



DWD Public Communications Practices and Procedures Manual

For additional information about Missouri Division of Workforce Development services, contact a Missouri Job Center near you. Locations and additional information are available at jobs.mo.gov or 1-888-728-JOBS (5627).

The Missouri Division of Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Missouri Relay Services at 711.

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FOREWORD

Effective and consistent communication is a vital part of the Missouri Division of Workforce Development's (DWD) relationship with the public. This Public Communications Practices and Procedures Manual is a living, breathing document designed to promote accountability and good communication practice.

This manual serves as the official communications guide for all DWD employees, Local Workforce Development Boards (Local WDB), Subrecipients, and Partner Agency staff who share facilities and program operations.

These guidelines apply to daily requirements for accuracy, consistency, and timeliness in relaying information to employees and the public at large.

The guide is assessed and updated regularly and includes measurable objectives and outcomes.

For the most current version of this manual, see "Files and Documents" at <http://jobs.mo.gov/dwdcomms>.

BRANDING

Having a clear and consistent brand image for Missouri Job Centers is paramount. The DWD Communications Style Guide, released in December 2017, outlines the proper use of logos, fonts, and colors used in our branding. With this guide, we go a step further by outlining when, where, and how logos, identifiers, and EO statements are to be used.

The use of the Missouri Job Center logo—either in its generic form or [combined with the local Job Center](#) or local WDB tag line—is required on all materials used by the job center.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires all one-stop delivery systems—including comprehensive centers, affiliate centers, Local WDBs, and partner agencies that use WIOA funding for their activities—to use the common identifier (“A Proud Partner of the American Job Center [AJC] Network”) or [the AJC logo](#) on **ALL** products, programs, activities, services, electronic resources, facilities, and related property and materials used in the one-stop delivery system.

Electronic resources include:

- Website
- Social Media
- Consumer Information Center (CIC) Messages (message board TV)
- Videos
- Public Service Announcements

Missouri Job Center (MJC) logos customized to include the location name are located on jobs.mo.gov/dwdmain. Guidelines and rules regarding the correct usage of the MJC logo can be found in the DWD Communications [Style Guide](#).

EMAIL

Email can be the first contact that we have with the public, so presenting a professional look is very important. Staff should strive for easy-to-find-and-use contact information and should follow the rules below.

All email signatures should include the following basic contact information:

- Name
- Title
- Office Name/Address
- Desk Phone Number
- Work Cellphone Number (When applicable and appropriate)
- Email address
- EO Statement
- Confidentiality Statement

DED policy¹ states:

- Signature blocks are limited to pertinent sender contact information limited to: title, work address, work phone and/or fax number, and employment-related social media icons.
- Employees are prohibited from including quotes, graphics, and/or taglines in email signatures.
- The Department or Division Director may temporarily authorize specialized signature blocks to promote Departmental events (e.g., Governor’s Conference, National Apprenticeship Week).

Having current logos for your MJC that include the “Proud Partner” identifier, Local WDB or partner agency linking to those websites is acceptable.

A sample of an acceptable email signature line follows. Instructions on how to update your signature in Windows 10 are [here](#).

¹ DED “Acceptable Computer Use Policy,” July 7, 2017. (See Attachment 2, [DWD Issuance 13-2016](#), “Confidentiality and Information Security Plan for the Workforce Development Statewide Electronic Case Management System,” March 13, 2017.

Name

Title

Agency Name/Address

Phone Number

email address



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CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT: This email and any attachments are intended only for those to which it is addressed and may contain information which is privileged, confidential, and prohibited from disclosure or unauthorized use under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, or copying of this e-mail or the information contained in this e-mail is strictly prohibited by the sender. If you have received this transmission in error, please return the material received to the sender and delete all copies from your system.

Signature rules apply for those State staff who remotely use the State’s web mail application, as well.

Users are expected to consider the target group of their communication and refrain from using general distribution lists “to all” where a more restricted group is appropriate.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

DWD is committed to ensuring an environment that celebrates diversity and eliminates discrimination. There is an obligation for all those involved in communication processes to ensure all forms of communication adhere to the principles contained in the equal opportunity (EO) and diversity policy language.

