

# Media Advocacy Guide

The purpose of this overview is to give TPEP grantees a quick reference guide to media advocacy — including what it is, why it’s important, your role and how to execute it effectively.

Much of this information is in the “Media Advocacy” chapter, *Designing and Implementing an Effective Tobacco Counter-Marketing Campaign*, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). If you would like to read more of the CDC’s thinking on media advocacy, go to [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/media\\_communications/countermarketing/campaign/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/media_communications/countermarketing/campaign/index.htm). We have also provided media relations tools and techniques to assist you in implementing media advocacy approaches.

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# The Theory of Media Advocacy

Media advocacy is the strategic use of mass media and community advocacy to change the social environment or advance a public policy initiative. It seeks to use the media to change the social environment in which individuals make personal behavior decisions rather than provide instructive health information to motivate people to make individual decisions.

## Media advocacy is:

- **Policy-oriented** — it strives to achieve a policy goal.
- **Community-based** — it's organized centrally by you or TPEP, but is implemented at the grassroots level.
- **Long-lasting** — it focuses on long-term social change rather than short-term, individual behavior change.
- **Collaborative** — it seeks the input of advocates and supporters to make it authentic and to create buy-in from all participants.
- **Collective** — it reinforces social responsibility for the problem of tobacco rather than placing responsibility on the individual.

## Why media advocacy is important:

- **Empowers the community** — it motivates those closest to your issue to work to solve it.
- **Targets policymakers** — it targets those who can make decisions that influence the health of whole groups of people.
- **Gets your message heard** — it delivers information and messages to your key audiences in a way they can understand.
- **Inspires others to join in your cause** — it creates widespread support and a movement to create change.
- **Changes attitudes about your issue** — it delivers strong, advocacy-based messages to key audiences from people they trust and listen to.
- **Gives people a voice** — it values the perspective of those closest to the issue and gives them an opportunity to share their story.
- **Trains the community** — it builds capacity among community groups to allow them to continue to work for positive change.

# Your Role in Media Advocacy

Your role in media advocacy has two parts: the first is the work you're already doing to activate and coordinate community supporters to get behind your issue. The second role is to work with this group of community supporters to advance your policy mission through strategic use of the media. By identifying stories, rallying spokespeople and providing information to reporters, you gain a valuable third-party endorsement of your issue and goals.

## Organizing community advocacy

Your role includes:

- Identifying local supporters, experts, advocacy groups and individuals who can support your efforts.
- Sharing campaign materials with advocates so that they can provide input and use them in their outreach efforts.
- Training advocate groups and other supporting individuals in message development and spokesperson training.
- Evaluating materials and activities to provide feedback to advocates.
- Providing tools, such as news releases and talking points, that advocates can customize.
- Providing alerts on key opportunities advocates can leverage.

## Developing media opportunities

Specific to media advocacy, one of the key things you'll ask your community supporters to do is to work with you and through the media to advance your policy objectives. Your role includes:

- Identifying and developing the right story and media opportunities.
- Working with community supporters to bring other voices into the discussion.
- Working with the media to secure stories that advance your policy objectives.

## Becoming a long-term media resource

Your role will require you to:

- Establish relationships with the media. Make yourself known and available. Send reporters useful information about your issue.
- Be aware of breaking and community news so you can always provide the most timely, relevant information.
- Be knowledgeable. Only provide credible information and don't overpromise. If you don't know something, get the answer and call back.
- Know the local media. Read it, watch it, listen to it, click on it. Know what each outlet covers and their reporting style so you can shape your outreach to fit.
- Respect deadlines! When you talk to reporters always ask when they need the information and deliver it on time.

## Determining the Best Media Advocacy Strategy

The most important element of media advocacy is thinking strategically about the goals you want to achieve and then selecting the best media advocacy techniques to get you there. In some cases, holding a press conference may be the best approach and in others, not sharing new information with the media at all may be the best — it all depends on what makes the most strategic sense at the time and in the particular circumstance.

