### Title: Media and General Inquiries and Releases

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<td>Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director</td>
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## I. AUTHORITY

This policy is issued in compliance with Ohio Revised Code (ORC) §3304.15 which establishes the power and authority of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and its Executive Director to develop all necessary rules and policy in furtherance of its statutory duties.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for responding to media and general inquiries and for OOD media releases to ensure that OOD maintains a cooperative and responsive approach to inform the public, media outlets, elected officials and other entities of OOD’s operations, accomplishments and challenges in accordance with appropriate federal (e.g. Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]) and state law (i.e. ORC, Ohio Administrative Code [OAC]) Governor directives and executive orders, other governing agency (e.g. DAS, OBM) policy or guidance, and/or Executive Director expectations.

## III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all OOD employees, contractors and consultants.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

**Deputy Director** – a member of the Executive Team who is responsible for the oversight and management of his/her Division/Bureau (includes the Chief Legal Counsel, Chief Financial Officer [CFO] and Chief Information Officer [CIO]).

**General Inquiry** – a request for information from any non-media entity or person.

**Media Inquiry** – a request for information from a media entity on individual (e.g. television station/reporter, newspaper, radio).
V. POLICY

A. General

1. OOD’s Office of Communications shall log all media and general inquiries that are received.
   a. Requests for public records shall be logged and forwarded to the Division of Legal Services (DLS) for further logging and response.
   b. If an inquiry involves legislation, it shall be logged and forwarded to the legislative liaison for further logging and response.

2. OOD’s Office of Communication, in conjunction with the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director and appropriate Deputy Director, shall be responsible for preparing all media releases and responding to all media and general inquiries in an accurate and timely manner.

B. Inquiries

1. Media Inquires
   a. Any employee, contractor or consultant who receives a request from the media, or a request for information which will be submitted to the media, shall proceed as detailed below.

      i. Telephone Call
         a) Inform the caller that any requested information will need to be gathered and that they will receive a return call as soon as possible.
         b) Contact the Chief of Communications at 614-438-1476 immediately to inform him/her of the request.
            1) If the employee, contractor or consultant who received the request is the subject matter expert on the request, be prepared to discuss a response with the Chief of Communications.

      ii. Receipt of a Request
         a) If a hard copy request is received proceed as detailed below.
            1) If the request is received via email, “reply” with the verbiage “I have received your request and you will receive a response as soon as possible”.
            1.1 If the request is received via US Mail or hand-carried, scan the request and forward via email as described in 2) and 2.1.
            2) Forward the email to the Office of Communications at OODOfficeofCommunications@ood.ohio.gov
            2.1 If the employee, contractor or consultant who received the request is the subject matter expert on the request, include a proposed response in the email to the Office of Communications.
2.1.1 The Chief of Communications shall review the request and, if applicable, the proposed response provided in the email, and then will either return to the individual for submission to the requestor or submit a response to the requestor him/herself.

2. General Inquiries

   a. If an employee, contractor or consultant receives a general inquiry and the subject matter of the request is not part of his/her day to day job duties, he/she shall forward the request, via email, to the Office of Communications at OODOfficeofCommunications@ood.ohio.gov as described in Section B.1.

3. Tracking and Response

   a. Upon receipt, the Office of Communications shall proceed as detailed below.

      i. Log all inquiries, including public records requests and ones related to legislation.

         a) Public records requests shall then be forwarded to the Division of Legal Services.

         b) Inquiries related to legislation shall then be forwarded to the legislative liaison.

      ii. For all inquiries that are not public record requests or ones related to legislation, complete a “Media Release or Inquiry” (20-COM-01.A).

      iii. Share the information with the Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director and appropriate Deputy Director;

      iv. Provide a timely response as determined appropriate by the Chief of Communications and/or the Executive Director.

C. Media Releases

   1. Any individual or office needing an OOD media release shall complete a “Media Release or Inquiry” (20-COM-01.A) and forward to the Office of Communications at OODOfficeofCommunications@ood.ohio.gov.

D. An employee, contractor or consultant is not to speak on behalf of OOD.

   1. If any employee, contractor or consultant chooses to exercise their freedom of speech as citizens, they shall not identify themselves as an employee, contractor or consultant of OOD and shall not exercise their freedom of speech on state time or on state property.

E. Record Retention

   1. All media and general inquiries and media releases shall be maintained by the Office of Communications in accordance with “Records Management” policy (70-RM-02) and record retention schedules.

F. Violation

   1. An employee who violates this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including removal.
FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- 20-COM-01.A Media Release or Inquiry

RESOURCES

- N/A

REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, or designee, to annually review this policy, on or before, the date listed in the header and if applicable, make any necessary revisions. The Deputy Director or designee shall document the annual review as required in OOD Policy 10-ADM-01 “Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Dissemination and Acknowledgement”.