Nondiscrimination Notices

DWD and its partner agencies are required to include a nondiscrimination notice on all materials to comply with federal law and regulations.² Any publically available item that is published, distributed, or posted **must** include the following EO statement:

For additional information about Missouri Division of Workforce Development services, contact a Missouri Job Center near you. Locations and additional information are available at jobs.mo.gov or 1-888-728-JOBS (5627).

Missouri Division of Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Missouri Relay Services at 711.

Like the common identifier, this statement **must** be included on **all** materials when the MJC is involved and WIOA dollars are used. However, “Missouri Division of Workforce Development” must appear only on materials created by the agency itself.

If the material is created by a Local WDB or other one-stop partner agency, its **own name** should be used, **NOT** “Missouri Division of Workforce Development.” Do not use the tagline on flyers for off-site events for MJC customers, such as job announcements or recruiting events at the employer’s location. Instead, if it is a *covered employer*, use “An Equal Opportunity Employer,” or “An EEO Employer” as a tagline. The MJC cannot “endorse” an employer’s EO status. It must be a *declaration* by the employer itself.

² Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 188, “Nondiscrimination” [[29 U.S.C. 3248](http://www.gpo.gov/intercontent?title=29%20U.S.C.%203248)] and the implementing regulations at [29 CFR 38.38](http://www.gpo.gov/intercontent?title=29%20CFR%2038.38).

PRINT MEDIA

Printed Materials – (Flyers, Postcards, Handouts)

Items that must *always* be included:

- Business / Event Name
- Event Date(s)
- Location—Full Address
- Contact Phone Number
- Contact Email
- EO Statement – In full issued text, no abbreviated versions
- [Missouri Job Center Logo](#) - Generic or location-specific (Do NOT distort to fit space!)
- [jobs.mo.gov Logo](#) (Do NOT distort to fit space!)

(Listed items do not have to appear in this order.)

Optional items that are *recommended* to be included:

- How to Apply
- Required Documents to Apply
- Needed Testing
- Company Logo—full resolution. (Do NOT distort to fit space!)
- Positions Available
- Directions or other instructions

Templates

Local MJC's are encouraged to use available Communications Office [design templates](#), all of which work together to establish DWD's comprehensive visual identity and include the most up-to-date logos and EO statement. Additional template requests should be directed to the [DWD Communications](#) team.

Unique designs are allowable, but must be preapproved by the Communications Office to ensure consistency with DWD standards.

Use of Division/Department Letterhead

Any communication or correspondence issued on Division or Department official letterhead DWD Director's office.

Letters should be formatted as follows:

- Date
- Recipient's Contact Information:
- Recipient's Name
- Recipient's Job Title (if situation requires)

- Recipient’s Company / Agency (if situation requires)
- Recipient’s Company / Home Return Address
(See the [DWD Communications webpage](#) for various samples and style examples.)
- Your Contact Information:
 - Your Name
 - Your Title
 - Your Phone Number
 - Your Email
 - Missouri Job Center—(location)
 - Job Center Address
- [jobs.mo.gov Logo](#)
- [Missouri Job Center Logo](#) – Generic or with location
- EO statement – In full issued text, no abbreviated versions (usually included as a footer or an end-of-letter text block).

News Releases

News releases primarily are generated by the Communications Office to promote DWD programs, services, or events. **News releases prepared by local MJsCs related to federally funded activities must be approved by DWD Communications and DED Communications prior to sending.** This Missouri state government requirement³ is a *long-standing* contractual obligation in the Annual Agreement for funding between DWD and the local grant recipient. All Local Workforce Development Areas are also contractually bound by their annual agreement with DWD, and by federal appropriations law authorizing their federal grant funding, to **acknowledge the federal awarding agency** (usually, Department of Labor) and the extent (amount or percentage) of the federal contribution to the program or activity in news releases and marketing materials.⁴

There is also a federal (and contractual) prohibition against using federal funds for any publicity or propaganda designed to support or defeat the enactment of any legislation before Congress, the State legislature, a county legislature, or a local government.⁵

³ This is a requirement of the Missouri Office of Administration in contract assurances relating to federal funds.

