



**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 (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)**

*Effective Date:*

**04/28/2023**

*Date of Last Revision/Review:*

**None**

**Related Standards and References:**

- [OAR 416-060](#) 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 Office:** The designated official spokespeople for OYA, who are the Director's Office communications director and communications deputy director.

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

Communications Office informed about news and activities at the facility, and to assist the Communications Office 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 wanting 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 wanting to promote a program or activity via 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) Posting to non-OYA social media or websites on behalf of OYA is prohibited, unless it is part of an employee's official duties (e.g., Human Resources employees who post on recruitment sites as part of their job duties).

#### B. Media Relations: Responsiveness

1. Facilities and field offices receiving media inquiries must only provide the Communications Office's contact information and forward the inquiry to the Communications Office as soon as possible. The Communications Office will coordinate the response.

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 immediately contact the Communications Office 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, field supervisor or designee. Youth who are under age 18 require legal guardian approval. Legal guardian approval and youth consent 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 Office 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 416-060 regarding youth interviews).

2. Whenever possible, OYA does not identify youth by name or face in publications, on social media, or in anything that will be seen by the general public. This practice is to protect the safety of the youth currently and in the future, and to protect their future opportunities once they are not in custody. OYA encourages external media representatives to follow this practice.
3. If identifying information about youth is necessary, it may be used in accordance with OAR 416-060-0015 (Media Identification of Youth in Custody) and after all appropriate parties have given written permission by completing and signing a YA 0056.

D. Media Relations: Access to Staff

1. 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.

2. When OYA receives a media request for a staff member's personnel records (except for an inquiry as a result of a criminal law complaint or request for verification of employment and salary), OYA must provide notification to the staff member of the subpoena or request, who has made it, and the reason for the subpoena or request if known.

- E. 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.

**V. 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:

- 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, even if outside business hours, by phone or by e-mail with a phone call alerting the Communications Office to the e-mail.
- Share potential news and feature stories in the facility or field office with the Communications Office 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.
- 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.
- If designated by Communications Office, escort media representatives during pre-approved visits to OYA facilities or field offices.
- Immediately report all contacts with a news media representative by emailing or calling the Communications Office. 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.
- 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.
- Respond to all media inquiries for information.