

### 3 Tips for Contacting the Media

Media coverage is important because the media help influence public perception of your program, and public perception informs political support and funding. National Drug Court Month is the perfect opportunity to highlight the many ways your court positively affects your community. Take these four simple steps to help make media coverage of your court more effective:

1. **Create a list of the right types of media to cover your event.** This should include print media (e.g., local or regional newspapers, magazines, university press, legal journals, military outlets, websites) and broadcast media (e.g., television and radio, podcasts).
2. **Identify which outlets will be most effective.** Don't feel as though you must limit your list to local media; regional, state, and national outlets may also be interested in covering your story. Think carefully about which outlets are most likely to reach the audience you need.
3. **Contact each media outlet on your list.** Ask for the name of the person to whom you should direct your materials, and obtain his/her phone number and email address. If you've noticed certain reporters or journalists in your area already covering criminal justice issues, or if you have a personal connection to local media staff, you can reach out to them directly.
4. **Send positive media stories to your Members of Congress and other elected officials.** Include both your representatives and senators. You can look up contact information for your Members of Congress on <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>.

### 3 Tips to Encourage Media Coverage

1. **Find a news hook.** Your court's graduation ceremony or other event is newsworthy, especially if one or more Members of Congress will attend. Also consider relating the event to the broader issues of the opioid epidemic, justice reform, and/or finding proven budget solutions for your community and state. If your court is in jeopardy of losing funding, say so!
2. **Humanize your piece.** Anecdotes and personal stories help illustrate and bring clarity to complicated issues. If you choose to feature a success story from your court, remember that **new participants are in a vulnerable stage and should not be profiled by the media.** Ask successful graduates or participants nearing program completion if you can share their story. If they wish to remain anonymous, ask if you can do so without using their name or photo.
3. **Follow up.** Most outlets will respond to your request or publish your written piece within 1-2 weeks. If you haven't had a response in that timeframe, or if your piece is particularly time-sensitive, you can make a follow-up phone call to be sure the request or article was received and ask about its status.

For assistance with media outreach and interviews, contact Brooke Prokopchak, NADCP Associate Director of Communications, at [bprokopchak@allrise.org](mailto:bprokopchak@allrise.org).