



Media Outreach Tips

Following are some quick tips for generating media coverage during AmeriCorps Week. These will you a general idea of the various ways you can reach out to the local media, as well as the timing involved, which should help you plan the overall process.

In the next several weeks, we will also be making available on this site a number of sample materials specific to AmeriCorps Week, including:

- Local Template Press Release
- AmeriCorps Week Op-Ed
- Letter to the Editor
- Radio PSA Reader Copy
- Community Calendar Listing
- AmeriCorps Week Fact Sheet
- AmeriCorps 'Message Points'

All of the above materials will be easily adaptable to your particular program's needs and the particular media you are trying to reach.

If you would like more extensive general guidance about working with the media, please consult *Sharing Your National Service Story: A Guide to Working With the Media*, which can be found on the web at http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/Media_Guide.pdf. Alternatively, the 36-page guide is available at no cost from the Corporation for National and Community Service; to order, please go to <http://www.nationalservicepubs.org/content/itemDetails.asp?strItem=CNA140&FormName=ItemDetails>.

Target Press Sooner Rather Than Later

If you do not already have a good press list, start assembling it now. The list should include:

- Top editor, city editor or community editor of local paper(s)
- News editor, station manager, public affair producer of local TV
- News editor, station manager of local radio
- Online editor/manager for locally-focused web site(s)
- Editor(s) of special interest weeklies or monthlies
 - Business
 - Nonprofit/volunteering
 - Regional (e.g. *New Jersey Monthly*)
 - Special demographics (e.g. seniors, young people, etc.)



Create a Publicity Plan

Don't wing it! Write down a plan for how you will generate media to support your organization's participation in AmeriCorps Week. It should include:

- Timing of events
- Timing of and tools for media outreach
- Target media list
- List of documents/invitations/signage that you will need to create
- Main message for your organization
- Primary spokesperson for your organization
- Who is responsible for what

Plan Any Special Events with the Media in Mind

You might love 8 a.m. breakfast events, but in general, the media works late and sleeps late. A few quick tips about planning an event with the media in mind:

- Lunch or early afternoon is an ideal time to attract press and still have a chance to make the evening broadcast news.
- Make sure you have logo identification for AmeriCorps and/or your organization as a backdrop to the key photo opportunity.
- Invite the media at a time when action is happening, not just speeches.
- Give local press enough lead time to plan their schedules to attend.
- Make sure to call broadcast media the morning of the event as final coverage decisions are typically made on the same day.

Write Down Your Main Messages Ahead of Time

No matter how comfortable you are talking about your organization and AmeriCorps, it is always helpful to prepare a short document summarizing the main points you want to convey. Share this with any staff or volunteers who could conceivably be approached by the media during your event to ensure that the organization communicates a consistent message. (NOTE: To help in this important effort, we will be preparing and posting a sample message document in the next several weeks.)

Be Creative and Original!

The media is inundated with requests for coverage of news and events. When creating your event and then preparing your press materials, look for creative ways to break through the clutter. While you obviously cannot sacrifice the seriousness of your organization's purpose and the mission of volunteering/service, you should be as original as possible in your planning.

Use the Tools That Are Available

A variety of media outreach materials, including press kits, are currently available to AmeriCorps grantees from the Resource Center, AmeriCorps, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and perhaps a group with which you are affiliated. Consult them now and take the best ideas from all to help create a successful event!