

## **MEDIA POLICY**

Whenever there is a request for information from the media, whenever there is a request for an interview, or whenever there is an incident or situation that arises anywhere in the Workforce Solutions system that could attract media attention, the following actions should be taken:

- All contacts and inquiries from members of the print or broadcast media must be referred immediately to the Workforce Solutions Communications Office and Public Information Officer (PIO).
- The Workforce Solutions Communications Office must be made aware of any and all media contacts that have been made, for the record and for possible follow-up.
- If PIO is not available, inquiries or situations should be directed to H-GAC's Workforce Office Manager or Secretary, who will redirect to the appropriate person.
- The Workforce Solutions Communications Office must be notified regarding all planned or unplanned on-site or contractor broadcast media interviews, filming or taping related to customers, programs, and related employment, child care, training and funding issues of Workforce Solutions.
- Whenever there is an incident or situation that could result in a media inquiry or has the potential for becoming a media crisis, the PIO, Workforce Manager and Human Resources Director all should be informed immediately so that a media strategy, official position statement, and/or media release can be developed.
- When speaking with the members of the media, officially or in an informal situation, the Media Guidelines need to be followed.
- The PIO must approve all participating customers and staff persons who appear in a print or broadcast media interview.

## **MEDIA GUIDELINES**

All inquiries and questions need to be directed to the Workforce Solutions Communications Office and the appropriate staff person, as set forth in the Media Policy.

- Understand that if the media is working on a story, a reporter is working against a deadline. It is everyone's responsibility to help that person get the necessary information in a timely manner, but in a way that protects both you and Workforce Solutions.
- Don't think you can respond to the media in your own time and in your own way. Always convey the impression that you are trying to help. Never give Workforce Solutions the reputation of not following through or stalling.
- Always keep in mind that all media people think they can go anywhere, anytime, to do whatever they think necessary to cover a story. The media is always in high gear. Newspaper deadlines sometimes assume more importance than the need to gather complete and correct

information. When a paper goes to press, it goes with what it has. If you have not provided the information a reporter needs in time, the story will run without it. The result is a missed opportunity or misinformation.

- When asked a question by the media, never say, “No comment.” Do say, “I will have a statement on this later,” and see that you do.
- Likewise, don’t be misled by a reporter saying something is “off the record” or think that casual conversation is not being noted. Nothing is ever off the record. If you don’t want it printed or broadcast, don’t say it.
- Always assume that all telephone calls from reporters are being taped.
- Treat all media equally and don’t play favorites.
- Never give a reporter your personal opinion, as it will be interpreted as “the official position” of Workforce Solutions.
- **Remember that dealing with the media in a positive way is based on your attitude and their perception. That is the basis on which a story will get reported.**

### Interviews

Keep the following in mind if you are being interviewed by a newspaper, radio or television reporter:

- Be organized. The media hates confusion. It likes to know what is coming next, even if it was the cause of the confusion.
- Always stay in charge. Don’t digress. If the reporter digresses and you want to continue making your point, choose the right words and bring the discussion back your way.
- Avoid the appearance of a cover-up if the subject is controversial. Investigative reporters are always looking for this.
- When being interviewed, be alert for the “waiting tactic”. Most people can stand about 6.5 seconds of silence before they feel they need to say something to fill the void. Media people know this. They will ask a question, put a microphone in front of you and wait. Wait back and avoid temptation to talk or expound to fill the silence. Remember, if you have said all you need to say, be silent. Don’t say another word. If you continue, you may say something in an unguarded moment that you don’t want in the newspaper or on the air.
- Avoid being outwardly hostile towards the media, and never show your inward feelings.
- If a newspaper interview turns controversial, always make sure you are 100% right in your statements or you will lose.

- Be wary of still photographers and broadcast camerapersons. Reporters are always looking for an expression on a face to add to a story.
- Use gestures carefully. They can be good or bad. Scowls are bad, and these pictures are always used over and over when things go wrong in an agency.
- If you are being photographed outside, don't ever wear dark glasses and give the impression that you are hiding something.
- Consider what you will look like or sound like on television or radio, and don't make any sarcastic, cute or clever remarks.
- Say what you want to say in a short, concise statement of no more than 30 seconds. This is the time of a typical "sound bite" in television. This makes it easier for the television editor when deciding what part of the interview to keep or cut. Your statement has a better chance of being used if you make the job easier for the editor.
- Don't assume the interview is over until the television crew or reporter drives away. Make sure a tape is not running somewhere, or the sound recording on a television camera is not on, when equipment appears to have been turned off. Prevent the broadcast media from creating extra video shots, or "B-roll footage," that can be dubbed later on with something you did not intend to say, or you thought was "off the record."

## **MEDIA CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

To be handled only by Public Information Officer and Appropriate Administrative Staff

**If an incident occurs, an official position statement will be issued right away so the public knows where Workforce Solutions stands.**

## **MEDIA RELEASE FORMS**

All participating customers and staff persons who appear in a non-news, public or private, print or broadcast media interview, filming or videotaping must sign a system Media Release Form.

Signed copies of one of the following Media Release Forms should be faxed or mailed to the Workforce Solutions Communications Office.

1. Authorization To Release Written Information
2. Authorization To Release Photograph, Film or Videotape

Forms can be downloaded from the Workforce Solutions – Staff Resources - [Outreach Resources](#).