### Five questions to ask yourself to determine the best course of action:

1. **What do you want?** Define your policy objective. If you have a hard-to-reach goal in mind, choose a more immediate goal as the next logical step.

*For example, if you're working on the Why Wait? campaign, your goal may be to get an iconic bar in your community to implement a smokefree policy.*

2. **Who can give you what you want?** Identify your target audiences. Who has the power to make the policy decisions that influence your goal?

*To get the iconic bar to go smokefree, think about who can make that happen. In this case, it's most likely the bar's owner.*

3. **What do they need to hear?** Develop messages that will resonate with your target audience. Think about what they value and the barriers that might be in the way of supporting your policy goal.

*Think about what the bar owner values and therefore needs to hear in order to support a policy change. Messages delivered through media channels should focus more on why going smokefree is good for business than why it's good for the health of customers and employees. Messages should also directly address and debunk perceived barriers.*

4. **From whom should they hear it?** Determine who will deliver messages to your target audience by thinking about who has the greatest chance to influence this audience. Sometimes, you may be the best person to deliver the message, but other times there is a better source. This is when you ask your community supporters to be the conduit to your target audience through media channels.

*Understanding who the bar owner listens to and trusts is important. If the owner values the input of customers, reading a letter to the editor written by a customer in the community and published in the local newspaper would be a powerful motivator. If the owner needs to hear from owners of existing smokefree businesses, a news feature focusing on a local business owner's success with going smokefree would be persuasive.*

- 5. Which media channels will reach your audience?** Decide which media advocacy approaches will best reach your target audience. Think about the ways in which your target audience connects with news and trusted sources. Would a letter to the editor, an op-ed, a news article, a TV segment, an editorial, a guest column, a newsletter article, a press release or press conference best get their attention?

*To reach the bar owner, some approaches to consider include:*

- *Asking for a meeting with the local newspaper’s editorial board with the goal of having the paper write a positive editorial in support of local businesses going smokefree early.*
- *Pitching a TV news segment highlighting a local bar’s decision to go smokefree, demonstrating the positive media attention a business can receive as a result of going smokefree.*
- *Asking the owner of an existing smokefree business to submit an op-ed to the local paper outlining the positive outcomes the owner has experienced as a result of going smokefree.*
- *Submitting an article to be published in a newsletter the owner reads detailing the business benefits of going smokefree.*

## Implementing Media Advocacy Strategies

Once you determine your course of action — submitting an op-ed, pitching a news story or arranging an editorial board visit — you need to present your issue to the media in a way that will generate interest. And, to do that, you must understand what the media want. Once you do, it’s your job to prepare media spokespeople, or potential op-ed or letter to the editor authors both by helping them develop key messages and by giving them tips on how to be most effective.

Remember, you can submit a technical assistance (TA) request to ask for help from Metropolitan Group on developing the best media advocacy approach as well as executing it.

### How to think like a reporter

Media want:

- New, unusual, unexpected, enlightening or controversial information; stories of wide significance.
- Trends — is your story happening elsewhere? Is your story indicative of a larger movement or change?
- The local angle or how your story affects the local community.
- Timely stories — are there any upcoming events, conferences, holidays that you can tie your story to?
- Issues their audiences care about. Think like a reader, viewer or listener. Always ask, “Why will this matter to someone else?”
- A human interest angle — is there anyone who can speak firsthand about the issue?

