



**KENOSHA
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

LIBRARY SPOKESPERSON POLICY

The Board of Trustees of the Kenosha Public Library adopts and makes public the following written policies.

I. PURPOSE

The Kenosha Public Library (herein referred to as "the Library") is committed to proactive and transparent communication with patrons, businesses, and community members. Partnering with the media is a vital strategy for sharing information about Library policies, services, and initiatives with the public.

II. POLICY

The Library Director is the primary authority for all media communications, except for routine programming and event promotion. All Library employees must notify the Library Director or their designee about any non-routine media inquiries.

Media requests are a priority for the Library and should be addressed promptly and accurately. If an employee is designated to respond, they must ensure all information provided is factual and aligns with Library policies.

Employees should respond as soon as possible when the Library Director requests information or designates a spokesperson for a media inquiry.

III. LIBRARY SPOKESPERSONS

Unless otherwise authorized, the following individuals serve as official spokespersons for the Library:

- Library Director
- Assistant Director
- Library Board President (for governance-related matters)

- Marketing & Communications Manager

Department Head/Branch Managers or other staff may be designated as spokespersons for specific topics at the discretion of the Library Director.

All media inquiries should be referred to the appropriate spokesperson. Employees should never attempt to speak on behalf of another department or the Library without authorization.

IV. ROUTINE MEDIA INQUIRIES

- Any media inquiry received by Library staff should be referred **immediately** to the appropriate Department Head/Branch Manager, Assistant Director, or Marketing & Communications Manager.
- A suggested response for staff is:
"I don't have the full information on that topic, but I will forward your request to the appropriate person who can respond as soon as they are available."
- Staff should collect the reporter's **name, phone number, email, topic of inquiry, and deadline** to pass along to the designated spokesperson.

V. SENSITIVE OR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

- Any media inquiries related to sensitive or controversial issues must be referred **immediately** to the Library Director.
- The **Library Director** or their designee will coordinate a response and designate an appropriate spokesperson.
- Examples of potentially sensitive issues include:
 - **Service disruptions** (e.g., power failures, building issues, infestations)
 - **Personnel matters** (e.g., suspensions, resignations of key staff)
 - **Emergencies** (e.g., fires, accidents involving Library property or personnel)
 - **Legal matters** (e.g., pending or resolved litigation)
 - **Criminal allegations or incidents involving Library staff or patrons**

VI. LITIGATION, PERSONNEL, AND ELECTION ISSUES

- The Library Director should be consulted regarding any public information or Open Records requests.
- Inquiries regarding:
 - Pending litigation should be directed to the Library Director.
 - Personnel-related matters should be directed to the Library Director and the Business Manager.
 - Election or campaign issues should be referred to the Library Director or City Clerk.
- If multiple Library staff are expected to be interviewed on the same topic, a post-interview briefing may be arranged to ensure consistency in messaging.

VII. PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW

- Library employees have the right to express personal views, but personal opinions may conflict with official Library policy.
- Employees writing letters to the editor may not use Library stationery. If identifying themselves as a Library employee, they must include a disclaimer:
“The views expressed are my own and do not represent the official stance of the Kenosha Public Library.”
- This same disclaimer must be given when speaking at public meetings, participating in interviews, or engaging in media discussions where the employee is identified as an employee of the Library, unless officially representing the Library. Employees who are not designated spokespersons shall not assume the responsibility of officially representing the Library with direction from the Marketing & Communications Manager, Department Head/Branch Manager, Assistant Director, or Director.

VIII. GENERAL MEDIA CONTACTS

- **Broadcast Media (TV & Radio):**
 - Always refer calls to the Marketing & Communications Manager, Department Head/Branch Manager, Assistant Director, or Library Director, who will coordinate the

response.

- **Local Print Media:**

- Routine inquiries regarding department programs may be handled by the appropriate Marketing & Communications Manager, Department Head/Branch Manager or Assistant Director.
- The Library Director should be informed of all media requests and interview topics of note. The appropriate spokesperson may provide the Library Director with updates after the media request.

IX. LIBRARY-INITIATED MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- The Library Director and Marketing & Communications Manager are responsible for proactive media engagement, including issuing press releases, media advisories, and story pitches.
- Departments seeking publicity must submit a Marketing Request Form within the requested timeframe for best media coverage.
- Routine program press releases should be submitted at least three weeks before an event to the Marketing & Communications Manager.

X. CRISIS OR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- During a major emergency (e.g., severe weather, natural disasters), the Library Director or their designee will serve as the main point of contact for the media.
- Staff who first identify an emergency should:
 1. Notify emergency responders if necessary.
 2. Contact their Department Head/Branch Manager or Assistant Director.
 3. Notify the Library Director as soon as possible.