Table of Contents

Overview

Unless a specific exception is made, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (Commerce) requires the following written deliverables from research projects conducted under the Conservation Applied Research and Development (CARD) grant program: [1]

- Final Report
- Executive Summary (Note: Unless otherwise directed by Commerce, this item should be incorporated into the Final Report.)
- Policy Brief ***may*** sometimes be required as an alternative, or in addition, to the Executive Summary (Note: Unless otherwise directed by Commerce, this item should be incorporated into the Final Report.)

All written materials submitted to Commerce must meet the State's American's with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility standards for documents. In addition, they must be written in plain language that is clear, well-organized and easily understandable by State and utility staff as well as the general public. (Further information on ADA and plain language requirements is given in the second and third sections of these guidelines.) All final reports must use Commerce's logo and official fonts for headers and body styles. A report template has been created with Commerce's logo and official styles to simplify this process.

Note: In documents, the Conservation Improvement Program is abbreviated as CIP. If the reference is plural, it is typically stated as CIP offerings, or CIP programs (not as CIPs).

[1] Additional deliverables may be expected based on those specified by COMM in a particular RFP, recommended by the grantee in their proposal and/or incorporated as appropriate into the final Scope of Work by mutual agreement between COMM and the grantee.

Section 1: Final Report Guidance

CARD Report Template

Commerce has created a downloadable Word document template that includes two parts:

- Part one is a template for a two-sided cover page using Commerce's logo and official fonts and header styles.
- Part two is a template formatted for the creation of the final report itself using Commerce's official fonts and header styles.

The Template is a newer Word format which has a built-in Accessibility checker. The template as well as these Format and Content Guidelines can be downloaded from the CARD webpage on Commerce's website. Go to the bottom of the webpage and click the "Report Guidelines" tab.

The color palette of this template is as follows

- **Dark Blue Color Red/Green/Blue (RGB) = 24/80/122**
- **Light Blue Color Red/Green/Blue (RGB) = 35/115/175 (Similar to Commerce Logo)**

Part One – Cover Page Template

The two-sided Cover Page template ***must*** be used for the cover of the CARD Final Report. Yellow highlighting in the cover page indicates information or text that needs to be input or updated. Once the correct data is entered, the highlighting should be removed.

Content of Side One of the Cover Page

- Commerce logo
- Report title
- Report subtitle (if applicable)
- CARD program name and indication of whether the report is an "Interim" ***or*** "Final" report
- Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources as entity the report prepared for
- Grantee name as preparer of the report
- Grantee logo (if desired)
- In the Footer: Month and year report completed
- In the Footer: Grant cycle designation as follows:

Date RFP Issued	Date Proposals Due	Designation
May 4, 2015	August 14, 2015	*COMM-20150504-XXXXX*
May 19, 2014	August 29, 2014	*COMM-20140519-XXXXX*
May 12, 2014	July 21, 2014	*COMM-20140512-XXXXX*
May 22, 2013	June 24, 2013	*COMM-20130522-XXXXX*
May 1, 2013	August 12, 2013	*COMM-20130501-XXXXX*
March 19, 2012	May 7, 2012	*COMM-03192012-XXXXX*
April 4, 2011	May 4, 2011	*OES-04042011-XXXXX*
January 19, 2010	February 23, 2010	*OES-01192010-XXXXX*

Date RFP Issued	Date Proposals Due	Designation
April 14, 2008	May 15, 2008	*OES-04142008-XXXXX*

Note: XXXXXX equals your Commerce contract number for this project

Content of Side Two of the Cover Page

- Name(s) of the primary author(s);
- Organization(s) the author(s) are affiliated with, including address, phone number (optional), web address (optional), and project contact (optional);
- Copyright statement (optional)
- Commerce contract number;
- Names of Commissioner of Commerce and the Deputy Commissioner of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources;
- Name and contact information for Commerce's project manager;
- Acknowledgments to
  - Commerce and CARD for funding this project
  - Any additional entities the grantee would like to recognize for project contributions
- Standard disclaimer as follows:

  "This report does not necessarily represent the view(s), opinion(s), or position(s) of the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Commerce), its employees or the State of Minnesota (State). When applicable, the State will evaluate the results of this research for inclusion in Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) portfolios and communicate its recommendations in separate document(s).

