

Communications Department Policies and Procedures

Requirements and Guidance for Media, Social Media,
Website, and Visual Communications



COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Purpose

The purpose of the Communications policies and procedures outlines the principles for creating, disseminating, and managing communications activities that are produced by or on behalf of the City of Tulsa. The following policies and procedures provide guidance and structure to those tasked with producing communications that align with the City's goals, missions, and values; ensuring transparent communications; establishing and maintaining consistent communications processes; and upholding a high level of professionalism and standards.

Scope

The Communications Department is centralized in the City of Tulsa, and all Communication activities and efforts related to operations, personnel, and services; media and public relations; brand, identity, and creative services; and social media and website assets are the responsibility of the Communications Department.

Unless specifically exempted, this policy applies to all Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, and Employees. Further, it applies to City-contracted agencies, partners, and vendors involved in producing communication materials and/or efforts on behalf of or associated with the City of Tulsa. In certain situations, these policies may not apply to Mayoral communication appointments, Tulsa Police Department, Tulsa Fire Department, Authorities, Boards, and Commissions, or Autonomous and Semi-Autonomous Groups affiliated with the City of Tulsa.

Furthermore, unless otherwise approved by the Communications Department, all City departments, with the exception of the Tulsa Police Department and Tulsa Fire Department are prohibited from creating positions that include the coordination or management of:

- Media and public relations activities;
- Social media and website content development and/or design;
- Visual and/or creative communications; and
- Communication Activities and Efforts via Community Engagement Positions

Authority

This policy is established under the authority of Executive Order 2006-03. Per the executive order, the Communications Director is responsible for developing and coordinating the City's internal and external communications and all brand functions in accordance with its missions, goals, and objectives. The City of Tulsa Communications Department reserves the right to enforce this policy and take appropriate action to ensure compliance and alignment.

Additionally, this policy is considered a City Operating Policy, COP Section 1100, which requires the compliance of Employees. Failure to comply with this policy may be considered a violation of work rules, Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual (PPPM) Section 4.11 which may lead to corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Policy Statement

The Communications Department serves as the primary source of information from the City of Tulsa, both internally and externally. The Communications Department strives to build trust and maintain consistency. The Department is responsible for public relations activities, employee communications, visual communications, and its brand as outlined in the subsequent policies.

The goal of the subsequent policies is to provide internal and external publics accurate, consistent, effective and transparent communication that mitigates the risk of misinformation or misinterpretation with the utmost professionalism.

Review

These policies will be subject to periodic review by the Communications Department to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary updates or revisions will be made as needed to align with the evolving needs and goals of the City of Tulsa.

Request for Exceptions

Any requests for exceptions or modifications to these policies shall be submitted in writing to the Communications Department. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, considering the impact on the City's communication strategies, procedures, needs, goals, and/or objectives.

Effective Date

These policies will take effect on the date specified above and will supersede any previous policies or guidelines related to departmental policies within the City of Tulsa.

Signed:

Mayor G.T. Bynum

August 21, 2024

Definitions

Boards and Commissions – Citizen committees comprised of volunteers and appointees that cover a wide range of topics and interests. Boards and Commissions explore and provide thoughtful advice to help the City of Tulsa create policies and develop programs.

Autonomous and Semi-Autonomous Groups – Groups, organizations, or entities that are associated with the City of Tulsa and may provide services or duties on its behalf, but function independently or semi-independently from the City. Examples include, but are not limited to, Authorities, the Tulsa Zoo, Tulsa Performing Arts Center, Gilcrease Museum, PartnerTulsa, Tulsa Transit, the Downtown Tulsa Partnership, etc.

Brand – The overall perception, reputation, and emotional connection that people have with a company, product, or organization. It encompasses the thoughts, feelings, and associations that people have when they encounter or think about a specific company or product. It is shaped by the brand strategy and the multiple tangible and intangible elements involved.

Brand Architecture Framework – A strategic and structural organization or hierarchy of a brand. It provides a systematic approach to categorizing, structuring, and managing a brand and its assets to ensure clarity, coherence, consistency, and effective communication to the target audience. It informs guidelines and decisions on positioning and the visual identity, which determines how the brands are presented to the audiences.

Brand Guidelines – A set of rules, instructions, and specifications that define and communicate how a brand and its various elements should be presented and utilized across platforms and touchpoints. They serve as a comprehensive reference document that ensures consistency and cohesion in the visual and tonal aspects of a brand's identity. Also known as brand standards or brand manuals.

Brand Management – The process of maintaining, improving, and upholding a brand so that the name and image is associated with intended results.

Brand Strategy – A long-term plan and framework that guides the development, positioning, and management of a brand to achieve specific objectives.

