

It's important to build relationships with your local media outlets and their reporters. By doing so, you make it easier to spread the word on the importance of local decision-making and establishing yourself as a key resource for local government issues. Knowing how to effectively interact with the media will help make your message easier to share:

KNOW WHAT THEY WRITE ABOUT.

Find out which reporters cover what beats. Understand how they write and the issues they seem to cover most often. Also, check their social media feeds, so you can understand what interests them outside of work, allowing you to better connect with them.

DON'T BURY THE MAIN IDEA.

Make your story pitch interesting and compelling. Try to grab the reporter's attention and focus on an issue their readers would be interested in. Use media tools like press releases and media advisories and get to the point quickly in what you send. In this 24/7 news cycle, things move fast. If the reporter has to dig in your press release to find the story, you've probably already lost their attention.

USE INFLUENCERS.

When using a letter to the editor or an op-ed, it's important to focus on who the most appropriate person would be to author it. An elected official? A business leader? A community activist perhaps? Choose the author wisely.

RESPECT DEADLINES.

Reporters have less time to work on stories these days because they have more stories they need to write. If they reach back out to you regarding a story you pitched, make sure to respond as quickly as possible. They are acknowledging the importance of your story by touching base, so do them and yourself a favor and help make it the best it can be by responding!

TRADITIONAL MEDIA TOOLS



MEDIA ADVISORY:

A media advisory is a one-page sheet that alerts reporters to an upcoming news event. It provides a compelling preview of what will be shared but not the actual news itself. It should be sent out a few days before the event and followed up with a phone call.



OP-ED:

An op-ed is a column or guest essay – about 500 words – published in the **opinion** section of the newspaper, on or opposite the **editorial** page. This tool should be timely, present strong arguments and be authored by a well-respected community leader considered knowledgeable on the subject.



PRESS RELEASE:

A press release announces breaking news and should be written like a news story. To stay relevant, this tool should be sent out as soon as possible after the actual public announcement of the news you're sharing.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Letters to the editor are short, timely responses to recently published articles or commentary. This tool allows you to offer a short rebuttal or add a crucial missing perspective. Most letters are 150-250 words.