



OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY
Policy Statement
Part I – Administrative Services



Subject:

OYA Media Relations

Section – Policy Number:

E: Information Management – 3.0

Supersedes:

- I-E-3.0 (01/13)
- I-E-3.0 (10/10)
- I-E-3.0 (03/04)
- I-E-3.0 (12/03)

Effective Date:

12/30/2014

Date of Last Review:

12/23/2016

Related Standards and References:

- [OAR Chapter 416](#), Division 60 (Media Relations)
- American Correctional Association, *Standards for Juvenile Correctional Facilities*; 4-JCF-6G-03 (Media Access); 4-JCF-6G-04 (Response to Media)
- [OYA policy](#): 0-2.1 (Professional Standards)
 I-E-2.1 (Request for Agency Public Records)
 I-E-2.3 (Requests for Youth Records, Reports and Other Materials)
 II-A-1.0 (Facility Access)
- [Attachment A](#): Communications Liaison Protocol
- OYA forms: [YA 0056](#) (Youth Media Release/Consent Form)
 [YA 0059](#) (OYA Employee, Volunteer, Contractor Media Release/Consent Form)

Related Procedures:

- None

Policy Owner:

Communications Manager

Approved:


 Fariborz Pakseresht, Director

I. PURPOSE:

This policy provides guidelines for OYA staff when responding to media requests.

Complete guidelines on media representative access to OYA facilities, field offices, and youth are delineated in [OAR chapter 416, division 60](#).

II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

Communications manager: The manager of the Communications Office in the Director’s Office, who is the person designated as the official spokesperson for OYA.

Communications liaison: The person in each facility or field office assigned to function as a liaison with the communications manager to keep the

Communications Office informed about news and activities at the facility, and to assist the communications manager in responding to media representatives.

Youth: A person in the legal and physical custody of OYA, either in an OYA facility or placed in the community under supervision, or a person in the legal custody of the Department of Corrections and the physical custody of OYA.

III. POLICY:

OYA releases information in a professional manner consistent with state and federal laws governing the release of information, rights of privacy, and disclosure of public records.

In recognition of the news media's role in reporting matters of public interest, OYA will work with media representatives to provide requested information within OYA's resource limitations and requirements for safety, security and confidentiality; and will permit and assist with access by media representatives to OYA facilities, programs, youth and staff for the purposes of supporting OYA's mission and goals within the limitations required to ensure facility security, safety and youth reformation.

OYA may initiate contact and provide access to media representatives to report on activities that further OYA's mission and goals.

IV. GENERAL STANDARDS:

All agency media relations and responses to media inquiries are coordinated by the Communications Office in the Director's Office.

All news releases, Web and social media postings, story pitches to news media representatives, and other outreach to news media representatives, or the general public are issued through the Communications Office or under the Communications Office's oversight and direction.

Complete guidelines on media representative access to OYA facilities, field offices, and youth are delineated in OAR chapter 416, division 60. This policy provides supplemental guidelines on media relations for OYA staff.

A. Media Relations: Outreach

1. Facilities, field offices, and other areas of OYA wishing to promote a program, activity or event must provide the relevant information to the Communications Office at least four working days before the event. The Communications Office will produce the final version of the information and release it to the media. If the event is to include an invitation to media to be present, the invitation must be made by the Communications Office.
2. Facilities and field offices opening an event to media participation must coordinate with the Communications Office to ensure appropriate releases have been signed by youth and staff, media

representatives understand and agree to terms for attending events and identifying youth, and escorts have been identified to welcome and guide media representatives while they are on site.

3. Offices wishing to promote a program or activity via Facebook, Twitter, or other social media platforms must work with the Communications Office.
 - a) The Communications Office will issue the message or may authorize the program managers to post messages directly to social media platforms on behalf of the agency.
 - b) The Communications Office has final authority to approve or remove postings as deemed necessary.
 - c) Staff who are approved to post items directly to OYA's social media sites must follow all requirements in OAR 416-060-0015 regarding the sharing of identifying information about youth.
 - d) Postings to non-OYA social media or websites on behalf of OYA are prohibited.

B. Media Relations: Responsiveness

1. Facilities and field offices receiving media inquiries may provide facts related to basic facility or field office operations (such as the number or ages of youth in a facility or supervised on probation or parole). All other media requests for information must be forwarded to the Communications Office.
2. Any OYA staff member who is contacted by a media representative must, after speaking with the media representative, immediately send an e-mail to oya.communications@oya.state.or.us summarizing the contact. The e-mail message must contain the name and affiliation of the reporter, any questions asked and any answers given. This report is to be sent even if the staff simply referred the media representative to the Communications Office.

C. Media Relations: Access to Youth

1. Interviews with youth may be permitted with their consent and the approval of the appropriate superintendent/camp director or field supervisor. The youth's consent must be documented on a YA 0056 (Youth Media Release/Consent Form).