Brand Voice – The personality, tone, and style of communication that a brand uses to engage its audience. It encompasses the consistent use of language, vocabulary, grammar, and messaging across all brand touchpoints and communication channels.

Brand Tone – The attitude and/or manner a brand uses to communicate its messages across various platforms and interactions. The brand tone reflects the brand voice but can adapt to different situations depending on context and goals.

Campaign or Program-Specific Branding – A distinct set of visuals and messages developed to promote a specific marketing campaign, program, service, or initiative within the organization. It involves developing visual elements, messaging, and positioning strategies that are in alignment with the broader organizational brand framework but that may be tailored or customized in other ways to better achieve the objectives of a particular program or initiative. Campaign and/or Program Specific branding is typically narrower in scope, limited in purpose, and shorter in duration. As such, neither it or its components can be used in place of the organization’s comprehensive brand or identity.

City – The City of Tulsa.

City of Tulsa Abbreviated City Logo – An abbreviated, secondary variation of the City of Tulsa logo that has been modified to better accommodate space-constrained situations. Other than the situations it was designed for and intended to be applied, it should not be used in place of the Full City Logo without receiving approval.

City of Tulsa Full City Logo – The primary identifier for the City of Tulsa and first choice for visually representing the organization, its departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, employees and services. The City logo should never be redrawn, modified, replaced, or distorted.

City of Tulsa Icon Logo – An extremely abbreviated, tertiary version of the City logo that is intended to be used in extremely space-constrained situations and applications. Other than the situations it was designed for and intended to be applied, it should not be used in place of the Full City Logo without receiving approval.

City of Tulsa Seal – A visual emblem or symbol that represents a city or municipality. It serves as an official mark of government authority and/or enforcement for the city government and elected officials. It is not a logo and should only be used in specific, selective situations.

City of Tulsa Text Only Identifier – A text-based, tertiary identifier that is intended to be used in space-constrained situations to help identify the organization when the Full City Logo or Abbreviated City Logo will not suffice. Other than the situations it was designed for and intended to be applied, it should not be used in place of the Full City Logo without receiving approval.

City Public Information Officer (PIO) – A trained communications professional in the Communications Department who communicates timely information about their organization with members of the media and public. Exceptions are provided for trained employees within sworn departments, specifically Tulsa Police and Tulsa Fire.

Collateral – Collateral includes but is not limited to brands, identities, logos, brochures, handouts, flyers, posters, templates, signs, vehicle markings or decals, facility signage, uniforms, garments, videos, advertising and marketing campaigns, websites, social media platforms, social media graphics, and any other visual communications or assets used to represent the City of Tulsa, its departments, employees, services, and/or work.

Communication Activities and Efforts – Functions that include media and public relations, brand, identity, and creative communications, social media, web-based communications.

Community Engagement Positions – Staffing that facilitates public engagement opportunities related to subject-specific activities and efforts through coordination with the Communications Department. Community Engagement Positions include, but are not limited to, positions titled as Community Involvement Coordinators and Community Engagement Coordinators.

Core Organizational Brand Assets – Tangible and intangible assets that are critical to establishing the organization’s brand, visual identity, brand strategy, and overall brand framework. Core assets include the City of Tulsa Logo or any of its approved variants, the City of Tulsa Seal, and other proprietary assets.

Department – A functional unit or group within the organization that is responsible for carrying out specific tasks or activities related to a particular function, service, or areas of the organization’s operations. City departments are as follows: Asset Management, Communications, Customer Care, Department of City Experience, Development Services, Finance, Fire Department, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, Municipal Court, Parks, Culture and Recreation, Police Department, Public Works, and Water and Sewer.

Department and/or Division Identifier (ID) – A standardized visual representation of an individual City of Tulsa department. It provides the City the ability to effectively recognize, differentiate, and position its departments within the overall brand and brand strategy. It is composed of the City logo and the department name. Department IDs are supplemental or secondary in nature. They are used for additional communication or clarification purposes and do not replace the City of Tulsa logo.

Digital Expressions – Customized versions of the City of Tulsa logo that feature stylistic treatments that may or may not animate to reflect and represent specific events, City of Tulsa Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, services, programs, and/or initiatives.

Direct Media Interaction – Written request for communication, a person-to-person interaction, an interview request on a job site, a phone call, or otherwise.

Division – A organizational unit within a department that focuses on services, functions, and/or projects that have been grouped together based on common purpose, goals, and objectives.

Emblems, Icons, Visual Identifiers, and Sub-Brands – Graphics and/or symbols used to support visual communications as part of the overall brand and identity strategy and framework. They are complementary in nature and are typically used for smaller, more limited purposes. Because of their supporting nature and narrow or limited scope, they are not the same as a logo and cannot be used in place of the City logo or a Department Identifier.

