Updated: November 12, 2017

## Project Name: Mayor’s Office of the CTO Website

## **Introduction**

### **Voice**

These voice characteristics represent the personality of our office, and should be consistent across all touchpoints. Keep these in mind as you write.

The Mayor’s Office of the CTO is:

* Authoritative (but not bossy)
* Smart (but not jargony)
* Serious (but not stuffy)
* Aspirational (but not hyperbolic)
* Cool (but not elitist)

### **Readability**

All text should be written at an 8th grade reading level or below, and formatted with the following:

* Short words and sentences
* Line lengths of no more than 75 characters
* Important information up front
* Descriptive headers to separate content sections
* Bulleted and numbered lists
	+ Capitalize all first words
	+ End all bulleted statements with a period

## **Style guidelines**

Follow the [Chicago Manual of Style](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html) unless otherwise noted here.

### **Acronyms and abbreviations**

* Avoid using acronyms when possible, as they can be confusing to users. Acceptable acronyms: NYC, NYS, US, GIF, PDF
* When using an acronym, write out the first instance on the page followed by the acronym.
* If the phrase you’re abbreviating is very short or only used once or twice on a page, don’t use the acronym.
* Use ‘a’ before acronyms beginning with consonant sounds, ‘an’ before those beginning with vowels sounds.
	+ Ex. Do: “an NYC”; Don’t: “a NYC”

### **Capitalization**

* Use title case for page titles, and sentence case for other titles, headings, and subheadings.
* Capitalize *agency* when referring specific City agencies.
	+ Ex: “The Agency is hiring an analyst.”
* New York City:
	+ When referring to NYC government, capitalize the first letter
		- Ex: “I work for the City of New York.”
	+ When referring to the city itself, use lowercase
		- Ex: “I visited the city of New York.”

### **Numbers**

* Write out all numbers before 10. After 10, use numerals.
* Phone numbers should be formatted as:
	+ (917) 482-1294
* Spell out *percent* instead of using the % symbol.

### **Punctuation**

* Avoid using ampersands (&).
* Use serial commas in lists.
* Use em-dashes to separate phrases.

### **Links**

* Use hyperlink text that explains where your user is going. Do not write "Click here" or "see more."
	+ Ex: Do: [Freeze your rent](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/index.page); Don’t: [Click here](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/index.page) to freeze your rent.
* Hyperlink website URLs <a href = nyc.gov/accessnyc>ACCESS NYC</a>
	+ E.g. Use ACCESS NYC to screen for eligibility

### **Specific words and phrases**

* Avoid the word *innovation*.
* Avoid the word *citizen*. Instead use *residents* or *New Yorkers.*
* Email, not e-mail
* Online; not on-line
* Web page; not webpage
* Website; not web site
* Eastern Time or ET; not EST or EDT
* PO Box; not P.O. Box
* Health care, not healthcare
* Child care, not childcare