## How to get media interested

- Identify and develop a story idea. Now that you know what the media want, think about what opportunities you can leverage to get the media interested in covering your issue. For example, Lane County used an announcement that the University of Oregon would be smokefree for the Olympic trials to get local media to publish an op-ed that discussed the policy as well as the need for smokefree outdoor spaces, especially those where young people are present.
- Find the right place for your story. If you're pitching a news story, say exactly where you think your story fits. Is it a health brief for a newspaper? Is it a consumer alert segment for TV?
- Find the right person to pitch. If you're pitching an editorial board visit, be sure to pitch the editorial page editor. If it's a news story, research what certain reporters have recently written and tie your story to what you discover they're interested in covering.
- Draft the pitch. Be sure to describe how your story connects to the media outlet's audience. Be sure to use the key message sheets provided with this guide.
- Decide how to deliver the pitch: e-mail, phone, mail or in person. If there is a quick turnaround time on your news, picking up the phone may be the most effective way to pitch your idea. If you know that a reporter responds well to e-mail, send your information that way. Cater your approach to the way your contact best responds to information.
- If you don't get a response from one delivery method, try another. For example, if you don't get a response from an e-mail pitch, try giving the reporter a call. If he or she is still not interested, be sure to ask if another reporter might be.
- Once you have media interested, determine who would be the best spokesperson, speaker, author, etc. Sometimes you may be the best messenger and other times you may not.

## Developing key messages for media advocacy

Key messages provide targeted audience groups with the emotional and intellectual information they need to engage with an issue and take action. Key messages should be tailored for each audience whether you're preparing for a news interview, an editorial board visit or a news conference. Think about the audience that the media you're working with targets.

Follow these steps:

- Put messages in a "What?", "So what?" and "Now what?" format. This format ensures that your messages first state the problem, then explain why it matters and, finally, explain what we are doing or can do to solve it.
- Include no more than three main points.
- Be clear and concise, and avoid jargon. Use quotable language.
- Demonstrate relevance and provide supporting statistics.

## Leveraging Media Success

After a story runs or airs, it's important that you maintain and reinforce your relationships with the media and leverage your success to make sure it has as significant an impact as possible.

- Always thank a reporter for interesting, balanced coverage on a critical issue. Offer to work with this person again soon. Thank an editorial page editor, too, if an editorial board visit leads to a positive editorial.
- Correct factual errors for a reporter's file. Request a correction only if the error might have damaging consequences in the community.
- Put the reporter in your contact database, along with a note about the experience to refresh your memory as needed.
- Thank community supporters who helped with your media effort.
- Send copies of a print media placement or a broadcast transcript to your community supporters.
- File the placement in your archives and send a copy to DHS TPEP.
- Add positive print media placements or broadcast transcripts to your website.
- Once a story has run, ask your community supporters to post comments on the outlet's website.
- Think about how you might distribute links to a story or op-ed in an e-mail, or reprints of the piece. Is it appropriate to send to target audiences?

## Tips for Media Advocacy Implementation

### Tips for a News Interview

#### The benefit

Pitching and securing a news story is the most commonly used media advocacy and media relations tool. It involves working with a news reporter to develop a factual, balanced story about a timely topic. The story can be for a print, radio, TV or online media outlet.

A positive news story gets messages and information out to your key audiences quickly and can greatly support the goals of your campaign. An effective story will provide a call to action that drives audiences to get involved or a way to act on the information they've received.

#### How to execute it effectively

It's always important to offer media a variety of spokespeople to interview. The power behind media advocacy is bringing different voices into the discussion and ensuring community supporters are great spokespeople. Think about business owners and employees, teachers, health care providers, youth leaders, advocates, people with personal passion for your cause, etc. Sometimes the best

spokesperson may be you. To determine the best spokespeople, ask yourself who is closest to the issue and who is directly involved or impacted. For example, when Jackson County pitched the local paper about a downtown bar going smokefree, the most effective spokesperson was the bar's co-owner because he was in the best position to offer a real-world story about and rationale for the power of going smokefree. When the reporter asked for information on the *Why Wait?* campaign as well, the Jackson County TPEP coordinator was the person with the most useful and compelling information and perspective.

These tips will help you prepare yourself and other important spokespeople.

