Invoice Validation Process Provider Communication Guide

The receipt of a provider's invoice is the first step in the enhanced invoice validation process, and a crucial one. It is critical that in addition to having their invoices validated promptly, providers have a sense of the status of their payment during the period it is moving through our process. As part of that effort, this guide lays out the steps necessary to ensure transparency for providers as validation proceeds. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the Contract Invoice Validation Process Guide.

Receipt of Invoice:

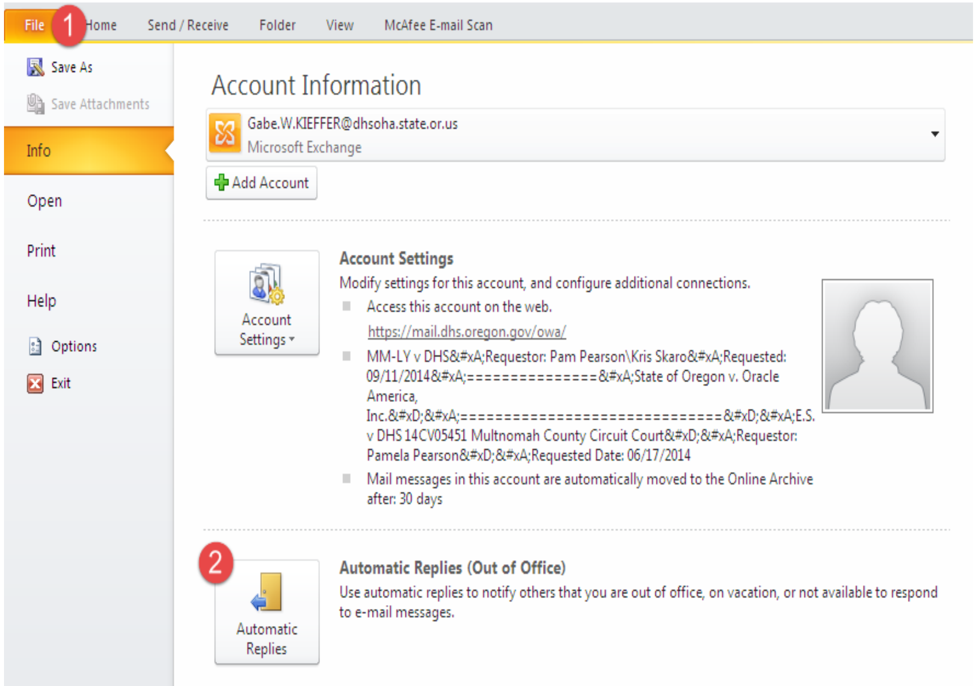
Submission Type	Steps
Electronic invoice process **Electronic Submission is the PREFERRED option. Please encourage providers to use this format whenever possible!**	1. Contractor submits electronic copy of invoice through standard e-mail boxes. 2. Use the Outlook auto reply function to confirm receipt of invoice. (Instructions below). 3. Proceed to Validation Guide.
Invoices received via fax **Note: Invoices received by mail do not receive a confirmation.*	1. Contractor submits invoice via fax. *(Recommendation: for those offices that have the capability, configure fax machine to convert incoming transmissions into a .pdf file, then send the file to the designated branch contract-invoice email address. Contact your local OIS tech if uncertain how to configure machine).* 2. Proceed to Validation Guide.

