

## **CITY OF RICHARDSON INTERDEPARTMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **MEDIA POLICY**

#### **PURPOSE**

To establish policy, procedures and guidelines for public communication between City of Richardson officials, employees and citizens, news media representatives and others seeking information concerning City issues, programs, projects, services and activities.

#### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the City of Richardson to encourage positive communication and to ensure the exchange of accurate, timely information among City Council members, City employees and administrators, citizens, media representatives and others interested in City issues, policies, operations and services.

The Director of Communications, with guidance from the City Manager or his designee, is responsible for developing, directing and implementing the City's overall community, marketing and media relations function. The Director of Communications will assist in the planning of key programs and projects to ensure that community and media relations concerns are fully considered.

The Director of Communications will assist City departments to design communications strategies for City services and programs, develop guidelines for publications, and coordinate a consistent identity for the City.

The Police Chief and Fire Chief each shall designate a member of their respective department to serve as the City's official spokesperson for routine, daily, and public safety incidents.

#### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS MATERIAL**

City departments and their staff, in cooperation with the Director of Communications, have a joint responsibility to initiate and develop community relations material, whether printed, displayed or produced through audio/visual media. The departments will consult with the Director of Communications to ensure the presentation of a consistent, positive, and professional image for the City. Non-routine materials shall be routed through the Director of Communications at an early stage for review and for approval at the final draft stage.

Printed, displayed or audio/visual media intended for a mass audience regarding public/policy issues, including newsletters, posters, advertising, and flyers should not be distributed before final approval from the Director of Communications. All other routine communications must be reviewed and approved by the Department Director or designee directly responsible for the outreach.

Refer to the Social Media Policy for guidelines and procedures on electronic media including websites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.

#### **MEDIA RELATIONS**

The Director of Communications is responsible for media relations and is available to assist departments who have been contacted directly by the media. When questions arise from the media, a reasonable effort should be made to answer or address them in a timely manner - generally within the business day.

1. All media inquiries, with exception to routine Police and Fire Rescue matters, should be reported to the Director of Communications and City Manager's Office.
2. All departments must immediately report to the City Manager's Office and the Director of Communications, information or situations that are extraordinary, having serious, controversial or city-wide impact.
3. Media calls should initially be referred to a Director level or above. When Directors receive a call from a reporter who wants to verify facts or other information in the public domain, the Director or designated spokesperson may respond directly to the media and copy that response to the Director of Communications. At any time, staff may refer the reporter to the Director of Communications for assistance.
4. Broadcast media inquiries should be directly referred to the Director of Communications for coordination. In most instances, radio reporters are seeking to record phone interviews, and television reporters are looking to record footage of the story and obtain an on-camera interview. Working with the City Manager's Office, the Director of Communications and the Director of the Department that is the focus of the request will make a decision as to who will represent the City on camera or over the phone.

The Director of Communications will act as City spokesperson when needed; however, most media responses are usually handled best by the individual(s) with the most experience and information with the subject in question. Generally, directors and higher positions are authorized to serve as a spokesperson, or to designate another spokesperson.

Responses should be formulated according to the following guidelines:

**City Council members, the City Manager, the Deputy City Manager, Assistant City Managers and the Director of Communications** provide information on policy issues or issues which have city-wide significance or impact.

**Department Directors** provide information on the planning, direction, effect, and status of policies and programs within their areas of responsibilities.

**Project Managers** provide specific information concerning the individual projects and services within their areas of responsibility, only after notifying their Department Director of the media request and receiving approval to handle the response.

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS**

Public Information requests (sometimes referred to as Freedom of Information Act) are processed by the City Secretary's Office.

All public safety record requests are processed by the appropriate Fire and Police Department staff.

*Signed by Dan Johnson*

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Dan Johnson, City Manager

*08/24/2015*

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Date