



sample

Youth Advocacy Program's Communication Policy

This is a sample document to outline protocols and procedures for the use of photographs, speaking requests, and name use/anonymity for young people. Questions about this policy can be directed to Youth Advocacy staff and Communications Staff.



Juvenile Law Centers Photo Use Values

It is critical to Juvenile Law Center's mission that we follow standards to uphold our organizational values. We believe in youth empowerment, and do not want to exploit young people or use their photos in ways that are disconnected from their work and involvement. We are aware of ways in which photographs can be used irresponsibly to uphold dangerous and damaging stereotypes. We also know that sometimes even when photos are used without the intent to harm, they can still cause harm. We endeavor to be mindful in our practice. We recommend that agencies engage in the same practice of recognizing the harm of photos, and the lack of concise media policies that respect an individual's wishes on how, and when their photos are used.

It is imperative before starting any program, all youth receive an image release form- and any other necessary forms- and that staff members take the time to review them with young people in their programs. Our Youth Advocacy Program staff orient all our youth advocates in our program and review all our forms, including our media release. Youth should always be able to opt not to sign a release form and choose to not have any of their photos shared. If the young person or their guardian signs the release form, every document should be kept for safe keeping in a hard, or online file. Juvenile Law Center program staff scan, and store in an online storage system all youth documents.

Use of Names & Anonymity

If a youth advocate is younger than 18, Juvenile Law Center will only use the youth's first name in public spaces or will title them anonymously. Youth advocates and program alumni who are older than 18 will be asked whether they would like to have their names used publicly through Juvenile Law Center and will be asked their preferred name. However, if Youth Advocacy Program staff and Communications staff feel that there may be concerns about using their full name, staff will discuss the challenges around publicly identifying their full names. With press, the Youth Advocacy Program staff and Communications staff may request that only the youth advocate's first name be used in the publication or communication. In some instances, anonymity will be requested. If a Youth Advocate is younger than 18 and press insists on using their full name for a particular story, the Youth Advocacy staff, Communications staff, and the youth advocate (and when necessary, an adult who is responsible for the youth advocate) will have a conversation about whether or not to move forward with the story's coverage. For youth advocates who are older than 18, the decision to permit the usage of their full name remains at the young person's discretion. The Youth Advocacy Program staff and Communications staff will consult with the young person to assist them in making an informed decision.

Developing Your own Media Releases

Please see a sample below of the language Juvenile Law Center uses in their media release form. This form was updated to be a fillable version. Agencies can choose to use and update the language for how it best pertains your agency to use for their young people.

Tips on Language:

If organizations are hoping to develop their own media releases, we strongly recommend that the “purpose and use of” language is specific only to the work that young people are doing within organizations. We also recommend having attorneys and HR personnel view the document before finalizing and distributing to young people. *We do not recommend using language in media releases that allows for the copying, and or distribution of children, youth, or adult photos for “any” agency purpose. Done carelessly that kind of photo use can be harmful, exploitive, and triggering.

Examples of appropriate and acceptable photo usage at Juvenile Law Center:

- Projects that youth advocates have worked on
- Celebrations coming up related to Juvenile Law Center’s work as a whole
- General Juvenile Law Center brand and marketing materials, including the website
- Social media celebrating the Youth Advocates’ work or related accomplishment
- Recognition of specific events, such as Foster Care Awareness Month IF youth have helped to write a related blog for the month or offered to share a story, etc.
- Retroactively, if the use of the photos is connected to project-specific work the youth were involved in Fundraising specifically for Youth Advocacy programs

Photos cannot and should not be used for the following:

Any publication that is not directly related to the Youth Advocates’ work or the Youth Advocacy Programs in general. Such publications may include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs and emails from staff about issues that Youth Advocates did not assist
- or work on Fundraising letters and emails
- Articles and blogs for other outlets
- Issue reports
- Social media posts
- Presentations (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.)

For all of the above listed items, fair use photos that are available on the internet should be used. Staff should speak with a JLC Communications staff member if they have questions about fair use photos.