

# Practical Guide to **Media Outreach** For **Project Safe Neighborhoods**

safer neighborhoods by  
reducing gun crime  
through

partnerships  
strategic planning  
training  
outreach  
accountability





---

# Table of Contents

**1 PSN and the Media**  
How to Use Your Local Media  
Fundamentals of a Communication Plan  
Honing Your Media Plan: “Earned”  
Versus Paid

**2 Getting Media Exposure**  
Understanding Media  
Who’s Who?  
Making Your Story Newsworthy  
Incorporating Advertising

**3 Maximizing Messages and Materials**  
Developing Your Messages  
Pretesting

**4 Customizing Your Media Program**  
The Basics  
Media Relations Building Blocks  
Pitching Your Story  
Responding to Media Inquiries

**5 Making the Internet Work for You**

**6 Developing Other Outreach Tools**

**7 Choosing Effective Professional Help**  
Public Relations Agencies  
Advertising Agencies  
Graphic Designers  
Research Firms  
Video Producers

**8 Moving Forward**  
Evaluating Your Efforts  
Refining Your Communications Program

**9 Resources**  
Glossary of Terms  
Directories  
National Media Contacts  
Public Relations References  
Media Event Checklists

**10 Appendix: Tools and Templates**  
PSN Background  
Sample Campaign Fact Sheet  
Sample Letter to the Editor  
Media Interview Guide  
Media Advisory Template  
Press Release Template  
Media Campaign Talking Points  
Pitch Letter Template

## Key Terms are Highlighted in the Text of this Media Guide

Terms in the Guide which are in *italics* are included in the Glossary in Section 9, Resources.

For those items which are in *italics and underlined* we also have provided samples of them in the Appendix, Tools and Templates.



# About This Guide

Mass media – television, radio, newspapers, the Internet, and others – can be an organization's most powerful and influential allies. For community-based efforts such as Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), local media hold the key to generating public awareness, spurring civic action, and influencing community policy. As a result, the media can be potent partners in your efforts to prevent gun violence.

But in today's highly competitive environment, hundreds of worthy causes are constantly jockeying for a piece of the media pie. Organizations that are proactive, creative, accessible, and reliable – and that understand how the media work – will be most successful in getting their slice.

This Guide has been developed to help you get the most mileage out of your limited human and financial resources. Designed as a resource for media novices and experts alike, it concentrates primarily on "earned" media strategies – ways to get free media coverage. It offers a variety of tools, proven resources, models, and templates to help enhance your current activities, as well as tactics to help you and your media partners maximize local impact by tying into national PSN messages.

This *Practical Guide to Media Outreach* – available free of charge at [www.PSN.gov](http://www.PSN.gov) – is one of several resources developed by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to assist PSN Task Forces as they engage their local media. A leader in the field of social marketing, nonprofit AED is available to work with you and your media partners to develop an earned media strategy. If you have questions or would like to discuss your specific media needs and challenges, please contact Jim Bender at [PSN@aed.org](mailto:PSN@aed.org) or call 202-884-8737.

*This guide was developed with support from Grant No. 2004-GP-CX-K002 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice.*



Academy for Educational Development





# PSN and the MEDIA

How to Use Your Local Media  
Fundamentals of a Communications Plan  
Honing Your Media Plan: "Earned" Versus Paid

Mass media are the primary sources of information for a vast majority of Americans. So, it stands to reason that regular media exposure will enhance the profile of your PSN efforts and help you get out your message.

Sounds simple enough. But how do you actually get that exposure?

In most local *media markets* (terms in the Guide which are in *italics* are included in the Glossary in Section 9, Resources) organizations have access to a wide range of ways to reach local media consumers. Some cost money, such as when you buy time on TV and radio stations or pay for an ad in the local paper. Some are free, such as news coverage, *editorials*, *letters to the editor* (find samples of the items in *italics and underlined* in the Appendix), local talk shows, human interest *features*, and *advertising* time and space provided at no cost as a public service to qualified nonprofit organizations.

Knowing when and how to tap your various local media resources is the key to making your PSN messages cut through the fierce competition for media exposure.

## **How to Use Your Local Media**

This Guide will take you through the processes of how to maximize your PSN media efforts. But how do you begin? You can't start utilizing media to work for PSN until you know who they are, what they do, and how you can help each other.

Start with these general recommendations, and when they're in place, move into the details of making local media work for you.

1. **Compile a media list** with the name, address, phone, fax, Web site, e-mail address, and other key information about your region's television and radio stations, daily and neighborhood newspapers, special interest publications, organization newsletters, and other vehicles for disseminating PSN information. Be sure to include the names and contact information for key personnel such as the publisher or general manager, public service director, news personnel, program producers, and others you'll find in the Who's Who section of this Guide.