Employee – An individual who is hired, appointed, or employed by the City of Tulsa to perform specific tasks, duties, or roles within the organization. Employees, for the purposes of this policy, are largely hired or appointed for the purpose of executing operational and administrative tasks, services, and functions that fall under the Charter authority of the Mayor.

External Communications – Written, verbal, or visual communications, whether in physical or digital form, that are intended for, or distributed to, external audiences.

Grandfathered Departments – Departments within the City of Tulsa who in 2007 were granted an exception status that allows them to continue use of individualized brands, visual identities, and/or logos as part of the City of Tulsa’s overall brand architecture and framework. The grandfathered departments who have received this exception status are the Tulsa Police Department, Tulsa Fire Department, and Tulsa Parks Department.

Identity – The visual expression of the brand. It involves the design and aesthetics that give the brand its recognizable and distinct appearance. The identity includes core elements such as the logo, seal, typography, color palette, image/photo style, emblems, icons, uniforms, vehicles, signage, and many other components. The identity ensures consistency and recognition across numerous platforms and touch points, which help establish a cohesive brand image.

Internal Communications – Written, verbal, or visual communications intended for, or distributed to, internal audiences that include departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, and employees.

Indirect Media Exposure – News media or non-traditional media publishing, absent of direct media interaction, that results from employee activities, behavior, or performance.

Logo – A specific graphic mark that is used to represent a brand, company, or organization. It is the organization’s primary visual identifier and is one of the core elements of the brand’s identity.

Media – Traditional and Non-Traditional Media.

Media Inquiry – Any request for information or interview from traditional media or non-traditional media.

Media Relations – The mutually beneficial relationship between journalists and the City of Tulsa.

Media Training – Required education and instruction provided by the Communications Department for identified City spokespersons.

Non-Traditional Media – Non-traditional media includes but may not be limited to (any social media platform ran independently of the Communications Department, independent bloggers and influencers; citizen activists; etc. Non-traditional media can include information and content, whether in written, photographic, or video form, captured and disseminated by and through non-traditional means or interactions to widespread audiences through social media platforms or direct engagements with traditional news media agencies.

Partners/Partner Organizations – A partner or partner organization is an entity, such as a company, nonprofit, or government agency, or individual that collaborates with the City of Tulsa or one of its departments, divisions, sections or sub-sections to achieve shared goals, objectives, projects, or services.

Personal Social Media Account – A City employee’s personal social media account(s), which can include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, X, etc.

Official Social Media Account – A social media account managed on behalf of the City of Tulsa by an approved Social Media/Website Contributor.

Section – A smaller work unit or segment within a division of a department that specializes in specific services, projects, or tasks.

Social Media – Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Social Media/Website Contributor – At the discretion of the Communications Department, City employees may be granted limited access to specific social media platforms or the City website with the capability of contributing to content posted on those pages. Contributors will be required to demonstrate the appropriate experience, education, or training for social media and website management on behalf of an organization or business.

Spokesperson – Subject matter expert trained and approved by the Communications Department to speak on behalf of their department, division, section, sub-section, or service/program/response. Spokespersons are not PIOs.

Sub-Section – A smaller work unit or segment within a section of a division that specializes in extremely specific services, projects, or tasks within that section.

Traditional Media – Traditional media organizations, platforms and/or channels such as broadcast television, newspapers, magazines, online publications, etc.

Tulsa Flag – The flag of Tulsa, Oklahoma, which was conceived from a public project and contest created and overseen by community members. The Tulsa Flag is licensed under a Creative Commons 0 (zero) license, making it part of the public domain, and free to access or use by the community. In 2018, it was adopted by the Tulsa City Council and Mayor as the official flag of Tulsa. It is not a logo and should not replace the Full City Logo or City Seal without approval.

Visual Identifier – A distinct visual element or combination of elements that represent a brand, organization, entity, service, or program.

Website – A set of related web pages located under a single domain name, typically produced by a single person or organization.

Media and Public Relations Policy

Policy Statement

The City of Tulsa recognizes the importance of strong media and public relations activities to foster public trust, enhance communication, and promote unity and teamwork among its various departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, and employees. A unified media and public relations framework reinforces the City's commitment to professionalism, transparency, and accountability.

Exceptions

Except in certain situations such as the communication of Citywide and multi-departmental initiatives, or during an activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Tulsa Police Department, and the Tulsa Fire Department can conduct media relations activities on behalf of their individual departments for day-to-day operations.

All other City of Tulsa Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, and Employees are not authorized to, independently of the Communications Department, engage in External Communications activities focused on operational and administrative functions.

