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## State of Ohio Administrative Policy

Ohio.gov Standardization &  
Registration of Internet Domain Names

No: Information Technology  
IT-06

Effective: December 21, 2012

Issued By:

Robert Blair, Director

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### 1.0 Purpose

This policy provides requirements for how agencies standardize, obtain and safeguard certain **Internet domain names** by establishing naming requirements, and a central registration and tracking process.

A glossary of terms found in this policy is located in Appendix A - Definitions. The first occurrence of a defined term is in **bold italics**.

### 2.0 Policy

In the interest of minimizing user confusion and establishing strong brand recognition, agencies shall register all state of Ohio related Internet sites under a .gov domain.

2.1 **.gov Level Requirements:** When requesting a .gov domain name, the word "Ohio" shall be included within the **second level**.

2.1.1 Agencies are encouraged to request **third level "Ohio.gov"** domain names rather than pursuing unique .gov SLDs. Registering a third level "Ohio.gov" domain avoids a GSA registration fee, ensures the domain will never expire and the domain will be clearly associated with the "ohio.gov" brand.

2.2 **.gov Naming Requirements:** Agencies shall ensure that they adhere to the following .gov naming requirements:

2.2.1 The .gov domain shall not be used to advertise for private individuals, firms, or corporations, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service. [GSA, Title 41 Part 102-173 of the CFR Requirement]

- 2.2.2 The .gov domain shall not be used for campaigning. The .gov Web sites may not be directly linked to or refer to Web sites created or operated by a campaign or any campaign entity or committee. No political sites, party names, acronyms or political causes shall be used. [GSA, Title 41 Part 102-173 of the CFR Requirement]
- 2.2.3 When an external link makes a user leave a .gov Web site, a notification or screen (splash message) should alert users that they are leaving the official .gov page. [GSA, Title 41 Part 102-173 of the CFR Requirement]
- 2.2.4 Agencies shall avoid the use of “slang” within a domain name. For example, if a Web site is referring to reducing the budget, requesting “slimbudgetohio.gov” as a domain would be considered “slang” by the GSA.
- 2.2.5 Agencies shall avoid the use of underscores within a domain name, and spaces are prohibited. Although not recommended, dashes may be used, except at the beginning or end of a domain name.
- 2.2.6 Agencies shall avoid the use of names or acronyms that are associated with, easily confused with, or too similar to those of another agency, organization or entity, or that could be interpreted as disparaging to a group or classification of Ohio residents.
- 2.2.7 GSA and/or DAS reserves the right to terminate any .gov domain that is not in compliance with the requirements set forth in the GSA .gov Program Guidelines and Title 41 Part 102-173 of the CFR.
- 2.3 **Use of Alternate Top level Domains (TLD):** If an agency elects to use a ***top level domain (TLD)*** other than .gov, the agency shall ensure that users are redirected to an Ohio.gov domain.
- 2.4 **Verify Domain Name Availability:** Agencies shall ensure that any desired domain name is available for acquisition. If it is determined that it is not feasible to obtain a desired domain name, the requesting agency shall select another.
- 2.4.1 The requesting agency shall ensure the availability of a domain name before any marketing investments are made and/or any official notifications are distributed.
- 2.5 **Purchase and Administration of Domain Names:** DAS shall purchase and administer domains on behalf of the state agencies that fall within the scope of this policy as well as any other agencies or local governments interested in using the DAS service.

- 2.5.1 Only DAS OIT managed domain name servers shall be used to host and support all registered domains.
- 2.6 **Domain Name Cancellation:** Domain names shall be administered and renewed until a request for cancellation is received via the online **DAS OIT's Ordering System**.
- 2.6.1 DAS OIT shall retain a domain name registration for a minimum of 12 months after a Web service has been discontinued or migrated to another domain name.
- 2.6.2 During this 12-month period, a notice with the new domain name or a notice of service discontinuation shall be posted at the Web site of the domain name to be canceled.
- 2.7 **Policy Exceptions:** Any requests for exceptions to the domain name requirements outlined in this policy shall be reviewed by the Governor's Office.
- 2.8 **Procedures:** Agencies interested in registering or cancelling a domain name shall follow the procedures outlined below.
- 2.8.1 **Establishment of an Administrative Contact:** Agencies shall establish a primary and secondary administrative contact for managing domain names.
- 2.8.1.1 DAS shall be notified of changes in primary and/or secondary contacts as soon as practicable.
- 2.8.1.2 The administrative contact shall request desired domain names by accessing DAS OIT's Ordering System and selecting "Telecommunication/Domain Services." A justification for the domain and **Internet protocol (IP) address** shall be included in the DAS OIT's Ordering System request.
- 2.8.1.3 The administrative contact shall be responsible for providing all required information on the Domain Services order form.
- 2.8.1.4 For additional information regarding the DAS OIT's Ordering System, visit: <https://stateofohio.service-now.com/ess/home>.
- 2.8.2 **Domain Name Approval:** The requested domain name(s) shall be reviewed by DAS OIT Unified Network Services and, if approved, acquired by DAS through an approved registrar for the requested TLD.
- 2.8.3 **Registration Confirmation:** Upon successfully registering a requested domain name, notification will be sent to the agency administrative contact.
- 2.8.4 **Domain Name Cancellation:** To cancel a domain name, the agency administrative contact shall access the DAS OIT's Ordering System and select "remove domain" from the menu on the Domain Services order form.

