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**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
FOI/Records Management Section  
8701 Morrisette Drive  
Springfield, Virginia 22152

SEP 25 2014

Case Number: 14-00665-F

Subject: Requesting a digital/electronic copy of the most recent DEA Communications Plan, etc.

This letter responds to your Freedom of Information/Privacy Act (FOI/PA) request dated August 17, 2014, addressed to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Unit (SARF), seeking access to information regarding the above subject.

Based upon all available information, we have determined that DEA's Office of Congressional and Public Affairs (CP) is the office that may have records responsive to your request. Accordingly, your request letter was forwarded to CP and the processing of your request identified certain materials that will be released to you. The documents are being forwarded to you with this letter.

The rules and regulations of the Drug Enforcement Administration applicable to Freedom of Information Act requests are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 28, Part 16, as amended. They are published in the Federal Register and are available for inspection by members of the public.

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV 2010). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

If you are not satisfied with the response to this request, you may administratively appeal by writing to the Director, Office of Information Policy, United States Department of Justice, Suite 11050, 1425 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001, or you may submit an appeal through OIP's eFOIA portal at <http://www.justice.gov/oip/efoia-portal.html>. Your appeal must be received within sixty (60) days from the date of this letter. If you submit your appeal by mail, both the letter and the envelope should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

If you have any questions regarding this letter, you may contact Paralegal II, Ms. Branch on 202-307-7611.

Sincerely,



Katherine L. Myrick, Chief  
Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Unit  
FOI/Records Management Section

Number of pages withheld: 0

Number of pages released: 10

Number of pages referred: 0

Number of pages consulted: 0



May 2010



## ***A Strategic Communications Plan for the Field***

***Congressional & Public Affairs***

*From the Administrator*

*Over the past 35 years, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has evolved from a small, domestic-oriented law enforcement agency to an international organization having a global presence. Now recognized as the world's leading drug law enforcement agency, and the only single-mission federal agency dedicated to drug law enforcement, our reputation and success can only be attributed to the outstanding and collective contributions of the men and women of DEA. Today, DEA remains at the forefront in combating global drug trafficking, drug-related terrorism, and other transnational crime, improving our national security, and increasing the quality of life for the American public.*



**Michele M. Leonhart**

*DEA has proven that we can—and are—destroying powerful drug organizations. DEA's ability to hunt down major drug traffickers has been our signature. We have seized record amounts of drugs, cash, and assets, which has had tremendous impact—from fewer drugs on the street, to millions of dollars kept out of the hands of criminals and terrorists, to fewer dangerous drugs in the hands of our children, and less violence in our communities. Every day, this agency shuts down criminal networks, bolsters national security, and restores peace and safety to countless grateful families. As we move forward, we will continue to focus on the following vision:*

- *Disrupt and dismantle the major drug trafficking supply organizations and their networks  
- including organizations that use drug trafficking proceeds to fund terror*
- *Attack the financial infrastructure of drug trafficking organizations*
- *Prevent the diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances and listed chemicals from legitimate channels, including the Internet, while ensuring an adequate and uninterrupted supply for medical, commercial and scientific needs*
- *Enhance the collection and sharing of intelligence to predict shifts in trafficking trends, to identify all components of the major drug supply organizations, and to support counter-terrorism*
- *Strengthen partnerships with our domestic and foreign law enforcement counterparts to maximize the impact of our worldwide operations*
- *Support drug demand reduction initiatives and provide assistance to community coalitions and drug prevention officials*
- *Develop future DEA leaders who reflect the richness of diversity in America.*

*I am proud of this agency and our many accomplishments. As I reflect on where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going, there is much to celebrate yet more to accomplish. As we address the threats and challenges that lie ahead, DEA must continue to exploit technology, intelligence, and operational strategies to cripple the global drug trade and contribute to the well-being of the American public and the world population. As we remain vigilant in our mission, focused on our targets, and continue to work with our global partners, we will achieve continued success.*