⁴ Most recently, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018” ([Pub. L. 115-141](#)), Division H, Title V, Section 505, March 23, 2018. This stipulation is a general provision of Congressional Appropriations to DOL of funds for WIOA and other purposes. The most recent appropriation is cited, but this is a recurring obligation for subrecipients.

⁵ Most recently, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018” ([Pub. L. 115-141](#)), Division H, Title V, Section 503, March 23, 2018. This stipulation is a general provision of Congressional Appropriations to DOL of funds for WIOA and other purposes. The most recent appropriation is cited, but this is a recurring obligation for subrecipients.

ELECTRONIC/DIGITAL MEDIA

Websites

- Websites for Local MJC / Local WDBs must provide up-to-date contact information (name, address, email) to allow the public to contact them.
- Local MJC / Local WDB websites must be continuously maintained. Periodic review and necessary revisions are needed to ensure that all content is relevant, accurate, and up-to-date.
- Confidential information shall not be published on local MJC/WDB websites. For more information about what information is defined as confidential, see the DWD Confidentiality policy.⁶
- Local Job Center/WDB websites must comply with WIOA to include the AJC common identifier either as [the AJC logo](#) or as a tagline on the site.
- The correct form of the local MJCs' names is: "Missouri Job Center – [location]." Example: Missouri Job Center – Saint Louis County is correct, as is Kirksville Job Center.
- As with any publication, please check for spelling errors, typos, and grammatical and punctuation mistakes. Avoid or explain abbreviations or acronyms unfamiliar to the general public.
- Images must not incorporate difficult to read or illegible text. Images must not appear pixilated or stretched. Do not poach photos, art, or graphics. Secure the rights to use an image on your website or in a publication—either from a photo release, through purchasing stock images, or using images through the Creative Commons process.
- Websites must conform to the accessibility standards of the 29 CFR Part 38 rules implementing the Nondiscrimination provisions⁷ of WIOA. This includes website accommodations for people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency (LEP). This may include providing "Babel notices" (information in multiple languages),⁸ other accommodations for LEP individuals,⁹ and making sure website materials are accessible to individuals with visual or hearing

⁶ [DWD Issuance 13-2016](#), "Confidentiality and Information Security Plan for the Workforce Development Statewide Electronic Case Management System," March 13, 2017.

⁷ WIOA Sec. 188 [[29 U.S.C. 3248](#)].

⁸ [20 CFR 38.4\(i\)](#).

⁹ [20 CFR 38.9](#).

disabilities.¹⁰ Websites must also display the required EO notices and similar information.¹¹

- For a list of required information required to be available on a Local WDB website, see the “Transparency” section (pages 6–7) of [DWD Issuance 19-2016](#), “Ethical Requirements for Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Boards,” June 7, 2017.

Radio & TV

All scripts for radio and TV Public Service Announcements (PSA) must be approved by DWD Communications prior to recording. Sample scripts are available [here](#) or the Communications team can write PSAs specific to your needs.

Video

Video, like all materials produced for the public, must contain the correct logos and EO language. If the video contains shots of customers or staff members, you must obtain signed release forms for each person in the video before using it. Some programs (for example, Summer Jobs for Youth) have a media-release procedure associated with the enrollment process. Verify consent for all customer images before use.

Photography and Recordings

In accordance with DWD policy, if you wish to take photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, or any other electronic or digital method of recording, you must ask your subjects to sign the [DWD release agreement](#) (other releases are available for [youth](#) and [veterans](#)). If it is logistically impossible for all subjects to sign the above form (for example at a job fair), they must be notified that their likeness will be captured. Below are some examples of how to remedy this.

Notification Language at Entry to Event

Attendance at this event constitutes an agreement to [Name of] Job Center’s use and distribution, now and in the future, of the attendees’ image or voice in photographs, video, electronic reproductions, or audio recording of the event. If you have questions or concerns, contact [Job Center] at [Job Center phone number]. (If you use this method, you must photograph the notice as it is posted on the day of the event. Please keep this photo on file with the event’s photos.)

¹⁰ [20 CFR 38.15\(a\)\(5\)](#).

¹¹ [20 CFR 38.38](#).