### **Before an interview**

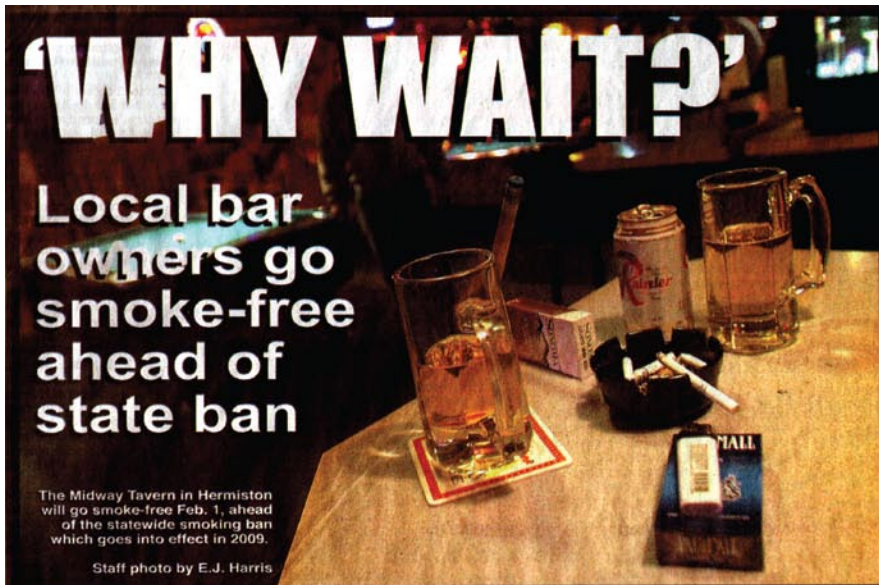
- Practice! Practicing key messages in front of a mirror helps you stay consistent, clear and comfortable.
- Anticipate tough questions and practice your responses.
- Research what the reporter has covered in the past and think about how he or she will most likely cover this issue.

### **During an interview**

- Set ground rules. Clarify what you're able to speak about and what you're not. ("I can give you statistics on smoking, but if you want to talk about health impacts, I can connect you with Doctor Smith.")
- Give more than a "yes" or "no" response, but stop speaking when you've finished your thought. Often spokespeople want to fill silences and end up saying things they did not intend.
- Listen carefully to each question, answer it and find a way to transition back to what you want to talk about. This is called "bridging."
- Remember, you're the expert. You have the information the reporter needs for his or her story. Be confident and clear.
- Avoid negative responses; do not repeat negative questions in your response. For example if you are asked, "Why do all teenagers smoke?" rather than saying, "I don't think all teenagers smoke," simply say, "Fewer than 10 percent of teenagers smoke — it's really not a common behavior."
- Never give false information. If you don't know the answer, say so and let the reporter know that you'll get him or her the answer shortly.
- Stay cool. Never get defensive.
- Speak slowly and enunciate.
- Speak in sound bites. Less is more. Express your thought in a concise way that has a beginning, middle and end. These short statements are more likely to be remembered and quoted.



Here's an example of a front-page news story in *East Oregonian* that ran as a result of the *Why Wait?* campaign's media outreach:



## Local bar owners go smoke-free ahead of state ban

The Midway Tavern in Hermiston will go smoke-free Feb. 1, ahead of the statewide smoking ban which goes into effect in 2009.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## With ban forthcoming, proprietors ask, why wait?

It's law. By 2009, Oregon's bars, taverns, bowling alleys and bingo halls must go smoke-free. Instead of holding out until the last moment to ban smoking, some bar owners and managers are saying, "Why wait?"

Pendleton's Red Lion Hotel went smoke-free in its lounge almost a year ago.

Red Lion Manager Jim Steelman said the hotel's purchase of an expensive new carpet for the bar prompted the decision. The thought of

By KATHY ANEY  
THE EAST OREGONIAN

the pristine \$12,000 carpet immediately saturated in cigarette smoke made Steelman cringe and led him to consider going smoke-free early.

