

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

*Subject:*  
**COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Effective Date:

Policy Number:

Revision Date:

Responsible  
Entity:

### 1. Purpose

This policy is designed to establish guidelines for effective communication by the Opioid Abatement Council (“the Council” or “OAC”) to all relevant stakeholders, ensuring transparency, consistency, and timely dissemination of information related to the OAC activities.

### 2. Policy

It is the policy of the Opioid Abatement Council to ensure the Opioid Abatement Office effectively keeps the public informed and engaged when there is new information to share and provides prompt responses to public requests.

### 3. Definitions:

- 3.1 The Council- Refers to the Opioid Abatement Council (OAC) created pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 33-11-101, *et seq.*, and who is responsible for disbursing funds from the Opioid Abatement Fund for proceeds received from the statewide opioid settlement agreements.
- 3.2 TDMHSAS- Refers to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- 3.3 OAC Office- Refers to the staff of the Opioid Abatement Council that administers the Council.

### 4. Procedures

#### 4.1 Website Review

- 4.1.1 The [Opioid Abatement Council's website](http://www.tn.gov/oac) (www.tn.gov/oac) is the main communication tool with the public.
- 4.1.2 The OAC Executive Administrative Assistant, in consultation with the TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communication, will manage the OAC's official website and serve as the point of contact for posting information on the website.
- 4.1.3 The website is updated as new information is ready to be shared with the general public. The shared information is created by the OAC Office.

- 4.1.4 A full review of all information on the website is completed biannually.
- 4.1.5 All information posted to the OAC website must first be approved by the OAC Executive Director or the OAC Deputy Director.
- 4.1.6 The Senior Policy Analyst will collect public comments from the OAC website.
  - 4.1.6.1 The public comments are emailed to the [opioid.abatement@tn.gov](mailto:opioid.abatement@tn.gov) Inbox.
  - 4.1.6.2 The public comments will be forwarded to the Sr. Policy Director.
  - 4.1.6.3 This information will be shared with the OAC Executive Director and OAC Deputy Director to determine what will be shared during the Council meeting.
- 4.2 **Public Emails**
  - 4.2.1 The OAC Office created the email address [opioid.abatement@tn.gov](mailto:opioid.abatement@tn.gov) for the general public to access the Office staff.
  - 4.2.2 The emails received via this email address are reviewed on a daily basis, and responses are determined by the Program Director and/or the OAC Executive Director.
- 4.3 **Newsletters**
  - 4.3.1 The OAC Office will send newsletters via email on at least a monthly basis to people in the community who requested to receive the newsletter via the Contact Us page on the OAC website.
  - 4.3.2 The topics of the community newsletter will include, but are not limited to, information regarding upcoming OAC meetings, Community Grant information, and other information about the OAC.
  - 4.3.3 The OAC Office will send a Community Grant newsletter via email on at least a monthly basis to all agencies that were awarded a Community Grant.
  - 4.3.4 The topics of the Community Grant newsletter will include, but are not limited to, information regarding upcoming OAC meetings, contracting, invoicing, and monitoring.
- 4.4 **Meetings**
  - 4.4.1 The OAC Office will prominently post a notice of upcoming Council meetings on the OAC website in accordance with the Tennessee Open Meetings Act requirements.
  - 4.4.2 The notice will include, but is not limited to, the meeting date, time, place, agenda items, instructions for attending the meeting in person or accessing the meeting electronically, and any other necessary information in accordance with state law.

#### **4.5 Media Requests**

- 4.5.1 The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications is the point of contact for all inquiries from the news media. The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications, in consultation with the OAC Executive Director, determines the level of response, and, when appropriate, additional/specific staff to respond.
- 4.5.2 Media contact with staff, other than the OAC Executive Director or TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications, must be pre-approved or reported to the TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications as soon as possible.
- 4.5.3 The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications must report contacts of major importance with the media to the Commissioner of TDMHSAS and the Governor's Communications Office.
- 4.5.4 The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications and the OAC Executive Director's contact information shall be posted on the OAC website.

#### **4.6 Press Releases**

- 4.6.1 The OAC Office may create press releases relating to information and/or activities of the OAC and OAC Office. The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications, the OAC Executive Director and OAC Deputy Director are authorized to create press releases on behalf of the OAC.
- 4.6.2 All press releases relating to information and/or activities of the OAC and OAC Office must be approved by either the Executive Director or the Deputy Director.

#### **4.7 Social Media**

- 4.7.1 The OAC Office may utilize Social Media platforms for marketing, blogging, and sharing of materials relating to the OAC and OAC Office. The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications is the point of contact for all social marketing, blogging, and video-sharing material and maintenance on behalf of the OAC.

#### **4.8 Public Information Requests**

- 4.8.1 All public information requests will be directed to the TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications at [oc.tdmhsas@tn.gov](mailto:oc.tdmhsas@tn.gov).
- 4.8.2 The TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Communications shall confer with the OAC Legal Counsel and the OAC Executive Director prior to any response to a request.
- 4.8.3 Public information requests shall be handled in accordance with the Tennessee Public Records Act and other applicable state law.

**5. Other Considerations**

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Public Information and Media Relations Policy 98-1

**6. Authority**

T.C.A. §§ 33-11-101 *et seq.*, 10-7-501 *et seq.* and 8-44-101 *et seq.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council Approval Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
OAC Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council Chair