

Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services

Chapter 2: Professional Practices	Policy # 2.6	Page: 1 of 3
Subject: Communications	Standards: ACA: 4-JCF-6A-12, TO 15 4-JCF-6A-11 3-JDF-1A-23 to 27 DSCYF #205	
Effective Date: 12/15/08	Revised Date: 6/27/14	

- I. PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that communications from and about the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.

- II. POLICY: Appropriate channels of communication shall be established and maintained within the Division and with outside agencies, including the executive/judicial/legislative bodies to help the Division operate in an efficient and consistent manner.

- III. PROCEDURES:
 - A. Internal Communications:
 1. Program/facility meetings are to be held monthly, at a minimum, for supervisory staff, exclusive of meetings held for training purposes.
 2. Staff meetings will provide for the participation of employees in the formulation of policies, procedures and programs, identification and solution of problems, and exchange of ideas. Staff meetings may also be the vehicle for communicating and interpreting Division, program or facility policies and procedures as well as for planning and setting goals. These meetings will be conducted monthly.
 3. Meetings will be conducted by agenda, and staff members are encouraged to contribute items for the agenda. Minutes should be recorded and an attendance sheet with original signatures attached.

 - B. Communication with Youth: Communication between youth and staff is essential to achieving positive outcomes. Superintendents/Chief/Administrators shall encourage verbal and written communications conducted in an orderly and systematic fashion.
 1. Program-oriented staff should have his/her office as close as practical to the youth with whom they work.
 2. Program and facility procedures shall be organized to offer youth a means to contact staff members who will respond to their requests and needs.
 3. Program and facility administration shall be encouraged to meet with youth regarding issues of concern, services provided, critical incidents, policy and procedure.
 4. Staff responsible for the case management of youth clients shall maintain contact with youth as required by caseload contact standards.

C. External Communications:

1. **Court Communication:** The courts shall be advised, at least annually, through written reports, of the extent and availability of services and programs for youth.
2. **Contact with the Public:** Staff contact with the public is expected to be conducted with professionalism. All staff shall receive training to ensure prompt, courteous, and correct responses to inquiries. This training shall include:
 - a. Confidentiality
 - b. Public information legislation
 - c. Approved telephone procedures
 - d. Basic instruction on policies relating to contact with the public
 - e. Instruction on how to respond to questions or complaints from families and other members of the public regarding issues of concern, suggestions for improvement, policy and practices

D. Coordination of Communication: All written and verbal requests for information regarding DYRS programs, facilities, clients or employees shall be referred to the Division Director or designee and notification to the Department's Community Relations Coordinator.

1. **Routing Method:** An initial review of all correspondence requesting information will be conducted by the Division Director or designee. Requests will be forwarded to the appropriate staff for response.
 2. **Mandatory Response:** All inquiries shall be answered promptly, accurately and completely in compliance with local, state and federal laws governing public information and rights of privacy and Department Policy 205.
 - a. Responses shall be made within 3 working days
 - b. Responses shall be sent via the Office of the Director
 3. **Correspondence Records:** The Division Director or designee shall keep a record of all incoming and outgoing correspondence, as well as copies of the correspondence.
- E. All requests for information shall be answered unless some question about the validity of the information or an individual's right to privacy exists. Such requests will be handled by the Office of the Director.

Review Date:	Reviewed By:
6/27/14	Nancy S. Ditz
5/16/16	Nancy S. Ditz