

QUICK TIPS: UNDERSTANDING & ENGAGING THE MEDIA

MEDIA AT A GLANCE

The media operate in a 24/7 news cycle in a largely digital environment. In order to gain interest for your information, engage journalists, broadcasters, and internet publications with content that includes one or more of the following.

- Unique news (e.g., events, policy changes, discoveries).
- Trends and milestones, such as anniversaries.
- Facts and figures to help put a story into perspective.
- Local angle to make news relatable to community members.
- Human interest pieces that bring the news to life.
- Exclusives that allow an outlet to be the first to report the story.

NEWS RELEASES

Decide where to send your news. Start by researching outlets and organizations that are likely to be interested in your information. For larger media outlets, research reporters who write about issues related to older adults. Distribution outlets include:

- Local newspapers and TV stations (community news or health care reporters).
- Industry trade publications, including magazines and newsletters focusing on nutrition.
- Other publications, such as magazines, that focus on seniors (assignment and feature editors).

Also note that industry partners and related organizations often have their own publications or are willing to post news or guest articles and blogs. Reciprocate by sharing their news, if you can.

Distribute your news via formal release. If you want to send out an official news release, you can send individual emails to reporters or use a formal service, many of which are free or low-cost. Try searching for "press wire" or "newswire." If contacting a reporter directly, keep in mind that many news organizations do not accept email attachments for security reasons. Insert your release directly into the body of the email.

Compare your release against this checklist. It's important that you include key information and check your material for clarity and quality.

- Confirm that your designated contact's information is correct and ensure that person is available to field inquiries once your news is issued.
- Ensure all hyperlinks and mail-to links are active and correct.
- Include page numbers on releases longer than one page (avoid releases over two pages).
- Include a federal funding and/or other disclaimers as required.
- Conduct a final proofread. Ideally, this is done by someone who has not seen it before.

INTERVIEWS

If your program is asked to participate in an interview, be sure to select a spokesperson who is informed, credible, and articulate. You should also identify someone who is dependable and has the time to be responsive to requests.

Interview Best Practices

- Know your end goal and always keep your audience in mind.
- Prepare three key points to make and develop supporting statements.
- Stay on message.
- Do not offer opinions or speculate.
- Use plain language – be clear and concise.
- Be conversational.
- Do not talk about things outside your expertise.
- Pivot out of difficult topics using phrases such as, "You raise a good point, but..."
- Remember, everything is on the record.