

MARYLAND JUDICIARY COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOLS

APPROVED BY JUDICIAL COUNCIL
JANUARY 20, 2016

rev. 11/6/17

THESE PROTOCOLS WERE APPROVED BY THE COURT ACCESS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON DECEMBER 14, 2015, AND PRESENTED TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION. ON JANUARY 20, 2016, THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE PROTOCOLS FOR JUDICIARY-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION.

overview	3
media relations	4
visual identity	5
email banners	6
graphic standards	8
typefaces	9
communications	10
website	11
social media	11
attachments	12



COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOLS FOR THE MARYLAND JUDICIARY

Good communication is a vital part of the Maryland Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all. This includes communication with each other as well as with our justice partners, the media, and the public we serve. We want to promote knowledge and understanding of the Judiciary, strengthen our own and the public's awareness of programs, projects, services, and initiatives, and provide effective and efficient communications within the Judiciary and to the public. Open, clear, and useful communications help build the public's trust and confidence in the judicial system.

These protocols address how we should communicate with each other and the public through print, email, video, and digital communications. They are intended to establish consistent standards and expectations regarding the development, production, and distribution of Maryland Judiciary communications.

All Judiciary-wide and public communications must be approved through the Judiciary's **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIVISION (GRPA)**. GRPA will work with the internal departments and the appropriate subject matter experts, such as judges, committee chairs, court program managers, etc., to ensure accurate information and provide final editorial review for all Judiciary materials. GRPA will process any changes through the subject matter experts and will seek final approval from the State Court Administrator and/or the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, as appropriate.

The Maryland Judiciary should speak with one clear, accurate, authoritative voice. The Maryland Judiciary has many messages to communicate to a variety of audiences, but needs to let people know that all messages are from one united Judiciary, even when the communication is about a particular court or program. Each program and individual court represents the Judiciary as a whole.

GRPA serves as the hub for large-scale internal and external print, video, email, Web-based, and electronic communications. The office works under the direction of the Programs Division Assistant Administrator, the State Court Administrator, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. GRPA works with courts, programs, departments, and other colleagues within the Judiciary to ensure that Judiciary-wide and/or public communications serve the Judiciary's mission and are clear, consistent, timely, and well designed.

4 communications protocols

The remainder of this document provides instructions and additional information about working with GRPA on the following:

- Visual Identity (Judiciary Seal)
- Media Relations (Press Contacts, News Releases, and Public Information Act Requests)
- Banners for Email Communications
- Graphic Standards (Colors, Type, and Layout)
- Judiciary-wide and Public Communications (Graphics, Editorial Support, Leadership Review)
- Website Content (CourtNet/Intranet, Judiciary Website mdcourts.gov/Internet)
- Social Media Communications (Under Development)
- Attachments (Maryland Judiciary News Release Template, Communications Request Form)

For more information, please contact Kelley O'Connor, Assistant Administrator for Programs, at 410-260-1560 or kelley.oconnor@mdcourts.gov. For assistance with communications efforts, contact the Government Relations and Public Affairs Division at 410-260-1488 or communications@mdcourts.gov.

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Government Relations and Public Affairs Division responds to media inquiries and Public Information Act (PIA) requests and issues Judiciary news releases.

Media inquiries and PIA requests: Media inquiries and PIA requests that are received by phone, email, or in person will be vetted by GRPA for consult with the appropriate subject matter expert, court executive and/or judge to formulate the Judiciary's response. GRPA will work with subject matter experts, court executives and/or judges, when appropriate, to serve as spokespeople in responding to media inquiries. GRPA will process and respond to PIA requests, coordinating with other departments and divisions as needed.

GRPA supports judges and other court leaders, upon request, during cases of high media interest. However, judges and other elected court officials may choose to engage in public relations activities, such as public celebrations, local ceremonies, photo opportunities with local officials, or partisan activities that do not require GRPA involvement. If you have questions, please contact GRPA for guidance.

