

Working with Your Local Media

When the Ad Council, the nation’s leading provider of public service advertising, surveys the media about why they choose to support a given PSA, the findings overwhelmingly indicate a preference for campaigns with local relevance. The majority of donated media time and space is given by the local media. The government requires the broadcast media to conduct public service, but not a specific amount.

Since the demand for advertising is high, the media cannot donate as much time and space to public service advertising. This is why it is critical that you reach out to the people who make decisions about which PSAs to use. These PSA Directors receive many PSAs in a typical month and have indicated that they place a priority on PSAs that benefit their local community. As a member of the community, you have a unique opportunity to reach out to the PSA Directors and convince them that these messages are important to their audience.

What Can You Do?

You can play a role in raising awareness about the Adoption from Foster Care campaign by encouraging local media to run these PSAs. Local media directors listen to their residents, and media outlets are more likely to run PSAs that address the issues that matter most to their local communities. Make it known that the Adoption from Foster Care campaign can help the 408,000 children in foster care find their “forever home,” so please help us get the message on air!

Take the following steps:

1. Appeal directly to the PSA Directors
 - a. Meet with them personally to develop a relationship
 - b. Maintain contact with them to reinforce the importance of the issue
2. Demonstrate the issue’s importance to the local community
 - a. Share statistics that have local relevance
 - i. How many children are waiting to be adopted in your area?
 - 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

MEDIA TIPS:

News and Talk radio stations are typically most supportive of PSAs. They may also be willing to have someone who has recently adopted on the air for an interview, particularly if the issue is topical and in the news.

How to Get PSAs Placed

- b. Offer local statistics and research
- c. Provide information for their news station web page
- 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 quality advertising for otherwise empty space or time

Develop a List of Targets

Concentrate on the local TV stations that you watch, the radio that you listen to, the newspaper that you read, the people who send you a cable bill, etc. These companies make up the media in your community.

Media Type	Description	Who to Contact
Television Broadcast affiliates Independent stations	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Public Affairs Director Community Affairs Director General Manager
Cable Cable systems	<p>Call the company listed on your cable bill, and try to contact all the cable systems in your area.</p> <p>Cable stations often have more time available to broadcast PSAs.</p>	Advertising Director Marketing Director General Manager
Radio	<p>Contact the radio stations that reach your target audience. Radio stations are formatted for very specific audiences.</p>	Public Affairs Director Community Affairs Director General Manager
Newspapers	<p>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.</p>	Director of Advertising Editor-in-Chief

Initial Contact with the PSA Director

The first time you contact (by phone 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. Most PSA Directors are familiar with the Ad Council and know that the Ad Council represents "issue-experts." They trust that Ad Council PSAs are generally of high quality.

Familiarize yourself with the PSAs and print the storyboards that are available on the Adoption from Foster Care Toolkit Website.

In the initial phone call, introduce yourself and explain that you would like to meet to discuss AdoptUSKids' mission to find all children in foster care a home. Be prepared to suggest a date and time and several alternatives.

CALL THE MEDIA:

- About November being National Adoption Month
- Around your upcoming local events
- If there is a motivating or impactful local story

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
- Briefly explain the goal and strategy of the campaign and how it will benefit their viewers, listeners or readers
- Personalize the issue for the PSA Directors (frame the issue around a local event or the media outlets programming)
- Outline next steps (set a meeting date, send the PSA)
- Provide your contact information

Prepare an Adoption from Foster Care campaign packet to bring to your meeting. The packet can include:

- Letter to the PSA Director
- Adoption from Foster Care Fact Sheet
- TV Storyboard and Scripts
- DVD and/or a broadcast quality version (beta-SP tape) of the TV spot
- CD of Radio spot and Radio Scripts

These resources are available for download on the AdoptUSKids' Website. For hard copies of materials, contact Talia Sacks, Assistant Campaign Manager, at tsacks@adcouncil.org.

Keep in mind that media outlets can order the PSAs by contacting the Ad Council's fulfillment center, the CI Group. Note: Ad Council orders will be fulfilled for media only. TV and radio PSAs are also available for download on www.AdCouncil.TV in broadcast quality.

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.

Sample Questions:

- Does your station/newspaper/magazine 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?

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.

Do...

- Show the PSAs
- Discuss the PSAs
- Make a personal connection
- Point out local relevance constantly

Don't...

- Assume they understand the broad scope of children waiting in foster care

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 an Ad Council campaign. Some stations will air PSAs from the Ad Council because of the production quality and the rigorous vetting process.

This is not an important issue to our community.

Discuss the issue on a local level. Do they realize that there are children in their own communities and area who wake up every morning hoping that this will be the day that they have a real family to be a part of?

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

Questions?

For more information, please contact Talia Sacks, Assistant Campaign Manager, at tsacks@adcouncil.org.