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# Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs: *Traditional Media Strategies*

## Lessons Learned *by Communities for Communities*

*The views expressed in this document are those of the Climate Showcase Communities grant recipients. U.S. EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned.*

### WHAT IS IT?

Traditional media—such as TV, radio, and print—can bring attention to newsworthy programs, raise their visibility, and motivate participation.

### WHY DO IT?

- Traditional media is the main source of information for many people. It can help you reach a wide range of audiences.
- Many traditional media channels are free, such as newspaper stories, radio interviews, and public service announcements.
- Some traditional media organizations also have blogs, Facebook, Twitter feeds, and other social media. They can do a lot of social media work for you.

### WHAT WORKS?

- Cultivate relationships with reporters and encourage them to write multiple stories covering the evolving components of your program.
- Look for opportunities to pitch success stories to the media.
- Invite the media to cover special, memorable events, such as groundbreaking ceremonies, ribbon-cutting events, or community stewardship projects.
- Write press releases in the form of articles and consider incorporating human interest stories. Make them easy for the media to use.
- Engage local political leaders or other high-profile community members in program activities and issue press releases about their involvement.
- Develop media sponsorships or event co-sponsorships.
- Ask the media to publish ads for free as a way of sponsoring your program's events.
- Leverage paid media by submitting public service announcements and requesting in-kind media services.
- Send reporters a follow-up note after the story is published and thank them for their accuracy or let them know if they missed something.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Do not overthink (or overspend) the message.
- These stories can have a short-term effect and may not motivate behavior.
- It can be hard to maintain the media's interest over a long period of time.
- The media may have different priorities when promoting your story. They may spin the story in a way that they consider more interesting.

### WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

MailChimp—Email newsletters: [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)



*“After the local paper ran a story about our program on Sunday, we came into the office on Monday morning and found dozens of messages from new clients.”*

*Alex, Sustainable Connections, Bellingham, Washington*

*“Everyone loves to see themselves on TV. When it is publicized, they will invite all of their friends and family.”*

*Climate Showcase Communities project lead*