### **Foreword:**

This document outlines DEA's national public affairs strategy for DEA field and headquarters staff. It defines DEA's public affairs mission and provide practical guidance. As such, this guide focuses on how to strengthen DEA's interaction between field divisions and headquarters and to present a powerful, nationally coordinated voice and a positive public image to key audiences. Accordingly, the Office of Congressional & Public Affairs (CP) recommends the following concepts to guide us in meeting those objectives:

#### **DEA must be less reactive and more proactive in our Congressional, media and public relations efforts.**

In media relations, that means trying to lead the news or develop stories that DEA wants to develop, not just react to it. For our Demand Reduction initiatives, that means actively building a network of coalitions with trade organizations, interested public, and schools to strengthen our shared anti-drug message to the media, government officials, youth, and other target audiences as well as develop a network willing to support DEA policies and positions core to our mission.

#### **DEA needs to develop and retain a strong system of internal communications.**

This is especially important between headquarters and the field. To have an influential and powerful external message, we must first have a strong, coordinated, and clear *internal* message. This means information must flow freely, not just a monologue from headquarters to the field, but a dialogue that includes proactive communications from the field to headquarters. The left hand must know what the right is doing-at all times.

#### **The Office of Congressional & Public Affairs must coordinate our national message.**

DEA must speak with one synchronized voice rather than with many fractured and unaligned messages. This requires the Office of Congressional & Public Affairs to create easily accessible resources for DEA's people in the field who have public affairs responsibilities so that they can promote DEA's message and, equally important, stay "on message." Several instances in the immediate past suggest that we are more likely to have a positive public image when our efforts are coordinated between headquarters and the field. *Project Coronado* is an operation that highlights how effective a highly coordinated national message with the media can be. Another good example is the press coverage DEA received from *Operation Xcellerator*. Because of coordination between the Houston Field Division, headquarters and the Department of Justice we were able to get high visibility in the media for that operation.

## **A Pro-Active Strategy**

The most essential improvement that needs to be made to DEA's public affairs strategy is the development of a more pro-active approach to the public that is often filtered through the media they see, their representatives which they elect, and community groups to which they belong. If we only react to the news, others (often those who do not support DEA's mission and objectives) will shape our public image. Whether the DEA chooses to actively engage in the public debate or not, that debate will continue with or without us.

A public affairs strategy is not a matter of grabbing headlines, or trying to claim credit; it comes down to our ability to assist DEA in fulfilling its mission successfully.

A strong public affairs strategy combines media outreach with community outreach, with our PIOs working hand-in-hand. To influence the mindset of key stakeholders, DEA cannot go it alone. Our PIOs often work through the filter of the media because that is where most people get their news. They have the ability to take our message directly to the public, unfiltered through the media.

We need to use tactics that work, including an on-message, disciplined organization of media outreach combined with message control. For example, when the American people know the facts, the vast majority support DEA and are against marijuana legalization. We must take the initiative, encourage their participation in the debate, provide them with the information and resources they need, and have a consistent, effective message ourselves.

## **Tactical Guidance**

To help PIOs do their jobs effectively, here are a few important suggestions on steps that should be taken if they haven't been implemented in your duty station already:

### **Media Relations**

- **Division websites:** Every field division has its own website to post news releases and other pertinent information. Most reporters, and increasingly the general public, go straight to the Internet for background research and information. DEA is considered a reliable, important government source for information. We must be part of the media mix with accurate, timely information delivered in a format the media and public can use.
  - Note: Your websites must continue to be marketed locally if they are going to have an impact. PIOs need to think about ways to make your site worth visiting. That can be done by constantly posting new information about topics of local interest including arrests, trends in regionally significant illicit drug trends, border violence, and other timely, hot topics.
- **DEA news releases** need to be sent out in a timely, consistent way. Our releases should prominently feature well-written, tightly worded quotes from SAC's. Doing so ensures that the media will note DEA's role in the case and pick up our quote or comment. It's important to write releases like an AP story, not a police report. They must be short, to the point, with the newsworthy aspect right at the top.

