

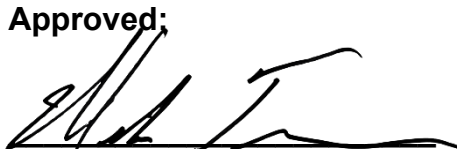


**OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY**  
**Policy Statement**  
**Part I – Administrative Services**



*Subject:*

**OYA External Communications**

<i>Section – Policy Number:</i> <b>E: Information Management – 3.0</b>		<i>Supersedes:</i> I-E-3.0 (04/23) I-E-3.0 (07/20) I-E-3.0 (12/14) I-E-3.0 (01/13) I-E-3.0 (10/10) I-E-3.0 (03/04) I-E-3.0 (12/03)	<i>Effective Date:</i> <b>01/29/2026</b>	<i>Date of Last Revision/Review:</i> <b>None</b>
<b>Related Standards and References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">OAR 416-060</a> Media Relations</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">OYA policy</a>: 0-2.1 (Professional Standards) I-E-1.0 (Director’s Office Incident Notification and Report) I-E-2.1 (Request for Agency Public Records) I-E-2.3 (Requests for Youth Information and Records) II-A-1.0 (Facility Access)</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Attachment A</a>: Communications Liaison Protocol</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">OYA forms</a>: YA 0056 (Youth Media Release/Consent Form)</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">OYA English to Spanish Glossary</a></li> </ul>			
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None</li> </ul>			
<b>Policy Owner:</b>  Communications Director	<b>Approved:</b>  Mike Tessean, Director			

**I. PURPOSE:**

This policy guides OYA staff and the communications office in telling a well-rounded, consistent, and transparent story about the agency.

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

This policy also ensures all agency printed and electronic documents:

- Achieve their intended purpose;
- Reflect OYA's identity as a single, unified agency;
- Are inclusive, equitable/accessible, and reflect the diversity of youth and staff
- Are consistent in certain writing and design elements; and
- Reflect the agency in a positive way.

## II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

**Communications office:** The communications director and communications deputy director.

**Communications liaison(s):** The person/people in each facility or field office assigned to inform the communications office about pertinent regional news and key storytelling opportunities about the facility or office, and amplify key messages within the facility or office.

**Document:** Information presented in written or electronic form that discusses or represents OYA services, and includes but is not limited to:

- Letterhead and business cards;
- Newsletters;
- Program information and marketing materials;
- White papers, reports, and issue briefs;
- Budget documents and legislative presentations;
- Materials for youth and families;
- Training materials, including curricula;
- Videos;
- PowerPoint, Prezi, and other presentation formats;
- Social media posts and ads; and
- Websites (including the agency intranet).

**Social media:** Web-based and mobile communication technologies that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content such as comments or responsive postings. Examples of “social media” include but are not limited to X, blogging sites, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

**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.

Further definitions may be found in [OAR chapter 416, division 60](#).

## III. POLICY:

The public is entitled to a full, transparent understanding of OYA’s operations, and such understanding is also critical to the agency’s successful operation.

The communications office advances this understanding within applicable laws, policies, resource limitations, and situational requirements for safety, security, confidentiality, and youth reformation. The office produces, and supports external sources producing, content about the agency’s core work, emerging issues, and other matters that will help the public understand how the agency functions, its mission, its vision, and its goals.

All agency storytelling and informational responses with the potential to circulate externally and broadly must be coordinated with or initiated by the communications office. The office will consult with relevant staff and agency leadership to shape how the agency will represent itself, its work, or its position

on specific questions for external audiences. This may also include facilitating access by news representatives to OYA facilities, programs, youth, and staff.

A. Documents must be consistent in style and design across OYA work units. Documents must be reviewed with the communications office prior to external circulation (see section IV.D.).

1. The communications office maintains the master copies of OYA's seal.
2. Colors
  - a) Main colors:
    - (1) Navy blue: 292763; and
    - (2) Gold: #ebc76b.
  - b) Secondary colors:
    - (1) Light blue: #bdd7ee;
    - (2) Light green: aec99e;
    - (3) Grey: #9da4ac;
    - (4) Teal: #70cad1; and
    - (5) Dark green: #335c67.
  - c) Fonts: Arial or Ebrima

B. OYA staff must follow FDA ADA communication standards when writing and preparing all documents, whether for external or internal audiences.

C. OYA must follow the State of Oregon's plain language standards, which include:

1. Writing in an eighth grade reading level;
2. Using active voice;
3. Using short, simple sentences;
4. Nouns appearing as nouns, not as adjectives;
5. One space (not two) appears between all punctuation (periods, colons, question marks, etc.);
6. Defining words that cannot be properly explained in the text;
7. Using typeface of a readable size;

8. Using fonts and a layout that enhance readability;
9. Defining acronyms the first time they are used; and
10. Minimizing use of acronyms and jargon.

