



INDEPENDENCE

Oregon's Story Begins Here

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE EXTERNAL MEDIA POLICY

I. Purpose.

This City of Independence (the "City") policy establishes guidelines for the City's media relations. The intended purpose of establishing a City media relations policy is to ensure a coordinated response with the City Manager's Office in deciding what is "said" on behalf of the City when City department heads, members of boards, commissions, and committees, and other City employees ("City Staff") communicate with members of the media. This policy is **not** intended to address elected officials. Issues concerning any elected official's contact with the media are exclusive to the purview of the City Council.

Effective communication with the media allows the City of Independence to inform the public, promote important City programs, and provide timely and coordinated information during a crisis or emergency. Building, maintaining, and coordinating a citywide media relations approach can best serve the City by:

- Ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public with transparency.
- Expanding the general visibility of the City.
- Informing the public of services and resources available to them.
- Promoting the City's achievements, activities, and events of significance.
- Ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public with transparency.
- Providing information in anticipation of, during, or after an emergency or significant event, including actions to build community resilience.

II. Policy.

- As designated by the City Manager, the Communications Coordinator has primary oversight of the City's media relations program.
- The Communications Coordinator will work with City Staff to coordinate responses to media inquiries.
- Whenever City Staff receives a media inquiry, the Communications Coordinator should be notified immediately prior to responding. The Communications Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible of any media interactions -including, the nature of any conversation or inquiry, the identity of the media outlet, the contact, and the staff member(s)' proposed response.
- The Communications Coordinator may work with City Staff to develop standing media response protocols to help ensure timely responses.
- In the event of a public safety incident or emergency, the Police Department, the Public Works Department, and any other relevant department will coordinate with the Communications Coordinator to manage inquiries made by the media and to coordinate information flow from the City to the public and the City Council ("Public Safety Releases").
- The Communications Coordinator does **not** handle public records requests. These requests should be made to the City Recorder.

III. Guidelines for Media Releases.

- Positive media solicitation is an integral element of the City's communications program. The Communications Office promotes the City through a communications program that includes media releases and advisories regarding special accomplishments, events and activities, programs, and plans. City staff should submit ideas for articles or pieces that would positively portray the City, its work, or the community to the Communications Office.
- All City department media releases intended for external audiences (excluding public meeting notices, legal advertisements, and construction notices issued by the Department of Public Works and

Public Safety Releases) shall be coordinated through the Communications Office.

IV. EXPECTATIONS FOR MEDIA

Media outlets can expect:

- A response/answer (the same day if possible and within as reasonable amount of time as possible). This can even include informing the outlet that “at this time we do not have an answer to your request, but we continue the pursuit.”
- To ensure accuracy and to assist with the facilitation of details and information it is necessary for the Communications Office to seek answers to the following:
 - What is your deadline? (Hard Deadline or Soft).
Communications Coordinator will set appropriate expectations as to whether this deadline is reasonable.
 - What is the story about? (Expect several follow-up questions about this).
- Be mindful of requests requiring interdepartmental research or other such complex requests that involve comprehensive attention. Expecting a short turnaround time on such requests is not reasonable and will be communicated by the Communications Coordinator.
- A request late in the afternoon that requires significant research and/or coordination will be handled the following day unless circumstances warrant otherwise.
- For interview requests, we are implementing a 72-hour lead time. This allows for scheduling and ensuring that the interviewee is prepared.

This Policy may be updated and amended at the discretion of the Communications Coordinator or the City Manager.