

identity guidelines

website applications

web branding

All websites and web applications of the Smithsonian Institution serve national and international audiences in broadening access to Smithsonian exhibitions, research, programs, staff, collections, and digital assets.

The Office of Communication and External Affairs (OCEA) ensures that the branding of all Smithsonian public informational websites adheres to Smithsonian branding guidelines and governs the use of the Smithsonian logo as detailed at logo.si.edu.

The following pages provide web branding standards and design guidelines to strengthen the Smithsonian brand and improve user experience by enabling cross-site navigation.

If you are having trouble with anything in this guide, please contact the Office of Communications and External Affairs brand team at Branding@si.edu

web branding standards

Smithsonian Web Branding Standards

All websites must clearly identify the Smithsonian unit and their Smithsonian affiliation. Each website must include the Smithsonian logo with a link to the Smithsonian flagship site at www.si.edu in adherence to the design guidelines documented in this guide.

All Smithsonian websites (including those operated on behalf of the Smithsonian) must contain a link to the Smithsonian Privacy Notice or a Smithsonian Privacy Office–approved Customized Privacy Notice. All websites must also include a link to either the Smithsonian’s standard Terms of Use Notice or an approved deviation. Only OGC may approve deviations from the standard terms of use.

Use of Domain Names

All new Smithsonian websites should use the Smithsonian Institution domain si.edu or a subdomain of si.edu for brand consistency and to leverage our SEO domain authority. The si.edu domain and its subdomains are available free of charge through OCIO Web Services Division (WSD).

Certain exceptions to si.edu domain use are permitted, those generally being e-commerce websites or websites created for tenant organizations or special projects through the Smithsonian Institution. Please reach out to the Office of Communications and External Affairs brand team at Branding@si.edu for guidance.

Per Smithsonian Directive 950 only OCIO is authorized to register and acquire domain names for the Smithsonian regardless of where a site is hosted. If vanity URLs are acquired for marketing purposes, it is still recommended that they point to an si.edu subdomain and not be the official site URL.

Recognition of External Sponsorship

Recognition of financial or “in-kind” support through an active link to a sponsor’s website or display of a sponsor’s logo is only permitted in accordance with SD 809, Philanthropic Financial Support. Units should contact their development office for guidance on recognizing corporate sponsorship. If a unit does not have its own development office, then it should contact the Smithsonian’s Office of Advancement for guidance.

