



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Strengthening Sustainability and Community Support Through Local Media

It is often appropriate to do personal acts of service in secret. However, your organization is not about just one person or an individual reputation. It is about the people you serve and the whole community. When friends, neighbors and civic leaders come to understand what your organization is doing and what a difference it makes to people in need, your work can inspire the entire community. This makes it much easier to enlist volunteers, raise funds, and generate broad support for your ongoing efforts.

What are the benefits of gaining media coverage?

- Greater public awareness makes you more accessible to people in need of your services.
- Volunteers and donors support organizations that are well known and understood.
- When other non-profits, government agencies, or businesses seek partners for new projects or services, your organization will come to mind.

What kinds of occasions warrant contacting your local media?

- Receipt of an honor or award by your organization, or a positive news story elsewhere.
- Significant new funding, such as a private, federal, state, or local grant.
- A major success by one of your program participants.
- Important changes, such as service expansion, a new program or new leaders.
- Significant events, such as a fundraiser, open house, or "graduation" for your clients.

What do I need to do to prepare?

- Identify a spokesperson. A spokesperson helps the media understand your organization and provides quotes for stories. This person should have a strong grasp of the organization's purpose and work, and should feel comfortable speaking to reporters.
- Put together a Media Kit. A Media Kit is a packet of information prepared for reporters, editors and others, and consists of a folder containing key information on your organization. A good Media Kit can include:
 - A description of your organization's history, work and purpose
 - Positive statements or endorsements by respected figures and organizations

- Pictures, stories, and/or testimonials that capture the heart of your work
 - Clippings from previous positive news stories, if available
 - Information on your leadership, potentially including biographical
- Put together a local media Contact Lists. This includes reporters and editors of local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Record names, phone numbers, and preferred method of receiving news releases (either a fax number or email). Over time, it is important to develop positive, professional relationships with these individuals.

How do I gain coverage?

- Prepare a press release. The release should be no longer than a single page and include:
 - The name and phone number of your contact/spokesperson
 - An attention-grabbing headline describing the "news"
 - Several paragraphs answering WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHEN? HOW?
 - One or two quotes from a member of your organization or an outside figure
- Fax or e-mail the release to your media contacts.
- Follow up with each media contact. An hour or two after sending the release ask if they received it and have any questions. If they did not receive it, offer to resend.
- If inviting media to an event, provide a compelling visual. Reporters seek images that help tell their story. A compelling visual or background—such as a graduation ceremony for participants or volunteers hard at work—increases media interest in your story.
- If inviting media to an event, call the media outlet the morning of the event to ask if they will attend. This provides a reminder and lets you know who will be there.



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