  Commerce, the State, its employees, contractors, subcontractors, project participants, the organizations listed herein, or any person on behalf of any of the organizations mentioned herein make no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the use of any information, apparatus, method, or process disclosed in this document. Furthermore, the aforementioned parties assume no liability for the information in this report with respect to the use of, or damages resulting from the use of, any information, apparatus, method, or process disclosed in this document; nor does any party represent that the use of this information will not infringe upon privately owned rights."

Examples of Built-in Commerce Styles used in two-page Cover Sheet

Title (26 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before equals 60, centered) Lettering RGB = 24/80/122 and Bottom Line RGB = 24/80/122 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Subtitle (22 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, Bold, paragraph spacing before equals 6, centered) RGB = 35/117/175 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission to…

Title CARD (16 pt., Franklin Gothic Medium, Regular, paragraph spacing before equals. 132, centered) RGB = 24/80/122
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Title Other (16 pt., Franklin Gothic Medium, Regular, paragraph spacing before equals. 12, centered) RGB = 35/117/175 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Title Logo (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, paragraph spacing before equals 30, paragraph spacing after equals 12, centered) RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Normal Bold + Underline (11 point, Book Antiqua, Bold, Underline, paragraph spacing before equals 18) RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Normal + 3 pt B4 (11 pt., Book Antiqua, paragraph spacing before equals 3) RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Normal Justified (11 pt., Book Antiqua, paragraph spacing before equals 6, justified), RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

Part Two – Final Report Template

Part two is a template that ***must*** be used for creating the final report itself. A Word "section break" separates this part of the document from the Cover Page that precedes it. This section break should ***not be deleted*** as it will alter the margin and heading settings of the Cover Page.

The report template contains Word document "styles" that have the official fonts, colors and sizes required for all documents that come from Commerce. It also contains the proper paragraph spacing to help eliminate the need for blank returns, which are problematic for ADA compliance.

The template also contains the default heading titles as outlined in the recommended content explained in the next section. Some projects may not lend themselves to a final report with the exact structure shown in the recommended content. Appropriate changes that have been discussed with the Project Manager can be made. As a result, send a final report outline to your Commerce Project Manager for review and discussion prior to drafting the final report itself.

The next several pages contain examples and descriptions of the built in styles of the template.

Examples of Built-in Commerce Styles used in Final Report Template

TOC Heading (14 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, plus 1 pt. border, paragraph spacing before 24, after 0), RGB = 24/80/122

H1 (22 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, plus 1 pt. border, paragraph spacing before 24[2], after 0), RGB = 24/80/122 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

H2 (18 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 18, after 0), RGB = 24/80/122 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

H3 (16 pt., Franklin Gothic Medium, italic, paragraph spacing before 15, after 0), RGB = 24/80/122 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

H4 (14 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, underline paragraph spacing before 15 after 0), RGB = 35/115/175 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

H5 (13 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 15, after 0) RGB = 35/115/175 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

H6 (13 pt., Franklin Gothic, italic, paragraph spacing before equals 15, after 0) RGB = 35/115/175 The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

[2] In the CARD report template, Heading 1 has **no spacing prior to the paragraph**, assuming Heading 1 will always be used **after** a page break. However, if you want Heading 1 to be contiguous with the previous text, you should edit the "style" of Heading 1 in the template to add 24 points before the paragraph in order to create the proper spacing.

