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Purpose

The value of Alpha Kappa Alpha’s brand guidelines lies in the ability to provide consistency and recognition. Consistent use of our logo, font, photographic style and key messages will build awareness and recognition of the Alpha Kappa Alpha brand. Over time, these elements will become visual reminders of what our brand means to our members and those we serve.

Send questions to: communications@aka1908.com
What is a brand?

A brand is a concept, an ideal that people hold in their minds and in their hearts when they think about a product, individual or organization. It is the collective memory of countless experiences over a lifetime. For Alpha Kappa Alpha, at its core, a brand is a promise of what the organization represents and what it means to those who engage it.
We choose brands not only for what they can do for us, but also for what they mean to us. The development of brand meaning is a deliberate process to infuse tangible and intangible qualities into the brand that differentiate it from other brands. This section describes the key drivers of Alpha Kappa Alpha’s brand meaning: our history, positioning, brand attributes and brand personality. These elements should come through in everything we do and say.
Our History

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated had its humble beginnings as the dream of Ethel Hedgeman, a co-ed at Howard University. Along with eight other students, she worked to create a support network for women with like minds to come together for the mutual uplift and benefit of others. In 1908, her vision became a reality as Alpha Kappa Alpha became the first African-American Greek-letter sorority.

Cultural awareness and social advocacy marked Alpha Kappa Alpha’s infancy. The Sorority promoted African-American culture and encouraged social action through the presentation of artists and social justice advocates. In these early years, Alpha Kappa Alpha also made its mark on education by establishing the first organizational scholarship at Howard University in 1914, just one year after its legal incorporation in the District of Columbia. These programs were a prelude to the thousands of pioneering and enduring initiatives that define the Alpha Kappa Alpha brand today.
Our History

Alpha Kappa Alpha’s programs have continued to reflect the communal consciousness steeped in the Sorority’s traditions and embodied in its credo, “To be supreme in service to all mankind.” We have enriched minds and encouraged life-long learning; provided aid to those in need, and initiated social action to advance human and civil rights. Since it’s founding, the Sorority has worked collaboratively with other groups to maximize outreach on progressive endeavors; continuously producing leaders to preserve its credo of service.
Our History

Alpha Kappa Alpha has grown to be a globally-impactful organization of nearly 300,000 collegiate members and alumnae, constituting 1,024 chapters in 42 states, the District of Columbia, the US Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Germany, Liberia, South Korea, Japan, Canada, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. Our members are bound by the bonds of sisterhood and empowered by a commitment to servant-leadership that is both domestic and international in scope. For over 110 years, the Sorority has maintained its focus in two key arenas: the lifelong personal and professional development of each of its members and an unwavering presence at the forefront of effective advocacy and social change that brings equality and equity to all the citizens of the world.
Our History

Under the leadership of thirty international presidents and with the support of a professional headquarters staff since 1949, Alpha Kappa Alpha’s members have instituted groundbreaking social action initiatives and social service programs that have transformed communities for the better. With a legacy of service and a clear vision for the future, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated is poised to address the challenges that society is facing today and beyond.
Positioning

Since 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has improved the lives of people worldwide by attracting and retaining capable and motivated members who genuinely care about each other and the people they serve. Our members develop innovative service programs that address significant issues in the areas of education, health, family, the arts, technology and economics. These programs are outcome-driven and executed with excellence. As the oldest African-American community service sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority attributes its longevity to accountable leadership and organizational efficiency.
Brand Attributes

1. Resilient: For more than a 110 years we have attended to the needs of others despite significant obstacles and challenges.