Media Inquiries and Distribution

Traditional Media Inquiries

1. The Communications Department is responsible for coordinating all media relations activities and maintaining relationships with all media outlets and reporters.
2. Because communications are centralized in the City of Tulsa, traditional news media inquiries, whether from external or internal requestor(s), should be referred immediately to the Communications Department who will review and work with appropriate City staff to coordinate a response.
3. If contacted by the Communications Department, it is important that City departments and personnel promptly respond to a Communications team member regarding requests for information or requests for a department spokesperson.
4. Open records are City records (documents, emails, etc.) that are subject to the Oklahoma Open Records Act. The City of Tulsa handles public record requests through open records custodians, and the Communications Department handles open records that come from the media. When requested, these records shall be compiled and made available to the Communications Department for the requestor. Open records requests that come from members of the media are handled by the Communications Department, with the exception of those that intended for the Tulsa City Council, Tulsa Police Department and Tulsa Fire Department.

Non-Traditional Media Inquiries

1. Similar to traditional media inquiries, non-traditional media inquiries, whether from external or internal requestor(s), should be referred immediately to a Communications Department team member who review and will work with appropriate City staff to coordinate a response.
2. Because anyone is capable of initiating a non-traditional media request, employees should use best judgment when determining whether an interaction with the public qualifies as an Indirect Media Exposure.

General or Routine Response to Media Inquiries

1. Every City department has designated media spokespersons. In most instances, this is the department head or division manager, though sometimes the spokesperson will be a City employee who serves as the subject matter expert on the topic.
2. Spokespersons are not PIOs and they do not initiate media relations activities.
3. In the event of an interview request, the Communications Department will work with the spokesperson/subject matter expert to either schedule the interview or coordinate a written response.
4. Should an emergency arise on a job site, the Communications Department should immediately be contacted and briefed about the incident so all crisis communications protocols can be followed.
5. Should media contact a spokesperson without the Communications Department having been involved, the request should immediately be referred to the Communications Department who will work with appropriate City staff to coordinate a response.

City of Tulsa Initiated Public Communications

1. The Communications Department initiates all proactive media contacts on behalf of City business, including issuing press releases, media advisories, and pitches to reporters and editors for coverage. It is solely the Communications Department's responsibility to develop and maintain relationships with the media.
2. The Communications Department must approve, and is responsible for disseminating, all news releases involving a non-sworn City department.
3. Department personnel should not initiate media contacts directly. All media outreach is coordinated by the Communications Department.
4. If an employee chooses to identify themselves as a City employee in any personal letter or e-mail to print, electronic media, or an additional media outlet, or in any similar personal statement published or submitted for print/media publication, they must include language which states that the views set forth therein do not represent the views of the City, but rather are the employee's personally held opinions. Similar disclaimers must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for a radio or television program, unless the employee has received prior approval to serve as an official representative of the City.

Authorized Spokespersons and City Public Information Officers (PIOs)

1. To expedite consistent and accurate information to the media, Communications Department PIOs work with department heads and City spokespersons to speak and give statements on topics within their scope of work.
2. A designated spokesperson should possess excellent communication skills, as well as the ability to quickly respond to media inquiries involving difficult issues. The spokesperson will act as the primary media source for statistics, history, description of projects and programs, facilities, services and other public information.

-
3. Communications Department media training is required for all City spokespersons, including field supervisors who may be on a worksite when media arrives to inquire about an emergency or project. The training covers City Policy and best practices for interviews and responses. Media Training is held at the Communication Department's discretion.
 4. If the Communications Department is made aware that a potential spokesperson for a particular topic has not had media training, the potential spokesperson may be asked to refrain from media interviews until they have received media training.

Litigation and Personnel Issues

1. City business conducted for the public benefit is public information. Inquiries regarding pending litigation, matters involving a significant exposure to litigation, and certain personnel-related information are exceptions. All media inquiries of this nature, similar to other media requests, should immediately be sent to the Communications Department.
2. As a general rule of thumb, the City withholds comment on pending litigation and personnel matters.

Expressed Personal Beliefs

1. When speaking on behalf of the City, employees should speak in line with City Policy.
2. Any employee asked to speak as a City representative should speak on behalf of the City. Interviews done while acting as a City representative should be factual, non-biased and focused on accuracy. When meeting media for an interview, it is important to remember that all things said, even before and after the interview while in the presence of the interviewer, could be construed as official City statements.
3. All City news editorial content is managed by the Communications Department. Employees who write personal letters to the editor of any newspaper or other media outlet may not use City equipment or City stationery (City seals, envelope stamps, email signatures). The same rule applies to "blogging" or commenting on any social network or news outlet website. If the employee makes mention of their employment with the City, they must include language stating their views do not represent the views of the City. Similar disclaimers must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for a radio or television program.
4. When speaking on behalf of the City, employees shall speak in line in accordance with the training received through media training.
5. Because all City employees are an extension of the City's brand/image, employees who make statements should make clear their beliefs are their own and are not on behalf of the City. Similarly, employees who express personal beliefs outside their City capacity, whether in written, verbal, or in visual form, including posts to social media, should make clear that their beliefs are their own.