H7 (12 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, underline, paragraph spacing before 15, after 0)
RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

**H8 (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold & italic, paragraph spacing before 15, after 0)
RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…**

***H9 (10 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold & italic, paragraph spacing before 12, after 0),
RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…***

Normal (11 pt., Book Antiqua, regular, paragraph spacing before 8, after 4)
RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)[3]
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

No spacing (11 pt. Book Antiqua, regular, paragraph spacing before 0, after 0)
RGB =0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

*Intense Quote (11 pt. Book Antiqua, italic, paragraph spacing before 8, after 4) RGB = 24/80/122
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…*

*Quote (11 pt., Book Antiqua, italic, paragraph spacing before 8, after 4) RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…*

**Intense Emphasis (11 pt., Book Antiqua, bold, paragraph spacing before 8, after 4),
RGB = 24/80/122
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…**

Subtle Emphasis (11 pt., Book Antiqua, paragraph spacing before 8, after 4), RGB = 0/0/0
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…

**Emphasis (11 pt., Book Antiqua, bold, paragraph spacing before 8, after 4), RGB = 0/0/0
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission…**

An example of bullet (or numbered) list format is below (11 pt., Book Antiqua, regular, paragraph spacing before 6, after 4) RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic), "Don't add spaces between paragraphs of the same style" box checked[4]:

- Item number one,
- Item number two, and
- Item number three.

"CARD Report Table 11 Point" format below (Book Antiqua, 11 pt., regular except header row and first column bold; paragraph spacing before 3, after 3), table properties "Repeat as header row at top

[3] Footnote (10 pt., Book Antiqua, regular, paragraph spacing before 4, after 4) RGB = 0/0/0 (automatic)
The Department of Commerce takes pride in its mission

[4] This line spacing can be changed either globally (by adjusting it in the "list paragraph" style), or for individual bullet lists (by adjusting it for a specific list) if more spacing is desired between the items in the bullet list.

of each page" box checked for first row. Header row background color, RGB = 166/200/226. NOTE: Blank formatted table can be inserted from "Insert Tables/Quick Tables" menu.

Table 1[5]: Caption (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4), RGB = 35/115/175

Building Type (a)	Size Sq. Ft.	Savings kWh	Savings $ (b)	Installed Cost (c)	Simple Payback
Office Building	50,700	6090	$731	$3,585	4.9
Warehouse	18,450	3980	$478	$1,800	3.8
School	38,900	3110	$373	$2,900	7.8

a. Table Footnote text (10 pt., Book Antiqua, regular, paragraph spacing before 4, after 4, paragraph formatting "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style" box checked, "Keep lines together" box checked).
b. Savings estimate based on $0.xx per kWh (Source: xxxx)
c. Costs include equipment plus installation by certified contractor. Do-it-yourself costs would be considerably less; for details see discussion in text.

Table 2: Caption (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4), RGB = 35/115/175

Description	Metric 1	Metric 2	Metric 3	Metric 4	Metric 5

"CARD Report Table 10 Point" format below (Book Antiqua, 10 pt., regular except header row and first column bold; paragraph spacing before 3, after 3), table properties "Repeat as header row at top of each page" box checked for first row. Header row background color, RGB = 166/200/226. NOTE: Blank formatted table can be inserted from "Insert Tables/Quick Tables" menu.

Table 3: Caption (10 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4), RGB = 35/115/175

Description (a)	Size Sq. Ft.	Savings kWh	Savings $	Cost $ (DIY)	Simple Payback	Cost $ (Contractor)	Simple Payback
Office Building	50,700	6090	$731	$2,480	3.4	$3,585	4.9
Warehouse	18,450	3980	$478	$920	1.9	$1,800	3.8
School	38,900	3110	$373	$1,735	4.6	$2,900	7.8

Table Footnote text (10 pt., Book Antiqua, regular, paragraph spacing before 4, after 4, paragraph formatting "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style" box checked, "Keep lines together" box checked).

[5] Be sure to use the "Insert Caption" function on the References tab to create captions for tables, figures and equations. If referencing tables, figures or equations in the text, use the "Insert Cross-reference" function.

