

Policy for Responding to Media Inquiries – An Example

Disclaimer: This example is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, values, and bylaws should drive the creation of this document.

Organization Name
Adopted/Amended __/__/20__

From time to time, **XYZ Organization**, may receive a media inquiry or must address sensitive or difficult public issues. To assure that the organization speaks with “one voice,” only designated spokespersons are to address these issues. This is important because the organizational position must be carefully considered to ensure that it aligns with mission, values, previous statements in similar situations, and possible implications for future activities.

Individuals designated to speak on the organization's behalf will be the board president and CEO/executive director. In their absence, another spokesperson may be designated but will only respond to inquiries after consulting with the board president or CEO/executive director. Board members and staff should direct all media inquiries, whether verbal or written, to the designated spokesperson. An acceptable way to do this is to say:

- I’m not able to respond to your questions, however, I will get your request to the right person who will get back to you.
- Can you give me a general idea of the issue you want to cover, so I make sure I get the appropriate person to call you?
- What is your deadline?
- What is the best number to call you?
- If I’m not able to reach someone, I will get right back to you.

Upon receiving an inquiry, especially one related to a sensitive or political issue, or one involving an organizational crisis or reputational risk, the board president and CEO/executive director will confer with other organizational leadership and quickly assess the situation, anticipate questions, develop key messages and supporting information, and prepare a written statement.

If the board president and CEO/executive director believe it’s necessary and in the best interest of the organization, they will seek legal advice or outside communications counsel before responding to inquiries.

In all cases, board and staff will be notified when leadership engages in media interviews on sensitive or difficult public issues and will receive copies of any statements or releases issued by the organization. They also will be reminded of the organization’s policy on media inquiries.