



Regional Housing Technical Assistance:

How to Talk to the Media about Housing

December 7, 2022

Presenters

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Workshop Goals

- How to use media to help advance public perception and your messaging around housing
- How to prepare to talk and work with media representatives and answer questions

Agenda

- Introductions
- About Media Relations
- Working in Your Organization
- Message Development
- Telling Your Story
- Strategies for Success
- Group Discussion
- Q&A
- Closing

Introductions

- Write your name and jurisdiction in the chat
- How has the media told your housing story?
 - What have they said about your jurisdiction and housing?
 - Has the story been accurate or inaccurate?
 - How has the media story impacted your housing plan and policies?
- Raise your hand to share

About Media Relations

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- Who is your audience?

About Media Relations

What is Media Relations?

- Media relations
- Public relations
- Community relations

Media Relations = Using the media to tell your story

About Media Relations

Why is it important?



The community is your audience

Who is Your Audience?

Who are you trying to reach?

Who are you talking to?

Working in your organization: poll and discussion



Message Development & Telling Your Story

- Sample Messages Pulled from the Headlines
- What is Your Message?

Message Development

- What is the message
- Who is telling it?

Message Topics:

- Housing Elements
- RHNA
- Affordable Housing
- Housing for all
- Cost of affordable housing

Message Development

- Creating more housing would help families seeking a first home.
- I want to prioritize balanced growth to maintain the city's beauty and history and preserve and increase affordable housing.
- The availability of housing choices fosters livability in our city and strengthens the economy.
- Housing is a basic human right and every individual should have quality affordable housing.

Message Development

- This development is dead on arrival.
- We're already full. We've done a better job than anyone else around here.
- Everybody deserves a place to live, the question is where do they deserve a place to live.
- Allowing construction of duplexes is not the (fill in the name of your city) way

Message Development

- What do you want the story to be?
- What is the big picture message?
- Why is this important?
- What is the value to the community?

Telling Your Story

Working with Reporters

Managing the information: 5Ws and an H

- What's the hook? The news?
- Prepare talking points in advance
- Keep it brief and simple
- Have the information you need

Exercise:

Your local newspaper would like to interview you about your Housing Element. What is one key message you want to get across?

Individually, take a few minutes to write down your key message:

- What is the value of the message?
- Why should people care?
- Who needs to know it (audience)?
- Why are you telling it now?

Telling Your Story

Your Way

Breakout Groups: Local Media Discussion

- What are the news outlets in your area?
- What is your message?
- Regarding housing elements, what would make for good coverage for you?
- Is there value in collaborating/sharing information across jurisdictions?
- Who are the reporters for housing issues?
- Report out on something you learned.

Telling Your Story

Report Out from Breakout
Conversations

- Report out on something you learned

Packaging Your Story

Tools for Media Relations

- Press releases
- Media advisories
- Public service announcements
- Op-Ed piece
- Calendar announcements
- Fact sheets
- Social Media
- Vlogs and blogs
- Writing your own story

Strategies for Success

- Working with Reporters
- What to Do When the Reporter Calls
- Conducting the Interview
- Responding to Questions

Strategies for Success

- Building trust and credibility
 - Relationship building
 - Be truthful and reliable
 - Be friendly and helpful
- Managing fear and anxiety
 - RELAX! - You are in charge. You have what they need or want
 - Manage their deadlines within your limits
 - Be prepared

When a Reporter Calls or Emails

- What is the story or query about?
- Who is your audience?
- When is the deadline?
- Who should respond?
 - Strategize on message and talking points
- Respond as if a friend
 - Mutual benefit

Conducting the Interview

- Call back when you said you would.
- Help the reporter understand the issue - don't use jargon.
- Say only what you want repeated, printed or shared.
- Be conversational. You are not making a report or speech.

Responding to the Reporter

- Answer the question
 - Short, to-the-point answer
- Transition to your message
- Don't respond to the unasked question
- Don't guess, make it up or play dumb
- It's ok to say you don't know and will get more information
- Answer with regard to other issues in the community

Strategies for Success

Review Poll Questions

- 1) Replying “no comment,” is a good response if you don’t have the information, aren’t prepared, or feel attacked. (No)
- 2) A good tactic to get your point across is to answer the question with the answer you want to give regardless of the reporter’s question. (No)
- 3) Stating to a reporter that you can't talk "now" but you can later is acceptable. (Yes)
- 4) Sharing information “off the record” is a good way to establish rapport with the reporter. (No)
- 5) Giving a response that makes your project sound better than it is will help with an unpopular hypothesis or a tough question. (No)

Questions and Answers

What questions do you have for
us?



Need Additional Resources?

- What worked for you?
- What can be improved?
- What resources do you need?

Put your responses in the chat.

Resources

[Let's Talk about Housing: Communications Guide for Local Government](#)

Schechter Consulting [communications and public engagement consultant services](#) through the RHTA Program

[California Association of Public Information Officials \(CAPIO\)](#)

[California Specialized Training Institute](#) Public Information Basics

Tips for Newly Elected Officials, March 2013
www.ca-ilg.org/media-relations

Additional Support for housing media relations and messaging

We're here to help you help your community!

- One-on-one support to jurisdictions for media relations and messaging related to Housing Elements is provided through June 2023 under ABAG's RHTA program
- Contact Surlene Grant and Debbie Schechter to schedule a meeting:
 - sggrant@envirocommunications.com
 - debbie@dschechter.com

Thank You!