Violations of the above policies could result in disciplinary action.

Selection of External Agencies and Vendors

1. The Communications Department is solely responsible for working with departments to perform media relations activities on behalf of the City of Tulsa and its departments.
2. Departments should not independently contract with any outside agency for the purpose of conducting media and public relations.

Social Media and Website Policy

Policy Statement

The Social Media and Website Policy establishes guidelines and procedures for the consistent and cohesive use of the City's approved social media channels and website, and provides guidance for City of Tulsa employees on social media protocols.

The City of Tulsa recognizes the importance of consistent information relating to the City's programs, services, and initiatives to foster public trust, enhance communication, and promote unity and teamwork among its various departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, and employees. A unified policy reinforces the City's commitment to professionalism, transparency, and accountability.

Exceptions

The Tulsa Police Department and the Tulsa Fire Department can conduct social media activities on behalf of their individual departments for day-to-day operations.

All other City of Tulsa Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, and Employees are not authorized to, independently of the Communications Department, create or engage in External Communications activities focused on operational and administrative functions.

All new social media tools proposed for City use will be approved by the Communications Department.

Social Media

1. The City of Tulsa uses unified, centralized social media channels administered by the Communications Department.
2. The primary social media platforms* utilized by the Communications Department for official use on behalf of the City of Tulsa are:
 - Facebook
 - X (formerly Twitter)
 - Instagram
 - LinkedIn
 - NextDoor
 - YouTube

** The Communications Department reserves the right to review and revise the approved social media platform list based on current trends, organizational needs, and best practices.*

-
3. The best and most appropriate use of social media platforms fall generally into two categories:
 - i As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
 - ii As marketing promotional channels, which increase the City's ability to broadcast services, programs, and initiatives to the widest possible audience.

Social Media Guidelines

City of Tulsa social media sites shall comply with State law including open records laws, the City of Tulsa's Charter and ordinances, executive orders, including without limitation to the City of Tulsa Ethics Code and City of Tulsa Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the City and members of the public. The views expressed in comments are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the City's official views.

The purpose of this site is to discuss matters of public interest in and to the City of Tulsa as identified and raised by the City of Tulsa for discussion. We encourage you to submit comments that are on topic, but please address your comments to the specific topic(s) discussed. This is a forum limited to the specific topics identified and raised by the City of Tulsa. Users who submit content to this site agree they have read, understand, and agree to the following terms and conditions by virtue of such use. The City of Tulsa reserves the right to regulate, delete or remove any comments that are considered to be:

1. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
2. Obscene language or content;
3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
4. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
5. Solicitations of commerce;
6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
9. Content that contains links to malware and/or malicious content that affects the normal functioning of a computer system, server, or browser;
10. Duplicated comments posted repeatedly within a short period of time;

Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.

Administration of City of Tulsa Social Media Accounts

1. The Communications Department will maintain administrative rights for all City of Tulsa social media accounts, including any login and password information. The Communications Department may grant access to social media accounts when deemed necessary.
2. Any new social media accounts will be established and administered by the Communications Department.
3. All City of Tulsa departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, and programs that have been granted social media channels will be audited annually by the Communications Department to maintain consistency, brand recognition, and a cohesive social media strategy.
4. Access to any social platform should be through official City-provided digital tools (computer, tablets, mobile devices). Personal devices should not be used. Employees cannot share access to City social media platforms and should never share personal login information.
5. The City is entitled to edit or remove published content from City social media pages. Removed content should be retained for Open Record purposes.
6. All content posted on City accounts is the property of the City of Tulsa.
7. Contributors will be designated by the Communications Department and will be limited to full-time City employees who have completed Social Media Management Training facilitated by Communications Department staff. Contributors must abide by this policy and follow the most updated procedures, guidelines, and best practices from the Communications Department. Violation of the policy can result in revocation of their role as a contributor and/or the removal of the account.
8. Outside of emergency or crisis related content, all scheduling of social content will be done at the discretion of the Communications Department designee to ensure strategic alignment with the stated goals of the City with every effort to post items in the order they are received, understanding the timeliness of some requests will warrant prioritized scheduling.
9. No platform will be used for political use to convey a political party, political candidate, or proposed legislation.
10. No platform will be used to advertise non-City programs, services, or initiatives, except in situations when the City of Tulsa takes organizational/institutional responsibility, is a driver or leader in the decision-making process, is providing significant funding, or when a clear and apparent legal agreement between the City and the involved organization/individual is in place. Platforms shall not be used for Community calendar events.
11. No platform will be used for fundraising for a private individual, business, nonprofit, or external organization.
 - i **Exceptions:** Fundraising efforts may be shared when the City takes organizational/institutional responsibility. In the event of an emergency, fundraising efforts coordinated under an activation in the Emergency Operations Center may be shared.

