Handbooks provide a greater level of detail regarding *how* Indian Affairs (IA) programs and staff carry out their responsibilities. Basically they document the procedures used to carry out the program’s policy. It is for this reason that an Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) policy chapter should be developed ***prior*** to a Handbook being developed for said topic.

Handbooks are typically companions to IAM policy chapters.

While a standard template, such as that for an IAM, is not required for handbooks, they *must* meet certain requirements and must also be reviewed and approved by the appropriate officials/offices (including RACA) prior to issue.

Each Handbook *must* have:

1. A cover/title page which states:
* Title of the Handbook
* Program the handbook is affiliated with
* Official Name and address of the issuing office
* Footnoted release number, date, and related IAM chapter (note: RACA provides the release number as well as the document identification number)
1. Foreword section with signature block
2. Table of Contents
3. Chapter and page numbers which match the table of contents
4. Correct citations and current authorities (i.e., references to CFR, U.S.C., official governing policies, regulations, etc.)
5. Current and accurate names of Indian Affairs offices and official titles
6. Attachments in electronic form

**The required template for the Handbook Cover (title), foreword, and Table of Contents is provided on the RACA intranet Directives webpage**: <https://iiamabqzucmw02p.ia.doi.net:16200/inside.indianaffairs/Org/AS-IA/ORM/DirectSys/index.htm>

Handbooks must also be written in a **concise manner** using plain language. Pictures, charts, and illustrations are discouraged as these can cause problems for staff in the field. Attachments/appendices should be kept to a minimum. All forms should be provided to RACA for loading to the IA Online Forms webpage; a reference to the webpage for any forms will be written into the handbook.

**To develop a Handbook:**

1. The originating office with primary subject responsibility prepares the handbook’s content. Subject-matter-experts are critical to identifying the information that needs to be captured within the handbook. The originating office should notify RACA of its need to develop such a handbook, and RACA will provide guidance as required.
2. The first draft is circulated internally for review and comment.
3. Once all internal comments are addressed, the originating office emails the draft to RACA for review. RACA will review the draft for format and content, and note any edits and/or comments in track changes. RACA will provide the release # and appropriate identification number at this time (if not already provided when first notified). RACA will send the draft back to the originating office to review and address any remaining edits/comments.
4. Once the originating office has addressed all remaining edits/comments, and believes the draft is in a ‘final’ stage, it emails the draft back to RACA for a final review and processing.
5. RACA performs another review and agrees that the handbook is ‘final’ (or communicates with the originating office on any remaining questions/issues). RACA then confirms with the originating office the parties who need to surname the policy.
6. Since the Policy Database within the Data Tracking System (DTS) does not allow for routing to individuals by name, RACA will request ‘surnames via email’ from the identified subject-matter-experts and/or management. RACA will upload these email surnames into DTS to travel with the final handbook version, and route the document(s) to the appropriate Central Office parties for surnaming and final signature. The final Approving Official (i.e., the person who signs off on the handbook) is usually a Bureau Director or other senior leadership official.
7. Once all surnames and the final signature have been obtained, the signature page will be scanned into DTS and routed back to RACA. The staff of the Approving Official will also mail the signed original copy to RACA.
8. RACA then performs final processing of the handbook, uploads and publishes it to the Handbooks webpage, and sends an email announcing the document’s publication to Central and Regional leadership, management, and appropriate staff with the link to the Handbooks webpage.
9. The originating office is responsible for any further distribution of the policy, but is encouraged to refer staff to the Handbooks webpage instead of printing hard copies.