NEWS RELEASES

Draft news releases can be written by GRPA or by the subject matter expert, the person in the court, program, division, etc., who is sharing the information for the news release. Here are the steps:

1. GRPA receives a request for a news release or identifies a Judiciary matter that might be of interest to the media or the public.
2. GRPA writes the draft after interviewing the subject matter expert and anyone else who needs to be interviewed. If the court/program, etc., writes the news release, they send it to GRPA. GRPA makes sure the draft is clear, on point, sounds like it comes from the Judiciary, and fits Judiciary and Associated Press style guidelines. GRPA may advise for or against issuing a news release in some circumstances.
3. GRPA sends the draft to the subject matter expert, who gets it approved by all appropriate authorities, including the administrative judge or the assistant administrator for the AOC division, and, where appropriate, the Chief Judge of the Court of Special Appeals or the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland.
4. When GRPA gets the approved draft back from the subject matter expert, GRPA will make sure it goes through final editing and approval by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and will distribute the final news release to the media and post it on the Judiciary's website.

The attached Maryland Judiciary News Release Template provides more information about the basics of writing a news release, what a news release should look like, and how it is formatted. If you are viewing this online, see the template here.

VISUAL IDENTITY (JUDICIARY SEAL)

The Judiciary has images, typically called visual identities, which create our Maryland court system brand. These include individual court seals (District Court, Circuit Courts, Court of Special Appeals, Court of Appeals) and the new Judiciary seal, which replaces the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) seal and can be used throughout the Judiciary:

- Individual court seals are to be used solely for the purpose of conducting official court business.
- The Judiciary seal should be used by all entities operating under the authority of the State Court Administrator for the purpose of conducting internal and external business functions and official communications.

Visit <http://courtnet.courts.state.md.us/seals/index.html> to access the Judiciary seal.



- The Judiciary seal should be used for Judiciary-wide initiatives, external communications, and business operations. The Judiciary seal should be clearly displayed and not smaller than 1" wide on printable pieces or web pages. If the space is less than 1", the wordmark described below is to be used instead of the seal. Consult the Government Relations and Public Affairs Division (GRPA) for all specific images including vendor file requests such as vectors and reverse type.

WORDMARK

A WORDMARK is a text only logo. It can be made with type or inserted as an image file. Don't use the Judiciary seal if it is too small to be readable. When there is not enough space for the seal — at least an inch — use the Judiciary WORDMARK - MARYLAND JUDICIARY in Calibri Bold, all caps, black and blue accent 25% darker on both WORD and OUTLOOK font color drop downs.

If a WORDMARK is needed as an image file for web or vendors, contact the Government Relations and Public Affairs Division.

Banners for Email Communications

New banners that feature the Judiciary seal have been approved for mass communication emails from the six AOC divisions. Additional banners are also available for Maryland Judicial Council committees. A mass communication email goes to a large audience such as the entire Judiciary or to a large email grouping within or outside of the Judiciary. Except in emergency situations, all mass communication emails, their purpose, expected delivery date, and text, should be coordinated in advance through GRPA. GRPA will obtain final approval from the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or State Court Administrator for all mass communication emails prior to distribution.

To obtain the new banners and instructions about how to use them, contact the Government Relations and Public Affairs Division at 410-260-1488 or communications@mdcourts.gov.

MARYLAND JUDICIARY

MARYLAND JUDICIARY
mdcourts.gov

MARYLAND JUDICIARY

MARYLAND JUDICIARY
mdcourts.gov

Sample banners:



Government Relations and Public Affairs Division



Administrative Office of the Courts

Information Technology Division



Administrative Office of the Courts

Programs Division



Administrative Office of the Courts

Internal Affairs Division



Administrative Office of the Courts

Judicial College of Maryland



Administrative Office of the Courts

Operations Division

GRAPHIC STANDARDS

Colors

The Judiciary color palette is taken from the Judiciary seal.



Primary colors

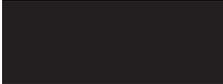
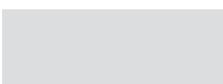
Judiciary Red (PMS 200 and 193, uncoated stock)

Judiciary Blue (PMS 7692)

Black

Accent colors

Light blue (PMS 645),
yellow/gold (PMS 124), and
gray (15 percent of black)

primary				
				black
				pantone 200
				pantone 286
accent				
				pantone 124
				pantone 645
				black 15%

PANTONE	R	G	B	HEX
200	196	30	58	c41e3a
286	46	85	164	2e55a4
124	218	146	51	da9233
645	131	162	196	83a2c4
black 15%				e5e5e5

Judiciary Red

Judiciary Blue

Black

Aim for similar colors.