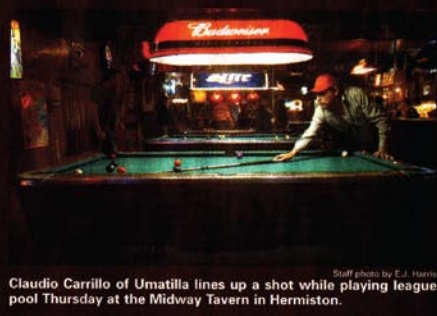
"We decided to bite the bullet," he said. "We thought we'd be the first out of the gate."

Some of Steelman's employees initially expressed misgivings about the transition to a smokeless atmosphere. The results surprised everyone.

See WHY WAIT?/10A



Staff photo by Nicole Barber  
John Carman enjoys a drink this past week in the smoke-free lounge at Pendleton's Red Lion Inn.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
Claudio Carrillo of Umatilla lines up a shot while playing league pool Thursday at the Midway Tavern in Hermiston.

"We actually started seeing our food revenues rise," Steelman said.

Non-smokers quickly replaced smokers who had left in search of hazier environs. Customers thanked him for the clear air and said they no longer had to strip off their clothes and throw them straight into the washing machine when they got home.

"People told me, "We can watch a game in here and not breathe smoke," Steelman said.

The state's Department of Human Services launched a Why Wait campaign to urge business owners to go smokeless early for an array of smart reasons.

Janet Jones, community health educator for the Umatilla County Public Health Department, said Steelman made a good choice.

"It's a great business decision," she said. "People want this."

Going smoke-free hasn't led to revenue reduction even when surrounding areas allow smoking, she said, and even showed a modest increase.

Smoke-free establishments decreased operating expenses by reducing the costs of cleaning, maintenance, insurance and labor.

Health is another motivation, Jones said.

"Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in Umatilla County," she said.

Most Oregonians, including employees, prefer to breathe clear air. In addition, she said, employee productivity increases and businesses avoid liability for secondhand smoke exposure and fires.

Hermiston's Midway Tavern is going smokeless starting Feb. 1.

Midway owner Larry Rice saw the handwriting on the wall long before the Oregon Legislature banned smoking from all but cigar bars and smokeshops.

"I knew it would be a matter of time," he said. "I actually thought it would come sooner."

He quizzed friends who own bars in Tri-Cities where smoking was banned two years ago.

"They were scared to death

## Business does better with bans

when they went non-smoking, thinking their business would drop,” Rice said.

The bar owners’ fears came to pass, Rice said, but only for about 90 days. Then business rebounded, and now it’s up. Rice expects a similar reaction in Oregon.

“Over 80 percent of people in Oregon are non-smokers anyway,” said Rice, a non-smoker himself.

Not everyone rejoiced at the news, Rice said. He gestured to a man sitting at the bar and taking a long draw off a cigarette.

“My hard-core smokers aren’t happy,” he said. “He’ll hang on ‘til the last.”

Non-smokers, on the other hand, welcomed the transition.

“Some who haven’t been here in a while say they’ll be back,” Rice said.

Oddly, the bar’s carpet played a part in Rice’s decision, as it did with Steelman’s at the Red Lion. He pointed at the carpet, which looked greenish-gray in the dimly-lit atmosphere of the bar.

“It used to be a lot lighter color than that,” he said.

He will replace at least part of the carpet after the bar goes smokeless. The bar’s electronic equipment was another consideration. Rice’s son recently opened up one of the

tavern’s big-screen TVs to clean it and Rice was appalled.

“The smoke gets in everywhere,” he said. “I couldn’t believe how filthy it was inside.”

At the Red Lion, the decision to make the lounge smokeless came on the heels of another change — barring smoking in the guest rooms.

One hundred percent of Red Lion’s rooms are smoke-free though the state only requires 75 percent. When a guest ignores the no smoking rule, the hotel charges a \$250 fee.

“We have to clean the drapes, use a special deodorizer and take the room out of service for a few days,” Steelman said.

The Red Lion provides customers a covered smoking area near the hotel’s front entrance. The new law mandates smokers must stay 10 feet from the building.

“We don’t want to alienate people who smoke,” he said.

At the Midway, customers may wander outside to a fenced-in beer garden, complete with two horseshoe pits.

