

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF CLAYTON

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-191

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COUNTY-WIDE COMMUNICATION POLICY FOR CLAYTON COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND OFFICIALS; TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO PERFORM ALL ACTS NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THE INTENT OF THIS RESOLUTION; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS RESOLUTION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, Clayton County (“the County”) is committed to operating as an open and transparent government, making information easily available in a reasonable time to its citizens and the media; and

WHEREAS, the County, its employees, and officials further recognize the media as an important part of an informed community and a watchdog over the government, and are otherwise committed to providing timely, accurate, and consistent information to effectively serve its residents and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the County also recognizes that open, ongoing, two-way communication is critical to building and maintaining positive, long-term relationships with all stakeholders, including, but not limited to, residents, citizens, and media, in order to provide effective communication, foster good media/public relations, and share public information that is consistent with Clayton County’s mission and goals; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to implement a county-wide Communications Policy applicable to all County employees and officials under the authority of the Board of Commissioners to provide a clear and concise process for dealing with inquiries from the

media and public at large for information, as well the process for dissemination of answers to said requests; and

WHEREAS, the Communications Policy will provide guidelines to County employees and officials for communicating with the media and citizenry in an efficient, effective manner; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners deems it in the best interest of Clayton County and the County will best be served by implementing a Communications Policy for the reasons stated above.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF CLAYTON COUNTY, GEORGIA AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED

Section 1. The Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the implementation of a county-wide Communications Policy for Clayton County employees and officials. The Communications Policy shall be in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Board authorizes the Chairman to perform all acts necessary to carry out the intent of this Resolution.

Section 2. This Resolution shall be effective on the date of its approval by the Board of Commissioners.

(SIGNATURES LOCATED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE)

SO RESOLVED, this the 5th day of September, 2023.

CLAYTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



JEFFREY E. TURNER, CHAIRMAN



FELICIA FRANKLIN, VICE-CHAIR



ALIEKA ANDERSON, COMMISSIONER



GAIL HAMBRICK, COMMISSIONER



DEMONT DAVIS, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:



COURTNEY RUSHIN, CLERK



Where the World Lands
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1. PURPOSE

To provide clarity on how Clayton County employees should deal with inquiries from the media, public, and dissemination process.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to Clayton County Employees. If you have questions regarding this policy, contact the Clayton County Communications Administrator or Office of Communications, 770.473.3834.

3. Transparency in Government

Clayton County is committed to operating as an open and transparent government, making information easily available in a reasonable time to its citizens and the media. The County and its employees recognize the media as an important part of an informed community and a watchdog over the government. Clayton County Board of Commissioners and employees are committed to providing timely, accurate, and consistent information to effectively serve its residents and other stakeholders.

Open, ongoing, two-way communication is critical to building and maintaining positive, long-term relationships with all stakeholders, including but not limited to residents, citizens, and media to provide effective communication, foster good media/public relations, and share public information that is consistent with Clayton County's mission and goals.

4. Speaking on behalf of the Organization

The Commission Chairman, County Commissioners, and Constitutional Officers are elected by the people to represent them. As such, each are free to speak to the media on any topic understanding reference to the Board of Commissioners decisions is guided with a majority vote as a decision of the Board.

The Office of Communications (Communications Administrator) or designee serves as a spokesperson. Additionally, the Communications Administrator may help coordinate, facilitate, and schedule interviews, or written statement on behalf of the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and CCBOD departments.

5. How to Address Inquiries from the Media

All media inquiries/requests should be immediately forwarded to the Office of Communications/Communications Administrator, the employee's department head, Chief Operations Officer and Deputy Chief Operations Officer. It is highly recommended for all emergency and time sensitive inquiries that a phone call be directly placed to the Communications Administrator in addition to forwarding the inquiry.

To avoid delays, an employee who receives a media inquiry should notify the Communications Team electronically by using the Submit Media Inquiry form located on the Office of Communications webpage or directly at the main number to the Office of Communications, 770-473-3834.

If the receiving employee/department head has information that can answer or will help answer the media inquiry, she/he should state it clearly and accurately in writing to the Office of Communications by forwarding to the Communications Administrator, their department head, Chief Operations Officer, and Deputy Chief Operations Officer.

In consultation with the Chief of Operations/Deputy Chief and/or Chief Legal counsel and the department head, an official approved statement or response may be generated on behalf of the organization to be shared with the media from the Office of Communications/Communications Administrator or designee.

Employees should not directly contact the media on behalf of the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and/or its departments without express written/prior approval and guidance from the Office of Communications or Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Chief.