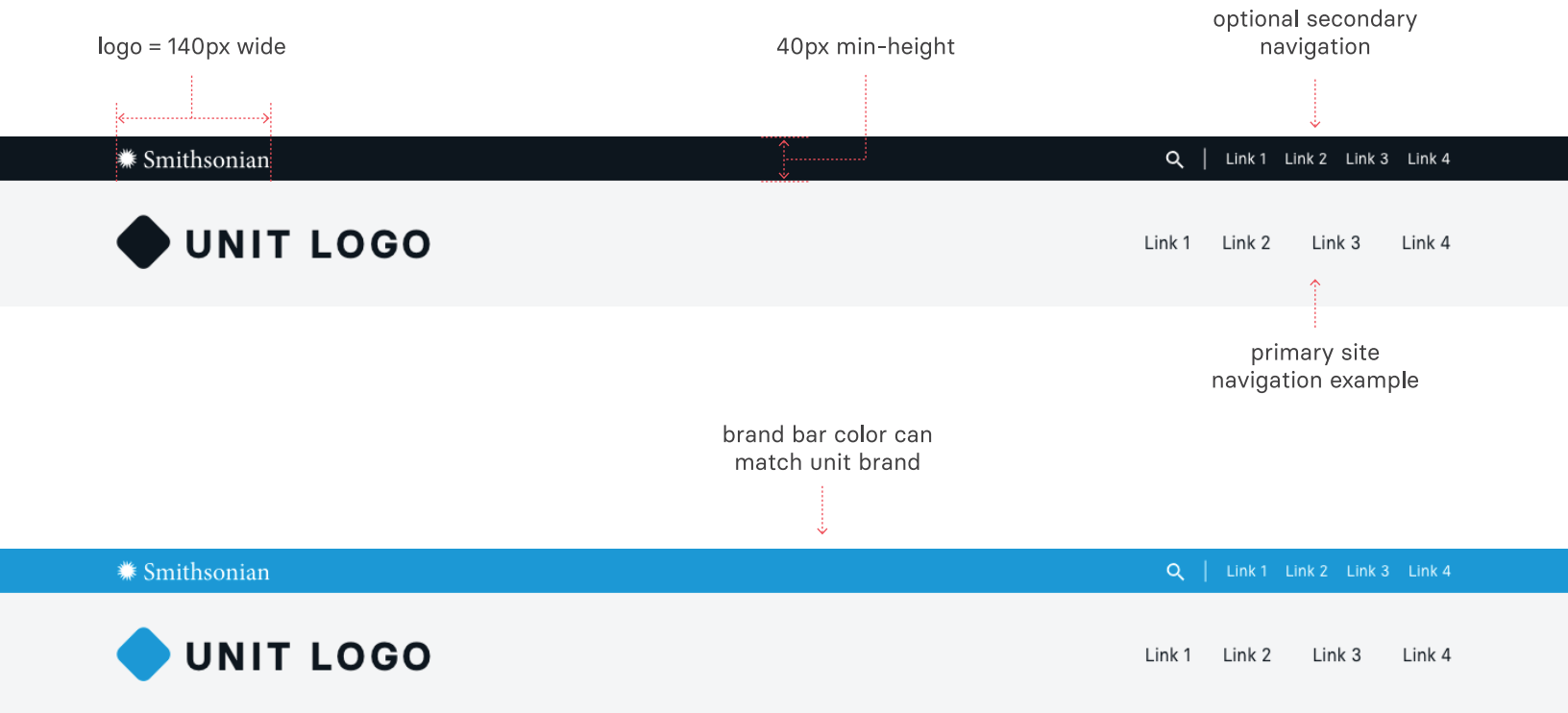
Recognition of Smithsonian Sponsorship

Recognition of Smithsonian Sponsorship should be determined by agreements made with partner or affiliate organizations.

web design guidelines

Desktop-Brand Bar and Footer Use

The brand bar is a tool used to communicate to our audiences that your website or app is an officially endorsed part of the Smithsonian and to provide a consistent route back to the Smithsonian homepage. It should be used on all primary unit and initiative websites. If you're unsure whether you're required to use the Smithsonian brand bar, or if you have any other design related questions, please contact the brand team at branding@si.edu.

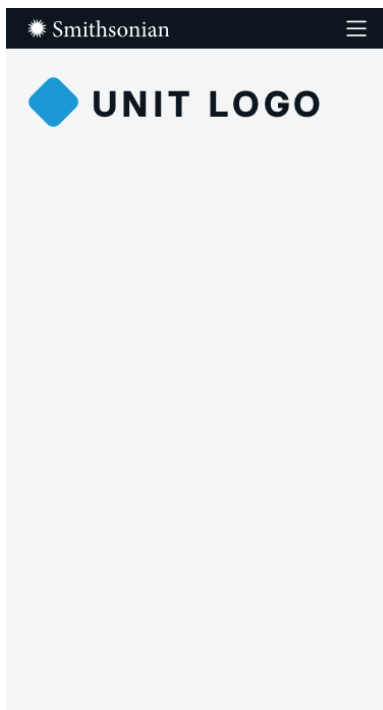


Desktop Application Rules:

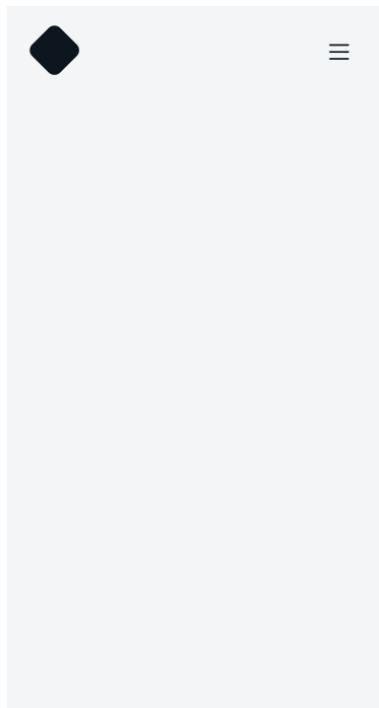
- The standard brand bar color is Smithsonian black (#101820) with a white logo. Alternatively, the brand bar color can match a unit's website color palette.
- The brand bar improves user experience by providing a consistent way to navigate between our websites. This becomes increasingly important as pan-institutional initiatives highlight web content from across the Smithsonian.
- The Smithsonian logo in the brand bar and the footer should link to [si.edu](https://www.si.edu).

Mobile—Brand Bar and Footer

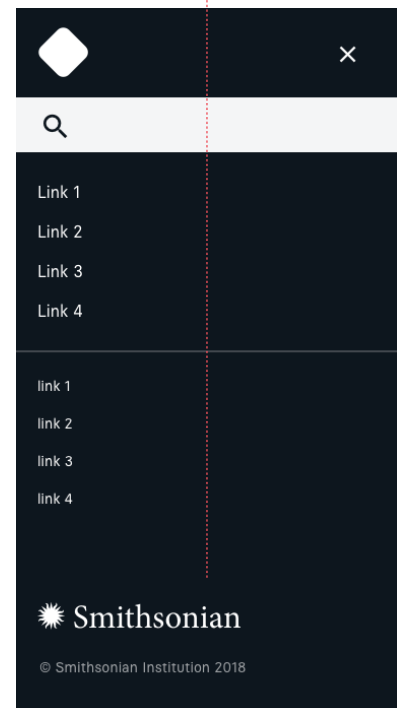
option 1
brand bar on screen



option 2a
Smithsonian brand hidden
to save real estate



option 2b
Smithsonian brand
shown in the navigation



Mobile Application Rules:

- The standard brand bar color is Smithsonian black (#101820) with a white logo. Alternatively, the brand bar color can match a unit's website color palette.
- The brand bar improves user experience by providing a consistent way to navigate between our websites. This becomes increasingly important as pan-institutional initiatives highlight web content from across the Smithsonian.
- The Smithsonian logo in the brand bar and the footer should link to si.edu.
- To save space, the Smithsonian brand can alternatively live in the navigation.

Color Variations

Unit website colors are a reflection of the unit's unique brand identity. The W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 require that color combinations meet clearly defined contrast ratios. To check if your website colors meet WCAG standards, use the following tools: [Contrast Checker](#) and [Contrast-A](#).