2. **Begin developing relationships** with key media in your community. Send them background information about Project Safe Neighborhoods, your local program, and your goals. Set up briefing meetings between PSN leaders and top level management and *editorial boards* of stations and newspapers. Remember: they, too, have a vested interest in your community. Enlist their support as corporate good citizens as well as public influencers.

---

3. **Get to know local media contacts.** Set up information meetings with journalists and producers to tell them about PSN and to find out about their needs. Learn how they like to be contacted, the best times to reach them, and the times to avoid. Find out about their interests and “*beats*” and observe what types of stories they cover so you know how to tailor approaches to their needs. Keep notes on what you learn about your media list.

4. **Establish your credibility** and the credibility of your partners. Be in touch with journalists and producers even when you don’t want or need anything specific from them. Keep them apprised of what’s happening with gun violence in your community; send periodic updates about PSN efforts that may be of interest. You might forward something from national PSN that may have relevance to another story they’ve been covering—you can find updates on PSN programs and materials at [www.PSN.gov](http://www.PSN.gov) or USANET. Be honest, accurate, and helpful, and you’ll become the person they come to for all gun crime-related stories.

5. **Keep your media list up to date.** Staff changes are common in the communications industry. People switch jobs at the same place, move up the ladder, or move to another media outlet. To avoid embarrassment or misdirection of your media materials, be sure your list is always accurate. Phone each outlet regularly—and especially before a major PSN media effort—to check your information.

6. **Develop a communications plan** that includes a solid media strategy based on your goals, your budget, and what you’ve learned during initial research.

## **Fundamentals of a Communications Plan**

A good communications plan provides a road map that gets you from where you are to where you want to be. It lays out the best avenues, alerts you to possible roadblocks, outlines valuable information, and guides you step-by-step to your destination.

For Project Safe Neighborhoods, that destination—your ultimate goal—is to prevent gun crime in your community. Your road map will incorporate a wide variety of media strategies and tactics. Use these guidelines to build your overall PSN communications plan:

1. **Do your research** – What is the current local perception or level of awareness of gun crime issues or the PSN program? Find out. Utilize all resources at your disposal. Talk to contacts and colleagues. Get on the Internet and search local news stories about the issue. Then, analyze the environment surrounding the issue to help plot your course. You’ll see how this fits into an overall *media analysis* in Section 3.

2. **Identify your communications objectives** – What do you want people to do, think, or feel as a result of your PSN communications efforts? Do you want to build awareness? Create or reinforce your image? Promote understanding, change perceptions, or motivate action? Do you want to simply get the word out about an event? Identify your goals and make them specific, action-oriented, and measurable.

---

3. **Define your target audiences** – Whom do you want or need to reach in order to achieve your goals? There will be many, including opinion leaders, government representatives, partners, offenders, youth, the community-at-large, and others. Your local media will be the target audience for many *communications strategies* (one-on-one briefings, for example), and they'll also be important conduits to help you reach your other audiences.

Be sure you don't overlook one crucial target: PSN staff and Task Force members. They are your internal audience. Effective internal communications are essential to reinforce and strengthen your objectives and to keep staff apprised. Keep the staff of your Task Force and partner organizations, including administrative staff, informed about current and upcoming PSN activities. Copy them on press clippings and important media materials. Send them e-mail updates, and make sure everyone is aware of the internal media protocol.

4. **Develop key messages** – What do you need to say to each audience about preventing gun crime—and how do you need to say it? Perhaps you tell partners that no one organization can do it alone. Maybe homeowners need to know that gun crime reduces property values. Or you show teens how gun violence can change their lives forever. Decide what messages will help achieve your objective with each audience and then use them as the foundation of all your communication materials. Section 3 will tell you more about developing your messages and materials.

5. **Determine your communications strategies** – Strategies show how you will achieve your communications objective. They are directional, such as utilizing recognized local experts as *spokespersons* or telling the stories of real people. There will be many ways to tactically implement every particular strategy.

6. **Identify communications tactics** – Tactics should be pulled from all the activities at your disposal—events, advertising, mailings, media outreach, speaking engagements, and partnerships. For the expert spokesperson strategy, for example, arrange news interviews or quote them in position papers. Ask your “real people” to speak at school assemblies or book them on talk shows to share their experiences with gun crime.

7. **Build in evaluation tools** – Check that your efforts are effective. You'll find suggestions in Section 8, Moving Forward, for how to evaluate your communications program.