Minimal color usage is usually the most effective. When choosing colors, consider the best options to convey your information clearly and effectively.

Easy to read typefaces

The two styles of type are known as “serif” or “sans serif”:
Select a font size that can be read easily by the intended audience.
For sans serif fonts, use a 10-points or larger font; for serif fonts, use 11-point or larger. Avoid italics and all caps.

Following are suggestions:

Sans serif

Good for all purposes. Use for headings when body type is serif and for email and online texts

Arial
Calibri
Tahoma
Verdana

Serif

Primarily use for paragraph text in printed documents)

Caslon
Minion
Palatino
Times New Roman

Layout

- Avoid complicated layouts and unnecessary decoration.
- Avoid exclamation points.
- Avoid use of more than 3 fonts.
- Larger images have more impact than small ones.
- Make sure you have permission to use any images, including images you found online.
- For PowerPoint, limit the amount of text on each slide. Instead of crowding, add another slide.
- Do not use watermarks behind large blocks of text; they need white space to be legible.



Images

Contact mary.brighthaupt@mdcourts.gov in the Government Relations and Public Affairs Division for professional layout and design assistance, including help in using images in communications.

Avoid the use of clip art, emoticons, emojis, motivational or personal quotations, or affirmations.

JUDICIARY-WIDE AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Government Relations and Public Affairs Division provides planning, conceptual development, project management, writing, editing, photography, art and graphic design, and print purchasing services for brochures, newsletters, promotional materials, etc., as well as video and other audio-visual development, planning, and production services. All mass communications, internal and external, should be done in coordination with GRPA.

GRPA serves as the hub for Judiciary-wide and/or public communications including print, video, email, Web-based, and electronic. In order to prevent duplication of efforts and inconsistent messaging, GRPA will work with courts, programs, departments, and offices to coordinate content, production, and distribution efforts.

Use GRPA's [communications form](#) to help establish the purpose, audience, number of copies, and distribution of any proposed communication such as a newsletter, brochure, email announcement, or video. It should be used when you are thinking about creating a print, video, or electronic communications product for wide internal or external distribution by email, on the Judiciary's website, or on the intranet.

Requests for a Judiciary-wide or public communications effort will be considered carefully based on priority, available staff time, and consistency of message within the framework of the Judiciary's mission and goals.

The ideal schedule to prepare communications such as brochures, news releases, and major email messages allows ample time for creation, edits, approvals, resolving scheduling conflicts with other projects, etc. Whenever possible, please allow for four to six weeks to prepare major communications. GRPA, however, will make every effort to comply with tighter deadlines.

GRPA depends on the requestors to provide accurate and timely information. Adequate lead time is also necessary to accommodate project planning, scheduling conflicts, re-edits, and reviews at multiple levels.

Website Content

If communication efforts include information on the Judiciary's website, the court, program, division, etc., that is the source of the communications effort is considered the subject matter expert and is responsible for making sure the information posted on the Judiciary's website is up-to-date and accurate. The court, program, division, etc., should review Judiciary website content regularly, and in-depth at least twice a year, and let GRPA know what changes need to be made. For more information about how to submit corrections, contact GRPA's webmaster at 410-260-1488.

Social Media Communications

The Judiciary's social media policy regarding the use of social media by Judiciary staff is online at: <http://courtnet.courts.state.md.us/judicialcouncil/policies/socialmedia/socialmediapolicy.pdf>.

News Release Template

Maryland Judiciary
Government Relations and Public Affairs Division
2001 E-F Commerce Park Drive
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-260-1488

CONTACT:

Name and email of contact in GRPA who will answer media inquiries

Phone number of GRPA contact

Month, date, year

For Immediate Release

Headline Goes Here (Initial Capital Letters)

Subheadline (if any) goes here – initial capital letter followed by lowercase, like a sentence

(TOWN OR CITY, Md. – Month, day, and year news release is distributed)

The short lead sentences go here and include the most important information and/or the most interesting part, sometimes called the “hook.” The second sentence provides the next most-important information.

