

Media Outreach and College Access

Reaching out to local media is a wonderful way to increase community awareness of and involvement in college access work. Path to College events are a positive reflection of work happening in your community and inviting the media will shine a spotlight on the work you're doing through the program.

Steps for Reaching out to the Media

1. Write a press release or media advisory: Write a brief press release or media advisory for your event or news. **Typically, a press release is used for a news story where there isn't a specific event for the media to attend (but many people also use press releases for events).**

In each press release or media advisory, be sure to include contact information, including a name, telephone number, and email address, for your designated media contact. In the body of the press release, make sure you cover the basic: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

A media advisory should be used for a specific event, such as a kickoff. The media advisory will highlight the date, time, and location of the event, as well as providing some background information.

2. Distribute the press release: When you are ready to announce your news event, send out the press release or advisory to the local media approximately **two weeks prior to the event.**

If you email a copy of the press release or advisory, include the text in the body of your email rather than as an attachment. This will help your email avoid spam filters. If you can, send the email from an address linked to a person's name (rather than a general organizational mailbox). An email from `firstname.lastname@tn.gov` is more likely to be read than an email from `CollegeforTN@tn.gov`.

Tip: If you or someone at your school has a relationship with the media or a specific reporter, have that person reach out and/or follow up. Also try reaching out to reporters who have covered your school(s) previously.

3. Follow up once you send the advisory: Once you have sent the press release or advisory, follow up by phone to make sure the newsroom received the advisory. Prepare to be brief on the phone- newsrooms and reporters are usually busy and being prepared when you speak to them will help you keep their attention.
4. Designate a media point of contact: Choose someone closely involved with your Collaborative, such as the site coordinator or project director, to be the point person for any members of the media who may want more information about the news release or event.
5. The day of your news release or event: Ensure that your media point of contact is prepared to answer basic questions about your event. If you are hosting an event, make sure parking is available for any media and that your school's front office is aware that media may be arriving.
6. Send a thank you: Saying thanks will help to maintain good relationships with local media outlets.