
	ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER	Approved By: City Manager 	No. 1
		Effective Date: Immediately Revised: 12/12/19; 12/8/2023	
Subject: Media Relations Policy			

Policy

The City of Highland Park is dedicated to the principles of open and honest government. In order to further the City’s goal of transparency, the municipal government organization must remain accessible to the public. It is the policy of the City of Highland Park to make information concerning City business available to the news media in a timely fashion. Information provided to the news media by the City shall be made available in accordance with the following media relations policy.

Definitions

For purposes of this Administrative Order No. 1 the following definitions apply.

- City Business: Any matter relating to, or affecting, the operations and management of the City of Highland Park, the Office of the City Manager, or any department of City government.
- News Medium: Any professional or student print, digital or broadcast news organization, reporter, spokesperson, investigator or representative of the same, including independent, freelance journalists, videographers, photographers, or bloggers.

Directives

- The City Manager shall serve as the primary media relations officer with respect to all general matters affecting the operations and management of City government. The City Manager may delegate responsibility for certain media inquiries to any person employed by the City, and that person shall respond to the news medium on behalf of the City.

- City staff must share all media inquiries with the City Manager or designee, who will coordinate an informed response.
- The City Manager or designee shall be responsible for clearing all public communications that are intended to constitute or express official City or department policy prior to dissemination to any News Medium.
- All interviews and appearances on behalf of the City must be authorized by the City Manager or designee.
- No employee shall discuss or disclose to any News Medium any matters of City Business that are required to be kept confidential or are prohibited from disclosure under any applicable law or agreement.
- All official declarations including without limitation all press releases, publications, speeches or other official declarations concerning the operations, management or policies of the City must be approved in advance by the City Manager or designee.
- Nothing herein shall be deemed or interpreted as prohibiting, or requiring authorization for, the expression by an employee of his or her own personal opinion on any matter concerning City Business including, without limitation, official City or department policy, in, to or on any News Medium, or any other forum. All employees shall, in such cases, have a responsibility to make a clear distinction between his or her own personal opinion and official City or department policy. Specifically, the following guidelines shall govern all participation in or with the News Medium by employees when expressing personal opinion:
 1. The employee shall preface any comments with a clear statement that they are expressing their own personal opinion as a private individual, and not as a City staff member;
 2. The employee shall not appear in any official City or department uniform or wear any City or department insignia or item that would create the appearance that they are a spokesperson for the City; and
 3. The employee shall appear or participate only during non-duty hours.
- Department directors may adopt additional media relations guidelines consistent with this Administrative Order No. 1 as may be expedient in the management and operations of their respective departments. Any additional guidelines must be approved by the City Manager.