2. Community-based: We act locally to have a positive impact on our neighbors and our neighborhoods.

3. Global: Our size allows us to reach communities all over the world.

4. Collaborative: We seek out partners who share our values and complement our strengths.

5. Creative: We find new ways to solve old problems.
Brand Personality

1. Optimistic: When faced with adversity we see opportunity.

2. Confident: We believe that we can and therefore we do.

3. Knowledgeable: Our vast personal and professional connections help us to stay informed.

4. Thoughtful: We attend to the needs of others.

5. Spirited: We are energetic and proud of who we are. We bring a “spark” to everything we do.
Words have power – they bring our brand to life. What we say shapes how others see us and how we see ourselves. While the content of our message may vary, it must be rooted in our identity. In this section, we provide some principles for effective communication as well as key content that should always be included.
Messaging – General Principles

1. All messages should reflect the Sorority’s brand meaning.

2. Copy should be conversational, as if speaking directly to, not at, the reader.

3. It should be clear and concise and appropriate for the audience.

4. Avoid the use of terms that are unique to Alpha Kappa Alpha along with other jargon.
Messaging – Boilerplate

The following boilerplate message should be used at the conclusion of all press releases and as a description of the organization. Chapters and Regions may add information pertaining to the regional or local leadership and community presence in the city/region. Boilerplate message is as followed:

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® (AKA) is an international service organization that was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African-American, college-educated women. Alpha Kappa Alpha is comprised of nearly 300,000 members in 1,024 graduate and undergraduate chapters in the United States, Liberia, the Bahamas, the US Virgin Islands, Germany, South Korea, Bermuda, Japan, Canada, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. Led by International President Glenda Baskin Glover, Alpha Kappa Alpha is often hailed as “America’s premier Greek-letter organization for African-American women.” For more information on Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and its programs, visit www.aka1908.com.
Emblems

The Alpha Kappa Alpha coat of arms (also known as the shield or crest) and administration logos are the primary visual devices for representing the sorority. They are the face of our brand. They celebrate our heritage and our future. In this section we provide standards for using our emblems and how they should be applied in various situations.
Coat of Arms Usage – Guidelines

1. In general, usage of the coat of arms is encouraged. Chapter and region websites, flyers, banners, posters, or other publications should bear the official Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority coat of arms and/or the full name of the sorority. The shield cannot be reproduced under any conditions for commercial or private use without written permission of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Corporate Office.

2. The registered symbol (®) should always accompany the coat of arms.

3. The coat of arms must always be reproduced complete and unmodified with all of its components intact. Please refer to the 2016 Constitution and Bylaws (Article XII, Section 10, Page 54).

4. Some limited variation in the color of the coat of arms is permitted as shown in the following slides. Variations should be used to improve readability for print and digital communication.
Color Variations – Coat of Arms (Gold)
Color Variations – Coat of Arms (White)
How to spot a fake: Ask yourself three questions.

1. Are the symbols in the right place?
2. Are the greek letters/font correct?
3. Is the federal registration symbol present?
Administration Logo – Guidelines

1. The *Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service* logo and the associated program logos are the official emblems of the 2018-2022 administration. They should be used to promote the current administration’s programs, projects and overall theme. Under no circumstances should the *Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service* logos supersede the coat of arms.

2. The *Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service* logo and associated program logos (e.g. HBCU For Life: A Call To Action) should be used when creating chapter correspondence, written communication, reports, flyers or the like.” *(The Official Guide to Alpha Kappa Alpha Protocol, 2014, Page 27)*
Administration Logo – Guidelines

3. Immediately retire use of any images and logos which are unofficial, have not been approved or reference prior administrations.

4. The *Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service* logo and all associated program logos can be used without prior approval from the Corporate Office for authorized service programs and projects hosted by a chapter, region or the Boule of Alpha Kappa Alpha.
Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service
Program Logos
Co-branded communication

When using the Alpha Kappa Alpha coat of arms with an administration or program logo in a horizontal orientation, always place the coat of arms to the left and administration logo to the right. No more than two Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority logos should be used on websites, flyers, banners, posters, or other publications.
Usage of Coat of Arms with Administration Logo

Co-branded communication

When using the Alpha Kappa Alpha coat of arms with an administration or program logo in a vertical orientation, always place the coat of arms above the administration logo. No more than two Alpha Kappa Alpha logos should be used on websites, flyers, banners, posters, or other publications.
Logo Don’ts

Logos and official symbols and trademarks should not be:

1. Modified in any way.

2. Worn on or near the buttocks or other inappropriate areas of the body.

3. Tattooed on any area of the body.

4. Used by vendors without written permission by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Corporate Office.

Report misuse to exec@aka1908.com or communications@aka1908.com.
Logo Don’ts

Logos and official symbols and trademarks should not be:

5. Rearranged, redrawn or rescaled.

6. Printed, sewn onto or drawn on any item, piece of clothing or paraphernalia that is derogatory or degrades the history and legacy of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®️, its founders or its members.