#### **IV. MEDIA AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

##### **A. General Requirements**

1. Publicly representing the agency [without coordinating with the communications office] is prohibited unless it is part of an employee's official duties. In these instances, employees are encouraged to coordinate with the communications office.
2. All agency media relations and responses to media inquiries must be coordinated by the communications office.
3. Each OYA facility and field office must have a communications liaison. This person is assigned to function as a liaison with the communications office to keep the communications office informed about news and activities at the facility. See Communications Liaison Protocol (Attachment A) for additional guidance.
4. Anyone wanting to promote a program, event, youth story, or aspect of agency operations must contact the communications office. Together, they will strategize the best way to go forward. This can be done at any point, but if it is not done at least eight working days before, it may limit the communication office's ability to effectively promote.
5. The communications office will coordinate with relevant OYA staff to gather information and develop the optimal story frame before sharing anything externally.
6. Unless otherwise directed by the communications office or OYA director, the communications office has final authority over whatever is shared in response to news inquiries and pitches.
7. Where possible, and within applicable laws, external communications must include youth voices.
8. Where possible, and within applicable laws, OYA encourages its partners to share stories of their work with the agency.

##### **B. News Inquiries and Pitches**

1. Complete guidelines on news representative access to OYA facilities, field offices, and youth are delineated in OAR chapter

416, division 60. This policy provides staff with supplemental guidelines.

2. The communications office produces all releases, story pitches, official statements, and other content for news representatives.
3. Unless otherwise directed by the communications office, the communications office is OYA's exclusive connection to news media.
  - a) Staff receiving news inquiries about OYA must refer news representatives to OYA's communications office.
  - b) Any OYA staff member who is contacted by a news representative must also immediately contact the communications office to inform them of the inquiry.
4. The communications office must review news representatives' requests to access OYA facilities, field offices, or interview staff or youth with the superintendent, camp director, or field supervisor, and the supervising assistant director.

Access may only be granted with their consent and in a manner that does not interfere with agency operations.

5. A member of the communications office must be present for news representatives' interviews with OYA staff or youth, or visits to OYA facilities or OYA community programs.
6. Youth interviews
  - a) Before a youth agrees to do an interview, a member of the communications office must explain the scope and expectations. They will inform the youth that independent news media organizations have full control over what is published, photographed, or broadcast. They will remind youth that online content may be discoverable for many years, and that the youth will receive no reward or incentive for participating.
  - b) Youth may consent or decline to be interviewed.
  - c) The communications team must obtain approval from the youth's superintendent, camp director, field supervisor, or designee, before raising the possibility with the youth.

The consent and approval must be documented on a YA 0056 (Youth Media Release/Consent Form).

7. The communications office is responsible for obtaining approval for a youth's interview, preparing the youth to interview, and obtaining a complete youth media release form prior to an interview.

If this is not possible, permission must be obtained via a public record (e.g., an email, Teams message, text message), and a media release form must be completed promptly after the fact.

8. The communications office must ensure nothing presented to the news media can identify a youth by full name or face, or include any overtly identifiable markers (e.g., tattoos, highly specific information).
9. When news representatives request personnel records, the communications office must notify the staff member that a request has been made, who made the request, and the scope of what will be provided.
10. If something significant happens at a facility, field office, or community program; or to a youth in a community placement, the associated manager must notify the communications office.

The communications director must also be included on any officer-of-the-day (OD) text message updates, any critical incident notifications from the field, and on all Director's Office notifications (DIR notification on JJIS Youth Incident Reports).

See OYA policy I-E-1.0 Director's Office Incident Notification and Report.

#### C. Sensitive or High-profile Content with Potential to Circulate Externally

1. The communications office has significant interest in reviewing and consulting on the following types of sensitive or high-profile content prior to its external circulation:
  - a) Material related to issues that have received significant public attention in the last three months;
  - b) Audits, investigations, or other points of potential vulnerability to the agency's public image;
  - c) Interactions with external partners, counties, or agencies; and
  - d) Content with reasonable expectation of media interest.
2. In the course of their work, staff might produce something that is not intended to but could circulate to a broad external audience (e.g., email, letters, youth photographs, documents that could be requested as public records due to current public interest).

If staff have reasonable concern that content may fall into one of the categories listed in paragraph 1 above, they are strongly encouraged to review that content with the communications office with enough time to make changes before it is shared.

3. If the communications office requests to review content before it is shared out of concerns relating to one of the categories listed in paragraph 1 above, staff must share it and are strongly encouraged to incorporate changes proposed by the communications office.
4. The communications office may also help develop content collaboratively with relevant staff.
5. Anything that may circulate broadly must not identify youth by full name or face, nor include any overtly identifiable markers (e.g., tattoos, highly specific information).

