (CPE), working with Ministries across the government.

2. General statement

Web properties are maintained for the purpose of making information available directly to the public, and are an important part of the Government of Alberta's communications efforts.

To reduce costs and provide a consistent citizen experience, the Government of Alberta will, with limited exceptions, house web content on a single website that conforms with Government Identity standards. Existing websites are regularly reviewed to assess ongoing usefulness and compliance.

- **Alberta.ca is the unified website for all government content**

All government web content should reside on Alberta.ca, in accordance with the Government of Alberta's Digital Communications Standards. Unless approved by CPE, content should not be duplicated into other digital products (e.g. mobile applications, other websites).

- **Web properties must be consistent with the Government Identity Program**

As noted in the *Communications Policy*, Government web properties must maintain a state of compliance with design guidelines set out by the Government Identity Program.

- **Web properties are regularly reviewed for usefulness and compliance to policy**

The approval of a public-facing website, website design, or web content is an ongoing, rather than one-time, event. The continued justification for a standalone web property is routinely reviewed, and websites that are no longer justified will be decommissioned.

3. Domain names

A domain name refers to the readable “address” of a website (e.g. google.com) found before the first “/” that can be directly entered into a browser navigation bar. Domain names are routinely used in marketing materials. They direct web traffic towards websites.

Alberta.ca Domain Name

Alberta.ca is the unified web domain for all departments and all government content.

The Alberta.ca domain is managed by CPE and administered by Service Alberta. Unless otherwise approved by CPE, departments will use one of the following on all communications and marketing materials:

- Alberta.ca
- A subdomain of Alberta.ca (e.g. health.alberta.ca)
- A marketing URL on Alberta.ca (e.g. alberta.ca/better)
- A page on Alberta.ca (e.g. alberta.ca/affordable-tuition)

For further information related to Alberta.ca subdomains and URLs, visit:

alberta.ca/governance

Other Domain Names

Generally, other domain names should not be used for marketing purposes and should not appear on government products. There are, however, two situations where a non-Alberta.ca domain name may be registered:

- **Registering a domain name to protect intellectual property**

Departments may register domain names to protect the government’s intellectual property (e.g. program names, trade names, campaign taglines, facility names, etc.) or to reduce the risk of misrepresentation. Domains registered for this purpose should be redirected to the Alberta.ca homepage.

To request the registration of a domain name for intellectual property protection (with redirect to Alberta.ca), email:

goa.servicedesk@gov.ab.ca

- **Registering a domain name as an exception to the general policy**

Exceptions to the requirement to use the Alberta.ca domain – either as a vanity domain that redirects to an Alberta.ca page or as a domain that points to a standalone website – may be granted on a case-by-case basis by CPE.

To receive permission to use a non-Alberta.ca domain (e.g. .ca or .com domain), a business case must be provided that explains the business rationale for the use of a unique domain, and why this rationale cannot be met by Alberta.ca.

To obtain CPE approval for registration and use of a non-Alberta.ca domain, email:

content@gov.ab.ca

4. Websites

A website is a collection of web pages. Generally – but not always – a domain represents a single website.

Alberta.ca

Alberta.ca is the Government of Alberta's website. It hosts all content related to Government of Alberta programs, services, campaigns, facilities, operations, personnel, etc., for audiences inside and outside Alberta.

Other Websites

Generally, other websites should not be created or maintained. There may, however, be times when separate, stand-alone websites may be developed.

Exceptions to the requirement to use the Alberta.ca website may be granted on a case-by-case basis by CPE. To receive permission to build or maintain a non-Alberta.ca website, a business case must be provided that explains:

- The business rationale for the use of a unique website, and why this rationale cannot be met by Alberta.ca.
- The plan and evidence of budget necessary to maintain compliance with Government Identity Program and Web Accessibility standards over the life of the website.

CPE will consider this business case plus other relevant factors, such as the risk of confusion and demands on resources in making its decision. Sunk costs, such as the procurement done in advance of seeking approval from CPE, will not be considered.

New websites being proposed by ministries or program areas must receive approval from CPE before proceeding. To obtain CPE approval for a website to be built outside of Alberta.ca, including sites being built on an Alberta.ca subdomain, email your request with business case to:

content@gov.ab.ca