If an employee creates an unauthorized social media site representing the City, a department, division, program, initiative, group of employees or a specific employee position, the Communication's Department will require the site to be taken down immediately. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

Employees

The City of Tulsa recognizes an employee's interest and right to actively participate in a variety of social media platforms outside of their City worktime. In regard to employees' personal use, the City adheres to Oklahoma state law. While it is not the City's intention to curb employees' First Amendment rights, expressed personal beliefs on employees' personal social media accounts should refrain from directing the following toward any citizen:

1. Obscene sexual content or links containing sexual content
2. Abusive behavior and bullying language or tone
3. Conduct or encourage illegal activities
4. Disclosure of information, which the City and its employees are required to keep confidential by City Policy

Employees will refrain from creating personal social media content during work hours. Additionally, employees should not create social media content wherein official or non-official work uniforms are worn, or when official visual identifiers are in view.

Employees should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.

The expression of personal beliefs might conflict with City Policy in certain instances. If an employee is thinking about making a personal belief public, it's asked the belief is made clear it is personal in nature.

All engagement on City of Tulsa Official Social Media Accounts should be handled through official City channels by approved Social Media/Website Contributors.

To create clarity and understanding, employees who operate Personal Social Media Accounts (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, TikTok, etc.) stating they are a City employee somewhere on the page, are asked to make clear any Expressed Personal Beliefs mentioned on their page are on behalf of their own thoughts and experiences and do not reflect the views of the City. Employees may repost information from the City's Official Social Media Account(s) or the City of Tulsa website on their Personal Social Media Accounts. Employees can share information about their jobs and work experiences on their Personal Social Media Accounts but remain subject to all relevant Human Resources policies.

Employees should not, through their Personal Social Media Account(s), make official statements on behalf of the City of Tulsa. Likewise, employees shall not create an Official Social Media Account for themselves, their department, division, section, or program.

Website

1. The City of Tulsa's website, www.cityoftulsa.org, serves as the City's primary and predominant internet presence.
2. All City departments, programs, and services will reside on the City's website and follow a consistent style, brand, and voice across all pages. Variations depend on website functionality, project goals, and Communications Department recommendations.
3. The Communications Department will continually monitor the website for opportunities to expand online services and features for our residents.

-
4. The website will offer an online translator for non-English speaking residents and visitors.
 - a. Where possible, the use of webpages in lieu of text-based attachments (i.e. PDF, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) is encouraged to allow for automatic translations.
 5. The City of Tulsa retains an online calendar of City holidays, meetings, and City events. Events outside of the City's scope will not be considered.
 6. The City of Tulsa website will only contain links to national, state and local government agencies, except in situations when the City of Tulsa takes organizational/institutional responsibility, is a driver or leader in the decision-making process, is providing significant funding, or when a clear and apparent legal agreement between the City and the involved organization/individual is in place. Links to non-governmental or commercial organizations will not be considered.
 7. The City of Tulsa does not allow for paid advertisement on the website.
 8. No webpage will be allowed for outside organizations or groups.

Website & Social Media Staffing

1. All City Departments, Divisions, Sections, and sub-sections, with the exception of the Tulsa Police Department and the Tulsa Fire Department are prohibited from creating positions that include the coordination and/or management of website and social media activities, without first receiving approval from the Communications Department. In such instances, the Communications Department will work with Human Resources in the pre-hire phase to develop a position description and scope of work that is consistent with the City's social media and website policies. The same process applies to City departments wanting to add positions that include the coordination of communication or marketing activities.

Brand, Identity, Visual, and Creative Services Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Brand, Identity, Visual, and Creative Services Policy is to establish processes, procedures, and guidelines for developing, managing, reviewing, approving, and implementing the City of Tulsa's visual brand, its identity, and any creative or visual collateral produced on behalf of the organization. This policy ensures that the City's brand and visual collateral are unified, recognizable, aligned with the City of Tulsa's brand strategy, consistently applied, and produced at a high level of professionalism.

Policy Statement

The City of Tulsa recognizes the importance of maintaining a strong, consistent brand identity and upholding the highest professional standards across all touchpoints and communication efforts. A unified brand and consistently applied brand strategy reinforces the City of Tulsa's commitment to professionalism, transparency, and accountability. This fosters public trust, enhances communication, and promotes unity and teamwork among our various departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, and employees.

