

# Mockup Style Guide For The Michigan Secretary of State

Prepared by: Ashley Erickson, Benjamin V. Dougherty, Gabriela M. Morales Medina, and Harrison Chappell

---

Broadly, this style guide is meant to detail recommendations for the tone, style, and formatting of Michigan's Secretary of State website. Specifically, this style guide is meant to:

- Help clarify content and language use throughout the website in order to reduce instances of duplicate information and material
- Ensure that all new content additions to the Secretary of State site maintain authoritative, clear, and accessible language in line with what is expected of a government agency
- Ensure that all of the information contained within the Secretary of State website is accessible to users in different contexts

Because the Secretary of State is a government agency and helmed by an elected official (both at state and local levels), it is reasonable to assume that practices, personnel, and priorities are subject to change after each election cycle. Despite this, this style guide's recommendations should transcend political agendas and may be adopted regardless of the individual(s) in office.

## Style Guide: Tone

Striking the right tone on the Secretary of State website is particularly important because of the site's potential audience. Virtually all individuals who are seeking voter information, registering a vehicle, or registering a business in the state of Michigan are likely to visit the website for instruction or information at some point. Therefore, it is critical that the content on the site reflects this very large audience and retains a tone users find comfortable and informative when interacting with a government agency.

Specifically, the following are tone recommendations for Michigan's Secretary of State website:

- Informative
- Authoritative
- Clear
- Empowering
- Accessible
- Unpretentious

### Tone Example 1

**Avoid:** If an emergency, such as a sudden illness or family death prevents you from reaching the polls on Election Day, you may request an emergency absent voter ballot.

*This example editorializes too much and compromises the recommended informative, authoritative tone of the site by being too paternalistic. Voters are capable of determining what constitutes an emergency that prevents them from attending the polls on election day.*

**Aim for:** If an emergency prevents you from reaching the polls on Election Day, you may request an emergency absent voter ballot.

*This example was improved simply by removing the sample emergencies. This minor change helped to streamline the language to fit with the tone recommendations and also made the sentence easier to read by simplifying the sentence structure.*

## Tone Example 2

**Avoid:** Michigan uses a multi-step system for teens to earn driving privileges known as Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). Teens who have reached the age of 14 years and 8 months are eligible to enroll in Segment 1 Driver Education, thus beginning the first step.

The Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing Parent Checklist is a free resource intended to assist parents or legal guardians of teens with understanding and following the steps of GDL.

To obtain copies, download a PDF copy using the link on this page.

*This text appears by clicking a link called "Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing Parent Checklist." However, the checklist is not actually displayed in any form on this page, and it requires viewers to open a separate PDF in order to access this information. This poses an accessibility concern as the second link is not immediately obvious, and the original checklist page only mentions the first step in the GDL process.*

**Aim for:** Michigan uses a multi-step system for teens to earn driving privileges known as Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). The general steps for this process are:

- Take Segment 1 Driver Education
- Obtain Level 1 Learner's License
- Log 50 hours supervised driving (including 10 hours night driving)
- Take Segment 2 Driver Education
- Complete Driving Skills Test
- Obtain Level 2 Intermediate License
- Obtain Level 3 License (17 years of age, 6 months Intermediate License, 12 months crash- and violation-free)

Click [here](#) for a full, printable guide to the GDL process.

*This revision formats the GDL process into a sensible and accessible list while welcoming readers to download the full guide for complete information. Ultimately, this change keeps some*

*of the same language from the original version, but allows users to quickly reference a short list rather than being routed to a 3-page document.*

## Style Guide: Design Elements

### Colors



In order to bring a sense of cohesion to the site, coordinating colors have been chosen for use in the site's content. The colors above were selected because they represent a significant aspect of the Michigan community such as the Apple Blossom (the state flower) or major state universities (Michigan State University/University of Michigan). The aim in choosing these colors is to create a palette that is representative of different aspects of life in Michigan.