Table 4: Caption (10 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4), RGB = 35/115/175

Description	Metric 1	Metric 2	Metric 3	Metric 4	Metric 5	Metric 6	Metric 7

Figure 1[5]: Pie Chart Caption (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4) RGB = 35/115/175

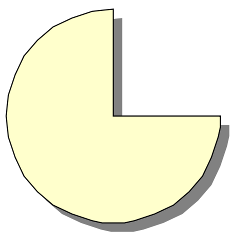


Figure 2: Flow Chart Caption (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4) RGB 35/115/175

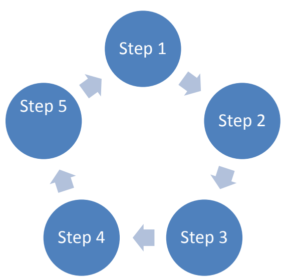
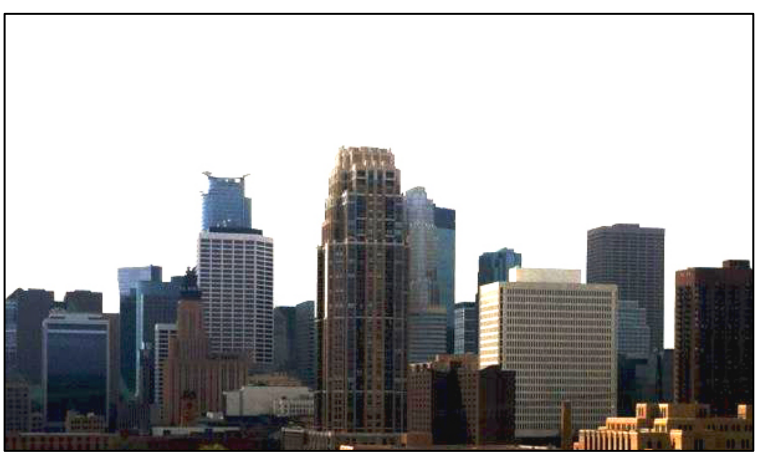


Figure 3: Photo Caption (11 pt., Franklin Gothic Book, bold, paragraph spacing before 12, after 4) RGB 35/115/175



Content of CARD Final Report

Recommended Content[6]

The CARD Final Report typically includes the following sections:

- **Abstract** – concise, informative summary of report that is about 200 - 400 words in length and addresses the report purpose and major findings (e.g. conclusions, recommendations).
- **Table of Contents**
- **Executive Summary** – a one to three-page document that provides a concise overview of the entire CARD project report. The purpose is to encapsulate the larger content of the report in an understandable and accessible way for readers who may be too busy to read the report in detail. It is typically focused on key outcomes and recommendations and intended for broader publication and a wide-ranging audience that includes CIP staff and policymakers, but also includes utility program designers, managers, implementers, and researchers as well as other CIP stakeholders and the general public. An Executive Summary generally consists of ***succinct*** versions of the following components and should include tables, graphs and figures as appropriate:
    1. Statement of the research question and its relevance;
    2. Summary of pertinent background information;
    3. Description of study methodology
    4. Outline of the results;
    5. Analysis and discussion of the results; and
    6. Presentation of conclusions and recommendations.
- **Policy Brief** – ***when applicable***, a Policy Brief may be required ***instead of***, or ***in addition to*** an Executive Summary. A Policy Brief is a one- to three-page document which articulates the research findings in terms of their implications for or impact on State policy and their specific application in the State. The primary audience for the policy brief should be Commerce Staff, state legislators and other policymakers. It should be a translation of the research results into the application of those results within State policy. A Policy Brief generally consists of ***succinct*** versions of the following components and should include tables, graphs and figures as appropriate:
    1. Statement of study purpose and its significance for energy policy in Minnesota;
    2. Summary of pertinent policy background and context;
    3. Description of study methodology;
    4. Outline of key findings related to energy policy in Minnesota;
    5. Analysis and discussion of implications of findings for policy and practice in Minnesota;
    6. Presentation of recommendations as they apply to energy policy in Minnesota.