2.8.5 **Domain Name Service Vouchers:** DAS OIT Unified Network Services shall invoice agencies via a voucher of intrastate payment for all costs associated with registration and administration of domain names.

2.8.6 **Implementation:** As of the effective date of this state policy, some agencies are unlikely to be completely aligned to the requirements outlined in the policy concerning Internet domain names. A general implementation framework for the requirements of this policy includes:

2.8.6.1 Any new domain name requests shall be for a .gov TLD, which includes the word “Ohio” at the second level. Any policy exception requests shall be directed to Digital Government.

2.8.6.2 All existing domain names that do not meet the .gov requirement shall be changed to comply with the requirements of this policy at the time of renewal. Any policy exception requests shall be directed to Digital Government.

### 3.0 Authority

CFR Title 41 Part 102-173

ORC 125.02, 125.021, 125.023, 125.04, 125.041, 125.18

### 4.0 Revision History

Date	Description of Change
08/26/2005	Original Policy.
12/21/2012	Revised the policy requirements to further establish the Ohio.gov brand throughout the state and updated the domain name registration procedures to reflect current practices. Also, transferred the policy content into a new State of Ohio Administrative Policy Template. Re-numbered policy to IT-06 to be consistent with new numbering format.
01/29/2018	The link for DAS OIT’s ordering system was updated to reflect a change in the system used as well as ordering terminology. Due to the clerical nature of the update, the effective date was not changed.
01/29/2023	Scheduled policy review.

### 5.0 Inquiries

Direct inquiries about domain name registration and maintenance to:

Customer Service Center  
Office of Information Technology  
Ohio Department of Administrative Services

1320 Arthur E. Adams Drive, Room 310 Columbus,  
Ohio 43221-3595

614-644-6860 | 877-644-6860 | [csc@ohio.gov](mailto:csc@ohio.gov)

Direct inquiries about this policy to:

State IT Policy Manager  
Enterprise IT Architecture & Policy  
Investment and Governance Division  
Office of Information Technology  
Ohio Department of Administrative Services  
30 East Broad Street, 39th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

614-466-6930 | [State.ITPolicy.Manager@oit.ohio.gov](mailto:State.ITPolicy.Manager@oit.ohio.gov)

State of Ohio Administrative Policies may be found online at  
[www.das.ohio.gov/Divisions/Administrative-Support/State-Administrative-Policy](http://www.das.ohio.gov/Divisions/Administrative-Support/State-Administrative-Policy)

## Appendix A - Definitions

- a. Domain Name. A domain name is used to locate computers on the Internet and to allow users to reach Web sites. Each domain name has at least two components, the top level domain name and the secondary level domain name. Structurally, TLDs and SLDs are combined to create a domain name address: [www.secondlevel.toplevel](http://www.secondlevel.toplevel).
- b. DAS OIT's Ordering System. DAS OIT's ordering system allows users to order IT enterprise services online, including telecommunication services such as domain services, Wireless as a Service, mobile services, and Internet access. These requests are submitted online at <https://stateofohio.service-now.com/ess/home>.
- c. Internet. A worldwide system of computer networks - a network of networks - in which computer users can get information and access services from other computers. The Internet is generally considered to be public, un-trusted and outside the boundary of the state of Ohio enterprise network.
- d. Internet Protocol Address. Also called an "IP address", a unique number assigned by an Internet authority that identifies a computer on the Internet<sup>1</sup>.
- e. Second Level Domain. The second level domain or SLD is the next highest level of the hierarchy after the top level domain. SLDs are typically selected to relate to specific information or services offered or to identify the organization providing the information. Structurally, TLDs and SLDs are combined to create a domain name address: [www.secondlevel.toplevel](http://www.secondlevel.toplevel).

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<sup>1</sup> "IP address." Def. The Gartner Glossary of Information Technology Acronyms and Terms. Ed. Carl Richmond. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Stamford: Gartner Direct Products, 2000.

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- f. Third Level Domain. The third level domain is an additional layer, which can provide further domain name clarification. One of the main benefits is that if the SLD is already owned by DAS OIT, the agency will not need to pay a fee to the registrar to secure the domain name. An example of a third level domain is [www.OAKS.ohio.gov](http://www.OAKS.ohio.gov).
  
- g. Top Level Domain. The top level domain is the basic component of a domain name address. Some examples of TLD domains are .com, .gov and .us.

**Appendix B - Related Resources**

<b>Document Name</b>
<i>General Services Administration Final Rule – 41 CFR Part 102-173</i> <a href="https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/policy">https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/policy</a>
<i>General Services Administration .gov Program Guidelines</i> <a href="https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/program-guidelines">https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/program-guidelines</a>
<i>General Services Administration .gov Domain Guidelines</i> <a href="https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/domain-guidelines">https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/domain-guidelines</a>
<i>General Services Administration .gov Freedom of Information Act Policy</i> <a href="https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/references">https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/references</a>
<i>Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Web site</i> <a href="http://www.icann.com">http://www.icann.com</a>
<i>Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) Listing of Generic (gTLD) and Country Code (ccTLD) Top Level Domains (TLDs)</i> <a href="http://www.iana.org/domains/root/db/">http://www.iana.org/domains/root/db/</a>
<i>NeuStar Web site</i> <a href="http://www.neustar.com">http://www.neustar.com</a>