Each outreach effort and every press release should be geared toward making it easy for reporters to understand why our event and/or information is newsworthy, and why they should cover it. Follow with a quote from the SAC or field management, and then provide details. *Remember to always try to put your law enforcement operation into a human context.* Any editor will be looking for statistics, but more importantly, they will want to know how the statistics and the crimes behind them affect their readers. If you need guidance, headquarters can send you some great examples of recent releases that illustrate this approach.

- **Referrals to other agencies:** Any time a reporter has a question about a drug issue the strong preference is to try to provide the answers in-house. We want DEA to be seen as *the* authority in the fight against dangerous drugs. On the other hand, we want to increase our cooperation and build relationships with our law enforcement partners. If the topic is best addressed by other law enforcement agencies and out of the purview of DEA's mission, we should make the attempt to direct media to the appropriate agency in a structured, strategic and reciprocal way.
- **Regular background briefings and editorial board meetings:** These briefings may result in news stories; however they also serve a function of building relationships with important news outlets and reporters who cover topics of interest to DEA. Are you exasperated that the media doesn't discuss with you our perspective on "medical marijuana?" Or the impact that diverted prescription drugs are having in your community? Have you sat down and discussed it with members of the media that cover these stories? Local newspapers will respect your knowledge if you treat them with respect. Ask to sit down and talk to them--and let us at headquarters know you're doing so because we can provide you with up to date talking points and information.
- **Regular op-ed pieces.** (See the next section on coordination of message.)
- **Reach out to non-traditional media:** For example, through initiatives such as Spike-TV's series "DEA," the agency has reached out to the movie and television industry to provide them more accurate information and to encourage fair portrayals of DEA and the fight against drugs in their productions. Also, you might want to consider reaching out to targeted audiences through a specialty publications such as *Police Chief Magazine*, anti-drug publications, blogs, or electronic publications.
- **Reach out to non-traditional supporters** for media events. It's important to put our enforcement operations into a context the public can understand, and have our messages in places where our target audience will see them. Where possible, find sources outside of DEA, perhaps a victim of drug crime, or the leader of a community affected by drug gangs and abuse to attend media events so that reporters and the public can be reminded that your story—the story of drug abuse, trafficking and crime—affects our communities, streets and individuals. Give the price paid for illicit drug trafficking a human face.
- **Coordinate news conferences and news releases:** When a story transcends local news, we should use the full scope of DEA's public affairs resources to get the message out. This includes not just headquarters events, but when your field office has an important news event you should work with headquarters to craft the message, so that together we can deliver your story to a regional or a national audience.

- **Use video and still photos to your advantage:** They are essential to telling our story. Not every instance or investigation will allow for video or still photos to be used, however wherever possible we should try to illustrate our story with graphics and pictures. Headquarters Audio-Visual is available to assist in any video editing or video production that is needed if your field division doesn't have the capabilities. In many cases, operations and cases will get attention not on their merits alone, but because there is something tangible for the public to see.

A number of other day-to-day tactics will be detailed and highlighted on CP's internal website on Webster and in CP's new electronic newspaper to all employees titled *DEA Today*. We are also re-working DEA's Public Affairs Training and Resources Guide to help the field with public affairs (see the section under "coordination" for more details).

### Demand Reduction and Outreach

One key responsibility of the Demand Reduction section is to coordinate and engage proactively in outreach and coalition-building activities. DEA is a relatively small agency, and if we are going to effectively influence public opinion, then we must work with other anti-drug and pro-law enforcement organizations that are organized and on the ground. They interact with the media and public on a regular basis in their communities, and are intimately involved in them. The number of neighborhood anti-drug coalitions in this country is huge, and not as organized as they could be. If we can help them by assisting them in their communications efforts, then we can achieve the shared goals of building local, state, and national support for the fight against drugs and for DEA.

