



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 (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)

Effective Date:

07/30/2020

Date of Last

Revision/Review:
None

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 Information and Records)
 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:

Joseph O'Leary, 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 to the media must provide the relevant information to the Communications Office at least 10 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 through social media, if appropriate, or may authorize approved staff 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 general facts related to basic facility or field office operations (such as the number or age range of youth in a facility or supervised on probation or parole). All other media requests for information must be forwarded to the Communications Office.

Facilities and field offices may not release information about specific youth to the media.

2. Any OYA staff member who is contacted by a media representative must, after speaking with the media representative, immediately call or e-mail the communications manager to summarize the contact. Their message must contain the name, affiliation, and contact information for the reporter, any questions asked and any answers given. The staff member must contact the communications manager directly, even if they 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 Communications Office and the appropriate superintendent, camp director, or field supervisor. Youth who are under age 18 require legal guardian approval. Legal guardian approval and youth consents must be documented on a YA 0056 (Youth Media Release/Consent Form). Refer to the form for more

information. A copy of the form must be sent to the Communications Office.

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 request access to a facility or field office to interview an OYA staff member generally will be granted if the staff member and the superintendent, camp director, or field supervisor consent, and if the interview does not interfere with agency operations. These requests must be approved by the Communications Office before they are granted.

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 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 on request 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 agency blog, social media, or other informational purposes.
- Keep the Communications Office up to date on the calendar of events at the facility or field 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 age range 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 in the community. Inquiries of a policy nature (e.g., budget, personnel matters or legislation), inquiries about a specific youth, or other 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 by emailing or calling the communications manager. Immediately report contact with a legislative representative by emailing or calling the Public Policy and Government Relations manager. 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.

Attachment A: Communications Liaison Protocol

- Promptly e-mail the Communications Office a link to or image of any local media coverage or editorial that mentions the agency or our programs. While the Communications Office monitors news coverage daily via search engine news alerts, sometimes these alerts are delayed.

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 Office.
- Respond to all media inquiries for information beyond questions about basic facility or field office operations.
- Provide communication liaisons with current contact information for all Communications Office staff members and the public policy and government relations manager.