Invitation Language

A photographer will be taking pictures at the upcoming [Event]. Your attendance at the event constitutes agreement to the MJC's use and distribution (now and in the future) of your image or voice in photographs, video, electronic reproductions, or audio recording. If you have questions, contact [Job Center] at [Job Center Phone Number].

Use of Copyrighted Materials

The use of copyrighted material in any local MJC product is prohibited, unless you have paid for or have permission for its use.

DED Policy states:

“Copyright Infringement is prohibited. Employees who download copyrighted material must do so in compliance with any agreements posted by the content's author and pursuant to current copyright law. If an employee is unsure of the work's copyright, patent, or other ownership status, the employee shall not post, upload, download or otherwise use the work. Employees must give credit to owners or originators of any material used or transmitted via state systems.”¹²

This includes, but is not limited to: video images, still images and music. Do not assume that any photo that appears on the DWD or any other website is free to use. Please consult with the Communications Office before using a photo from a DWD site for use on the local Job Center site or Social Media.

There are numerous sources for royalty-free music online through sites such as YouTube® or photos through sites such as Pexels.com. Please contact the Communications Office for assistance if you have any difficulty in finding these resources.

If copyrighted material is used, MJC's should maintain documentation proving they have permission to do so.

Electronic/Digital Flyers

Items that must always be included:

- Business Name
- Event Date
- Location—Full Address

¹² DED “Acceptable Computer Use Policy,” July 7, 2017. (See Attachment 2, [DWD Issuance 13-2016](#), “Confidentiality and Information Security Plan for the Workforce Development Statewide Electronic Case Management System,” March 13, 2017.

- Contact Phone Number
- Contact Email
- EO Statement—In full issued text, no abbreviated versions
- Missouri Job Center Logo—Generic or location specific with Common Identifier
- jobs.mo.gov Logo with Common Identifier

(Listed items do not have to appear in this order.)

Consumer Information Center (CIC) video display screen—1920 pixels wide X 1080 pixels tall, 72 dpi.

See the available “CIC Templates” at <https://jobs.mo.gov/dwdcomms>.

- Business Name
- Event Date
- Location—Full Address
- Contact Phone Number
- Contact Email
- How to Apply

Signage

Building/Outdoor Signage (approved)

- Window Signage / Decals
- Building Signage
- Pylon Signage
- Post & Panel Signage
- Banner (Outdoor)
- Yard Sign

Indoor Signage (approved)

- Pop Up Banner
- Poster
- Banner (Indoor)
- Table Throw

All signage, including Art / Graphics / Content **must be approved** by the Regional Manager and reviewed or designed by DWD Communications before an order is placed. These items will be ordered and placed by DWD Central Office, working with the Regional Manager and the Facilities Coordinator, in the case of building signage. DWD Supervisors cannot approve the purchase of signage, but may *request* additional signage through their Regional Manager.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The creation and maintenance of authorized social-media sites dedicated to specific MJC's (and including the use of State information links, branding, and images) is allowed **only** upon approval of the DWD Director and the DWD Communications Office. (Remember that the use of the name "Missouri Job Center" is authorized by DWD and is tied to center certification.) This ensures the site conforms to standards as set forth by the Communications Office, and that the content promotes consistency of message throughout DWD. This approval includes social-media sites already in existence as of the creation of this policy and includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

- A MJC that wishes to create an authorized social media site must develop and submit a [Social Media Plan](#) regarding the site to be created. This plan includes goals and objectives of the site, content to be included, a calendar of when the content will be posted, and any other information the Communications Office may require. This document is to be updated and submitted to the Communications Office on a yearly basis.
- If the DWD Communications Office is given administrative access to any social-media site created for a WIOA-funded programmatic purpose, the communications office will, upon request, endeavor to provide technical support (e.g., during local social-media staff vacancies or to ensure technical quality for branding and images).

Social media tools, at their most basic level, facilitate communication. Depending upon the tool used, communication may only be one-way (broadcast, or "push" media), used for internal staff dialogues, or be two-way between the MJC and the public. MJC's should include in their social media plan or policy what types of communication need to be vetted locally (by Local WDBs, Chief Elected Officials, or local governments) before they may be made available. This may vary from tool to tool.

