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MEDIA INQUIRY PROCEDURES

Description

How to handle inquiries from **any** media such as newspaper, radio, TV, cable access, magazine, trade organizations, etc.

Background

YWCA of Central Virginia strives to advance its mission by communicating openly and honestly using consistent messages with its constituents, including the media. It is important for all YWCA of Central Virginia staff and board members to reinforce these messages by referring all calls from any media source to the appropriate staff.

Procedure

1. Please refer all calls or visits to the current Communications and Development Manager; if she is not available, refer to the current Chief Executive Officer; or if the inquiry is specific to grants, refer to the current Senior Managing Director of Finance or the Senior Managing Director of Finance.
2. If senior staff is not available, take the following steps:
 - Find out the reporter’s name, phone number, and deadline.
 - Find out the nature of the story and/or questions (“*Lauren Alexander is our Communications and Development Manager who works with any media inquiries. May I ask what kind of a story you are working on so that we can gather the information and she will have all the facts in front of her when she calls you back?*”), OR, if you are sure that the Communications and Development Manager will be available to hear a voicemail message, offer to let the reporter leave a detailed voicemail message.
 - Let the reporter know that the Communications and Development Manager, the Chief Executive Officer, or another staff member will return the call by a stated time and date.
 - Contact the Communications and Development Manager immediately if the deadline is imminent. Should that staff member be unviable please reach out to our Senior Staff or if the inquiry is specifically about Housing and/or CSB their contacts below.
 - ✎ You may contact our current Communications and Development Manager (updated 12/15/2020): Lauren Alexander (lauren.alexander@ywcacva.org – office 434-847-7751 x306)

- ⌘ Senior Staff (updated 12/15/2020): Ashley Reynolds Marshall, Chief Executive Officer (ashley.marshall@ywcacva.org – work cell 434-316-8120); Linda Ellis-Williams, Senior Managing Director, Victim Services (linda.williams@ywcacva.org – work cell: 434-420-7122); Kim Torres, Senior Managing Director of Finance (kim.torres@ywcacva.org)
- ⌘ Housing (updated 12/15/2020): Kathy Brown, Office & Housing Manager (kathy.brown@ywcacva.org – work phone: 434-847-7751 x302)
- ⌘ Church Street Bridal Shops (updated 12/15/2020): Sheila Mercer-Arrington (sheilah.mercer@ywcacva.org – work phone: 434-847-7751)

3. Please do *not* offer information to media — even if you know the answer. It is helpful for YWCA of Central Virginia that all news contacts be handled by senior staff and documented. Also, it's too easy to get quoted as an organization spokesperson if you volunteer something the reporter wants to use. Assure the reporter that someone will respond in time to meet the deadline.

If the reporter needs an immediate response, or if the Communications and Development Manager (Lauren Alexander) will not be available in time to meet the reporter's deadline, refer the call to the Chief Executive Office via their email or work cell. If it's about our Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Assault programs, refer the call to the Sr. Managing Director of Victim Services via email. If the focus is on our housing program, please reach out to our Office and Housing Manager. If the inquiry focuses on grants, please refer the call to the Sr. Managing Director of Finance via email. For Church Street Bridal, please refer to the CSB Manager via email.

4. If you cannot reach the Communications & Development Manager, Chief Executive Officer, Senior Managing Director of Programs, or the Senior Managing Director of Finance (at work, home, or on cell phone) to respond in time for the deadline, call the reporter back, explain the situation, and apologize profusely, but still decline to answer the question yourself. *In no case* should you let the deadline come and go without any response. Then, please leave a detailed message for the Communications & Development Manager (or the Chief Executive Officer, Sr. Managing Director of Programs, or Sr. Managing Director of Finance) so that she can follow up with the reporter. In general, it is **not** advisable to say “no comment,” since that constitutes a form of an answer that may be used against the organization in some instances.

Main Contact: Communications and Development Manager (Lauren Alexander)

Other Contact: Chief Executive Officer (Ashley Reynolds Marshall); Sr. Managing Director for Victim Services (Linda Ellis-Williams); Sr. Managing Director of Finance (Kim Torres), CSB Manager (Sheilah Mercer-Arrington); Town Center Housing (Kathy Brown)

Key Points To Remember When Dealing with the Media:

- Be polite.
- Be helpful.
- Find out what the reporter needs to know and what his or her deadline is.
- Don't let a deadline pass without a response.
- Don't get drawn into providing information or opinions that you don't have the authority to provide.
- Always inform the current Communications & Development Manager (or a member of Senior Leadership Staff) of the call for follow-up.

Thank you for helping YWCA of Central Virginia provide accurate, timely, honest, and thoughtful assistance to the media.