

CIRCULAR

DATE July 9, 2018

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

REVIEW DATE: July 9, 2023

1.0 PURPOSE

This circular establishes the policies and procedures for the release of official communications from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's (BEP) Office of External Relations (OEX) to external audiences.

2.0 SCOPE

These policies and procedures apply to employees and contractors in OEX managing or releasing BEP's official communications to external audiences. OEX employees and contractors shall be responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures for all incoming and outgoing official communications covered in this circular regardless of form, which includes but is not limited to, oral communications, paper copy, electronic information, photographs, video, artwork, social media, and tape and digital recordings.

3.0 POLICY

OEX manages all of BEP's official communications to external audiences. Within its mission and management responsibilities, OEX will be as responsive as possible in dealing with inquiries from external audiences. On behalf of BEP, OEX will furnish leadership, guidance, and information to external audiences in those areas where staff possesses special or unique expertise.

Each of BEP's components shall coordinate with OEX any incoming and outgoing official communications covered by this circular to external audiences, see Section 6 – Definitions, unless a different BEP spokesperson has been requested and approved in writing by the OEX Chief.

BEP Deputy Directors, Associate Directors, Chiefs, and Managers are permitted to conduct routine and operational communications with their functional area counterparts at the Department of the Treasury, peers within other federal agencies, and existing customers without OEX review. This includes routine business and reporting requirements. Any questions regarding which communications should be reviewed by OEX should be directed to the OEX Chief.

4.0 REFERENCES

- 4.1 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [Part 2635](#), "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch"
- 4.2 5 United States Code (USC) [§ 7321](#), "Hatch Act"
- 4.3 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 0, "Department of the Treasury Employee Rules of Conduct"

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5.0 SUPERSESSION

This circular supersedes Circular No. 40-00.4, "External Relations Policy," dated February 10, 2012.

6.0 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Official Communications: Messages in any format that contain official information transmitted on behalf of the BEP to the external audiences.
- 6.2 Official Information: Information created or received by the BEP in the course of conducting Government business.
- 6.3 External Audiences: Any audience outside the BEP. It includes, but is not limited to, traditional and social news media – see Section 6.3.1, Congress, other elected and/or appointed officials, other federal government agencies, state and local governments, elected or official representatives of foreign nations, external agencies, private commerce, the general public, numismatic organizations, artists – see Section 6.3.2.
 - 6.3.1 News media are recognized local, regional, national, and international television, radio, print, and internet news media outlets, their reporters, producers, photographers and videographers. Freelance reporters, professional and amateur internet bloggers, and internet information sites are considered and treated as news media.
 - 6.3.2 Artists include filmmakers, advertising agencies, sculptors, novelists, writers, playwrights, and others participating in the creative arts.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Chief, OEX

- 7.1.1 The BEP Director delegates the day-to-day managing of external relations programs and policies to the OEX Chief.
 - 7.1.1.1 External contacts and inquiries of a non-routine nature or those that have policy implications shall be handled and coordinated by the OEX Chief.
 - 7.1.1.2 The OEX Chief, on behalf of the Director, will disseminate policy guidance on:
 - Identification of sensitive issues and designate appropriate spokespersons;
 - External correspondence, which falls within the scope of this circular; and
 - Telephone or verbal communication with Congress, elected and/or appointed officials, representatives of other agencies, foreign nations, and representatives of the media.
- 7.1.2 Unless otherwise assigned by the Director, the OEX Chief will also coordinate the following releases of information:

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- 7.1.2.1 Congressional and general correspondence including responses to inquiries forwarded to BEP from members of Congress, the Department of the Treasury, other agencies, or the general public to include numismatic or general information;
 - 7.1.2.2 Press/media, Congressional testimony, and all other public/private held events; and
 - 7.1.2.3 Clearance of speeches, articles, or similar communications about BEP prior to their release outside of the BEP.
- 7.2 The Office of Compliance is responsible for reporting and coordinating requirements with the Department of the Treasury's Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office.
- 7.3 The Office of Acquisition (OA) shall refer to guidelines for communications with potential BEP contractors and vendors; these guidelines are detailed in Section 4.0 of Circular No. 70-06.1, "Receipt and Handling of Unsolicited Proposals." In addition, OA established guidelines regarding the release of procurement information within and outside of the BEP (see Circular No. 70-06.14, "Disclosure of Procurement Information").
- 7.4 The Office of Security will respond to all routine inquiries from all outside entities/government agencies relating to law enforcement investigations. Inquiries of a non-routine nature that could potentially have an impact on the organization should be brought to the attention of the OEX Chief by the Chief of Security or designee.
- 7.5 The Office of Chief Counsel processes all requests for BEP records received pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and/or Privacy Act (PA). Unless otherwise officially authorized to do so, no BEP employee or contractor other than the Disclosure Officer may release records of the BEP, in whole or in part, under the provisions of the FOIA and/or PA. The Disclosure Officer will make the final determination on what records are properly releasable under the FOIA and/or PA.
- 7.6 Deputy Directors, Associate Directors, Chiefs, and Managers shall refer to OEX any incoming and outgoing official communication covered by this circular to external audiences. However, as previously stated, they are responsible for routine and operational communications with their functional area counterparts at the Department of the Treasury, peers within other federal agencies, and existing customers. This includes routine business and reporting requirements.
- 7.7 BEP employees and contractors shall refer to their respective Managers any incoming and outgoing official communication to external audiences covered by this circular. Employees or contractors may contact Congress in their personal capacity without OEX involvement.

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8.0 GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

- 8.1 OEX employees and contractors are required to comply with applicable Federal law and regulation when managing BEP's official communications to external audiences.
- 8.2 Any BEP employee or contractor having contact with or receiving an inquiry regarding BEP activities from anyone outside of BEP covered by this circular shall refer that person to the OEX Chief or their designee. BEP employees must be aware that this guidance applies while on BEP premises, official business, or off-duty. If the contact is made during hours when the OEX is not staffed (i.e., evening or midnight shift and weekends), the BEP employee shall send the request via email to the OEX Chief. An OEX representative will respond to the person as soon as possible.

9.0 PENALTIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE

OEX employees and contractors who fail to follow this circular, or BEP employees or contractors who release official communications covered by this circular to external audiences without OEX's permission, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal.

10.0 OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

Office of External Relations

<electronically approved>

Leonard R. Olijar
Director