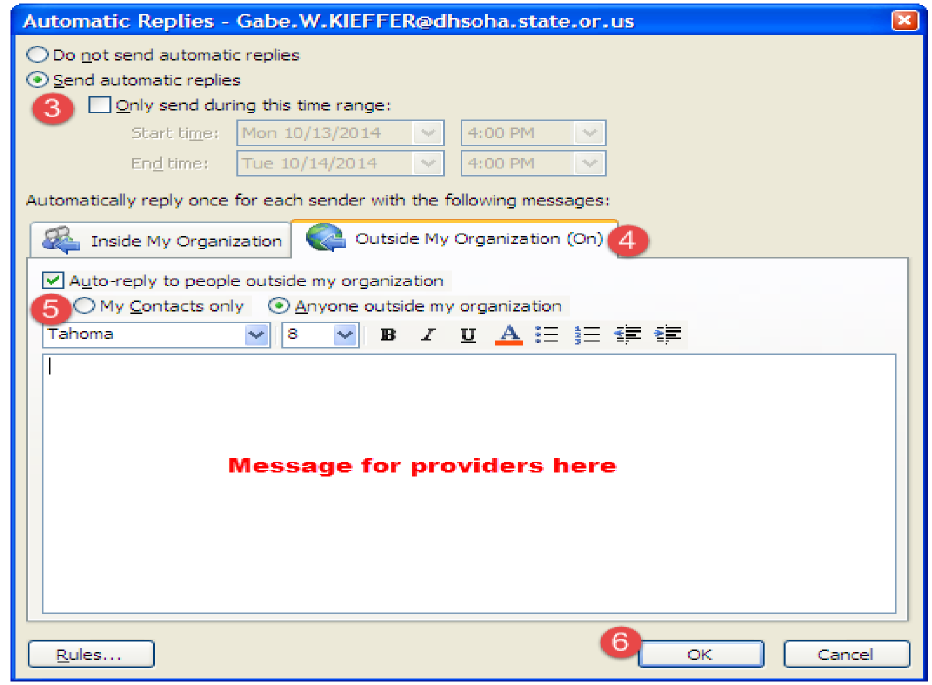
Note: This process intends that the electronic invoices submitted by the contractor should remain as Excel document through the validation process. There should not be a need to scan or .pdf the invoice!

Auto-Reply Instructions (Outlook 2010):

Click **File** button in the upper-left corner in Outlook 2010 and click **Automatic Replies**:
In the **Automatic Replies** dialog box, select "**Send automatic replies." (***Note:* *Do not check* ***Only send during this time range*** *as the automatic replies for receipt of invoices will be indefinite.)*
To send auto-reply message to external senders, click on the **Outside My Organization** tab and check the **Auto-reply to people outside my organization** option.

See screenshots:





Sample Text

Thank you for your submission!

Your invoice/question has been received by {Branch Name}. Staff will make every effort to complete branch-level validation within 5 business days. You will receive notification once the validation is complete and the document has been submitted to the Contracts Payable Unit. If necessary, a Contract Invoice Specialist will contact you to obtain any additional information needed to process payment. We will strive to respond to any questions or comments within 2 business days. Please allow at least that amount of time before sending a follow-up message.

You **may** reply to this message.

Click **OK** to activate the out of office message. Once established, the above message will be sent each time an email is received.

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In addition to the automatic reply sent to all submissions to the branch-level invoice Outlook inbox, there are **three additional critical junctures** within the validation/payment process during which providers and impacted staff should receive notification of a change:

Communication when returning an invoice to provider

As discussed in the Invoice Validation Process Guide, we ask our providers to complete all fields on their invoice. However, if an invoice is received from a provider that is not complete, branch validation staff are asked to attempt, by email or phone, to interact with the provider to gain the necessary information. If those attempts are unsuccessful, or if the invoice fails to meet certain criteria (see below), branch staff may need to return the invoice to the provider for follow-up and re-submission.

In these situations, please use the following message template (it is recommended to use Outlook Templates) when returning the invoice:

Send to: Provider
Cc: N/A
Subject Line Convention: #secure# Invoice Return Notice

Sample text:

The attached invoice is being returned for the following reason:

	Invoices should be submitted per month, per branch, and should not cross months.
	This invoice is being returned for correction. DHS Child Welfare requests invoicing on a standard template. Please resubmit your invoice on the DHS Child Welfare standard contract invoice template.
	This invoice is being returned to you because it is illegible in its current format. Please utilize the DHS Child Welfare standard contract invoice template and submit electronically.
	The information submitted on the attached invoice is substantially incomplete and prevents validation.

Please review and re-submit your invoice once the identified issues have been resolved. If you have questions or concerns about the return of this document, please reply directly to this email.