The full-color logo is reserved for logo.si.edu



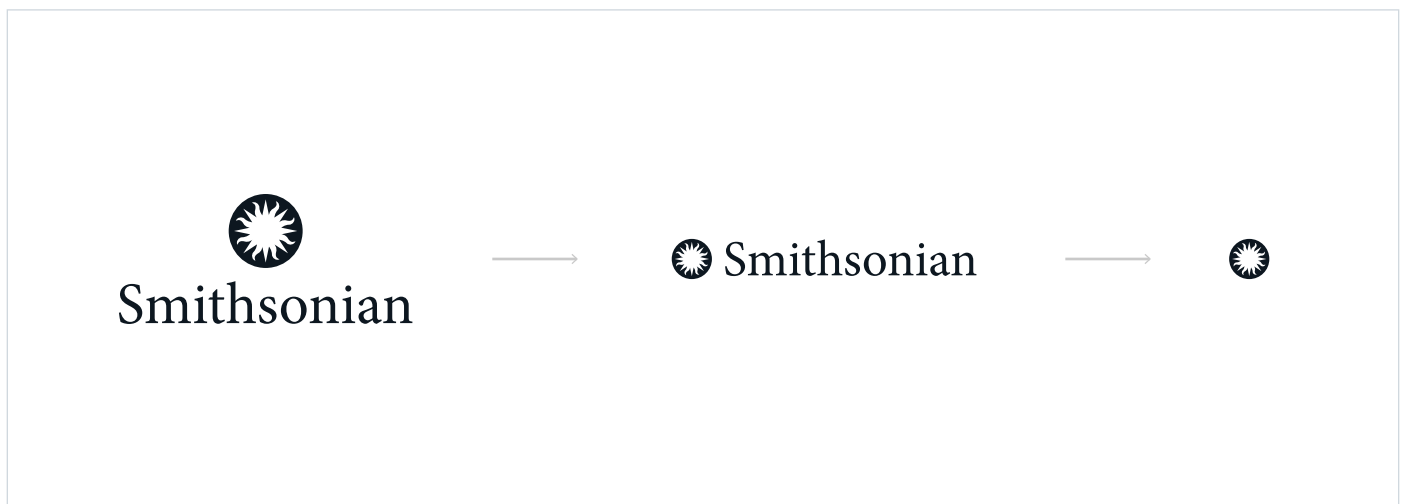
Primary logo for web use



Secondary logo for web use

Responsive Logo Breakdown

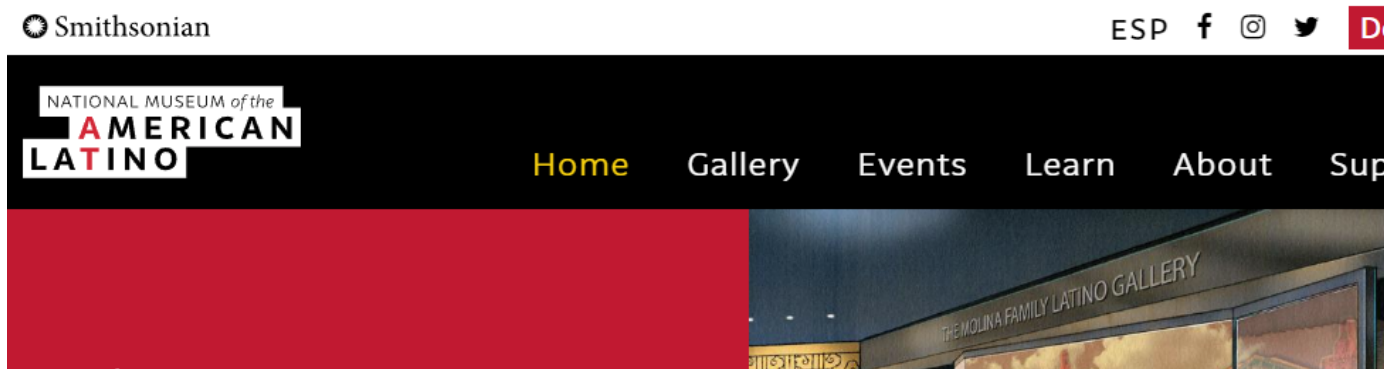
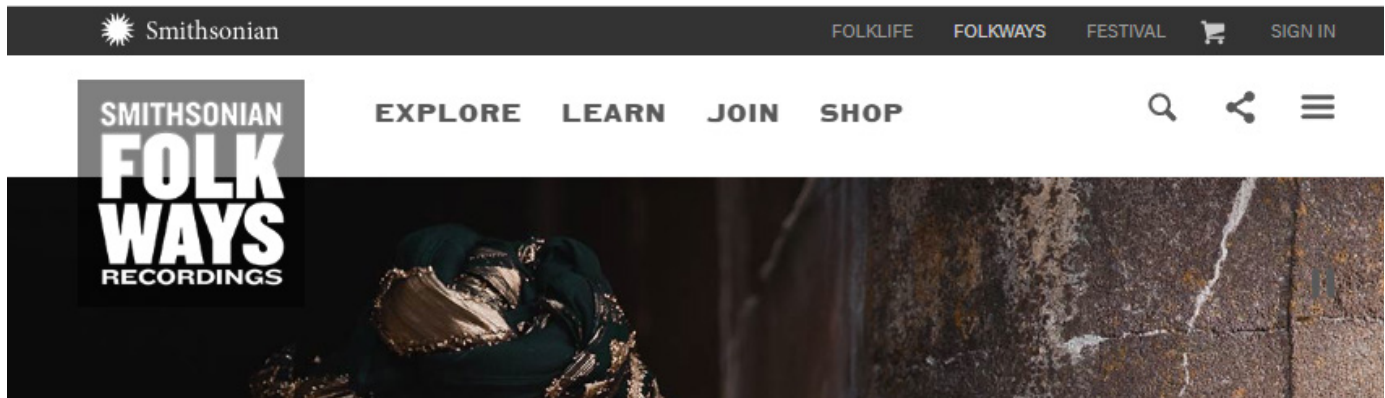
To provide a comprehensive user experience across multiple mediums, our logo can be used in a variety of ways. Below is a basic breakdown of how our logo can be used to fit in various formats or align with content. When designing a website, icons and logos should also be flexible enough to follow similar responsive design principles



