



NEW AMERICA
FOUNDATION

Crafting and Communicating Your Asset Building Message

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2008 Assets Learning Conference

September 11-13, 2008

Washington, DC

Why get the word out?

- Opportunity to share our good work
- Increased awareness of programs/policies
 - Local community more engaged
 - Potential clients aware of resources available to them
 - Current and potential funders see your work and its impact
- Potential to affect public policy and public opinion
 - May help secure or increase funding
 - Promotes “Asset Building” concept as an organizing framework for social policy and programs.



How do we get the word out?

- Engaging the Mainstream Media
 - Pitching an article to a local, regional or national paper or interest magazine
 - Writing your own article, oped, or letter to the editor.
 - Contacting local television and radio news outfits about potential special interest pieces.
- Using the web
 - Websites, list serves, digital newsletters
 - Coalition building
 - Blogs



Pitching A Story

- Question to Consider
 - Who is your audience?
 - What are you trying to communicate?
 - Does it have news energy?
 - Connect it to a recent event, anniversary, milestone
- TV, Radio, Newspaper, Community interest magazines/papers/newsletters



Writing and Placing an Oped

- Pick the news outlet you want to target
 - What is the typical length/writing style?
 - Do they publish pieces by anyone or those with a fancy title/background?
 - Do they tend to be more public policy focused or general commentary?
- Find a hook – what gives the piece news energy
 - Local, regional or national event
 - Major change in public policy
 - Building on related articles in the news
 - Note a letter to the editor is a direct reaction to a previously printed article/news piece



Writing and Placing an Oped

- Write like you are having a conversation with someone who have no prior knowledge on the topic
 - Avoid Jargon
 - Instead of “assets” use “wealth” or “savings”
 - Be specific, deliberate and to the point
 - Avoid elaborate metaphors or academic citations – Tell a story!
 - Appeal to broad themes and values
 - Personal responsibility, Economic Security
- Submit the article with the proper context (who you are, why you feel its relevant, etc.)
- Don't Give Up!



Using the Web

Basic communication

- Create a website for your organization (if you haven't already)
- Build a list serve of folks who may be interested in receiving updates

Engaging the Blogosphere

- Create your own blog, or comment on others
 - An update of recent happenings
 - Commentary/Analysis <http://www.newamerica.net/blog/ladder>

Connecting with similar organizations

- Coalitions (asset building and other) to share ideas/best practices
<http://communitiesconnect.wikispaces.com/Statewide+Asset+Building+Coalition>
- Issue oriented groups to track legislation, advocate for change, etc.





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