

Approval of Communications Work Policy

Overview

Description:

This policy outlines general communications approval requirements; the process may vary slightly in each administration.

Reason for policy:

To ensure information that is shared broadly or on key topics is accurate and consistent with DHS communications strategies.

Failure to comply:

Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures may result in disciplinary actions or termination.

Policy

I. Each DHS administration has a lead communications person who has been designated by senior management to serve as the point person for review and approval of communications work. DHS staff should consult with the appropriate communications staff person for guidance.

Communications officers review materials to ensure they:

- Reflect the priorities and messages of the agency and the broader administration and support overall agency and administration communications strategies.
- Relay accurate and useful information to the target audience.
- Meet department communications standards, including standards for: quality, writing and graphic design.
- Portray the agency in a professional manner.
- Use resources prudently. This is a line of filler text. Replace it with your own. This is a line of filler text. Replace it with your own.

II. Communications materials that require review include:

- All materials for distribution to general and specialty media, including news releases, letters to the editor, articles, fact sheets and background information
- All communications for the public or large segments of the public; this includes brochures, posters, promotional materials, newsletters, public awareness campaigns, videos, websites, Web content, logos, etc.
- All communications projects before they go to the Publications and Web Content Team, printers, outside contractors, or other developers and immediately prior to production
- All documents to be posted to eDocs
- All communications plans
- All communications materials produced by contractors or in partnership with other state agencies and outside organizations
- Key communications with counties, clients, providers, stakeholders or others, particularly materials that are controversial or new
- Key communications with employees, including all major announcements, internal newsletters and Web pages
- Key presentations on critical or controversial issues.

III. The following approval requirements apply to business communications conducted in the course of day-to-day business:

- Memos, letters, client and provider notices, bulletins and routine county correspondence generally do not require communications staff review and go through the normal review process in their area.
- Business communications such as these that are controversial, affect a large number of people or are otherwise high profile in nature are reviewed by the designated communications person.
- If in doubt, consult with the communications contact in your administration

Procedures that apply:

I. The following steps help to ensure the timely development and approval of communications work:

- Program staff members contact their communications person at the start of a new initiative or project to assess needs and develop a communications plan if warranted.
- For stand-alone communications needs, such as the production of a brochure or development of Web content, program staff members contact their communications person as soon as they are aware a product is needed.
- Communications staff develop and/or review content and assure that appropriate program experts and managers have reviewed for accuracy. Communications staff may identify a designee to review and approve certain routine materials.
- Communications staff coordinate production so products are completed in a timely, efficient and cost-effective way. This includes serving as liaison between the program area and the Publications and Web Content Team, the DHS Media Relations Team, the Commissioner's Office communications staff and any outside communications vendors.