

APPROACHING A RADIO OR TELEVISION STATION

Whenever possible, send a personalized email about your club's news to the appropriate person at the radio or television station you are targeting. You can include a press release in this email, but the body of the email is the most important part of the communication. Address the person you are sending the email to by name and give them a reason to cover your story. Follow the email up in about a week with another email or a phone call.

If you want coverage for your club outside of events, activities, and other newsworthy items, you can position someone in your club as an expert with regard to your cause. Find a local or subject-matter tie-in, then approach the station you have in mind about making an appearance. Community and public radio stations are great places to target. Look for their local interest programs and segments. If someone from your club appears on a show and does well, he or she could become a regular.

Call the station's newsroom to find out general information, such as deadlines. (Event news, for example, may need to be received several weeks before the actual event.) The newsroom line can also direct you to the correct contact for your club's news. Check the station's website to find its newsroom phone number.

Within your club, you may have someone with media contacts. Always ask if anyone in the club has those connections. If so, ask that person if he or she is willing to pitch stories on the club's behalf.

Before appearing on a news program, be prepared. Have your talking points ready and practice what you are going to say. If someone from the media attends an event, make sure a member of the club greets, orients and accompanies that individual. Make a strong first and last impression on anyone who takes the time to come out and report on the work of your club.