Rice will watch his clientele with interest in the coming months. The bar’s upcoming Super Bowl party may give him a clue to customer reaction.

“It’ll be a good test,” Rice said.

### Tips for an Editorial Board Meeting

#### The benefit

An editorial board is a group of people at a newspaper (usually the publisher, editorial page editor and editorial writers) who dictate the topics and position of its editorials or opinion pieces. They can also shape news coverage. A meeting with an editorial board provides an opportunity to introduce your issue and persuade the editors to cover it in a certain way as well as to establish relationships with these influential writers. Not only does participating in an editorial board meeting give you the possibility of gaining a favorable editorial, it can often help shape the way news staff track and write about an issue for many months or years to come. In essence, you are helping to provide key information, perspectives and resources on your issue to the entire institution.



## How to execute it effectively

To secure an editorial board meeting, use the same approach you would for a news story: Demonstrate the relevancy and timeliness of your issue in a pitch to the editorial page editor or other appropriate contact.

## Before the meeting

Just as with a news story, it's important to include the voices and perspectives of community supporters by asking them to participate in the meeting. Make sure people representing varying aspects of the issue are present. For example, a great *Why Wait?* editorial board meeting would include you, the owner of a smokefree business, an employee who currently works in (or would prefer to work in) a smokefree establishment, and a customer who prefers frequenting smokefree businesses. Make sure you meet with your community supporters before the meeting to discuss each person's role, talking points, the meeting agenda and responses to anticipated questions. It's important that everyone understand that while the meeting will be conversational, each person plays a specific role and has a specific message to deliver.

## During the meeting

Provide the editorial board staff with a couple of key documents that provide a frame of your issue — perhaps a brochure or fact sheet. Start by briefly introducing yourselves and giving a brief overview of your issue, why it matters and your call to action (“We hope you’ll consider an editorial encouraging businesses in our county to go smokefree.”). Then move into questions and discussion.

## After the meeting

Send handwritten thank-you notes to the people you met. Also, provide any additional follow-up information and materials requested during the meeting.

Once an editorial or opinion piece runs, think about who you might share it with (legislators, local decision-makers, tobacco prevention supporters, etc.) and consider asking community members to post comments on the newspaper's website (if the outlet has one) in response to the editorial as well as send a link to it to other supporters and friends.

Here's an example of an editorial in *The Oregonian* that the *Why Wait?* campaign succeeded with as a result of a meeting with *The Oregonian's* editorial board staff:



# A smoke-free workplace: Why wait?

Portland's Virginia Cafe received some well-deserved attention this week when it moved into new quarters, opening its doors for the first time in 94 years as a smoke-free establishment.

In doing so, the venerable watering hole became a trailblazer for a sensible state campaign called "Why Wait?" It encourages Oregon bars, taverns and other businesses to get a jump on a new law that will expand the list of indoor workplaces required to be smoke-free.

As laudable as the Virginia Cafe's early switch may be, the true spirit behind the "Why Wait?" campaign resides a few blocks away in downtown Portland at Kells Irish Restaurant & Pub. Kells went smoke-free seven years ago, long before legislators ever dared to consider cleaning up the air in Oregon drinking venues.

Kells owners Gerard and Lucille McAleese involved their customers in the gutsy decision. They also offered \$500 bonuses to employees who successfully quit smoking.

"As we expected, our business dropped about 5 percent in the first two months, and then it came back," says Lucille McAleese. "Our sales have been very healthy ever since, and it has only helped our bottom line."

Health insurance for Kells employees costs less. So does cleaning, maintenance and electricity for ventilation. Meanwhile, the couple still receive thanks from regular customers who managed to quit smoking.

Oregon's restaurant lobby and the tobacco industry predicted dire consequences last year when legislators agreed to tighten a feeble law that still permits smoking indoors where 35,000 Oregonians work. Effective next Jan. 1, that law will expand to include all bars and bar areas of restaurants, all bingo halls, all bowling centers, employee break-rooms and at least 75 percent of hotel/motel sleeping rooms.

