

DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section III:	Communications
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A reporter calls and asks you a question. For many state employees that can be a terrifying experience, but it doesn't have to be.

In fact, the media are integral to our work. Most of our state's citizens find out about the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) by watching television, reading a newspaper, perusing a web site or listening to the radio.

In general, DHHS doesn't have lots of money to spend on marketing our programs. Unlike private entities, we don't have advertising budgets. For the most part, we rely on *free media*--news stories--to get our point across. Knowing what the media is looking for and helping them get their information can help us do a better job.

In general, dealing with the media is like doing anything else. If you do the right thing, you'll be okay. Doing the right thing means making sure media requests are handled quickly and accurately. On a larger scale, doing the right thing means having good policy. Good policy will generate good news. You can't generate a lot of good news with bad policy. All the p.r. in the world isn't going to make a bad policy look good.

This guide is designed to help DHHS employees understand the media and to develop the skills to effectively work with the media. It can be used alone or in conjunction with media training offered by the DHHS Office of Public Affairs.

We have deliberately made this a "low-tech" document, so that it can be easily updated. If you are interested in receiving updates, please let us know. If you find information that you think should be included in this manual, please notify us. This is a working document. It will be improved by your additions. Your experiences working with media might make interesting reading for other DHHS employees. Please feel free to email me at [Public Affairs Director](#) or call me at 919-733-9190.