6. Public Safety Media Inquiries

Media inquiries related to an incident that involves Public Safety, and any request for public safety access and/or comment should be directed to the appropriate Police or Fire Public Information Officer/Chief of Police/Deputy Chief.

7. Dissemination in response to Media Inquiry

The Communications Administrator or designee, in collaboration with the Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Chief and/or Chief Legal Counsel or designated department head, will determine the nature of the inquiry and the best response.

If the Communications Administrator is not immediately available, he/she another Communications Department representative will distribute the approved media message/response.

The Communications Administrator shall consult with the Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Chief or Chief Legal Counsel and/or appropriate Department Head, to determine the appropriate and approved response.

The Office of Communications will coordinate press/news conferences as needed/approved.

8. Letterhead Use

General news releases for the Clayton County Board of Commissioners will be used for all Board approved initiatives, programs, services, partnerships, emergency notices, or announcements to media/public.

An individual Board Member shall use his/her letterhead for individual use for non-board approved initiatives, services, programs, partnerships, notices, or announcements to media/public.

9. Routine Communications Requests

Clayton County Board of Commissioners and departmental routine communications requests including, but not limited to events, activities, programs, services, initiatives, partnerships, awards, appointments, achievements should be submitted via the Office of Communications request form for vetting, logging, reviewing, tracking, and assignment purposes to the requested or appropriate communications channels (county's website, twitter, facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, youtube, CCTV23/99, Instagram, Nextdoor etc.)

10. Distribution Process

Only government and quasi government-related organizations (water authority, housing authority, school district, local university, etc. shall be approved for distribution) on Clayton County Government communications channels

Requests for distribution from departments shall be approved by the department/supervisor and checked for any errors in spelling or grammar before submission. Updates and requests for dissemination shall be resubmitted to avoid confusion and to ensure the correct version of the request for distribution;

11. Non-Routine External Requests

Generally, communications requests for development or distribution shall not include:

Any solicitation of funds, advertising, or any material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services;

Any content that is non-government (commercial, non-profit, faith-based etc.)

Any material that is obscene, indecent, or an invasion of privacy;

Any material lottery information, gift enterprise, or similar scheme;

Any material that is slanderous, libelous or made unlawful by a government body;

Any material that is copyrighted or subject to ownership or royalty rights without the necessary releases, licenses or permission;

Any content that pertains to campaigning or upcoming elections;

Board of Commissioners of any potential news stories and/or posts that could influence county business.

12. Social Media/Public Inquiries

The way our residents consume information has changed dramatically in recent years. The rise in social media, blogs, podcasts, and hyper-local websites has increased the availability of information, but has also given rise to the distribution of distorted or inaccurate narratives. Consequently, County employees shall direct inquiries to the Constituent District/Department offices and contact information (applying the same guidelines to routine inquiries as to those coming from members of the "traditional media) to ensure accurate, timely information and consistency in messaging.

13. Media/Public Access

The media has the right to access any part of Clayton County Government property that is traditionally or by designation a forum for public communication. The access permitted includes photographing and making video recordings in these public areas.

Media access is restricted from any area not normally accessible to the public (employee only included, but not limited to all secure areas).

If the media or citizen creates a disruption, does not comply with reasonable requests, or interferes with operations, employees should immediately report the situation to the

Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Chief, building security and Office of Communications.

14. Media/Public Access

A Department Head or the Communications Administrator can authorize media to access to certain "non-public" areas of Clayton County Government if it helps to facilitate the flow of information and does not interfere with operations, safety/security. Media representatives are encouraged to request onsite interviews statements desire interviews should schedule Non-employees must be escorted at all times by department head or designee in non-public, employee only and secure areas.

15. Brand Logo Use

The Clayton County logos are for the sole use of the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and associated government divisions, authorized partners and approved vendors with express written permission.

Generally, the County's brand logo, tagline, and marketing slogan should not be used in association with any unsanctioned Board, Chairman, or Commissioner's events, with his/her name and/or photo.

To protect the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and its departments, When the Clayton County logo, tagline and marketing slogan is requested for use and/or County endorsement is requested by a faith-based organization, non-profit organization, business, or other entity, the request must be received and submitted by the Commissioners and/or Department head to the Office of Communications with at least four-week notice to allow opportunity for review by Office of Communications, COO and Chief Legal Counsel. This step is necessary to protect the integrity of the brand as well as the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and its departments.

Use of the Clayton County logo, tagline and marketing slogan must be in accordance with the Board approved brand standards.