



OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY
Policy Statement
Part I – Administrative Services



Subject:

OYA Media Relations and Staff Participation in Public Events

Section – Policy Number:

E: Information Management – 3.0

Supersedes:

I-E-3.0 (03/04)
I-E-3.0 (12/03)

Effective Date:

10/25/2010

Date of Last

Review/Revision:
01/06/2011

Related Standards and References:

- [OAR Chapter 416](#), Division 60 (Media Relations)
- American Correctional Association, *Standards for Juvenile Correctional Facilities*; 3-JTS-1A-27 (Media Access)
- [OYA policy](#): 0-2.1 (Professional Standards)
 I-E-2.1 (Public Information Requests)
 I-E-2.3 (Requests for Offender Records, Reports and Other Materials)
 II-A-1.0 (Facility Access)
- Attachment A: Communications Liaison Protocol
- OYA forms: [YA 0056](#) (Offender Media Release/Consent Form)
[YA 0059](#) (OYA Employee, Volunteer, Contractor Media Release/Consent Form)

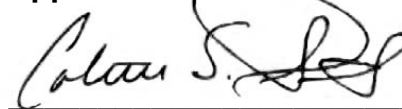
Related Procedures:

- None

Interpretation:

Communications Office

Approved:



Colette S. Peters, Director

I. PURPOSE:

This policy provides guidelines for OYA staff when responding to media requests, participating in public events, and making public statements.

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

II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

Communications Manager: The manager of the Office of Communications 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 Office of

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

Offender: All youth offenders placed in OYA facilities or under OYA supervision in the community on parole or probation status, and offenders in the legal custody of the Department of Corrections (DOC) or other agencies who are placed in OYA physical custody.

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, offenders and staff for the purposes of supporting OYA's mission and goals within the limitations required to ensure facility security, safety and offenders' reformation.

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

OYA staff participation in public meetings and conferences improves the community's understanding of OYA's mission, goals and programs; provides a channel for community input; and helps recruit volunteers and develop community support.

IV. **GENERAL STANDARDS:**

A. Staff Participation in Public Events

1. An OYA staff member must have authorization prior to serving as a juvenile justice content expert or representing the juvenile justice system or OYA at a public function.
2. The staff member must make the request in writing to his/her immediate supervisor who will forward the request through the local management structure for approval by the field supervisor, facility superintendent/camp director, or appropriate assistant director.
3. Public functions include, but are not limited to, presentations at conferences, trainings, or community service club meetings.

B. Media Relations

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

This policy provides supplemental guidelines on media relations for OYA staff.

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

4. All news releases, story pitches and other outreach to news media representatives are issued through the Office of Communications.
5. Facilities and field offices wishing to promote a program, activity or event must provide the relevant information to the Office of Communications at least four working days before the event. The Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications.
6. 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 Office of Communications.
7. Interviews with offenders may be permitted with their consent and the approval of the appropriate superintendent/camp director or field supervisor. The offender's consent must be documented on a [YA 0056](#) (Offender Media Release/Consent Form).

When authorized, an interview with an offender is permitted neither as a matter of right nor as a privilege of the offender 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 offender's treatment, education, reformation and rehabilitation.

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

8. Identifying information about offenders 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.

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9. OYA may use photographs, video recordings, or audio recordings of agency staff. A Media Release/Consent Form ([YA 0059](#)) must be signed by the subject prior to public distribution (i.e., broadcast or print media, posters, and other uses with a wide public audience).

For internal use (such as staff newsletters) and incidental external use (such as sharing the newsletters with outside groups), the staff member's verbal assent is required.

10. Items not allowed in a facility by media representatives include Mobile Communication Devices (text messaging devices or wireless, two-way communication devices designed to receive and transmit voice or text communication, including mobile Global Positioning Systems (GPS)). See OYA policy [II-A-1.0](#) (Facility Access) for more information on facility access and prohibited items.
11. 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.

V. LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURE or 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 Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications well in advance by e-mail or phone. The Office of Communications may use these stories for news releases, the employee newsletter or other informational purposes.
- Keep the Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications.
- Keep the Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications 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 offenders in a facility or supervised in the community, the types of crimes for which offenders are committed to a particular facility, or the general process for overseeing youth offenders 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 Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications a link to or fax of any local media coverage or editorial that portrays the agency in a negative or controversial light,

Attachment A: Communications Liaison Protocol

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 Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications 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 Office of Communications.

- 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 Office of Communications for review. The information will be provided to the requester by the Office of Communications.
- 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 Office of Communications. Visits at other times for routine meetings or to attend special events do not require the liaison to be present.

The Office of Communications will:

- Issue all news releases and story pitches to the news media. 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 Office of Communications 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).