DWD staff must adhere to all DWD standards and policies including the DED Human Resources Acceptable Computer Use Policy¹³ when using any form of social media:

- Employees are prohibited from posting on their personal online sites information or communications that could be attributed to the department or appear to be endorsed by or to have originated from

¹³ Included as Attachment 2, [DWD Issuance 13-2016](#), "Confidentiality and Information Security Plan for the Workforce Development Statewide Electronic Case Management System," March 13, 2017.

- the Department of Economic Development (DED). This includes using personal social media accounts for job development purposes.
- Employees are prohibited from linking from their personal social-media sites to DED’s internal or external web site(s). An employee may not speak on behalf of DED or represent that they are speaking on behalf of DED using any social media unless authorized by DWD Communications or DED Communications.
 - Supervisors and Functional Leaders may designate personnel in the MJC as administrators of their Social Media accounts, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube for DWD business purposes.
 - The following guidelines apply when posting authorized material on behalf of DED:
 - Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential information. Disclosing confidential information, even unintentionally, can result in legal action against you and DED.¹⁴
 - Posts should be based upon position assignment, accurate, professional, meaningful, and respectful.
 - Employees are responsible for correcting any errors or mistakes immediately and indicating the information has been corrected, if necessary.

Staff can “Like,” “Comment,” or “Share” a post that has originated on a DWD-approved site, but the content cannot originate on a personal site. If you are an administrator of a DWD-approved site and are accessing it through a personal account you MUST make sure when you post to change your “Posting As” to your MJC account and not your personal account.

Content

One of the critical components of developing a good social media presence is the creation of timely and relevant content. Developing and finding good content is a continuous exercise based on the response from customers on social media and the program area covered. Content provided should seek to promote DWD and MJC programs and services, leveraging existing content on DWD websites.

This content can consist of text, photos, videos, and/or links to other content, depending on the social media network. The use of media other than text heightens user engagement and can raise engagement with the message being shared.

¹⁴ [DWD Issuance 13-2016](#).

The development of appropriate content is specific to each presence that has been created and varies depending on the intended audience. Limiting posts to just sharing or forwarding content that is created elsewhere adds no value and should be avoided. Sharing or forwarding content as appropriate, however, can *add* value and provide an additional perspective for those interested in finding out more about DWD programs and services.

Ideas for content relevant to DWD:

- Highlighting DWD products, programs, and services.
- Providing information about service delivery changes, status updates, and issues.
- Promoting events hosted by, or in conjunction with DWD or workforce partners.
- Encouraging customers to learn about relevant services available to them.
- Providing contact information for customers to interact further with DWD.
- Sharing relevant news articles highlighting program successes or hot issues in your program area.
- Polling or asking questions of those who have liked your page.
- Creating advocacy campaigns encouraging individuals to complete an action (i.e., registering on the MoJobs web application or signing up for a workshop).

Use of Copyrighted Material

See “Use of Copyrighted Material” under “**ELECTRONIC MEDIA.**”

Management

Some social media tools allow various settings to be changed. In some cases, a comments feature may be turned off or on. Other features could include the ability to filter comments for language, or have a comment be approved before it is viewable on a site. **The recommendation is for comments to be turned off**, unless the site is closely monitored by the administrator(s) so that inappropriate comments can be dealt with immediately. Profanity filters should be set to Strong.

Records Retention and Sunshine Requests

Agencies should not rely on social-media sites to retain their documents, as that responsibility lies with the agency. State of Missouri records retention law¹⁵ and guidance¹⁶ is that official posts, comments, polls, photographs,

¹⁵ [RSMo 109.210\(5\)](#).

¹⁶ <https://www.sos.mo.gov/records/recmgmt/introduction> and <https://www.sos.mo.gov/records/recmgmt/whatisarecord>.

and other content are records. Social media posts for official business are also subject to RSMo Chapter 610, “Governmental Bodies and Records,” more commonly known as the “Sunshine Law” or “Missouri Sunshine Act,”¹⁷ which applies both to State agencies and Local WDBs. Uniform Guidance¹⁸ also requires a three-year retention of pertinent records relating to grants.