**Note: It is intended that staff will place an "x" in the box next to the row that describes the issue for the provider.*

Communication regarding submission of invoice to OFS:

Following the initial validation of the invoice, if some rows submitted cannot be approved for payment due to pending confirmation from a worker/supervisor, or because efforts to gain more information from the provider or contract administrator have not been successful, please use the following template (recommend using Outlook Templates) when submitting the invoice to the Office of Financial Services:

Send to: OFS-Contract Invoices
Cc: Provider
Subject Line Convention: #secure# Service Month Year (MMYY).Provider Name.Branch (*Example: #secure# 0514.Maple Star.Marion*)
File Naming Convention: Service Month Year (MMYY).Provider Name.Branch *(Example: 0514.Maple Star.Marion)*

Sample text:

Branch: {Insert Branch Name}
Provider:
Billing Month:
Invoice Number:
Total Invoice Amount (except for 1/12th invoice):

The attached invoice has been validated and is authorized for payment of all lines **coded as VP or OP**. All other lines **are to be held or not to be paid**. If you have questions about any of the hold reasons, please refer to the invoice instructions found on worksheet tab 3 of the invoice.

Additionally, please delete the following payment ID's:

**Note: The email from a DHS field office to OFS authorizing payment must either come from the Outlook account of an individual with signature authority that exceeds the amount being authorized for payment, or that individual's approval of the expense must be contained within the email chain sent to OFS. Additionally, the name of the approving manager must appear on the invoice in the 2nd "Printed Name" field.*

Example: Staff submit the validated invoice to the office manager, who reviews, adds their name to the Excel sheet, approves or denies, and then submits to OFS.

2nd Example: After receiving the validated invoice, the office manager reviews and replies to the sending staff after adding their name to the document and approving the expense. Staff will then forward the email chain to OFS to confirm payment may proceed. ***Authorizations submitted absent the required signature authority will be returned and payment delayed!***

Communication to OFS regarding Hold Status

Once issues preventing "Pay" coding have been resolved, branch staff can lift holds of the type "AH, CH, or PH" by sending an email request to OFS-Contract Invoices. The email **DOES NOT** need to include a copy of the invoice, which has already been submitted, unless a completely new invoice has been submitted by the provider.

Send to: OFS-Contract Invoices
Cc: Provider
Subject Line Convention: #Secure# .Hold Lift Service Month/Year (MMYY) Provider Name.Branch (*Example: #Secure# Hold Lift 0514 Maplestar.Marion*)

Sample text:

The following payment rows for the referenced invoice may now be paid:

Invoice number:
Invoice Month:
Participant name:
Participant ID:
Service Category:
Service Type:

Please remit payment to the identified provider as soon as possible.

**Note: The email from a DHS field office to OFS authorizing payment must either come from the Outlook account of an individual with signature authority that exceeds the amount being authorized for payment, or that individual's approval of the expense must be contained within the email chain sent to OFS. Additionally, the name of the approving manager must appear on the invoice in the 2nd "Printed Name" field.*

