

## External Affairs

<b>Effective Date:</b>	8/28/25
<b>Revised Date:</b>	8/28/25
<b>Issuing Authority:</b> Chief Probation Officer	

### 407.1 PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the oversight of public relations, media affairs, and the release of information through the Public Information Officer.

### 407.2 DEFINITIONS:

Communications Director (CD): The Division Director of the External Affairs Division is responsible for external communications with the media, public, outside organizations, and other government entities.

Official Media Personnel: Credentialed writers, journalists, photographers, or reporters of any official print, broadcast, or online media agency.

Public Information Officers (PIOs): External Affairs staff, including both probation officers and media specialists, specifically designated by the Communication Director as responsible for the dissemination of department information to the public, media, or other agencies.

Ride Along: A preapproved and prescheduled time for an individual to accompany an officer during the course of their duties.

### 407.3 RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### I. Media and Public Inquiries:

##### A. All Staff:

1. Provide basic professional information (agency of employment, name, and rank) when inquired by the public and/or media while on duty.
  - (a) Exceptions would include situations where the release of the staff's name could grossly endanger them or their families, such as an officer-involved shooting, credible threats, etc.
2. Direct requests from official media personnel beyond basic professional information to the department's PIO.

#### II. External Affairs:

- A. The External Affairs division is responsible for the oversight of public relations, media affairs, and the release of information of interest to the public.
  1. External Affairs, specifically the CD/PIO, must, at a minimum:

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- (a) Respond to public or official media inquiries in a timely manner with consideration of the nature, time, and extent of information requested.
  - (b) Be cooperative and transparent when releasing or denying the release of information to the public or media, considering legal requirements for the release of information, the best practices of probation work, public safety, officer safety, and operational security.
  - (c) Responses regarding juvenile cases or incidents shall not contain information that identifies or could be used to identify a juvenile.
  - (d) Advise any official media personnel known to have obtained identifying information or a digital recording of a juvenile that the subject of their material is a juvenile.
- 2. The Probation Department, through the External Affairs Unit, may publish photographs as needed for use in department publications, reports, brochures, or to post on the department website or social media sites, other than where precluded by GC §3307.5 et. seq.
- B. External Affairs Supervisor or Designee:
  - 1. Ensure compliance with this procedure and the External Affairs Guidelines.
  - 2. Ensure that department social media sites, where possible, contain a public advisement that the site is subject to moderation by the Probation Department.
  - 3. Ensure the removal of inappropriate posts (e.g., lewd, profane, or discriminatory language, threats of violence, encourage any illicit conduct, are commercial, etc.).
  - 4. Ensure ride-along requestors meet the following requirements:
    - (a) Must be at least 18 years old and be identified as Government, Business, or Media personnel.
    - (b) Submit to a background screening conducted by the Professional Standards Unit, unless waived by the Chief Probation Officer.
      - i. The background screening will consist of fingerprinting and a review of all available criminal history systems, DMV, CNI, CE, and JIMS, at a minimum.
    - (c) Requestor must complete and sign all required documents (e.g., Ride-Along application, agreement, waiver, etc.).
    - (d) All participants must be approved by the Office of the Chief Probation Officer.

### III. Funeral Department Representation:

- A. Department representation at funerals shall be requested and coordinated through the External Affairs Unit.

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- B. Decision for department participation may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Probation Officer or designee.

#### IV. Release of Information:

- A. Any public records act request for release of information shall be forwarded to the Custodian of Records.
- B. Probation Division Directors, Deputy Chief Probation Officers, or the Assistant Chief Probation Officer may discuss information concerning programmatic details of units under their command with official media personnel.

#### V. Social Media and Website Use:

- A. The department's social media presence is intended to:
  - 1. Serve as a platform, in addition to press releases, to inform the public of newsworthy events that occur in the Probation Department.
  - 2. Serve as a platform to educate the public or increase public awareness about Probation Department programs or events, or other correctional, criminal justice, or social service issues.
  - 3. Serve as a communication medium to keep department staff aware of current events/programs and increase department morale and pride.
- B. The department will make every effort to digitally record significant, special recognition, and historical events.