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[6] Some projects may not lend themselves to a final report with this exact structure. Appropriate changes that have been discussed with the Project Manager can be made. As a result, send a final report outline to your Commerce Project Manager for review and discussion prior to drafting the final report itself.

- **Introduction/Background** – provides adequate context to help the reader understand the research problem and how your project planned to address it, including:
    1. What technology, measure, or strategy does this study address?
    2. What previous research had been done in this area prior to your project?
    3. What gap(s) did this previous research leave and how does your project intend to address one or more of those gaps?
    4. Why were these gaps important to fill? In other words, what is the significance of your work or what is the expected impact of your work on our understanding of or resolution to the problem you outlined?
- **Methodology** – describes the research design or description of the plan for the research, including:
    1. What specific question or questions did the project plan to answer?
    2. What data was intended to be collected?
    3. What methods were planned to collect the data?
    4. How was data integrity going to be maintained?
    5. How was the collected data going to be analyzed?
    6. Incorporate any deviation(s) to the original research design with an explanation of why the deviation(s) were required.
- **Results** – objective description or display of results obtained in the study; include tables and figures in addition to text when showing quantitative results. In addition, assign numbers to the tables and figures. Lengthy tables or other data structures should be included in an appendix with summary tables in the report itself as appropriate.
- **Discussion of Results** – thorough examination of the results presented in the previous section; include figures and tables as appropriate to the discussion and as aids to understanding the material.
- **Conclusions and Recommendations** – should be a synthesis (not simply a summarization) of the results and discussion in the previous two sections, and should be geared specifically toward utility CIP executives, utility CIP program managers, CIP service providers and Commerce CIP staff. Questions to consider include:
    1. How should the results be interpreted by the utilities for inclusion in their CIP programs?
    2. What lessons did you learn from carrying out this field study or implementing this program pilot that would be useful to communicate to other utilities that are considering including this technology or applying this program strategy in their CIPs?
    3. Is this technology or program strategy equally applicable to the portfolios of investor owned utilities, cooperative utilities and municipal utilities, or are there specific considerations based on each utility type?
    4. If the results of this study are satisfactory:
        - Are the results good enough to implement/offer the technology/strategy as part of CIP at this point? If yes, what are the next steps to implement?
        - Is a pilot project a better first step than full implementation at this point? If a pilot is warranted, what is it specifically that the pilot would need to test or verify before a full-fledge program could be implemented and how would you recommend setting up such a pilot?

- Are further study and verification, or additional interpretation and refinements needed before this technology/strategy can be offered as part of CIP? If yes, what are they?
- Is this technology/strategy universally applicable to all/most utilities in the state, or is it transferrable to only certain utilities and what are the criteria?
- If the technologies are applicable to most/all utilities in the state are implementation differences among utility types/sizes foreseen?
- What follow-up research (if any) would you recommend to expand on the findings of this study?

5. If the results of this study are ***not*** satisfactory or inconclusive:
    - Are the issues inherent issues with the technology or strategy being studied?
    - Are the issues with the methodology of the study?
    - Are the issues related to sampling or data availability (e.g. is it poor, not adequate, not verifiable, etc.)?
    - Can the shortcomings of this study be corrected?
    - What could have been done differently or should be done differently in another study of the same or a similar technology/strategy?
    - Is this technology/strategy worth pursuing further or is it a dead end?
6. What other alternatives or solutions became available or were developed during the course of the study? Are any worth pursuing instead or in addition to this technology/strategy?
7. Do you have ideas or suggestions for completing a similar study more economically or in a shorter time frame?
8. Do the results of this study change your assessment of the energy saving potential you reported in your original proposal and if so, in what way? If you think it is appropriate, consider updating the Savings Estimate Grid table from your original proposal, but this is **<u>not</u>** required (sample below for reference).