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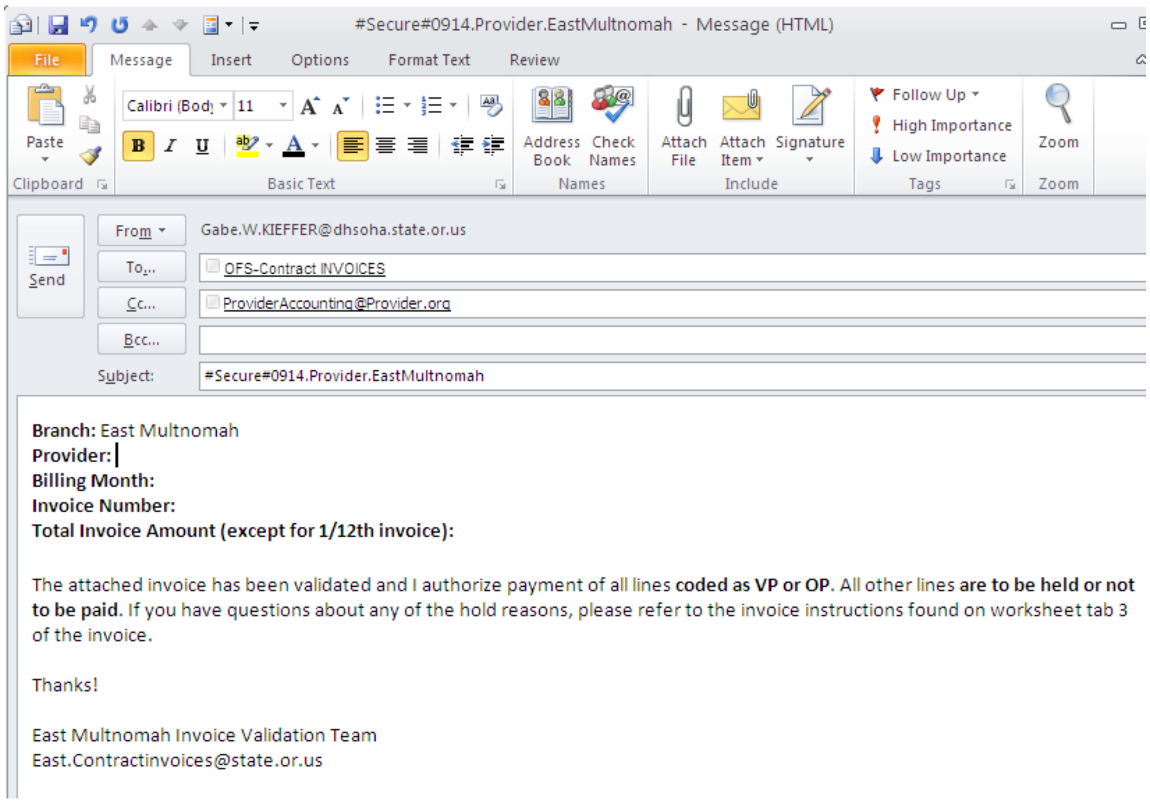
Creating Templates in Outlook (2010):

Benefits of using Outlook Templates: Efficient, Content is editable, “To,” “Cc,” and “Subject Line fields can be included

How to create a Template for standard e-mail:

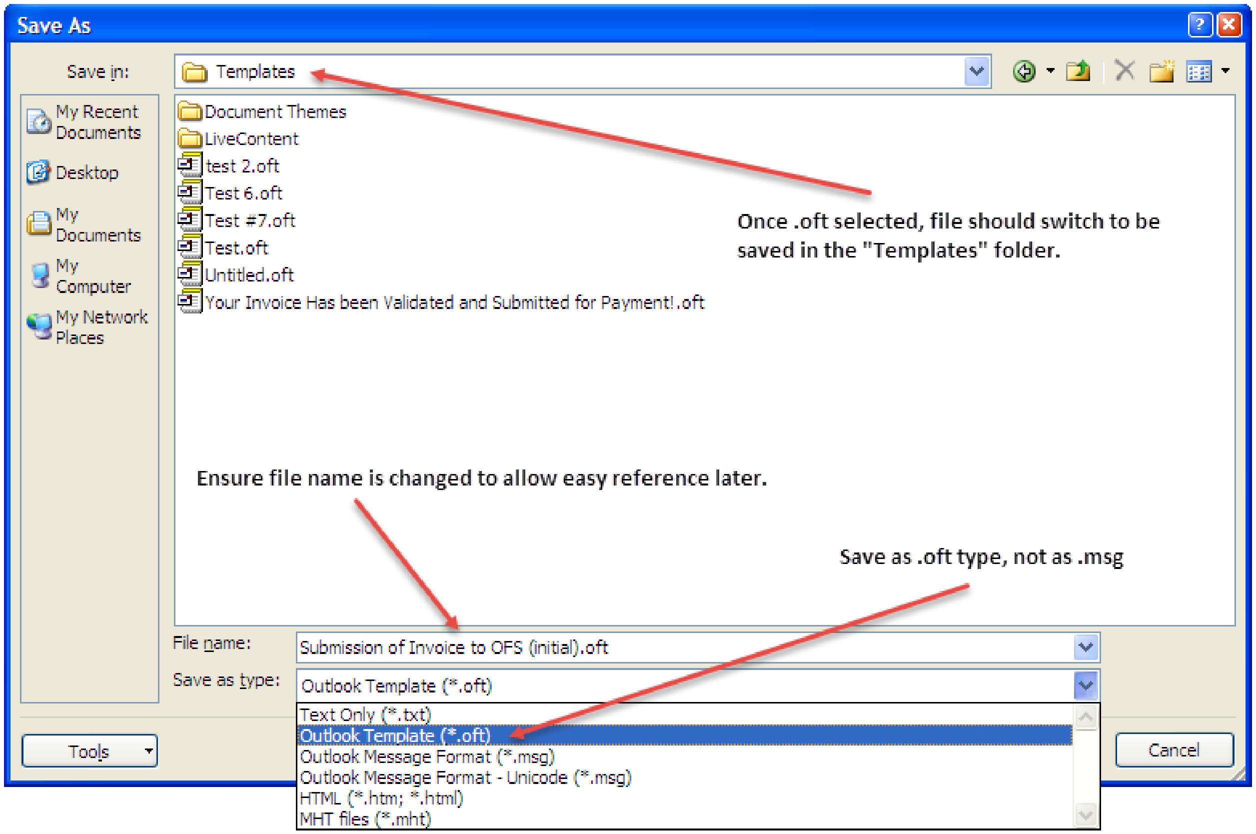
Home Tab: Select “New Email”
Modify email to reflect the template you will want to use (add “To,” “Cc,” and Subject Line, as well as formatted text in the body and a signature line.