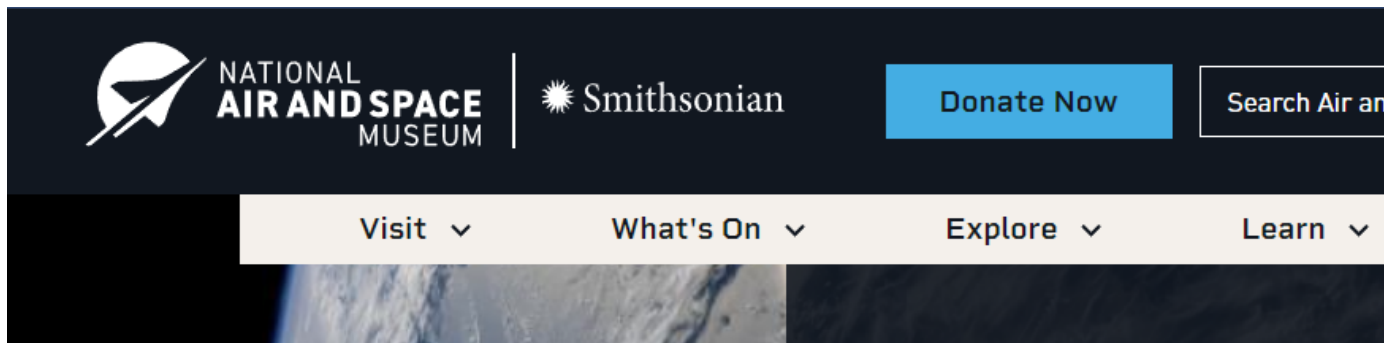
Brand Bar Design Examples

The following examples show approved use of the Smithsonian Branding Bar concept.

Standard Design



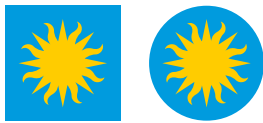
Alternate Design



Website Favicons

Options

When creating a favicon use the following examples as guidance.



Option A

This color combination is reserved for Big Brand Smithsonian only.



Option B

If you want to use a sunburst as your favicon, you can use a sunburst in our approved white sun/black background.



Option C

You may also use your own your own logomark.

If you are having trouble with anything in this guide, are missing brand elements from our [website](#), or are unsure if your communication best represents the Smithsonian Brand, please contact the Office of Communications and External Affairs brand team and we will be happy to help.

branding@si.edu