### Logo

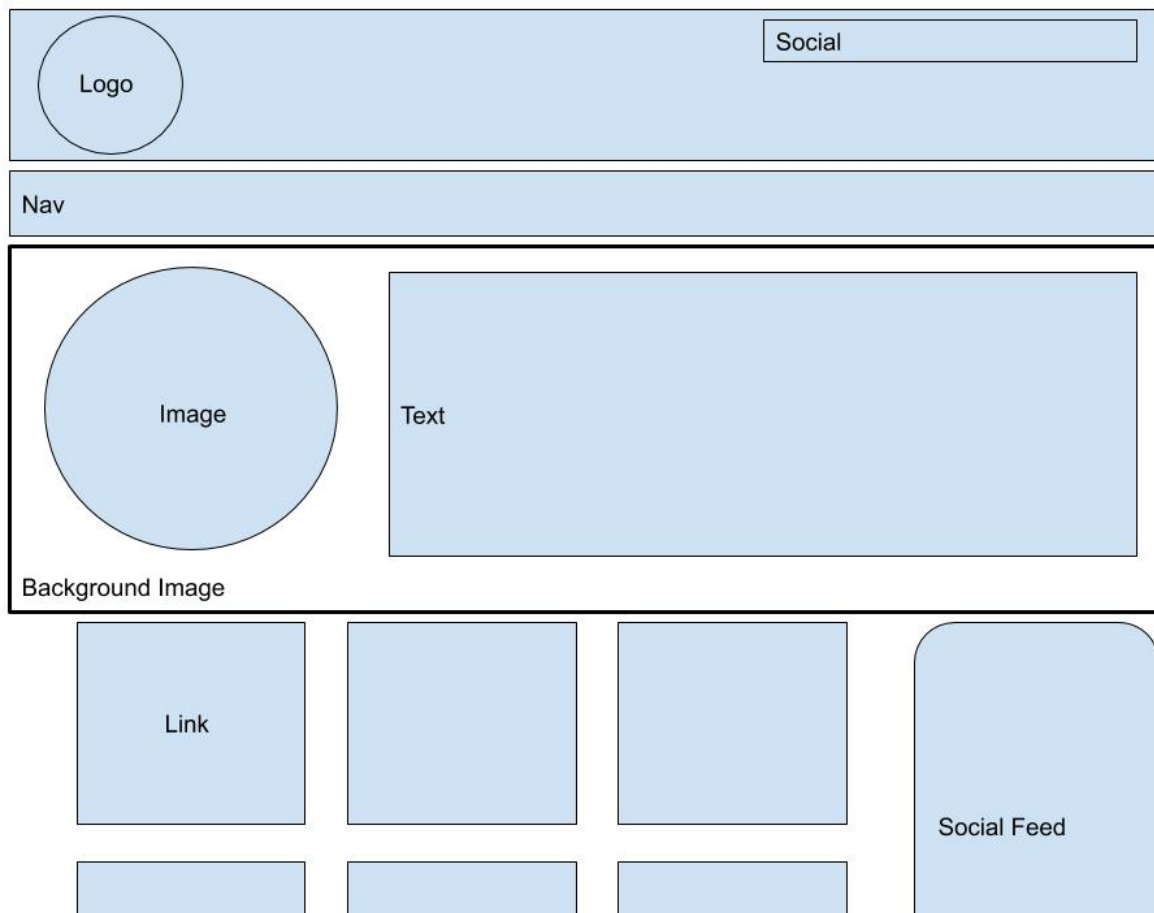


The  
state  
of

allows it for rescue in site branding and advertising for the office.

Logo strives to exemplify the colors of the  
of Michigan while also giving the Secretary  
State website a modernized logo that is  
memorable. The logo's simplicity also

### Wire Frames



The wire frame design looks to create a more simplified and modern style for the Secretary of State landing page. Links will be easier to select and a picture with information on the current Secretary will appear at the top. The inclusion of a live feed of state and local government Twitter accounts will help the website serve its purpose of connecting Michigan residents. This will also help the website reach a younger demographic who are first time voters.

### ***Title Typeface***

The typeface used for all titles will be Roboto. Roboto is a modern and easy to read sans serif font. When used for titles, the font should be size 40 bold to help it stand out from all other content and typefaces displayed.

# **Roboto Title - 40 Bold**

## Header Typeface

The typeface used for all headers will be Roboto. Roboto is a modern and easy to read sans serif font. When used for headers, the font should be size 20 bold.

## Roboto Header - 20 Bold

## Paragraph Typeface

The typeface used for all body paragraphs will be Nunito. Nunito is also an easily readable sans serif font that pairs well with Roboto. The font should be size 14.

### Nunito Paragraph - 14

ROBOTO	
Thin	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRS TUVWXYZ  abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvw xyz  1234567890  !@#\$%^&*()
<i>Thin Italic</i>	
Light	
<i>Light Italic</i>	
Regular	
<i>Regular Italic</i>	
Medium	<b>Roboto text</b> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in.
<i>Medium Italic</i>	
<b>Bold</b>	
<b><i>Bold Italic</i></b>	
<b>Black</b>	
<b><i>Black Italic</i></b>	

NUNITO	
Thin	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR STUVWXYZ  abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvw xyz  1234567890  !@#\$%^&*()
<i>Thin Italic</i>	
Light	
<i>Light Italic</i>	
Regular	<b>Nunito text</b> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in.
<i>Regular Italic</i>	
Medium	
<i>Medium Italic</i>	
<b>Bold</b>	
<b><i>Bold Italic</i></b>	
<b>Black</b>	
<b><i>Black Italic</i></b>	

## Style Guide: Photographs

For the homepage of the Secretary of State website, it is important to feature photographs like the one shown below. This comes from the notion that the site's visuals should be reflective of the diverse groups of people that live in Michigan. Furthermore, using representational images

of younger individuals on the site helps to foster a sense of inclusivity and encourage voter registration.



Taking cues from other Secretary of State websites across the United States, a photograph of the current elected official should be situated in the upper left corner of the landing page (see example below: Jocelyn Benson). This is not currently practiced by the Michigan Secretary of State website. However, taking this step (along with the Secretary of State's social media presence) will ensure a familiarity and continuity with the official Michigan voters elect.



## Style Guide: Language Elements

### Use of “You” Statements

Statements that instruct voters/registrants should be made using “you” statements. This helps to foster a standardized tone across the site’s content and makes users feel empowered to take necessary steps to become registered voters, register their vehicles, or register their business.

### Abbreviating “Secretary of State”

It is not recommended that “Secretary of State” be abbreviated in any way. Though it is perhaps tempting in order to conserve space, the acronyms SOS or SoS invoke the Morse code distress signal, which is not compatible with the tone the Secretary of State is keen to represent.

### **Language Elements Example 1**

**Avoid:** If the title of the vehicle is lost, it can be replaced by processing a duplicate title application at a SOS branch office.

**Aim For:** If your vehicle title is lost, you may replace it by processing a duplicate title application at a Secretary of State branch office.

*The changes in this example shift the addressee of the statement to the user, thereby complying with the recommended language element and eliminating cumbersome prepositional phrases in the process.*