

1073.0.0. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

This establishes the Department of Human Services (DHS) communications policy which includes all verbal, written and computer-based communications within and emanating from DHS. The policy is applicable to all DHS employees.

1073.1.0 Staying Informed

1073.1.1 Employees are responsible for staying informed on agency issues through the internal communications available to them and for seeking additional information from their supervisors when needed.

1073.1.2 Directors and supervisors will strive to provide prompt and complete information to employees, recognizing their responsibility to keep employees informed.

1073.2.0 Written Documents

1073.2.1 Employees drafting any document should try to write in a clear, uncluttered style.

1073.2.2 Supervisors should be aware of the quality of written documents leaving their units.

1073.3.0 Office of Communications

The Office of Communications is available to assist division directors in preparing for legislative appearances and also to assist in preparing printed materials for internal training and communications.

1073.4.0 Publications

1073.4.1 The Office of Communications will evaluate all internal and external DHS publications with a focus on avoiding duplication, and coordinating the effort to ensure that an easy-to-read style is maintained.

NOTE: A prior evaluation of newsletters to clients and providers is required only if the division is embarking on a new communications project. If the division is continuing with the same form of communication they have utilized in the past a prior review is not required; however, the Office of Communications should be included in the distribution of any mass communique.

1073.4.2 The Director of Communications will oversee publication of a bi-weekly, departmental newsletter to bring topical information to all DHS employees. When possible, the newsletter will be used to give employees advance notice of information that will be released to the media.

1073.5.0 News Media

- 1073.5.1 The Office of Communications will coordinate communications with the news media, handle incoming media calls and arrange radio, television, and newspaper interviews with the DHS employee most qualified to discuss the issue. The Director of Communications will work with division directors to determine how each request can best be handled and will keep the DHS Director informed about news stories involving DHS.
- 1073.5.2 The DHS Director will provide input on how DHS policy can best be conveyed to the public and the media.
- 1073.5.3 Employees at the county level should strive to develop a working relationship with the local media in their region. The Office of Communications recognizes that county supervisory employees and facility administrators are often capable of handling routine press questions. An attempt should be made to resolve issues at the lowest level possible. If the press inquiry is anything out of the ordinary, the local supervisor should notify the division director and the Office of Communications which will work with all the involved parties to determine how the situation can best be handled.

1073.6.0 News Releases

All news releases must be sent to the Office of Communications for editing and distribution to the media, unless doing so would cause the news release to lose its timeliness. In such cases, a copy of the news release must be sent to the Office of Communications on the date of distribution. (Routine meetings, public hearings and training announcements; advertisements; and schedules are exempt.)

1073.7.0 Communications with the State Attorney General's (AG's) Office

- 1073.7.1 Requests for advice from the AG's Office will be from division/office directors, or their designees, who will contact the assistant in the AG's Office responsible for consulting with and advising DHS. An informational copy of all written requests will be submitted to the DHS Director.
- 1073.7.2 Requests for an official opinion from the AG's Office will be prepared for the DHS Director's signature. A statement of the need for the opinion will accompany the request. The DHS Director will review and, if approved, forward the request to the Governor's Office which will forward it to the AG's Office for disposition.
- 1073.7.3 All proposals for legal services contracts will be submitted to the DHS Director for approval. A statement of justification will be included. The DHS Director will review the request and, if approved, forward the proposed contract to the Governor's Office where it will be considered in consultation with the Attorney General's Office.

1073.8.0 Federal Office Visits

Division/office directors will keep the DHS Director informed regarding impending visits by federal officials and associated entrance and exit conferences. Written notice will be provided immediately to allow for attendance by the DHS Director if indicated. The notice will include the name of the visiting official and the time, place and purpose of the visit. (Does not apply to unannounced visits by federal officials.)

1073.9.0 Initiating Section/Department

Office of Finance and Administration
Human Resources/Support Services Section
Policy and Administrative Program Management
P.O. Box 1437/Slot Number W403
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
Telephone: 682-5835

Replacement Notation: This rule replaces DHS 1073 dated 5-25-99 and supersedes DHS Policies:
1015, Departmental Requests to the Attorney General's Office and
1041, DHS News Releases.