Apprehensive business owners should take comfort in the experience of the McAleeses. They realized that 80 percent of Oregonians don't smoke. They took note of surveys showing that 75 percent of Oregon smokers say they want to quit.

Frequent visitors to Ireland, the couple proved to be prescient. Exactly four years ago this month, Ireland became the first country in the world to implement legislation creating smoke-free enclosed workplaces that included bars and restaurants.

By every account, the law has been a runaway success. And if the entire nation of Ireland can do it, so can Oregon businesses next January.

Which again raises the question: Why wait?

## Tips for Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds

### The benefit

Both letters to the editor and op-eds are opinion submissions from members of the community to editorial page editors at newspapers and magazines. They're highly persuasive and give you an opportunity to educate readers about your issue, demonstrate support for a particular call to action and show why other readers should support it. They allow you to communicate your key messages directly to your audiences and provide you with an opportunity to debunk the arguments of your opponents.

### How to execute them effectively

*Letter to the editor:* A letter to the editor is written in a letter format to the editorial page editor of a newspaper or magazine. You can use it to call attention to a recent article written in that publication on your issue, to correct facts in a biased or inaccurate article, to praise the publication for its positive coverage of your issue, or to educate about a local issue that's relevant to readers. By asking several community supporters to submit letters, you can demonstrate wide-reaching support for your issue and make a call to action.

*Op-ed:* An op-ed (literally "opposite the editorial page" because that's where it traditionally is placed) is a longer, more detailed submission that is clearly focused on educating readers about an issue and encouraging them to act. It's a more in-depth look at an issue and provides significant supporting facts and statistics.

*The author:* Deciding who should write the letter or op-ed is as important as the content. Think about who has the most authority in the community and whose perspective would best influence your target audiences.

### Tips for getting published

- Make your letter to the editor or op-ed concise and check the specifications of the paper to which you are submitting for length and format requirements. Generally, letters to the editor should be 300 words or less, and an op-ed should be 650 to 700 words.
- Make your submission timely. Reference something that's recently been in the news.
- Make your point, preferably at the beginning of your submission.
- Make it personal — provide anecdotes and personal examples to help drive home why this issue is important and what it means to you and the community.
- Support your facts and be constructive.
- Avoid TPEP or public health jargon.
- Include a call to action — what do you want readers to do?
- Include all your contact information (name, daytime phone, address and e-mail) at the end of your submission. This is typically used for verification purposes only.
- Follow up. If your submission doesn't run right away, don't be afraid to call and see if the paper intends to publish it. Be ready to say why it should be printed when you make the call.

Here's an example of a letter to the editor that ran in the *The Register-Guard* congratulating 2008 USA Track & Field Olympic Trials Steering Committee for deciding to make the event tobacco-free.

THE REGISTER-GUARD • MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2008

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## EDITORIALS & LETTERS

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### **It will be a tobacco-free Trials**

This week the Eugene '08 Steering Committee — the group organizing the 2008 USA Track & Field Olympic Trials here in Oregon — announced that the event would be tobacco-free.

As individuals working to create healthy communities in Lane County and Oregon, the Tobacco-Free Lane County Coalition and Lane County Public Health enthusiastically support this decision.

Through this policy, the steering committee is clearly sending an important message that tobacco and healthy choices and activities don't mix. Research shows that tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Oregon — for people using it directly and for people breathing secondhand smoke.

By choosing to prohibit the use of tobacco at the Trials, the steering committee obviously is stating to all that attend, and most importantly to our youth, that sports and tobacco don't mix. Every day, an estimated 48 Oregon kids try their first cigarette. Of those, 20 become regular smokers, mainly because they saw other people smoking and they wanted to be like them. One way to help young people make healthy choices is to create opportunities for them to have fun in healthy environments.

We commend the Eugene '08 Steering Committee for adopting a tobacco-free policy. We encourage others to follow their example and take a stand for healthy choices. After all, you don't have to be a world-class athlete to know that tobacco has no part in a healthy community.