Primary responsibilities of the Demand Reduction staff include:

- **Building DEA's network of contacts with coalitions:** Headquarters generally works on national initiatives, while field divisions work at the state level. HQ does this by providing the Field with a steady stream of useful, up-to-date information that helps keep them informed. In return, the Field can help HQ by:
  - Alerting HQ when DEA is doing an event and needs people to rally and show support.
  - Sending messages directly to the public, unfiltered by the media.
  - Using relationships with local organizations to quickly and forcefully respond to inaccuracies in the media.
- **Becoming an information clearinghouse and resource center: Demand Reduction crafts resource/information materials,** such as DEA's award-winning websites *GetSmartAboutDrugs.com* and *JustThinkTwice.com*; and publications like *Prescription for Disaster: How Teens Abuse Medicine*, *Drugs of Abuse* and *Speaking Out*. Through their regular contacts with anti-drug coalitions, headquarters staff are in a unique position to assess trends and know what type of information and on what subjects is most needed. Headquarters outreach uses their network of contacts to distribute information nationally, just as the DRCs in the field should do at the state and local level. DEA, through Demand Reduction, provides information based on our extensive knowledge and experience with drugs to the broad army of anti-drug interests nationwide. We can help them with our information, and they can help us with their numbers.

- **Representing DEA at conferences and events** where we can train others to effectively fight against the misuse of illicit drugs. Our priorities in attending these events includes:
  1. Training others, or to get training.
  2. Building DEA's network of coalition partners.
  3. If DEA isn't providing training and the event is local or regional in nature, local DEA representatives rather than headquarters staff should plan on attending important partner conferences and exhibitions.
- **Participating in community-public speaking and outreach opportunities:** DEA representatives can give drug-awareness presentations to youth, parent, and educational organizations, etc. Headquarters can provide PowerPoint Presentations for you to modify for your specific audience, posters and display materials for your use, and publications for you to distribute.
- **Encouraging partners to sign up to Dateline DEA.** DEA headquarters publishes Dateline DEA, an external electronic newsletter every two weeks. Already more than 17,000 individuals and media outlets receive this compilation of the most significant DEA activities, reminding them of DEA's top stories. The newsletter also links back to full stories on DEA's national and division websites, giving us an opportunity to reach this broader audience with even more information.

Note: In order to get your division's information on DEA's national and division-managed sites, please be sure to send all division news releases, demand reduction initiatives, and other important stories and materials to headquarters as soon as possible so your site has the most important information available and is kept up to date.

#### **Congressional Affairs**

- While the federal government is located in Washington, DC, most of the action that catches a member of Congress's attention takes place on the ground in their district. They might read the *Washington Post*, but they clip the articles from the local paper, be it the *Dallas Morning News* or the *Seattle Times* or the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. They respond to what is happening in their house district or their state. They listen closely to the local police department and to community leaders in the towns, villages, and cities that they represent.

As a result, we need to be sure that clips about drug problems or the good work DEA does in their districts and with local and state law enforcement makes it to their desks.

For example, while the Congressman and Senators from New Jersey care about what DEA is doing on the Southwest Border, they certainly are paying attention to (or should be made aware of) a demand reduction initiative like *Operation Medicine Cabinet*, the extremely successful one day takeback program in New Jersey in which every county in the state took part.

By coordinating your releases with Congressional Affairs at headquarters, we can be sure to forward it to the appropriate congressional office.

- Division offices need to make sure that state fact sheets (drug trends on their division and national websites) are kept up to date. Congressional staff, along with reporters, drug coalitions, and the general public will use the statistics and information we put on these pages as a key source of information. If Members of Congress get bad or dated information, or very little information, then their perception of the work that the DEA does in their states will be negatively affected. On the other hand, if the site is a useful resource to them, we will gain even more support from Congress.

### **Coordination and Communication**

For DEA to stand out among competing voices in potential news stories about illicit drugs and drug law enforcement, we must coordinate our efforts nationally. To do this, we need a robust and timely method of communicating internally between our divisions and between divisions and headquarters. New York needs to know what Miami is doing, and Los Angeles needs to know what Houston is doing, and so on down the line. Rather than creating random and isolated news hits, we need to develop a consistent, national drumbeat on the topics we want to promote.