When authorized, an interview with a youth is permitted neither as a matter of right nor as a privilege of the youth or the news media organization. Instead, an interview may be approved if the appropriate superintendent/camp director or field supervisor and the communications manager determine it is consistent with OYA's mission and goals and the safe, secure and orderly management

and operation of the facility or program, and is consistent with the youth's treatment, education, reformation and rehabilitation.

(See OAR chapter 416, division 60 regarding youth interviews).

2. Identifying information about youth may be used in accordance with OAR 416-060-0015 (Media Identification of Offenders) and after all appropriate parties have given written permission by completing and signing a [YA 0056](#).

D. Media Relations: Access to Staff

Media representatives who desire access to a facility or field office to interview an OYA staff member generally will be accommodated if the staff member and the superintendent/camp director or field supervisor consent, and if the interview does not interfere with agency operations.

A [YA 0059](#) (OYA Employee, Volunteer, Contractor Media Release/Consent Form) must be signed by the subject prior to the interview.

- E. Each OYA facility and field office must have a communications liaison. This person is assigned to function as a liaison with the communications manager to keep the Communications Office informed about news and activities at the facility, and to assist the communications manager in responding to media representatives.

See [Communications Liaison Protocol \(Attachment A\)](#) for additional guidance.

V. LOCAL OPERATING PROTOCOL REQUIRED: NO

Purpose of the Communications Liaison

The Oregon Youth Authority designates staff to serve as communications liaisons in its facilities and in its field offices. The liaisons help fulfill OYA's mission by keeping the communications manager and the public policy and government relations manager in the Director's Office informed about news, activities and events at facilities and field offices, and by assisting with responses to media and legislative inquiries.

These staff members fill this role as part of their normal responsibilities. Although this is a highly responsible assignment, the time commitment normally is minimal. Media relations and legislative relations training is provided by the Communications Office to ensure liaisons have the comfort level and skills needed to work with members of local news media organizations and state legislators.

Primary responsibilities of the Communications Liaison

Each communications liaison will:

- Stay abreast of potential news and feature stories in the facility or field office, and communicate these (including the appropriate contact person) to the Communications Office well in advance by e-mail or phone. The Communications Office may use these stories for news releases, the employee newsletter or other informational purposes.
- Keep the Communications Office up to date on the calendar of events at the facility or field office. These events will be added to the agencywide Calendar of Events kept by the Communications Office.
- Keep the Communications Office informed about occurrences that have the potential to generate media or political interest (e.g. suicides, escapes, violence or other significant events). Such occurrences are to be communicated to the Communications Office immediately by phone or by e-mail with a phone call alerting the communications manager to the e-mail (or, after hours, to the communications manager by cell phone).
- Assist the Communications Office in gathering information about issues, programs and other topics to prepare talking points, issue briefs and other materials, and to answer questions about agency programs, activities and issues.
- Respond to news media inquiries about facts related to basic facility or office operations. These include providing information such as the number or ages of youth in a facility or supervised in the community, the types of crimes for which youth are committed to a particular facility, or the general process for overseeing youth youth in the community. Inquiries of a policy nature (e.g., budget, personnel matters or legislation) or questions about topics outside the scope of basic operations are to be referred to the Communications Office for response by that office or by agency leadership.
- Immediately report all contacts with a news media representative or legislative representative by sending an e-mail to oya.communications@oya.state.or.us. This ensures that Communications Office staff members, the agency's Public Policy and Government Relations Manager, and agency leadership are knowledgeable about such occurrences and better prepared to respond to subsequent legislative, news media or other inquiries.
- Promptly e-mail the Communications Office a link to or fax of any local media coverage or editorial that portrays the agency in a negative or controversial light, any stories that have appeared locally that don't appear in the "Recent media

articles” e-mails distributed by the communications manager, and any stories requested by the Communications Office on an immediate-need basis. While the daily news coverage search engine turns up most stories, there can be a 24-hour delay in the process. Alerting the Communications Office when a story appears ensures the Director’s Office can be prepared to respond to the issues raised. If there is misinformation in the story, the liaison should provide the facts to the Communications Office.

- If assigned by the superintendent, camp director, or field office supervisor to fulfill a public records request under the Oregon Public Records Law, collect the information, review it with the superintendent, camp director or field supervisor, and then deliver it to the Communications Office for review. The information will be provided to the requester by the Communications Office.
- Greet and accompany the Director during formal visits to the facility or field office when available. Typically the Director conducts a formal visit to each facility and field office at least once a year and other times as appropriate. The schedule of these formal visits is provided to the liaisons by the Communications Office. Visits at other times for routine meetings or to attend special events do not require the liaison to be present.

The Communications Office will:

- Issue all news releases, story pitches, and social media postings. The communications liaison will initiate contacts with the news media only with the pre-approval of the agency communications manager.
- Maintain an agencywide Calendar of Events listing activities, events and anticipated news. Communications liaisons are responsible for providing information about their facility or field office events for the calendar.
- Provide communication liaisons with current contact information for all Communications Office staff members and the public policy and government relations manager (office desk and cell phones, home landline and cell phones, office and personal e-mail addresses, and office and home faxes).