How and when you work with the media comprises only one part of this overall communications plan. But as your primary avenues to the public, media activities are key.

### **Honing Your Media Plan: "Earned" versus Paid**

There are many ways to take advantage of your local media—from paid advertising (sometimes called “*unearned*” exposure) to news and *editorial* coverage, programming, *public service announcements*, Web content, and more. Most successful communications efforts incorporate most, if not all, of these proven vehicles.

---

**Media outreach**—sometimes called media relations—usually refers to an organization’s efforts to obtain free, or earned, media coverage. It is the backbone of all public communications programs. Why? While **earned media** coverage lacks an important ingredient that advertising provides—control of content, timing, and presentation—it also provides one crucial element that paid advertising simply cannot deliver—credibility. Because program content is not “paid for,” it is seen by the viewer as more objective, and there is an assumed endorsement by the media outlet. As a result, **earned media** coverage is much harder, but usually much more gratifying, to obtain.

Earlier in this section, we discussed that creating and maintaining a dialogue with your local media is crucial to the success of your efforts to create awareness of PSN, your local program, and gun crime prevention. So, although your media plan may include a schedule and budget for paid advertising, you’ll want to create clear, detailed, and precise earned media strategies and tactics to provide the credibility that a media plan alone cannot provide.

### **A Sampling of Media Strategies and Tactics**

Develop and distribute to local journalists and producers a **media information package** with background on gun crime, local statistics, information about your local PSN program and partners, and contact information.

- Schedule **briefing meetings** with local stations and newspapers to introduce yourself and PSN, and to identify ways to work together.
- Identify one or more **spokespersons** who can be available for media interviews or questions. Provide them with **talking points** so they're always prepared to reinforce your key PSN messages.
- Develop a **calendar** of PSN and gun crime prevention events. Create **news releases** as each key event approaches.
- Distribute television **public service announcements (PSAs)** available from national PSN and "tag" them with local information—or work with a local TV station to produce your own local PSAs.

These and other media strategies and tactics will be explained further in Section 4. The opportunities are almost endless. Use your imagination, talk with other PSN programs about what's worked for them, and be sure to tap the expertise and connections of your other partners.

# 2

## GETTING MEDIA EXPOSURE

Understanding Media  
Who's Who  
Making Your Story Newsworthy  
Incorporating Advertising

If you ever took a journalism class, you know about the "*five Ws and an H*" that are the "must-haves" for every news story: who, what, why, when, where, and how. The needs are no different if you're to develop an effective media plan for PSN.

Understanding the differences among media, their unique requirements, the roles of various media professionals—and then packaging and presenting your PSN information to meet their needs—will help ensure that your media outreach efforts cut through the barrage of requests for time and space.

### Understanding Media

Every medium and local media outlet has its own particular needs. Some are obvious, such as needing visuals for television. Others aren't so apparent. Be sure to find out about the unique requirements for *your* local media when doing your initial fact-finding and briefings.

**Print media** – Newspapers, local magazines, special interest publications, newsletters, and other periodicals can tell your story with much more detail than broadcast media. With the exception of daily newspapers, they also have longer *lead times*—something to remember for time-sensitive information. Find out their *editorial calendars*—what they'll cover in each issue—and take advantage of it. Don't forget unusual opportunities to position PSN efforts with a business *angle* or as an *editorial*, for example. And always respect *deadlines*.

**Radio** – Although most stations broadcast some local news, with the exception of all-news and talk radio formats, they may do very little news gathering of their own. Find out how they like to receive information in the newsroom. Also check out the public service, news, and talk programs they produce. Radio often provides some of your best opportunities to get more lengthy exposure and in-depth discussion of your issues.

---

**Television** – With television, pictures are king. Be sure you can offer interesting visuals for your story. Is there a way you might work with one of your local stations to develop a news series about gun crime? Local programming such as morning "wake up" shows and public affairs programs always are looking for interesting local topics. Watch what they air and see how you might approach the producer with a program idea about a PSN issue. If you have community access channels on your local cable or satellite networks, take advantage of their opportunities. You'd be surprised how large their audiences can be!

**Internet** – Don't forget to tap the power of the Web. If your chamber of commerce or city government has a Web site, contact the Web master about having information posted on their community calendars. Offer to host a chat on how to prevent gun violence in your community.

Ask your local partners to provide information about PSN on their sites, and don't forget that most newspapers and stations have their own Web sites. You'll find more about using the Internet in Section 5.

## **Who's Who?**

Knowing the appropriate person to contact for each media opportunity can make the difference between getting coverage and missing the boat! When you're compiling your *media list*, be sure to include these key personnel and others who may be unique to your hometown. It's never overkill to send your materials to more than one appropriate person at the same media outlet. What is overlooked by one may catch the eye of another.

