

MEDIA OUTREACH

Media Advisory

The purpose of a media advisory is not to tell the complete story, but instead to entice media to attend your event to learn more. If your event will feature a photo opportunity that local media may wish to pursue such as the finish line of a fundraising race, you may want to include a line in your advisory highlighting the photo opportunity to encourage media attendance. Both print and broadcast media have a need for compelling visual images in their stories.

Writing a Media Advisory

A Media Advisory template, which can be customized as needed, is provided below. You may use this template as the basis of your media advisory, making sure to edit it as necessary — particularly updating all placeholders to customize it for your event.

When writing your media advisory, keep it short (no more than a page). The most essential components are the details of the event: what it is, the location, the day and time it will begin, who is participating (mention local civic and policy leaders, etc.).

It is crucial to include a contact name and telephone number that media can call in advance.

Distribution

As a general rule, send the advisory to local media outlets in your community two weeks before your event. Here are some other suggestions for successfully distributing your advisory:

Daybooks

Daybooks are internal calendars of upcoming news events that are kept by wire services, such as AP, UPI and Reuters. Daybooks are daily listings of all activities that media are invited to attend: they are not read by the general public.

Use an Internet search engine to find a list of national newswire services. (e.g. Associated Press, Reuters, etc.)

Contact each newswire's local bureau for your city or state. Ask for the name and fax number of that bureau's Daybook Editor.

Fax your media advisory, asking the editor to place it on the newswire's daybook in three places — the week before, the day before, and the day of the event.

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Media Advisory (cont.)

Week-ahead Columns

Contact local newspapers and business publications that feature upcoming activities, asking them to place your advisory in their week-ahead columns or calendar listings to encourage community members to attend your events.

Week-ahead columns reach a wider audience because they are published in local newspapers and business publications.

Create a media list

Your list of media outlets must be accurate and up to date to effectively reach reporters with your story. Check your local library or bookstore for media directories of daily and weekly newspapers, television stations, radio stations, newswire services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters, and business trade publications in your community.

Examples of media directories include Bacon's directories, the Yellow Book, and The Gebbie's Press All-In-One Media Directory. Use the phone book or the Internet to supplement your list.

Once you have developed a list of phone numbers and addresses, call each outlet to verify the information and to determine which editors and reporters, such as health reporters, are the most appropriate for your news.

Create a list with the name of each media outlet, its address, telephone number, fax number, and the names and titles of specific reporters or editors who cover substance use disorder treatment and health-related issues. Most reporters and editors prefer information to be e-mailed to them, so secure an e-mail address when possible. When calling to verify contact information, you also should ask about the best time to call each reporter about your event (i.e., how far in advance/what time of day).

Include specialized media on your list, such as African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or other minority newspapers or radio stations. Other specialized media include university/college newspapers; television, cable, and radio stations; small community papers or neighborhood newsletters; and publications produced by local organizations, such as businesses, hospitals, women's centers, health care clinics, professional associations, mental health organizations, churches and other faith-based institutions, drug stores, and local civic clubs.

Follow up. After you e-mail or fax the media advisory, contact reporters by phone to determine their interest in attending and/or covering the event. This type of personal effort often can make a difference in generating media interest.