

Media Inquiry and Interview Request Policy

Henderson County Board of Elections

Effective Date: September 15, 2026

Policy Owner: Henderson County Board of Elections

1. Purpose

This policy governs how the Henderson County Board of Elections responds to media requests for information and interviews. Its purpose is to ensure the agency provides accurate, timely, and well-prepared responses to the public.

2. Scope

Applies to all employees, officials, and staff who may receive a request from a journalist, reporter, or news outlet for information, comment, or an interview.

3. Submitting an Inquiry or Interview Request

All media inquiries and interview requests must be submitted a minimum of 24 hours prior to the interview to the Elections Director at sheatherly@hendersoncountync.gov and the Elections Assistant Director at atroutman@hendersoncountync.gov, and must include:

1. Reporter's name, outlet, and contact information
2. Topic or subject matter of the inquiry
3. Specific questions the reporter intends to ask, submitted in writing in advance
4. Deadline for response
5. Format requested (written statement, phone interview, in-person interview, on-camera, etc.)

4. Advance Notice of Questions

- To ensure the agency provides accurate and complete information, media outlets are asked to submit their questions in writing before an interview or response is scheduled.
- Responses will be prepared based on the questions submitted. The agency reserves the right to decline or reschedule interviews where questions were not provided in advance, at the discretion of the Elections Director.
- If a reporter asks follow-up questions during an interview that go beyond the submitted topics, the spokesperson may decline to answer on the spot and follow up in writing afterward.

5. Employee Responsibility

- Employees contacted directly by media should not respond and should forward the request to Elections Director/ Assistant Director as soon as possible.
- Employees should not speculate, offer personal opinions as agency positions, or answer on the agency's behalf unless specifically authorized.

6. Response Process

1. Elections Director/Assistant Director logs the request and reviews the submitted questions.
2. Relevant staff or subject-matter experts are consulted to prepare accurate responses.
3. A designated spokesperson is identified and, where applicable, briefed with prepared answers.
4. The response or interview is scheduled once materials are ready, within the requested deadline where reasonably possible.

7. Information That May Be Withheld

Certain information may not be provided in response to an inquiry, including matters under active investigation, pending litigation, confidential personnel information, or records otherwise exempt under applicable public records law. Such requests will be reviewed with Legal Counsel as needed.

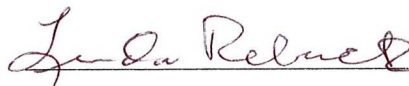
8. Crisis or Emergency Communications

1. During an emergency, crisis, or incident involving significant public interest, all media inquiries are routed through the Henderson County Chief Communications Officer.
2. A single, consistent set of talking points will be developed and approved before any spokesperson addresses the media.
3. Employees on-site during an incident should not speak to media and should direct reporters to the designated spokesperson or a safe media staging area.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Elections Director and updated as needed by the Henderson County Board of Elections.

ADOPTED this 15th day of Sept., 2026, by unanimous vote.



Linda Rebuck, Chair