

How to Get PSAs Placed

Working with your local media

Working with Your Local Media

PSA Directors (PSDs) receive many PSAs in a typical month and have indicated that they place a priority on PSAs that benefit their local community.

The majority of donated media time and space is given by the local media. While the government requires the broadcast media to conduct public service, it does not require a specific amount. And since the demand for advertising is high, the media does not donate as much time and space to public service advertising. That is why grassroots involvement in campaign outreach can have a critical impact.

As community advocates, you have a unique opportunity to reach out to local PSA Directors to convince them that these messages are important to their audiences.

What Can You Do?

You can play a role in raising awareness not only by sharing the PSAs with your networks through social media, but also by contacting your local Public Service Directors and encouraging them to run these PSAs. Local media directors listen to their residents and community-based organizations, and they are more likely to run PSAs that address issues that matter most to their viewers. Make it known that this issue is essential in keeping their communities healthy and safe.

Take the following steps:

1. Appeal directly to the PSA Directors
 - a. Meet with them personally to develop a relationship, or leverage an existing relationship you may have
 - b. Maintain contact with them to reinforce the importance of the issue (e.g., sending news articles or info as appropriate, checking in at key time periods, offering to be an issue expert for their next show/interview, etc.)

MEDIA TIPS:
News and Talk radio stations are typically most supportive of PSAs. They may also be willing to have someone from your organization on the air for an interview, especially when the issue is in the news.

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2. Demonstrate the issue's importance to the local community
 - a. Share statistics that have local relevance
 - b. Talk about events taking place in your area
3. If applicable, offer your expertise as a resource to the media
 - a. Be available for interviews
 - b. Offer local statistics and research
 - c. Provide information for their news station web page and social media
4. Point out the benefits of the PSA to the media outlet
 - a. The PSA issue complements the station's programming or news angle
 - b. It improves the image of the media in the community
 - c. It provides high impact advertising for otherwise empty space or time

Develop a List of Targets

Concentrate on the local TV/radio stations/newspapers and magazines/websites that the people you want to reach watch/listen to/read/visit. Think about who are the local cable providers - these companies provide the local media.

Media Type	Description	Who to Contact
Television Broadcast affiliates Independent stations	These stations produce their own local news and also sell advertising to local businesses. Many of these stations are affiliates of a broadcast network like ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, WB or UPN. For instance, in Atlanta the ABC affiliate is WSB-TV. Be sure to contact the staff at your equivalent of WSB-TV and not at the national ABC television network.	Public Affairs Director Community Affairs Director General Manager
Cable Cable systems	Call the company listed on your cable bill, and try to contact all the cable systems in your area. Cable stations often have more time available to broadcast PSAs.	Advertising Director Marketing Director General Manager

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Radio	Contact the radio stations that reach your target audience. Radio stations are formatted for very specific audiences.	Public Affairs Director Community Affairs Director General Manager
Newspapers	Newspapers are the most difficult medium in which to place PSAs, because they can print only the number of pages needed to fit the articles and paid advertisements for that day. Try to persuade local papers to use these ads in a meaningful and timely way. For instance, if there is a relevant local event, suggest placement of the PSA.	Director of Advertising Editor-in-Chief

Initial Contact with the PSA Director

The first time you contact (by phone, email or letter) the media in your community, try to set up a meeting. You'll find that PSA Directors are generally people concerned with the community and may make time to see you.

In the initial phone call, introduce yourself and explain that you would like to meet to discuss your organization's role in the community and the campaign. Be prepared to suggest a date and time and several alternatives.

Introduce Yourself

Once you locate the right person, contact them with basic information on the campaign.

- Tell them why you are writing or calling (I want to meet with you, I want you to run these PSAs)
- Give them two or three vital statistics pertinent to your community
- Inform them of any recent news stories that focus on the issue
- Briefly explain the goal and strategy of the campaign and how it will benefit their viewers, listeners or readers (refer to national outreach email)
- Personalize the issue for the PSA Directors (frame the issue around a local event or the media outlet's programming)
- Outline next steps (set a meeting date, send the PSA)
- Provide your contact information

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Prepare an educational campaign packet to bring to your meeting. The packet can include:

- Letter to the PSA Director
- Fact Sheet that includes local stats and facts
- TV Storyboard and TV/Radio Scripts
- DVD and/or a broadcast quality version (beta-SP tape) of the TV spot or video (i.e., for online use)
- CD of Radio spot and Radio Scripts

The Meeting

When you meet with the media, you need to know what you are asking them to do, and what you are trying to accomplish. Do your research - you want to find out what social issues are important to the company you are visiting, how they support those issues, and events that they sponsor. This may uncover an opportunity for you to partner on an event or respond to an incident in your community.

Do...

- Show & discuss the PSAs
- Share any positive results (either locally or from another community that aired the PSAs)
- Make a personal connection
- Point out local relevance constantly

Don't...

- Assume they understand the issue
- Be unprepared...know the goals, benefits and materials available
- Give up!

Sample Questions:

- Does your station/newspaper/magazine/website have a specific policy regarding public service advertising?
- Are you focusing on any particular public service or community initiatives?
- Are there opportunities to partner with you on upcoming events?
- How can we be a resource to your station?

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Be Prepared – Possible Responses to the Campaign

We produce our own station campaigns.

Let's work together. We can support and enhance your public service initiatives by providing up-to-date information and research as well as local resources (i.e., 1-800-number, websites, etc.). We can be a resource for you.

We have a policy against supporting any PSAs

Try to find out why. This policy may be based on a misconception. Mention that this is a campaign/program funded by the Dept. of Justice. You want to express that the campaign is credible and of high quality.

This is not an important issue to our community.

Discuss the issue on a local level. Share statistics and results that you have seen in the community since the onset of the campaign. Leverage a recent or poignant news story.

Follow Up

After your meeting or phone call, follow up.

- Send a thank you note to your contact
- Provide any follow up materials that you promised
- Keep in touch with your contact as events and relevant news stories occur

Questions?

Please contact Leiana Kinnicutt at lkinnicutt@futureswithoutviolence.org.