Table V. Example of Savings Estimate Grid

SAVINGS ESTIMATE GRID	**Range for Total Number of Discrete Instances** ▼	**Low Savings Estimate per Instance** **Units**	**Most Likely Savings Estimate per Instance** **Units**	**High Savings Estimate per Instance** **Units**
Range of Savings Estimate per Discrete Instance ►		50	75	100
Low Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	1,000	50,000	75,000	100,000
Most Likely Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	2,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
High Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	3,000	150,000	225,000	300,000

- **References** – list of references used in the CARD research project.
  1. The specific format used for the reference list is not fixed, but should be consistent with a standard, recognizable style manual like:
     - The *Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) –available here or at:* http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html
     - *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA Style) – available here or at:* http://www.apastyle.org/
     - *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (MLA) – available here or at:* http://www.mla.org/style/style_faq1
     - *American Anthropological Association Style Guide (AAA) – available here or at:* http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf.
     - Note: a side-by-side comparison of the CMS, APA and MLA Styles can be found here or at: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/949/01/
  2. Internet Links should be included in the references when applicable. To meet ADA compliance, attach web address as a hyperlink on a word or phrase that describes what the hyperlink is for. If you want to ***also*** type out the hyperlink so that printed copies of the report show the link, this is acceptable. If referencing an online article, include the digital object identifier (DOI) if available. The DOI is a permanent ID that, when appended to http://dx.doi.org/ in the address bar of an Internet browser, will lead to the source. If no DOI is available, list a URL instead.
  3. Personal communications or e-mail messages should also be listed in the reference list if important to documenting a particular finding or supposition.

Optional Items

Additional items may be incorporated in the final report if appropriate, including but not limited to:

- Lists of Tables (especially if there are many)
- Lists of Figures (especially if there are many)
- Lists of Equations (especially if there are many)
- Definition of Terms
- Appendices

Section 2: ADA Compliance Guidance

All CARD final reports, executive summaries and policy briefs must meet the State's ADA accessibility standards. While this template is a start on meeting the ADA requirements for documents, there are many things that need to be done ***as the final report is written*** to ensure compliance. Below are some general guidelines:

Built-in Styles:

- Use built-in styles in this template in the final report, including all of the headings required for your report, normal style, table styles captions, etc.;
- The built-in styles contain the appropriate default paragraph spacing to help eliminate the need for blank returns, which are problematic for ADA compliance;
- If additional spacing is required around a specific figure or for some other reason, modify the spacing within the individual paragraph rather than adding a blank return.
- Use short titles in headings whenever possible;
- Ensure all heading styles are in the correct order (in other words, don't skip over a heading).

Tables:

- Add alternative text[7] to all tables (under table properties, choose the alternative text tab and fill in the ***same text in both the title and the description*** areas of the dialogue box);
- Use simple table structures (more complex structures are harder to "read" or navigate); for example, if it can be avoided do not merge row or column cells;
- Avoid using blank cells in tables for formatting;
- Specify column header rows in tables, even if tables do not span more than one page (highlight header row and under table properties, choose the row tab and check the "Repeat as Header Row" box;
- Do not put tables inside text boxes; leave them as "Word Tables";
- Do not copy tables into document as figures – whenever possible create the table in word itself;
- Use "insert caption" feature to create a caption for tables (highlight table and on References Tab, choose "Insert Caption");
- Reference tables in the text by number using the cross-reference feature (on References Tab, choose "Cross-Reference" and insert the table you want cross-referenced). This has the added advantage of automatically updating as tables are added or moved around.

[7] Alternate text is a phrase (or word) that performs the same function and communicates the same information as a table, figure or image so that people who are visually impaired and using a special reader can get the gist of any non-text content. It does not necessarily describe the non-text content, but should serve the same purpose. In creating alternate text, think about why the non-text content is being used, what information it is presenting and what purpose it is fulfilling.

Figures, Photos and Objects:

- Add alternative text to all figures (right click figure and choose "Format Picture," then "Alt Text" and fill in the ***same text in both the title and description*** areas of the dialogue box); be sure to include alternate text for logos;
- Do not put figures inside text boxes; leave as independent object;
- Place figures "in-line" with text; do not position with text wrapping and avoid using floating figures.
- Use "insert caption" feature to create a caption for figures (highlight figure and on References Tab, choose "Insert Caption");
- Reference figures in the text by number using the cross-reference feature (on References Tab, choose "Cross-Reference" and insert the table you want cross-referenced). This has the added advantage of automatically updating as figures are added or moved around.