Agencies should identify staff whose responsibility it is to ensure that certain records, including statements of policy or public postings for comment, are exported from the social media site or captured in some other way. This is usually the job of the person designated as the “custodian of records”¹⁹ for Sunshine purposes. For these reasons, and because government records on a non-government-owned server still can be subject to a Sunshine request, and legal discovery, **DWD strongly recommends not using social-media sites as a substitute for career-services counseling at the MJC.** Resolving issues or answering questions specific to an individual case might be a legal record, as opposed to a calendar announcement of a class or job fair.

Social media are not obligated to respond to agency requests—only to what is agreed upon in the Terms of Use or Terms of Service. For this reason, it is important to monitor social media activity and capture all records.

Retention periods for records can vary from one day to permanent/transfer to the Missouri State Archives. The retention time will depend on the content of the record. State agencies should refer to the [Missouri General Retention Schedule](#), their Agency Records Disposition Schedule or contact the Division of Records Management. Local agencies should refer to their Records Retention Schedules or contact the Local Records Division. Some social-media sites give users the ability to export their information, while others require the use of third-party tools. The responsibility to maintain the records resides with the agency, not the social media company. DWD will issue updated records retention and destruction guidance in PY2018.

If a host site shuts down, crashes, or the vendor arbitrarily changes the Terms of Use, records could be at risk, potentially. Without adequate “disaster recovery” preparation, there is nothing the agency can do to protect itself. Agencies must have a plan and process in place for how records will be saved.

¹⁷ [RSMo Chapter 610](#).

¹⁸ [2 CFR 200.333](#).

¹⁹ [RSMo 610.023](#).

COMMUNICATING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Media Requests

Requests from legitimate local, state, and national news-media outlets including newspapers, radio, television, magazines, online news sites, and news-oriented web logs (blogs), should be responded to promptly, with an appreciation of deadlines and the frequency of publication or broadcasting. Legitimate media outlets can be commercial or non-profit enterprises, and publish or produce on a regularly recurring basis. They have a known office of publication where the business, publication, or program originates and maintain an active phone number for the transaction of business during normal business hours.

“A representative of the news media” means any person or entity that gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience.²⁰

Guidelines for communicating with the media:

- DWD staff members may answer routine media inquiries within the staff member’s area of expertise about programs and services for which descriptive printed information (DWD agency literature) or online information (jobs.mo.gov) is readily available. This includes such things as event schedules (date, time, and location for job fairs and workshops). That is, answer any simple questions about upcoming events or programs where the answer is already available (who, what when, where, how) directly and as soon as possible.
- DWD staff members should log media inquiries on the [Media Log](#)—whether in person, by phone, email, or any other means—and advise DWD Communications of the contact. Note what information was given out, as described above. Always keep a record of the name of the person calling, the publication or media organization, and callback or contact information. If available, learn when the information will appear in print or be broadcast. Pass this information on to the [DWD Communications](#) staff with any pertinent details.
- Politely decline answering issues-oriented questions (“why”; answers that involve opinions or assessments). Refer the caller to [DWD Communications](#).
- DWD Communications staff will refer more detailed media inquiries to the DED Director of Communications in consultation with the DWD Director’s Office and program managers, if appropriate. In general, the

²⁰ This definition is taken from federal rules at 5 U.S.C. 552, “Public information; agency rules, opinions, orders, records, and proceedings” at 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(III).

DED Director of Communications will be at the forefront of all media inquiries.

