



Web design brief for Project PLASE - July 15, 2003

This brief contains the core information that CCTS will use to make design decisions. The current version is a draft. We hope to arrive at a final version during our meeting on July 17.

Project PLASE's Communication Goals

1. Increase awareness among donors, volunteers, and the community.
2. Shift perception among audiences that already know PLASE. PLASE should be perceived as organized, professional, and beneficial to communities.
3. Share resources with other organizations.
4. Increase direct communication with clients, clients' families, and other community organizations that touch PLASE's clients.

Project PLASE's Web Site Goals

1. Attract donations
2. Provide information that tells Project PLASE's story in a positive light
3. Recruit volunteers
4. Recruit employees
5. Stimulate community support

Web Site Users and Their Goals

It is important to remember that visitors come to a Web site with a purpose; they want to get something done. If the design does not accommodate users' goals, the site will fail.

- **Individual donors and institutional funders**
 - » Contribute online
 - » Evaluate Project PLASE
- **Community members**
 - » Learn about Project PLASE
- **Volunteers and potential volunteers**
 - » Find upcoming volunteer opportunities
 - » See who's volunteered before and what they did
 - » Learn about Project PLASE
 - » Sign up to volunteer
- **Friends and family of clients**
 - » Find out how to get someone admitted
 - » Find out how Project PLASE's programs work
 - » Find out who works at Project PLASE, and their credentials



- **Other organizations** that interact with Project PLASE or have a related mission
 - » Get contact information
 - » Find out how Project PLASE's programs work
 - » Find out how to refer a client to Project PLASE
- **Employees and potential employees**
 - » Find open positions and requirements
 - » Apply for a job

Creative Approach

- **Key message:** Project PLASE is not just a homeless shelter. For thirty years, Project PLASE has been a benefit to Baltimore, serving the needs of its most vulnerable adults. PLASE's holistic approach allows residents to become self-sufficient and move on to permanent housing.
- **Look and feel:** The site will communicate warmth, comfort, accessibility, and a sense of family.
- **Language and tone:** Current site content is a little technical and employs some jargon. Language should be concise, friendly, and accessible to a wide audience. For example, "psychosocial services" vs. "caring for those with mental illnesses."

Technical Approach

- **Site programming:** Interactive portions of the Web site (for example, an online volunteer application) will be written by CCTS using PHP, a widely used and free Web scripting language. Some site content will be stored in a database. We will use the MySQL database management system, which is also free and widely supported.
- **Technical infrastructure:** The site is hosted at Quantum Internet Services. This company provides acceptable bandwidth and supports all the necessary software packages.

Site Maintenance

- **Content management:** The site will be built so that editors can add or change content quickly without accidentally damaging the overall site design. We will provide step-by-step guides to adding and editing pages.

Other important considerations

- **Privacy and accessibility:** We will create a site that adheres to standards for privacy protection, and that is accessible to users with disabilities.

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Schedule

Phased Development

Much of the proposed site content exists today. However, some pages and sections need to be brainstormed and written with Project PLASE's help. Therefore, it makes sense to implement the site in two phases. The site architecture documents the suggested phases.

Deliverables in Plain English

- **Site design brief:** This document. It briefly describes what the organization wants to achieve, who the audiences are, and how CCTS will approach the design and technical work. It helps all of us agree on how things will be done.
- **Site architecture:** A chart that shows all the pages that will be on the site, and the categories they fall into. May also list the links that will appear on a global navigation bar or menu, and may briefly describe page content.
- **Visual approach:** What the site will look like. These don't usually have real content in them -- they're to show color, layout, font, and where things are placed on pages.

Shaded dates represent in-person meetings

Date	Deliverable/Work being done	Description
July 15	Draft Site design brief Draft Site architecture	
July 17	N/A	Discuss Site design brief and Site architecture
July 22	Final Site design brief Final Site architecture	<i>Site categories (global navigation) and content are fixed from this point on</i>
July 22 - Aug. 22	Content development	PLASE provides content; CCTS edits and formats for the Web. All content is needed by Aug. 1
Aug. 11	Draft visual approach	CCTS presents suggested design approaches
Aug. 21	Final visual approach	<i>Overall look and feel are fixed from this point on</i>
Aug. 18 - Sept. 8	Site development	CCTS writes site code
Sept. 8 - Sept. 17	Site implementation and testing	CCTS moves code to server, tests to make sure everything works
Sept. 15 – Sept. 19	Training	CCTS teaches PLASE's editors how to add and update content
Sept. 18	Site launches	