Another reason for having a strong system of internal communication is so that offices can trade ideas on what works (and what doesn't work), share intelligence, explore new and emerging trends, and spark new ideas/approaches to continuing challenges.

Furthermore, once we have settled on a position, we need a good means for distributing talking points so that we are all on the same page and all saying the same thing. It's not helpful for one office to have one position while another office is saying something that may be different or even inconsistent with headquarters or other divisions. Words matter. We should put our heads together, come up with the best talking points on any given issue, and then get those talking points out to everyone.

It is headquarters' job to quickly and comprehensively get out the unified message the Acting Administrator has prioritized at any given time. However, it is the field's job to drill it down, make sure that they are looking for it, and implementing the needs of the organization.

*What headquarters is doing to make you more effective and make your job easier?*

Keeping you in the loop with:

- **Internal e-newsletter:** DEA's internal e-newsletter *DEA Today* provides, in a colorful format, news about DEA and its employees worldwide.
- **Daily News Clips:** Get the day's top news stories about illicit drugs and DEA every day from around the country. Looking at this first will give you an awareness of important media coverage that impacts the news environment and DEA's place in it.

Helping you stay on message through:

**DEA.gov:** DEA's website is one of the most crucial tools at our disposal. Not only is it the only 24-hour face of DEA for the public, it is a key resource for DEA's management of public affairs. Every position that DEA headquarters takes on any public issue is articulated there, and it is updated daily. Use it as a guide to help with public events, speeches, press conferences, and interviews in your region, and use it as a location that the general public and the media can go to for official positions and current news about DEA.

On the DEA homepage you will find:

- **Resources for important ongoing DEA-led programs** (like the clan lab registry, takeback programs, and HGH/Savia/internet pharmacy trends), as well as for ongoing public affairs debates (like legalization).
- **The best arguments and facts from Agents and Analysts across the nation.** Steal information freely from the website--all the content has been pre-approved. Remember, DEA.gov is not just a resource for the public; it is a resource for you.
- **Leaflets, handouts, talking points, logos, posters, pamphlets, charts, and other important materials designed by DEA's professional graphics department** is available for you to print out and distribute at conferences, schools, or any public events you attend, both at the homepage, through Webster, and directly from DEA's graphics department.
- **Division websites** are also accessible from DEA.gov to promote what the DEA is doing in your region of the country. You don't need to design the page—just send the information to us, and headquarters will post it.
- **Dateline DEA:** Anyone can sign up for this by visiting DEA.gov and providing their e-mail address. Promote this.

**Webster:** Congressional & Public Affairs is updating and redesigning its page on Webster. There you will find:

- **PIO Resources and Training Guides:** These guides will help you create news releases, op-eds, and other public affairs resources.
- **Graphics resources:** You'll find dozens of logos and hundreds of photos from past operations and events on the CP site on Webster for your use.
- **News release templates:** Including standard news release templates that you can use to plug your news into. By using these forms you will help maintain a consistent look for DEA.
- **Sample op-eds:** Headquarters has a writing team dedicated to researching and writing editorials and op-eds for DEA. We will be posting these op-eds on Webster. Division PIOs should take these op-eds, localize them (local/state/regional information and stats), put their SACs name on them, and submit to local newspapers. This will maximize your impact with minimal work, and help DEA push our message out to the public.
- **Sample letters:** PIOs can use letters to the editor to distribute to supporters via our e-mail network to coalitions, law enforcement, anti-drug groups, and other partners. We provide the facts and the information, while they provide the context and the force of numbers.
- **Successful Projects:** Did your division find a particularly good way to deal with a public relations challenge, or a technique that has worked to get a message out successfully, from Red Ribbon Week to conducting damage control? Send your idea to headquarters so we can post it on the Successful Projects page so you can you're your fellow PIOs how you did it.

### Keep the Strategic Initiative

DEA is a national organization with local roots around the country, so let's make sure we are sharing our local resources nationally to maximize our impact. Good ideas are our best resources, so please join us in doing all you can to help DEA and assist your fellow agents in our important work.