

PIO NETWORK SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES



INTRODUCTION

These guidelines establish a statewide policy with regard to the use of social media within the context of judicial business. They are intended to provide guidance to Public Information Officers and/or their designee on the use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media tools used to disseminate information and engage with individuals and partners. The way the public and media receives information is changing every day. Social media can help update people in a timely and efficient manner.

Social media offers courts the ability to communicate with a large audience to:

- a. Provide real-time information about the Court, news, and events;
- b. Uphold the integrity of the judicial process and independence of the judiciary;
- c. Improve access to Court services;
- d. Promote transparency and accountability;
- e. Improve the administration of justice;
- f. Communicate the value of the third branch of government;
- g. Increase public engagement with the Courts; and,
- h. Drive followers to the Court's website for additional information and resources.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

The social media site administrator(s) designated by the Court shall:

- a. Use the official Court-approved account when responding. Do not use personal accounts to respond to inquiries or postings.
- b. Be the only person(s) posting content. They are responsible for monitoring, managing, and removing (when necessary) any posts that do not meet the established rules/guidelines. They shall:
 - i. Designate two or three backup administrators to monitor and post to accounts in case the primary administrator is unavailable. The primary administrator will provide account login information to designated employees.

- ii. Passwords and administrative access on all platforms will be changed whenever an authorized employee ends their employment, changes jobs to a position that is not authorized for access to social media accounts, or has access privileges revoked.
- c. Post at least once a week, if not per day.
- d. Comply with the Code of Judicial Conduct.
- e. Take careful consideration when removing/hiding content posted by the public as it can be a violation of user rights.
- f. Post a User Agreement and Disclaimer on the social media site and/or your website.
- g. Accept the social media provider's terms of service as a responsibility of each agency.
- h. Link back to the Court's website when possible.
- i. When taking pictures of groups, let them know their picture may appear on social media (but no specific person should be identified unless it is relevant). Note, when taking pictures of students, ask permission from the teacher to take and use images of the students. Explain how you intend to use the images. Verbal consent is OK. If you take a group photo to post, ask the teacher to identify any students you are not allowed to photograph.

It is good practice to AVOID posting:

- a. Confidential or non-public information.
- b. Political activities (personal or those of judges), including events or stories that include judicial candidates.
- c. Events not open to the public (can share post-event).
- d. Your own opinions.
- e. Anything that violates city, state, or federal laws or regulations.
- f. Endorsements of products, private businesses, causes, or political candidates.
- g. Copyrighted material without permission.
- h. Anything that constitutes non-public Court business.
- i. Anything that would make the Courts look as if they are partial to a cause one way or the other (Ex. Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Victims Awareness Month).

Examples of good topics to post on social media:

- a. New Court certifications (Ex. Drug court)
- b. Adoption day stories
- c. Photos and stories of judges volunteering in the community
- d. Judges who have received awards for their work inside or outside of the courtroom