

Media & Press Relations Policy

The Media Relations Policy's purpose is to ensure that accurate and timely information about the Long Beach Public Library is relayed to the public regarding the day-to-day programming, controversial, negative or other issues that may arise regarding the library or during an emergency situation.

Library Staff & the Media

In order to provide the most current and consistent information about the library including matters of established policy, practice and/or procedure, inquiries from news media shall be directed to the Library Director or Assistant Director. If the Director and Assistant Director are unavailable, Library staff will take a message from the media and convey it to the Director or designee at the earliest opportunity.

When receiving requests for specific program information, the Director or Assistant Director may decide to put the media in contact with the Department Head whose department is responsible for the program. When appropriate, the Department Head may include select other staff in the communications. Individual Library staff may not speak to the media on behalf of the Library unless authorized to do so. Library staff must be aware that they are always seen as speaking from a position of authority even when they designate comments as opinions.

In matters of budget development, the Library Director may comment for background but shall not speculate on the Board's direction. Upon budget completion, Trustees and/or the Director may provide explanations of budget components; however, if such comments deviated from the adopted document, the Trustee must stipulate they are speaking for themselves, as a private citizen.

Trustees & the Media

The Board President is the spokesperson for the Library Board of Trustees. Individual Library Trustees may not speak to the public or media on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees unless authorized by the Board to do so.

- Should there be media inquiries directed to Trustees regarding undecided policy issues, Trustees shall invite the media to the next regularly scheduled Board meeting that addresses the policy in question.
- If there is no majority opinion or Trustees are not reachable, Trustees can speak only for themselves and must stipulate they are speaking for themselves and not the Board.
- Should there be media inquiries on Library matters that are part of the public record, Library Trustees should be careful to define when their remarks represent personal opinion and when their remarks represent an official Library Board position. Library Trustees must be aware that they are always seen as members of the Library Board even when they designate comments as opinion.

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Crisis Communication

The Library Director or Assistant Director is the only person authorized to release information on behalf of the Library when an emergency occurs or there is media interest in controversial or negative issues or incidences. During and after an emergency situation, library employees, volunteers, board members:

- Will not respond to media or public information requests
- Will refer all public and media inquiries and information requests to the Library Director or Assistant Director
- In the absence of the Library Director or Assistant Director, all public and media inquiries and information requests will be referred to the President of the Board of Trustees
- Will not discuss or speculate on the cause, consequences, events, impact, or personnel involved with the situation
- Will not communicate about the emergency on social media
- Will not disseminate photos on social media