



VIRGINIA
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Public Relations 101

Public relations is the art of using various techniques to communicate with various audiences about your project.

Steps for Success

Step 1: Identify your key audiences.

- Project partners?
- Donors or potential donors?
- Patients/clients?
- Local or state officials?
- General public?
- Other?

Step 2: Determine what information you want to communicate.

- Project impact and value (*data re: patients served, money saved and/or generated, health outcomes, other project achievements*).
- Feature story describing some key aspects of a project
- General description of project (*what it is/does, target population, hours, community partners/supporters*)
- Special events for the project (*dedication, grand opening, etc.*)

Step 3: Select the most effective medium for communicating the topic to the targeted audience

- Television
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Newsletter
- Magazine

Step 4: Make contact in the appropriate way

- *Media Alert*
- *Press Release*
- *Phone call to reported*
- *Letter to the editor*

Step 5: FOLLOW UP. It is very important to build relationships with media contacts. Make sure you always follow-up with a phone call after submitting a press release or media alert.

Helpful Hints

- Always know the message that you want to get across through each media activity. Use data to make your case when possible.
- Recruit college students majoring in communications, local ad agencies, or public relations professionals to help you with your efforts.
- Respond promptly if a reporter calls.
- Follow-up with reporters who are not able to attend the event.
- During an interview, provide the reporter with relevant data, facts, and statistics. Stay focused on the point(s) you want to make. You can often shape a story.
- Use television when you know you will have good visuals. Be prepared to only get 10-15 seconds of coverage.
- When using the newspaper send digital photos with press releases and include the full names of the individuals pictured.
- Use any good press to help promote your project.
 - Send copies of articles to donors, community partners and other significant players in your project.
 - Keep a notebook or file of all of your press coverage.
 - Create an “In the News Page” on your website. Post all press releases and provide links to publish articles or video highlighting your project.
- Send copies of articles to funders as soon as you get them.