Telling Your Story: Media & Public Discourse on Housing

OhioMHAS Housing University

October 1, 2018
Panelists:

• Marcus Roth, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
• Jenny Camper, Lesic & Camper Communications
• Mark Ferenchik, Columbus Dispatch
Presentation Agenda

• About the media
• Working with reporters
• How to get media coverage
• The interview
• Special considerations: op-ed placement, social media
About the Media

• How has the media landscape changed?
• Traditional vs. Social Media
Working with Reporters – Understand their situation

• See themselves as public watchdogs
• Not there for your PR needs
• Overworked & on deadline
• Generalists – usually not experts on your issue
• Need reliable, factual information and expertise
Working with Reporters – What’s News?

• Local impact
• Timeliness/current issues
• Conflict & tension – controversy heightens news appeal
• Unusual – “man bites dog”
• Objectivity – need to include other points of view
How to Get Media Coverage

• Make news – do or say something significant (proactive)
• Exploit news (reactive)
  ✓ Comment on current events
  ✓ Present new angle to the story
  ✓ Represent key stakeholder
How to Get Media Coverage

• Read, listen and watch reporters you care about
• Develop and update a list of media contacts
• Develop a proactive media plan – make routine contacts to reporters
• Understand other reporters’ beats: health, editorial page, business...
How to Get Media Coverage

• Issue a press release
• Hold a press conference
• Call reporters
The Interview: Be Prepared

• Know the publication/outlet
• Know the audience (readers, listeners, viewers – not the reporter)
• Why should the audience care?
• Develop & practice 2-3 key messages
• Consider solutions to problems
• Gather supporting info:
  - statistics, surprising facts
  - a relevant anecdote?
  - suggest other sources?
• Know your vulnerabilities, consider a response
The Interview: Do’s & Don’ts

• Do stay on message
  - Bridging: “That’s a good point, but the main consideration is...”
  - Flagging: “The most important point here is...”
• Do stay positive – offer solutions
• Don’t repeat negative language
• Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know
• Don’t say “no comment”
• Don’t share personal opinions
• Don’t argue: reporters have the last word
Special considerations

• Op-ed pitch techniques
  – Build relationship with editors
  – No more than 700-750 words
  – Must be timely, newsworthy and clearly state a point of view about an issue
  – Create proactive editorial calendar
  – Be sensitive to offering exclusive piece, follow rules of editor
Social Media Strategies

• Consider outreach through social media when appropriate: bloggers, YouTube, podcasting
• Know that many print reporters also manage blogs, some get video
• Be sensitive to rapidly changing state of the media
Resurgent Franklinton neighborhood welcomes new grocery store

Grocery manager Susan Hough, right, and Wendy Nelson, center, sell bananas to Aisha Peterson on Wednesday at the Jubilee Market and Cafe at 1160 W. Broad St. in Franklinton. Lower Lights Christian Health Center opened the 4,500-square-foot grocery store after spending $1.7 million to renovate the former Anthony Thomas factory. Low-income residents will receive discounts at the store.

[Joshua A. Bickel/Dispatch]

Franklinton has a grocery store again.
Mid-Ohio Foodbank to close Clarfield Farm

Tracey Slaughter, left, and Anne Massie remove irrigation piping from Clarfield Farm for possible use at a new location. The Mid-Ohio Food Bank has announced it is closing the farm because it can't reach a new lease with the property owner. [Eric Albrecht/Dispatch]

By Mark Ferencik
The Columbus Dispatch

The Mid-Ohio Foodbank is closing its Clarfield Farm on Aug. 2 because it can't secure a new land lease with the owners of the property.
Crisis Communications

- Define what is ‘crisis’
  - Emergency (first responders) or Controversy (NIMBY)?
- Have crisis operations plan in place; and crisis communications plan
- Be prepared
Crisis Communications

- Anticipate potential situations

- Prepare a plan:
  - Identify a crisis team and spokespeople;
  - Develop notification system;
  - Know stakeholders & supporters;
  - Prepare standard statements and messaging; and
  - Conduct assessment.
Thank You! Questions?