Other

- Avoid using repeated blank characters. For example:
  - Delete any blank spaces at the end of paragraphs;
  - Provide the desired gap ***between*** paragraphs by attaching spacing "before" (or after) paragraphs as part of the "Normal" style rather than by using a blank return after each paragraph).
- Use hyperlink text that is meaningful. In other words don't type out the web address; instead attach the web address as a hyperlink on a word or phrase that says or describes what the hyperlink is for. If you want to ***also*** type out the hyperlink so that printed copies of the report show the link, this is acceptable.
- Avoid image watermarks.
- Avoid using text boxes whenever possible.
- Avoid blank returns (document readers often get confused by blank returns and erroneously conclude that it is the end of the document). Instead, modify the normal and heading styles to provide the needed paragraph spacing.

Microsoft Word 2010 has a built-in accessibility checker that can be used to evaluate whether or not specific accessibility issues have been addressed, and indicates where in the document the issue is located. This is a very helpful tool in creating assessable documents.

More detailed information on accessibility for Word documents, including how to address the issues outlined above, is available in the article "Creating Accessible Word Documents" (http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/creating-accessible-word-documents-HA101999993.aspx) on Microsoft's website.

Another worthwhile web reference is Penn State's Accessibility site for MS Office products (http://accessibility.psu.edu/microsoftoffice/), which includes a useful page on Charts & Accessibility (http://accessibility.psu.edu/images/charts/) and another one on Math and STEM content (http://accessibility.psu.edu/math/).

Section 3: Plain Language Guidance

In 2014, Governor Mark Dayton launched a Plain Language Initiative which directs all state agencies to: use language commonly understood by the audience; write in clear and complete sentences; and present information in a format that is easy-to-find and easy-to-understand. [8]

CARD reports, executive summaries, and policy briefs must comply with these requirements. Some basic tips on plain language include:

- Think about the audience of the report and what is essential to communicate to that audience.
- Write in active voice (not passive).
- Clearly define jargon or acronyms that might not be understood by everyone who will read the report. If there are a lot of specialty terms, consider creating a definition section of the report that can be referenced by the reader.
- Give links a meaningful name that gives the user information.

The Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) describes plain language as any "communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it."[9] PLAIN goes on to say that plain language is defined by results, more than technique: if "it is easy to read, understand and use" it is plain language.

The PLAIN Language website (http://www.plainlanguage.gov/) contains useful information and resources for plain language writing. A particularly useful introduction is "The Elements of Plain Language."[10] In addition, they publish guidelines for plain language which are thorough yet straightforward.[11]

Another useful website is Plain Figures (http://www.plainfigures.com/index.html) run by a consulting and training company that specializes in teaching people how to turn numerical information into figures, tables and graphs that people readily understand and remember without sacrificing accuracy or richness. This website includes a Free Downloads & Useful Resources page that contains some basic articles and references books.

In addition, the California Mental Health Services Authority (CaIMHSA) publishes some simple "Tips Towards Plain Language" (http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/CM0101.html), which may also be helpful.

[8] For more information on Governor Dayton's initiative, see the plain language Fact Sheet (https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1046366/2014-03-03-unsession-plain-language.pdf).

[9] Plain Language Action and Information Network. "What is Plain Language?" Accessed July 24, 2015, (http://www.plainlanguage.gov/whatisPL/index.cfm).

[10] Kimble, Joe, 2002. "The Elements of Plain Language," The Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN). Accessed July 24, 2015, (http://www.plainlanguage.gov/whatisPL/definitions/Kimble.cfm).

[11] Plain Language Action and Information Network, 2011. "Federal Plain Language Guidelines," Accessed July 24, 2015, (http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/bigdoc/fullbigdoc.pdf).