**PAULA R. STAIGHT, chairwoman  
Tobacco Free Lane County  
Coalition**

# Protocol for Accessing Technical Assistance on Media Advocacy Efforts

## Getting to know Metropolitan Group

Metropolitan Group (MG) is excited to be part of the TPEP team as the media contractor providing technical assistance to grantees and contract partners. Our charge is to work collaboratively with you to help place media stories, increase visibility and build public will for tobacco prevention and the important work being done across the state through your efforts.

## Who we are:

Metropolitan Group, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, with offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, is a leading full-service social change agency. We craft and integrate strategic and creative services that empower social purpose organizations to build a just and sustainable world. We specialize in four practice areas: strategic communication, resource development, intercultural communication and organizational development. We have 21 years of experience in social marketing, media relations, advocacy, public engagement and public will building. In addition to public health, we work on social issues involving education and libraries, socially responsibly business, environmental sustainability, children and families, and other concerns that shape our world.

Our TPEP team has expertise in strategy development, media relations, advocacy and policy work, public engagement, interactive media and graphic design. We have experience in public health, including tobacco prevention, and have worked with all your target audiences and throughout Oregon.

Our Technical Assistance Team is your first call for collaboration. We will funnel your requests to other team members as needed.

You can reach us by e-mail at [tarequest@metgroup.com](mailto:tarequest@metgroup.com) or by calling us at (503) 223-3299.

## What we can do for you:

Our TA team provides a full range of communication services, focusing on media relations, to support your policy-focused tobacco prevention work. We can work with you in a variety of ways, including developing customized messages, targeting specific publications and reporters for stories, training staff in media advocacy, and helping you build and strengthen partnerships. We also develop communication tools to meet identified policy and media advocacy strategies. Below is a more detailed list of services:

### Media:

- Developing media strategies
- Creating customized media lists
- Identifying and preparing spokespeople
- Crafting specific messages
- Writing and distributing media releases, alerts and advisories
- Writing letters to the editor and op-ed pieces
- Conducting outreach to editorial boards
- Crafting and pitching stories to reporters
- Planing and implementing news conference and media events
- Conducting media and message trainings

### Other Communication Tools and Activities:

- Providing strategic input on brochures, fliers and handouts
- Drafting speeches and talking points
- Evaluating communication programs
- Developing marketing strategies
- Assisting with promotion and event strategies
- Conducting partner and sponsor identification and outreach

### Other projects and tasks, as needed:

- Talk to us about your specific needs and we will work to help you accomplish your goals.

## Protocol for technical assistance requests:

To make a request for technical assistance, please follow the steps below:

*NOTE: For assistance to be most effective, please send TA requests at least 10 business days before your outreach needs to take place. We can, of course, move quickly when needed, but the more time we have to develop targeted strategies and materials the better.*

### Step One: Submitting your request

- Please contact Kirsten Gunst at MG to discuss your request (503-223-3299, [kgunst@metgroup.com](mailto:kgunst@metgroup.com)).

### Step Two: Getting to work

- For brief questions, MG will provide guidance on the spot.
- For longer-term projects, we will schedule a start work meeting, outline the approach and scope, and submit to Jonathan Modie and your liaison for approval.
- Once we get the green light, we will work directly with you on your request.

### Step Three: Wrapping up

- Once our work is concluded, the MG TA Team will send you a wrap-up e-mail detailing the work completed and any suggested next steps or action items.
- *Reminder:* As part of your Media Advocacy Plan e-mail follow-up to TPEP, be sure to:
  - Fill out the TPEP Evaluation Questions (located in the Community Program Media Advocacy Plan document as Attachment B).
  - Track any media coverage and submit a list to the TPEP Media Coordinator.
- Please copy the MG TA Team ([tarequest@metgroup.com](mailto:tarequest@metgroup.com)) in your follow-up.

**We look forward to working with you!**