By leveraging the expertise of the Communications Department and centralizing the responsibility for these matters, we aim to enhance brand recognition, provide effective internal and external communication, protect the City's reputation, and ensure that all visual materials and collateral meet the highest standards of quality and professionalism. As such, all creative and/or visual communications for the City of Tulsa and its departments must be developed by or in coordination with the Communications Department.

Exceptions:

- 1. Use of Core Organizational Brand Assets:** In cases where Core Organizational Brand Assets are used by internal or external entities, all relevant policies and guidelines must be followed. Except in situations where Core Organizational Brand Assets such as the City logo (or one of its approved variants) and/or City Seal are used, the Brand, Identity, Visual, and Creative Services Policy may not apply to the Tulsa City Council, Boards and Commissions, or Autonomous and Semi-Autonomous Groups affiliated with the City of Tulsa.
- 2. Visual Communication(s) Development:** Except in situations where an exemption has been provided or approval granted, all visual communications, brands, identities, logos, and identifiers must be created by or in collaboration with the Communications Department.

-
3. **Brands and Identities:** With the exception of the Grandfathered Departments, this policy prohibits any other City of Tulsa Department, Division, Section, Sub-Section, or Employee from having its own separate and distinct brand, visual identity, or logo.
 4. As a result of the exception status granted to them in 2007, the Grandfathered Departments (Tulsa Police Department, Tulsa Fire Department, and Tulsa Parks Department) may possess their own distinct visual identities, logos, and branding materials. However, these departments shall make good efforts to ensure that their respective visual identities are consistent with the overall City brand guidelines, strategy, and framework so as not to create confusion or dilute the City's official brand identity.
 5. Additionally, whenever possible, the Grandfathered Departments must make good effort to establish their connection to the City of Tulsa through use of graphic, text, verbal, and/or written means.

No other departments may pursue, develop, or implement separate, distinct visual identities, logos, and/or branding materials without requesting and receiving an exception status from the Communications Department.

6. **Department Identifier(s):** With the exception of the groups listed below, the standardized treatment for Department Identifiers (IDs) is limited to City of Tulsa Departments. It shall not be modified for sections, sub-sections or groups.

Approved Exceptions: Department of City Experience – Animal Welfare, Community Development, Code Enforcement, Resilience and Equity, Design Studio, Planning Office. Mayor’s Office of Economic Development.

Brand Guidelines

1. Brand guidelines and standards are available to offer guidance and specifications for numerous aspects of the City of Tulsa’s brand and identity. For specific guidance on use of brand elements, please refer to the City of Tulsa’s Brand guidelines.
2. All City departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, employees, and contractors/vendors/partners shall comply with designated brand guidelines and graphic standards established and outlined in the City of Tulsa’s brand guidelines as identified by the Communications Department. This includes but is not limited to logos; seals; colors; fonts and typography; iconography; photography and videography; etc.
3. Except in situations where graphic standards and requirements cannot be met due to production limitations, the City of Tulsa's identity and official logo shall be used consistently and in alignment with the brand strategy, architecture or framework, and guidelines. This includes but is not limited to publications, flyers, signage, posters, vehicles, printed promotional materials, uniforms, websites, digital graphics, and other collateral that is related to the City or one of its departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, or employees.
4. The City of Tulsa’s official logo and other core elements of the visual identity shall not be altered, modified, or distorted in any way, except as approved and/or directed by the designated Communications Department employee(s).
5. All City of Tulsa departments, divisions, sections, sub-sections, and employees, except the Tulsa Police Department, Tulsa Fire Department, and Tulsa Parks Department, shall use the official City of Tulsa logo as their primary visual identifier in all communications and branded materials to maintain consistency and brand recognition.

-
6. The use of alternative or supportive logos, branding elements, and/or visual identities intended to be used in place of the City of Tulsa logo is strictly prohibited, except as explicitly approved and/or directed by the Communications Department.

Creation, Development, Implementation, and Management of Brands, Identities, and Visual Collateral

All recommendations and/or decisions related to how to create, implement, manage, or apply the City of Tulsa's brand and/or identity on City collateral or assets are to be made by the Communications Department. This includes, but is not limited to brochures, handouts, flyers, posters, logos, emblems, icons, signage, vehicles, buildings, branded uniforms or garments, websites, social media platforms, and other visual communications or assets.

