

Navigating Today's Changing Media

WHAT A REPORTER WANTS AND WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL THEM

Why would a reporter want to speak with Probation/Parole?

- ▶ Crime/court stories are widely-read
- ▶ Supervision details
- ▶ Juvenile case/process details
- ▶ Someone on supervision gets a new charge
- ▶ Not likely for a 'good news' story
- ▶ Mass incarceration myths
- ▶ Opioid epidemic impact on P/P

What should I tell the reporter?

- ▶ Never lie or conceal
- ▶ Being vague, but truthful, is OK
- ▶ Avoid 'no comment' as your only comment
- ▶ Control the narrative – you have the sought information
- ▶ Be aware that media coverage amplifies an issue/topic
- ▶ Don't feel required to answer every question
- ▶ Do it on your terms (i.e. email me the questions)
- ▶ Never do a cold interview ("Let me know your angle, I can gather the info and get back to you")
- ▶ ALWAYS assess whether you should say anything at all, or refer to another agency

Strategies & Tactics

- ▶ Be aware of their angle - ASK
- ▶ Never do a cold interview
- ▶ Do it on your terms (you have the info!)
- ▶ Off the record ever?
- ▶ Avoid 'no comment' as only comment
- ▶ No obligation to answer everything
- ▶ Assign someone as media liaison and make sure they are available
- ▶ When to be proactive v. reactive
- ▶ On-camera makes a story bigger
- ▶ Know what you can say (coordinate/consult with DA; Be careful not to potentially prejudice a jury)

Today's Reporter

- ▶ Crime/court topics are very popular
- ▶ Gotcha/watchdog journalism
- ▶ Anti-establishment reporting/reporting with bias
- ▶ **Fair & accurate** becoming **fast & controversial**
- ▶ Reporters are generally confused by the P/P process, which can be dangerous; provide info on basics of process and procedure
- ▶ Keep in mind what the reporter wants v. what is best for your agency

Press Releases/What to Publicize

- ▶ What deserves a press release?
- ▶ Publicize your good work! Don't count on media for that (bad news gets a LOT more views)
- ▶ Consider direct communication to the public (social media)
- ▶ Platforms for your messaging/input/response
- ▶ Make the release newsy and easy to read (avoid instant narrative)
- ▶ When to be proactive v. reactive
- ▶ Include a contact for any follow-up questions