## Television and Radio

**Assignment Editor** – assigns reporters and *videographers* to cover events and stories. Mostly a position found in TV, but some large radio stations also have assignment editors. Send them information about all upcoming events.

**Producer (news and program)** – plans news or information programs and brings together all live, recorded, and graphic elements of a story or program.

**News Director** – is in charge of the news operation and makes decisions on coverage and presentation. In radio and smaller TV markets, news directors often also report and produce.

**Reporter** – covers news stories, usually on camera (TV) or tape (radio) from the scene or the newsroom. Reporters develop sources and conduct interviews and often cover specific "*beats*" such as city hall or government.

**Anchor** – is the on-air newscaster. An anchor may also serve as a program's managing editor or producer, and may often do reporting from the scene.

**Photographer** – also known as videographer, photojournalist, or cameraperson, operates the cameras that shoot stories. In smaller markets, they also may do reporting.

**Public Service Director** – often oversees the outlet's public service advertising availabilities and assists nonprofit organizations with announcements and production.

**Calendar Editor** – coordinates announcements of special events and meetings. Send them short descriptions of your upcoming events.

**Advertising or Sales Department** – if you decide to purchase advertising time or space, you'll deal with the station's or paper's advertising sales department. These people can help you develop a schedule and budget for your ad "buy."

**Web Master and Online Editor** – at appropriate Web sites, send them information for additional exposure.

**Daybook Editor** – at the Associated Press (AP) wire service, notifies subscribers of upcoming events in a particular city or region.

**PR Newswire** – this commercial wire service will distribute your releases and announcements for a fee.

## Newspaper

**Editor** – most newsrooms have a variety of editors to handle different functions. In large newspapers, each section – such as business, entertainment, and news – may have a specific editor to make decisions about what stories are covered.

**Executive Editor** – generally has the final say about what stories are published and how they are covered.

**Assignment Editor** – determines which reporters will cover a given story.

**Metro or City Editor** – oversees the metro or city desk and plans the paper's coverage of news throughout the region.

**Photo Editor** – directs, manages, and assigns photographers and selects images for use throughout the paper.

**Reporter** – develops and writes stories. They find and maintain contacts for information and have a good sense of what readers need and want to know.

**General Assignment Reporter** – covers all types of stories as assigned.

**"Beat" Reporters** – covers one specific area such as Government, health, or the police department.

---

## **Making Your Story Newsworthy**

Editors and reporters get literally hundreds of *news releases* and other media materials every day. How do they decide which get "ink" or "air" and which get tossed aside?

When an editor or producer is deciding whether to run a particular story, the bottom line is how much it will appeal to the outlet's audience. As you put together your story, ask yourself these questions.

- **Is the information timely?** - does it connect to current issues?
- **Is it "news"?** - has it been reported already?
- **Is it local?** - does it affect people in this community?
- **Does it have a human interest element?** - does it have emotional appeal?
- **Does it affect a lot of people?** - why should the community care?
- **Is there a "draw"?** - such as a celebrity or other noted person?
- **Is it visual?** - do you have pictures to enhance your words?

### **CONNECT TO CURRENT ISSUES**

- Are gun crime and prevention being covered?
- Are other issues being covered that relate to prevention of gun crime?
- What are the main themes and arguments being presented?

One way to guarantee timeliness of your story is to tie it to what your local news media are already reporting. Read the newspaper every day. Listen to radio as you drive to and from work. Try to catch at least one local daily TV newscast. Are you seeing any trends? Use this information to capture or expand PSN's exposure. Is a vital point of view omitted? Can PSN be a resource? Offer outlets new or additional information to present a balanced view, provide up-to-date local statistics, present your experts as *spokespersons*, and point journalists to other sources. Become a resource for them and you may become a part of the story they're already reporting.

Remember, your goal is to maximize exposure of PSN and your mission. If you spend a bit of time to ensure that your story is newsworthy and timely, you'll be much more likely to earn coverage for PSN!

---

## **Incorporating Advertising**

*Advertising* provides an opportunity to augment your *earned media* efforts with controlled message delivery. There are two ways to get advertising space and time: your task force can pay for it, or can investigate opportunities for free public service advertising (print) or announcements (radio and television). Both are generally referred to as *PSAs*.