Hierarchy of Visual Identifiers

A clear and defined hierarchy of visual identifiers has been established to maintain consistency, coherence, and a balanced approach to representation across the organization. Adhering to this hierarchy ensures that our brand remains recognizable and unified across all channels and touchpoints. Within our Brand Framework Architecture, the following order or tiering is applied:

1. Full City Logo or one of its approved variants
 - *With or without the City of Tulsa Seal depending on circumstances.*
2. Department Identifiers
3. Campaign or Program-Specific Brands
4. Emblems, Icons and Other Supporting Graphics or Visuals

Access to Design and Visual Communication Software and/or Tools

In collaboration/coordination with the Information Technology Department, the Communications Department is responsible for reviewing and approving or denying all requests from City departments and/or Employees who are seeking access or subscriptions to design and visual communication software and tools. This includes, but is not limited to the Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, Figma, Affinity, Procreate, Sketch, Webflow, Gimp, Midjourney, and other similar software, tools, or services.

Permission can be granted when an employee possesses the requisite skills, education, and/or knowledge necessary to properly utilize software/tools and demonstrates an ability to meet brand and professional standards. This permission remains valid for as long as the employee continues to follow all Communications Department procedures and timelines; coordinates and communicates with the Communications Department on the development, approval, and distribution of any internal or external collateral; and consistently meets and adheres to brand guidelines and professional standards.

The Communications Department will closely monitor the compliance of approved employees and retains the authority to revoke permission or access in cases of continued non-compliance, quality control, or a failure to adhere to the established procedures.

Requestor must provide information and responses that satisfy the following criteria:

-
1. Identify the specific individual(s) who would receive access or a license to the requested software, tool, or subscription.
 2. Provide proof of education, training, experience, and/or qualifications for each individual requesting access in order to measure and/or demonstrate their requisite knowledge and understanding of the requested software and/or tools.
 3. Identify a clear need and provide examples of the types of projects and/or collateral that would be produced if/when access to the software or tool is granted/approved.
 4. Confirmation from the department and/or employee that they understand they must coordinate, collaborate, and communicate with the Communications Department on all collateral and material developed with the software or tools to ensure that Communications policies, procedures, brand guidelines, and quality standards are met.
 5. Confirmation from the department and/or employee that they understand access to the software, tools and/or subscription can and will be revoked if compliance or quality issues repeatedly arise.

Selection and Interaction with External Agency(ies) and Vendors

As a municipality, the City of Tulsa must maintain and protect its brand and image by producing high-quality internal and external collateral or messaging that is consistent with brand guidelines. To aid the City in its efforts to build, enhance and promote the City's brand and identity, the Communications Department is responsible for working with departments to select marketing and/or communications agencies authorized to perform various advertising, creative, promotional and strategic marketing services for the City of Tulsa and/or its departments.

For an organization to properly communicate with a consistent voice and appearance, it is essential that all communications activities and collateral be coordinated with or through the Communications Department.

Individual Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, and/or Employees should not contract directly with a marketing or creative communications agency without the Communications Department's involvement. Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, and Employees also are required to notify and involve the Communications Department of any work to be performed by a contacted agency/ies.

Internal and External Use of the City of Tulsa Name, Logo, or Seal for Official Business

Use of the City of Tulsa name, logo, Seal, or other foundational brand elements by Departments, Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections, Employees, Partners, or any other organization for an event, activity, initiative, or other kind of physical or digital collateral is only appropriate when:

1. The City takes organizational/institutional responsibility;
2. The City is a driver or leader in the development and/or decision-making process;
3. The City is providing significant funding, or;
4. When a clear and apparent legal agreement is in place between the City and the involved organization/individual.

Prior to distributing or applying the City of Tulsa logo and/or City Seal, a request for approval to determine appropriateness must be submitted in writing to the Communications Department.

Non-Compliance and Corrective Action

Failure to comply with the Brand, Identity, and Creative Services Policy may result in corrective actions.

Corrective actions include but are not limited to:

- 1. Redevelopment:** Non-compliant materials may have to be redesigned or redeveloped to bring them in line with the established brand and quality standards.
- 2. Removal and Destruction:** Even in situations where non-compliant materials have already been produced, distributed, or made public, action may be required to remove and/or destroy them to prevent further dissemination and mitigate any potential issues.
- 3. Removal of or Limiting Access to Software and Assets:** For situations where non-compliance has repeatedly occurred due to a lack of knowledge, unauthorized access, substandard quality, and/or inappropriate/incorrect use, the Communications Department and Information Technology Department may restrict or remove access to communication software, tools, and/or brand assets to minimize or prevent the creation of additional non-compliant materials and collateral. A review and decision related to removing or limiting access will be triggered if/when 3-5 instances of non-compliance occur within a six-month period.
- 4. Other Appropriate Measures:** Depending on the severity and nature of the non-compliance, the Communications Department reserves the right to implement additional measures as necessary to rectify the situation and prevent future occurrences.