Example of “Submission to OFS email template”



File Tab: “Save As.”

Save As Screen: Select “Save as type” menu (bottom middle) and select “Outlook Template (*.oft)”



Save As Screen: Name the template something unique and quickly recognizable (example: “Submit to OFS with Holds”)

Save As Screen: Save

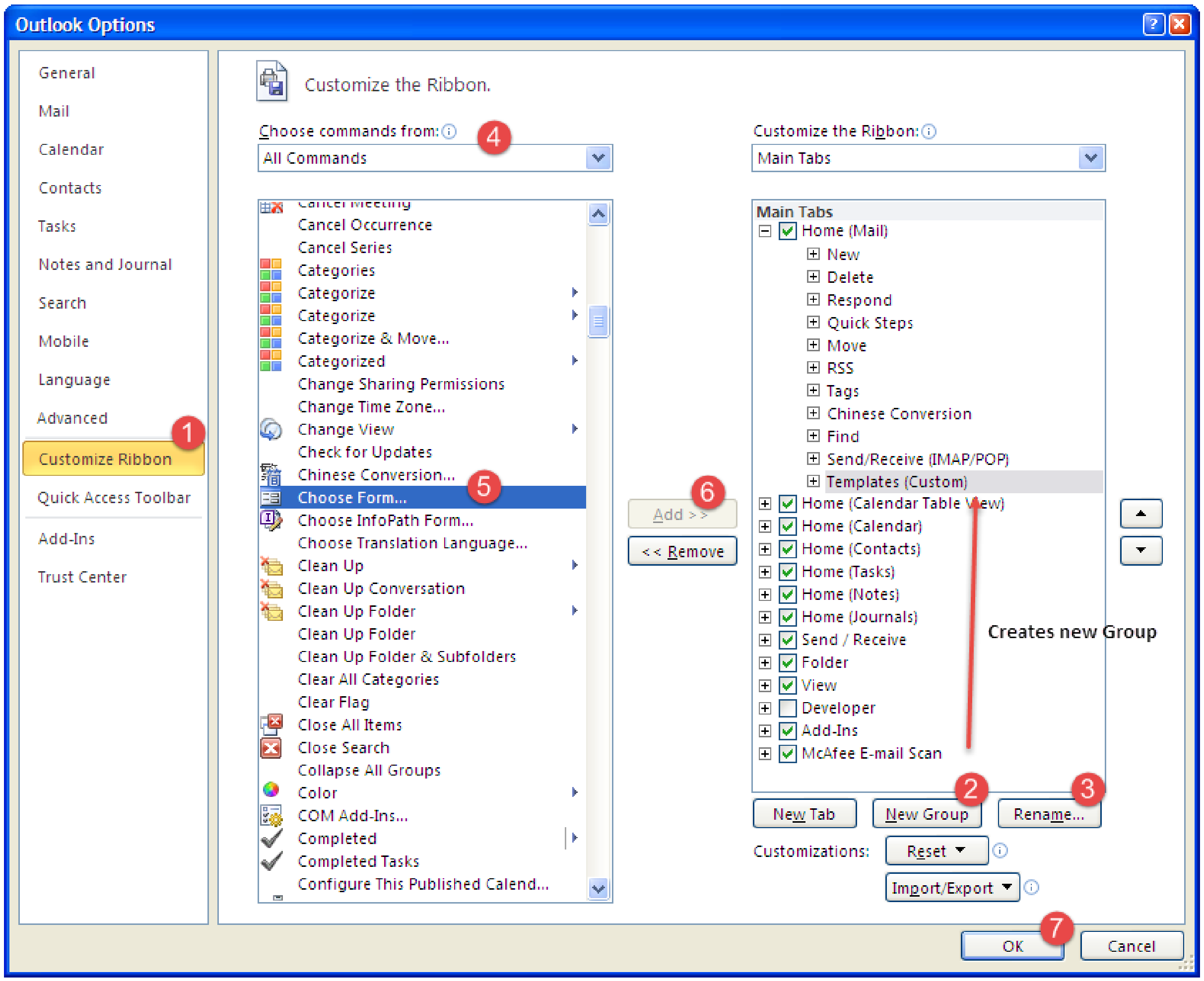
Returning to the original email, now close and save.

