



## City Council Policy #15 Public Information Policy

Date Approved: July 6, 1998

Dates Amended: 2/7/2000; 12/4/2000; 7/21/2008; 12/17/2018; 12/19/2022

### I. **Mission Statement**

The Public Information Policy outlines all appropriate use of communication used by the City of Kirksville. This policy establishes procedures to inform the public with limited direct, non-editorial information concerning City government, emergency response, and community events sponsored by, or in a contracted partnership with, the City of Kirksville.

### II. **Guidelines for City of Kirksville Employees**

- A. Employees shall be required to use the Style Guide and branding resources provided by the Communications Department in order to develop aesthetic consistency and community cohesion.
- B. Employees shall be responsible for educating City contracted partners on the Public Information Policy and Style Guide to ensure all guidelines are followed. Contracted partners and events must follow the City of Kirksville's Public Information Policy and Style Guide. This includes any organization and/or event where City of Kirksville staff are used to produce promotional materials, whether it is partially funded by another organization or not. Any exception must be approved by the Public Information Officer.
- C. Employees shall act as an archive of information. Employees must take steps to keep and preserve any content posted through an external communication channel.
- D. Employees shall professionally represent the City of Kirksville through all external communication channels and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the City's goals.
- E. Employees shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.
- F. Employees shall not speak to the media on the City of Kirksville's behalf without first contacting their Department Head. All routine media inquiries should be directed to the Communications Director.
- G. Employees shall NOT use the City's external communication channels to:
  1. Advertise products or services, or conduct any activity meant to foster personal gain, financial or otherwise, including outside business or commercial activities.
  2. Engage in campaigning for any candidate or any other purpose prohibited by law.
  3. Copy or transmit any documents, images, software, or other information protected by a copyright owned by an individual or entity other than the City of Kirksville, without proper authorization from the copyright owner.
    - a) Copyright protection applies to any document, image, software, or information unless it is specifically marked as public, not copyrighted, or freeware. In the absence of any specific copyright markings, material or information should be assumed to be copyright-protected.
    - b) It is the employee's responsibility to obtain proper authorization from the copyright owner.
  4. Express their personal views or concerns through external communication channels while representing the City of Kirksville.
  5. Promote worship or materials of a religious nature.

6. Complain, or criticize employees, customers, suppliers, or anyone else affiliated with the City of Kirksville using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating.
7. Disclose confidential, proprietary, or private information that was obtained as a result of their employment with the City of Kirksville.
8. Publish confidential, proprietary, or private information about the City or its employees.
9. Publish any other material which in the judgment of the City Attorney, or outside legal counsel, is inconsistent with any federal, state or local law, ordinance, or rule, and/or which subjects the City of Kirksville unreasonably to potential liability.
10. Publish any false information or rumors about the City of Kirksville, fellow employees, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the City of Kirksville or any other affiliated businesses or cities.
11. Publish any matter which is legally obscene or otherwise unprotected by the Constitution of the United States pursuant to applicable federal, state, or local laws.

### **III. Proclamations**

- A. All City official content released through an external communication channel becomes public record and, therefore, is under regulations of Missouri Sunshine Law. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.
- B. Priority over all previously scheduled programming will be given to governmental agencies for use during an emergency when such emergency or disaster has been declared. During such emergencies, all external communication channels will permit and accept informational announcements from non-governmental entities when such announcements are deemed important public information pertinent to the emergency or other conditions requiring protection of the public health, safety, or welfare.
- C. Published content should pertain only to City events or services. Exceptions are made for services and events in contracted partnership with the City. Published content, or shared content, on all other external communication channels should only pertain to City, City-sponsored, or City Council-endorsed programs in conjunction with a City contracted partner, City contracted service, or City contracted event. This includes any type of sharing, liking, favoriting, retweeting, forwarding, etc.
- D. The City shall have full permission or rights to any content published by the City, including photographs and videos. Photo release forms must be provided to the Communications Department before any photograph or video is published through an external communication channel. Exceptions are made for public broadcast of City Council meetings, open public meetings, or City employees.
- E. The City reserves the right to utilize or remove any content already published, when possible and deemed appropriate by the Communications Department. This includes, but is not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication that is published through a communication channel.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions about particular content should be directed to the Communications Department.

### **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

- A. **The Communications Department**

1. Shall create a comprehensive guide that establishes aesthetic consistency. This shall be called the Style Guide. This guide can include, but is not limited to, branding policies, templates, writing resources, etc. The Style Guide may be edited to adhere to the advancement of communication technologies.
2. Shall develop and maintain employee procedures for the implementation and ongoing maintenance of this policy.

**B. The Public Information Officer**

1. Shall monitor the City of Kirksville's external content to ensure adherence to this policy for appropriate use, messaging, and branding consistent with City goals and the Style Guide.
2. Shall approve social media sites for creation and development.
3. Shall determine and/or approve who may serve as administrators of social media on behalf of City communication resources and establish what resources may be suitable for use by the City of Kirksville.

**V. Communication Channels**

**A. Government Access Channel**

1. Videos of City Council meetings and governmental informational programming shall be given broadcasting priority over all other programming.

**B. Website**

1. The City of Kirksville Website shall adhere to all the standards and guidelines of the Public Information Policy, with the exception of the "New Resident Information" page that lists business contacts licensed to work within the City of Kirksville. These business contacts will be posted at the discretion of the Public Information Officer.
2. City of Kirksville or contracted partners' events and services shall be posted on the website calendar when applicable prior to being publicized through all other external communication channels.

**C. Mass Notification System**

1. Approved administrators shall be the only distributors of information via the Mass Notification System.
2. Content published through the Mass Notification System shall meet all guidelines outlined in the Style Guide. This includes categorized content directed towards specific audiences.

**D. Social Media**

1. All City policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media usage.
2. Approval must be received from the Public Information Officer to develop a social media site. The department receiving the approval is responsible for maintenance and archiving of the department social media site under administration of the Public Information Division.
3. All social media sites associated with the City of Kirksville shall bear the name and/or official logo of the City.

**E. Email**

1. Falls under all content guidelines listed in the Public Information Policy.

2. Use of official City of Kirksville email addresses while communicating as a City employee will constitute conducting City business.
3. Email is to be used in a manner that is consistent with the City's goals of and as part of the normal execution of an employee's job responsibility.

**F. Signage**

1. All signage, including electronic, shall remain under the scrutiny of the Communications Department and follow guidelines set in the Public Information Policy, Style Guide, and branding resources unless another contract is in place.

**G. Physical Publications**

1. Falls under all content guidelines listed in the Public Information Policy including all guidelines in the Style Guide.

**VI. Glossary of Terms**

**Social media** - mass media source that allows direct distribution of information

**Public Information Officer** - Communications Director

**Communications Department** - consists of the Communications

**Communication channel** - any outlet that can be used to engage citizens in information or content

**Email** - Act as an archive of information. Employees must take steps to keep and preserve any content posted through an external communication channel

**Physical Publications** - any hard copy document that is distributed through any external communication channel i.e.: Kirksville Connection, flyers, brochures, documents inserted into utility bills, mailings, etc.

**City Council endorsed** - consensus of the City Council