- With prior approval from DWD Communications, DED's Director of Communications, or the DWD Director's Office, DWD staff members may respond to requests for local radio or TV on-air interviews when the topic is within the staff member's area of expertise.
- Respond to all inquiries as soon as possible. Media outlets work on tight deadlines and will seek another source if calls are not returned.
- Do not feel obligated or compelled to give a phone interview or in-person interview. If you would like to think before answering, ask the reporter to email specific questions. This should be acceptable to the reporter if you are providing information in a timely manner.
- Answer only the questions that are asked. Do not elaborate.
- Do not speculate. It is OK not to know the answer to a question. Avoid "no comment," as it has a negative connotation. It is OK to say, "I don't know," or "I will try to find an answer and get back to you."
- Make sure the reporter understands your answer. Explain program names, abbreviations, or specialized vocabulary you might use that are peculiar to workforce development. You are the source educating the reporter, and in turn, the media outlet's audience.
- Remember you are representing your MJC and DWD. Personal opinions should not be expressed at all.
- There is no such thing as "off the record." Expect that anything you say to a reporter will be printed or broadcast.
- Provide your best contact information for follow-up questions.
- Issues that should not be discussed with reporters include legal issues, personnel issues, matters of client confidentiality, or emergency incidents. Refer all such inquiries to [DWD Communications](#).
- In the case of emergency incidents (disaster, accident, crime committed or in-progress on the Job Center premises, etc.), advise the DWD Directors Office and DWD Communications of the situation as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so. Local staff should avoid being the subject of on-the-scene interviews in emergency situations. Refer these inquiries as above. As instructed in the Job Center Safety and Security Manual,²¹ the Supervisor or Functional Leader must file an incident report with the DWD Assistant Director for Field Operations as soon as possible after the incident is over.

²¹ [DWD Issuance 11-2014](#), "Missouri Career Center Safety and Security Policy Manual," March 27, 2015, and any subsequent revisions.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Official Requests

DWD staff members should immediately **refer** requests for customer case file or personally identifiable information (PII) that are received from municipal, county, state, or federal officials, administrators, or agencies, to the DWD Director's Office. This includes requests from law enforcement.

There are federal regulations restricting such disclosures.²²

- For general programs or services information that is already publicly available, and unrelated to specific customers, DWD staff can immediately answer questions from public officials. As with media requests, log and forward a record of the contact to DWD Communications.
- DWD staff members must advise their supervisor, or consult with the DWD Director's Office, prior to appearing in an official capacity at any public or private interview, meeting, inquiry, hearing, or conference of any municipal, county, state, or federal governing body.

Public Information/Open Records

DWD complies with all applicable federal and State laws regarding the retention and release of personal records of all current employees and customers. Direct all Missouri Sunshine Law requests to:

General Counsel
Department of Economic Development
P.O. Box 1157, Jefferson City, MO 65102

Confidentiality

DWD staff members shall adhere to DWD's Confidentiality and Information Security Plan²³ for the Workforce Development Statewide Electronic Case Management System and not provide information regarding customers or clients of DWD programs or services to any person or agency in any manner that would be inconsistent with, or constitute a breach of, that plan. All staff **must be familiar with Section 5.7 of that policy, "Sharing of confidential information."**

In brief, that policy requires that any user of confidential information must be authorized. **Permissive disclosures** must involve a signed request from the subject whose information it is, or a signed release directing that specific information be conveyed to a specific third party for a specific use.

Required disclosures are releases of information mandated by law or regulation that do not require the informed consent of the subject of the

²² [20 CFR Part 603](#).

²³ [DWD Issuance 13-2016](#), "Confidentiality and Information Security Plan for the Workforce Development Statewide Electronic Case Management System," March 13, 2017.

information. When confidential information is subpoenaed as part of a civil or criminal case or investigation, **DWD Administration will handle all such requests, and no information is to be released at the local level without prior authorization from DWD.**

A record must be kept of **all disclosures** of PII given to that customer, or to that customer's legal agent, or to authorized third parties not involved with the day-to-day use of a customer's PII.

Likewise, a record must be kept of all requests received for a customer's PII, **whether the request was fulfilled or not. These request and disclosure records must be retained for a period of at least five years, or the life of the PII record, whichever is longer.** (Note that this is longer than the three years required by Uniform Guidance for other records.)

Other interested parties

All reasonable inquiries and requests for information by any customer of DWD or citizen of Missouri should be addressed in a timely fashion. If a redirection to DWD publications and online resources is insufficient to satisfy the request, redirect the inquiry to the DWD Communications office. The redirection approach can be applied to all inquiries.

Requests may come from other information outlets that are primarily affiliated with an association, organization, cause, party, lobby, or other activity. In these cases, if news dissemination is not the primary activity or organizing purpose for that entity, or in the case of news outlets created and maintained by hobbyists or amateurs, the request should be treated as a general public inquiry.