DHS Provider Support

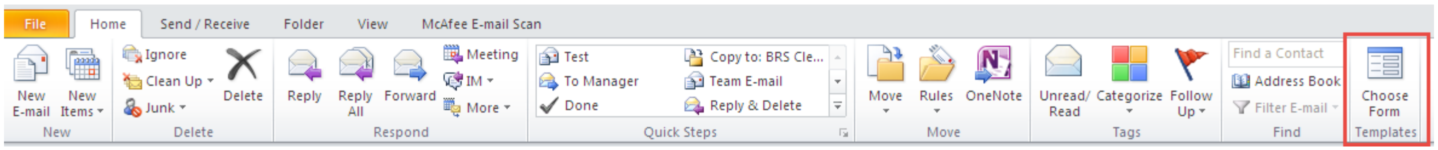
Invoice Validation Process Provider Communication Guide

Adding the Template Icon to the Outlook Ribbon:

On the Outlook Main Page, click the “File” tab and “Options” >>> Select the “Customize Ribbon” (1) >>> Click the “New Group” icon (2), then choose “Rename” (3) and call it “Templates.” Click “OK.” >>> Choose “All Commands” (4) in the “Choose commands from” menu >>> Select “Choose Form” (5) and click “Add.” (6) >>> Click “Ok” (7) to save changes.

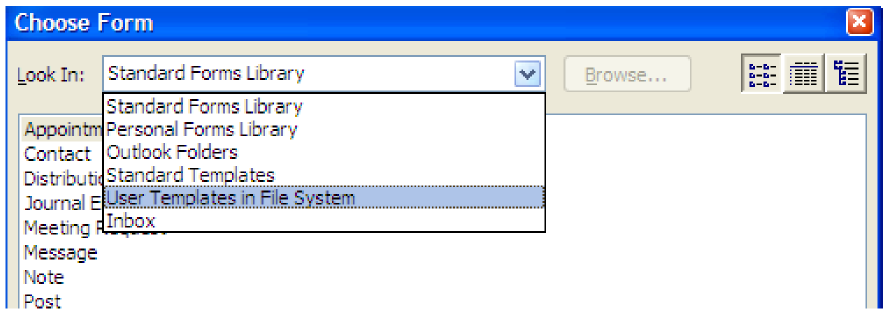


After Clicking Ok and returning to the Outlook "Home" Tab, you'll now see the "Choose Form" icon appear on your Ribbon:



Now that the icon is present, whenever a template is needed in the course of work, simply click the icon:

The "Choose Form" box will appear, then select the "User Templates in File System" option from the "Look In" menu:



All saved templates will now appear. Simply select the one you want and click "Open":