D. Content Created to be Shared Externally

1. In the course of their work, staff may need to produce something that will predictably promote the agency to an external audience. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Fliers;
  - b) Posters;
  - c) Website content;
  - d) Emails or letters to external partners; and
  - e) Photos of programming in OYA facilities or community placements.
2. If staff choose to produce content themselves, that content must be reviewed by the communications office prior to circulation and must:
  - a) Adhere to the agency's brand identity (colors, logo);
  - b) Be written in accessible prose (simple terms, few or identified acronyms), not to exceed an eighth grade reading level; and
  - c) Maximize use of appropriate visual communications (photos, graphics, charts).
3. Staff may also ask the communications office to develop needed content collaboratively.
4. Non-promotional materials that will reach an external audience are not subject to this policy. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Job postings;
  - b) OYA policies and local operating protocols; and

- c) Procedural explanations.
  - 5. Anything that will circulate to the general public must not identify youth by full name or face, nor include any overtly identifiable markers (e.g., tattoos, highly specific information).
- E. Content Produced by or with External Partners.
- 1. OYA hopes that external partners will produce content that demonstrates their work with OYA to an external audience. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - a) Photos, video, or audio of programming;
    - b) Website content;
    - c) Newsletter blurbs; and
    - d) Pitches to news representatives.
  - 2. The communications office must ensure partners adhere to applicable policies and laws.
  - 3. All photos, video, and audio must be reviewed by the communications office prior to partners sharing the content to a wide audience internally or in any way externally.
  - 4. Any press release, pitch, or other media outreach must be reviewed by the communications office prior to sharing.
  - 5. The communications office may help partners develop needed content collaboratively.
  - 6. OYA encourages partners to tag OYA or collaborate on social media posts.

## **V. PUBLICATIONS MANAGEMENT**

### **A. External Communications**

- 1. All documents that display the official OYA seal or are issued by staff for external audiences represent OYA. Staff producing such documents must work with the communications office from initial development through final production to ensure the documents meet all agency requirements regarding writing and design, appropriately reflect the agency's mission and values, and are cost-effective.

2. OYA staff must use templates prepared or approved by the communications office, when such templates are available.
3. Spanish versions must be provided for all materials given to families at facilities or in field offices.

Staff producing such documents must work with the communications office to ensure consistent, professional translation.

#### B. Internal Communications

All materials for exclusively internal agency distribution are approved through the local management structure. This authority may be delegated locally. If materials have potential to be forwarded externally, the communications office must be consulted (see section IV.D.).

#### C. Youth-facing Communications

1. All printed or electronic materials intended for youth audiences must follow the guidelines in this policy.
2. Staff are strongly encouraged to ask youth to review youth-facing documents before they are finalized to ensure content and delivery effectively communicate the intended message to youth audiences.
3. All youth-facing communications intended to be used beyond a single living unit must be translated into Spanish. Staff creating these materials must work with the communications office to ensure consistent, professional translation in line with the OYA English to Spanish Glossary.

#### D. OYA Forms

1. The agency forms coordinator is responsible for coordinating the development of and changes to OYA forms to ensure consistent formatting and cataloguing.
2. Most OYA forms are available on the OYANet Forms site for staff use. The Forms site is maintained by the forms coordinator.

E. All materials distributed to the public must be available in alternative formats upon request.

#### F. Copyrights

Staff may not use copyright-protected material. Protected material may be used only with the appropriate owner's permission. Notice of that permission must appear on the document in which the material is used.

#### G. Contractor Requirements

1. This policy applies to materials produced under contract. Contract administrators are responsible for relaying recommended or required changes to the contractor.
2. The OYA Budget and Contracts Unit must ensure that contract language reflects this policy.

#### H. Internet Pages and Social Media

1. Staff may not create independent websites, social media sites, or other Internet-based sites and pages that represent OYA without prior authorization from the communications office. This includes websites developed for individual facilities or programs, and any Facebook or other social media pages and sites developed to promote OYA programs or activities.
2. Staff may not post information or links to information that is restricted (e.g., youth information, personnel information).
3. The following are OYA's current official social media sites:
  - a) Facebook: Oregon Youth Authority; OYA Foster Care;
  - b) LinkedIn: Oregon Youth Authority;
  - c) YouTube: Oregon Youth Authority;
  - d) Instagram: @oregonyouth\_oya; and
  - e) Inside OYA blog: [www.insideoya.com](http://www.insideoya.com).
4. The communications office is responsible for monitoring OYA's social media sites at least weekly.

#### **VI. LOCAL OPERATING PROTOCOL REQUIRED: NO**

## **Purpose of the communications liaison**

OYA designates staff to serve as communications liaisons in its facilities and field offices. The liaisons help fulfill OYA's mission by keeping the communications office informed about news, activities and events at facilities and field offices, and by providing information to the communications office as needed.

These staff members fill this role as part of their normal responsibilities. The time commitment normally is minimal.

## **Primary responsibilities of the communications liaison**

Each communications liaison will:

- Share potential news and feature stories in the facility or field office with the communications office, preferably well in advance. The communications office may use these stories for news releases, the agency blog, social media, or other informational purposes.
- Keep the communications office current on the facility or field office calendar of events (e.g., upcoming programming, educational events, OIR events).
- Notify the communications office of significant events, staffing changes, emergent issues, and crisis when known.
- Take photos or video, or otherwise document, activities happening at the facility or field office.

## **The communications office will:**

- Issue all news releases, story pitches, and social media postings.
- Respond to all media inquiries for information.