7. Changed, modified or embellished for promotional, advertising or personal use.

Report misuse to exec@aka1908.com or communications@aka1908.com.
Regional and Chapter Logos - Guidelines

Like the Alpha Kappa Alpha coat of arms, region and chapter logos can be an effective tool to brand programs and events. In this section we provide guidelines for creating logos and their proper use.
Regional and Chapter Logo - Guidelines

1. The words Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® (Inc. is acceptable) must be included along with the region or chapter name.

2. The logo must use the sorority’s official pink and green colors as indicated in the brand guidelines. The official colors may not be modified.

3. Logos must positively reflect the sorority’s mission and values.
Regional and Chapter Logo - Guidelines

4. Region and chapter logos shall never supersede or replace the sorority coat of arms.

5. Region and chapter logos shall never supersede or replace *the Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service* logo or related program logos on program-related publications.

6. When used, the region or chapter logo should always be placed to the right of the sorority’s coat of arms. In the case where the logos appear vertically, the region or chapter logo should be placed below the sorority coat of arms.

7. Regions and chapters should use no more than two Alpha Kappa Alpha logos on any single webpage, flyer, poster, banner, or other publication.
Region and Chapter Logo - Guidelines

8. Region and chapters may create logos for special occasions (significant anniversary, fundraiser, etc.). These logos must comply with the guidelines.
Fonts and Colors

Font is more than a design element. It articulates our message, expressing both what we say and how we say it. Consistent use of font is a simple way to align our visual identity. In this section we define the fonts that should be used in all Alpha Kappa Alpha communications.
Appropriate for formal printed communication, the Georgia font conveys a sense of friendliness and a feeling of understanding. In addition, this font family is very legible. In italics, the Georgia font is a graceful and flowing font. The bold weight retains the character and charm of the regular font while providing consistent emphasis even with small sizes. The Georgia font is also appropriate for online content. Regardless of medium, use Greek letters when using the abbreviation AKA.
Georgia’s sister font, Verdana, is ideal for communication that will primarily be read on electronic devices including computers, tablets and smartphones. The generous width and spacing of Verdana’s characters is key to the legibility of this font on the screen. These features are maintained in italics and bold weight. The Verdana font is also appropriate for informal printed communication. Regardless of medium, use Greek letters when using the abbreviation AKA.
Official Color Palette

- **Print** – Primary colors: Salmon Pink (Pantone Pink: 182) and Apple Green (Pantone Green: 354)

- **Web** – Salmon Pink: F3B0B1 and Apple Green: A8DA61

- Do not alter or obscure the colors in the Alpha Kappa Alpha coat of arms or administration logos in any way.

- Do not substitute colors or rearrange the order of the colors in the Alpha Kappa Alpha coat of arms or administration logo.
Photography

A good image becomes the opening sentence of our story. Images grab people’s attention and ingrains itself into their memory. They are also an effective way to convey the Sorority’s brand personality. This section provides some basic guidelines for primary (appropriate for most communications) and secondary (appropriate for limited audiences and specific activities) photography.
Primary Photographs

1. Photographs should feature undergraduate and graduate sorors engaged in community service.

2. Photographs should be action-oriented, focusing on the specific tasks sorors are performing versus posed, group pictures.

3. Include service recipients and community partners to the extent they enhance the communication and appropriate releases have been obtained.

4. Relevant signage, landmarks, etc. can also be included.
Examples of Primary Photographs
Secondary Photographs

1. Feature sorors engaged in social settings such as fundraisers, sorority relations activities, etc.

2. Focus on the interactions between sorors and convey a sisterly (kind, caring) connection.

3. Limit images that play on stereotypes (e.g. stepping, posing, etc.).

4. Avoid images that cast sorors or the sorority in a potentially negative light (e.g. drinking, sexually-suggestive dancing, provocative clothing, etc.).
Examples of Secondary Photographs
Additional Resources

1. AKA Style Guide
2. Guidelines for AKA Web Presence
3. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Guide to Social Media
4. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Guide to Working with the Media