



Press & Traditional Media

When announcing your grant to the public, promoting an event, or sharing the results or final products of your project, working with traditional media like newspapers, magazines, radio, and television is an opportunity to reach a broad audience in your community and across the country. Below are suggested steps, assets, and media engagement strategies for your press outreach.

Building a Media List

Pitching your story to the right press is key to getting press coverage for your project. With the target audiences you identified in your strategy phase in mind, research and select outlets and reporters that are trusted by those audiences and whose coverage is relevant to your work, location, and field.

Here are tips for building a media list – journalists, reporters, bloggers, and outlets you will contact for your story:

- **Select the Target Audience:** Who needs to read/hear this story? Where do they get their news most often?
- **Research Subject Coverage:** How and where are similar projects being covered? Which journalists and outlets are reporting on this subject? What is the readership and social media following of the outlet and/or reporter?
 - Search social media and search engines like [Google News](#) with key terms for coverage of your subject and field.
 - Whenever possible, look not only for the outlet but a reporter whose beat aligns with your project.
- **Create a List:** Build a document with each outlet/reporter, contact information, coverage area, and any notes about their work that will determine when or if you should contact them with your pitch.
 - It's important to update this list regularly to be sure you have the correct information when pitching.
 - Document outcomes in this list – Did they pick up your story? Was it effective and/or well received? Let this determine who you will pitch to again, or not, down the line.

Media Research

In addition to the resources shared above, these websites, tools, and tips are useful for finding outlets and reporters to pitch your story to:

- [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#): This map and searchable database includes more than 1,500 public radio and television stations in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- [National Public Radio \(NPR\)](#): NPR maintains a searchable database of all member stations and their websites for both broadcast and digital coverage.

- **Muck Rack:** This PR and journalism tool maintains lists of radio and television stations, magazines, newspapers and more by state and city. The searchable database ranks these outlets by audience and note what is a local or national/international outlet. In addition to location-based lists, they provide topic-oriented lists if your goal is to connect with an invested audience.
- **Newslink:** This free website provides a variety of resources to find local and topic-relevant outlets, as well as global news sources.
- **Google News:** Google News aggregates coverage and can be used to research coverage of your grant project's subject area. Search key terms, relevant scholars or public figures, and media outlets to compile a list of reporters or outlets who cover the topic and may be looking to cover a story like yours.
- **Chambers of Commerce and Tourism Boards:** Many cities, towns, and states maintain publicly available lists of all major news outlets. Check their website or contact their press office for help.
 - **Example:** [Durham, North Carolina](#), provides a list of all major local outlets, reporters and their beats, circulation and publication schedules, and contact information.

Press Releases & Media Pitches

There are two primary ways to approach the press with a story – press releases and media pitches. Both should be part of your communications plan as your project evolves.

Press Releases

- A press release is a formal announcement of something newsworthy, written generally for a variety of journalists covering your subject or field, as well as the broader press, that can be used to produce a story with little follow up with your organization.
- Press releases answer who, what, when, where and why, following this format over 1–2 pages (ideally one):
 - Headline, Sub-headline, Dateline
 - Lead – The essential information for your story
 - Body – Additional information about the story
 - Quotes – From spokespeople, project leadership, etc.
 - Boilerplate – Brief description of the organization
 - Contact Information – This should be consistent across media outreach
- When to send a press release:
 - When you have major news to share with a wide audience (ex: awarded an NEH grant)
 - When you are announcing a partnership with an organization (joint statement)
 - When your project is complete and has results/products/findings that the public can engage with
 - When you have more information to report than can be achieved in a standard media pitch (150–400 words)
- **Examples:** NEH Press Releases are [available here](#).

Media Pitches

- A media pitch is a short, personalized message, typically an email, sent to a journalist proposing your story for coverage.

- Media pitches are shorter than press releases – according to [Muck Rack](#) 91% of journalists prefer pitches under 200 words – and should generally include the following:
 - Personalized greeting to journalist that shows an understanding of their work.
 - 2-3 paragraphs outlining the story and answering the journalist's questions of, "Why should I cover this and why would my audience care?"
 - Call to action – set up a phone call, organize a press visit, etc.
- When to send a media pitch:
 - When you want to secure a profile or interview for a team member.
 - When you want to directly contact a specific journalist to cover the announcement in your press release.
 - When you don't have an announcement but see a timely opportunity for coverage (eg: National Arts and Humanities Month in October).

Editorial Calendar & Timelines

Unlike social media, which can move quickly and at your project's pace, the press requires more advanced planning to report on your project. Before beginning outreach, put together a calendar with your target coverage date and deadlines for assets like press releases, photography and video, website content, and social media content that you want to use in your pitch or to be posted when the story is slated to go live for maximum impact.

When planning your calendar, there are several factors to keep in mind:

- For events and other coverage that need advance notice for the story to run effectively, you want to start press outreach 3–5 weeks in advance to ensure your audience can get the information and act (i.e., get tickets, register, etc.).
- For same-day announcements via press release, aim to have all assets live on your website and on social media accounts immediately following the release.

Press Kits

A press kit outlines the essential details of your project, products or findings, team, and any relevant media like photos and videos. Press kits are designed to give journalists the background they need to produce coverage, saving time for all by ensuring accurate information is readily available.

For ease of use, your press kit should be posted online as a PDF or a webpage, and all large files like images and videos should be available for download, not sent via email. In general, press kits should include the following elements:

- Boilerplate Description
- Team Bios, Photos, & Quotes
- Logos
- Fact Sheet
- Contact Information
- Social Media Links
- High-resolution Photos
- Infographics (if applicable)
- Videos (if applicable)