The rest of the news release provides important/interesting details and follows in a few more paragraphs, including information and quotes.

“Quotes should come from the most authoritative sources,” said Title Name.

“Quotes, if any, should sound like they are part of an interview, and should not just repeat the information, but provide further information or an opinion about the value of the information.”

Make sure to split up quotes from different people with a short paragraph like this.

“The second quote can go here,” said Name, title. “Try not to quote more than two people.”

News releases should be short. They cannot include everything. You are trying to let the public know about something in a very short amount of space, or you want to intrigue the media to do their own interviews for an article they create. The media will probably not run your news release verbatim and will almost never use all your information. Make sure the most important information is at the top: media editors frequently use just the first couple of paragraphs.

If you want the reader to act on the news release, that information is traditionally included in the last wrap-up call-to-action paragraph, with short instructions on how to act. The most common call to action goes something like this: For more information, contact the Government Relations and Public Affairs Division at 410-260-1488, or email communications@mdcourts.gov.

Communications Request Form

Office of Communications and Public Affairs
 2001 B/F Commerce Park Dr.
 Annapolis, MD 20678
 Phone: 410-260-1488
 Email: communications@mdcourts.gov
 Date Requested: _____
 Date Needed: _____

Communications Request Form

Responsibilities

Your Tasks:

- Request publication in a timely manner
- Complete the Communications Request Form
- Provide draft copy in a Word document
- Review design, provide feedback, obtain proper approval

Tasks for the Office of Communications and Public Affairs include:

- Review Communications Request Form
- Proof copy and edit text to be consistent with Judiciary style
- Design publication/video
- Secure printing estimates based on design
- Provide recommended printer
- Finalize design for approval
- Prepare files for printer
- Review and approve for distribution or printing

The purpose of this form is to provide the Office of Communications and Public Affairs with a detailed description of your project request. Our goal is to have a complete understanding of your needs and the intended audience so that we can create the best possible product.

Production schedule: Because publications range in size, text, purpose and complexity, the time for design and printing varies. *Please provide us with as much lead time as possible (4-6 weeks).* Please be aware that video productions may take longer depending on the scale and complexity of the project. This form can be emailed, mailed, or delivered to the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at the address listed above.

Please complete the information on the back of this sheet.

Name of Project

Desired Delivery Date

Office Requesting Publication

Contact Person

Type of project:

- Brochure Email Newsletter Photography/video Website initiative
 Other _____

This project is:

- New Reprint with changes Update of outdated publication
 Other _____

Quantity:

Estimated quantity for the next year: _____
Reprinting involves additional costs. Estimate your print need for 12 months of distribution.

Description of project:

- Briefly describe the proposed project and its purpose:

- Who is your primary audience?

- How are you planning to distribute the final project?
 Website download Print Flash Drive DVD
 Other _____

- **This project has been edited and approved by:**
Name: _____
Title: _____
Contact information: _____

Text for project: Requestor will provide draft text in a Word document by: _____

Photography/Video Assignment Request

Office of Communications and Public Affairs
 State of Maryland Judiciary
 Judicial Education Conference Center
 2001-E/F Commerce Park Drive
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 410-260-1488

Date:

Name of requestor:

Department:

Contact information: (office phone number, email, after-hours cell phone)

Shoot Information

What are we photographing/video recording?

Event/subject:

Shoot date:

Start time:

End time:

Shoot contact:

Phone:

Email:

Shoot location:

Shooting Directions:

Supporting Materials Attached: (meeting agendas, event program, brochure, etc.)

Special instructions: (type of photography wanted, formal portrait, candid, group shots, podium shots, and or special shooting instructions for video):

Photo/Video Usage

How will the photo/video be used?

Print only (what publication?):

Web and Print:

Web only (what Web site?):

Historical/archival use:

PowerPoint presentation:

Play on a DVD only:

File and Delivery Information

Needed by:

Name of publication:

Type of publication:

Other:

Format:

Color:

Method of delivery:



**Maryland Judiciary
Government Relations and
Public Affairs Division**

**580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-260-1488
communications@mdcourts.gov**