Most stations and newspapers offer some advertising free of charge to qualified public service organizations. PSN will be competing with many other worthy causes for this limited PSA time and space, but it's always worthwhile to contact the outlet's public service director to find out how to go about gaining access to their free *availabilities*. Your PSN task force may find that some times of the year are more accessible than others, and those might be perfect for highlighting your PSN task force's efforts. In an abundance of caution, personnel from the United States Attorneys' offices should not approach media outlets to discuss placing PSAs. This role is best played by a media partner or community group who is familiar with the process.

If the budget permits, your PSN task force may decide to *buy* time or space through the advertising or sales department. This guarantees that your ad will be used when and how you want it to be used. The PSN task force becomes another advertiser, just like the local supermarket or car dealership. Many media offer special rates for nonprofit organizations. Be sure to ask. Your PSN task force might stretch its budget by requesting one *pro bono* ad for each one that it purchases; this is becoming increasingly common as more nonprofits pay for advertising.

Whether your task force obtains free or paid advertising, PSN will have to provide tapes, *scripts*, or print ads to the outlet. Sometimes stations and newspapers will help with production—especially if the task force is purchasing time or space. If not, the task force will need to find someone—such as a video production facility or graphic designer (see Section 7)—to help create them. National PSN and other local PSN programs may have appropriate *spots* and print ads you might use. Your media partner also might be a prime resource. And don't forget to use other community partners as resources. Investigate all the possibilities to help maximize your task force's investment.

One last note on public service announcements: many stations, papers, and community access channels mention special events as part of their free public service calendars. Two to three weeks before an event, send a *short* description of your event—including the date, place, time, and other pertinent information—to the outlet's public service director or calendar editor. They'll often be printed or get on-air just the way you write them.



# 3

## MAXIMIZING MESSAGES AND MATERIALS

### Developing Your Messages Pretesting

As you move from planning to implementation, you'll probably start wondering how you can guarantee that your efforts will have the desired result—that your *target audiences* will do, think, or feel as you intend. The short answer is: you can't. But you can take certain proven steps to increase the chance that your PSN messages and materials hit their intended mark.

#### **Developing Your Messages**

In your communications plan, you have identified the many target audiences you need to reach to advance your PSN mission: young people, offenders, policy makers, police officers, judges, parents, victims, media, and others. What do you need to say to each audience about preventing gun crime—and how do you need to say it? In a nutshell, that's the definition of a message.

As you begin to craft your local PSN messages, decide what it is you want your audience to remember. Construct everything around that core, and make it appropriate to *each* particular audience. Remember that your message is the sum total of words, images, and presentation. So, think about how your message will work in different materials. Talk your audience's language. Use pictures and visuals that resonate with *them*. Make it matter to *them*. Remember that every PSN message and material need not reach all your audiences.

Use these guidelines as you develop your PSN messages and materials:

- **Tailor your message to the audience and the medium.**

Will you be developing a brochure for parents, a letter for local law enforcement officials, or a poster for high schools? If it is for mass media, is it crafted to appeal to the broadest possible cross section of your community?

- **Keep it short, simple, and direct.**

If your audience only remembers one thing, what do you want that to be? Build your message around that core.

- **Put a human—and preferably local—face on the issue.**

Include a quote from a victim's mother in the brochure for parents; statistics about police injuries in a letter to officials; or a testimonial from a teen offender on the poster.

- **Use persuasive visuals and symbols.**

What catches the imagination and motivates a parent is quite different from what motivates a teenager at risk.

---

- **Ask for "the order."**

Be sure to tell your audience what they can do. Otherwise, you'll leave them with more questions than answers.

- **Never forget to whom you're talking!**

It's all about the audience. Remember that *your* goal is to make prevention of gun crime *their* goal.

## **Pretesting**

Before you invest time and expense into developing final communications products, wouldn't it be great to know which messages and materials will be most effective with your intended audiences and what changes might make ineffective ones better? That's where *pretesting* comes in. It can save not only time and money but your entire communications effort by validating your concepts and ensuring that your messages resonate.

**Test your messages and materials to answer these questions:**

- Do people understand what you're trying to say?
- Would it move them to do, think, or feel as you intend?
- Do they *like/dislike* the materials? Why/why not?
- Would they use or pay attention to the materials?
- Are the materials culturally appropriate?
- Is the level of language and grammar appropriate for your target audience?

Depending on your needs and the stage of your planning, one or both of these research options may be helpful:

*Opinion polls* are surveys conducted with scientifically drawn random samples from a specified group. A poll produces top-line data that show the overall result for each question. It provides *quantitative* information about the public's level of support (e.g., what percentage of mothers favor gun crime enforcement) or measures the extent of knowledge of a particular issue (e.g., how many teens know that some thefts *could* result in Federal prison time).

Polls usually are conducted by firms specializing in this kind of research, and many offer options ranging from full surveys on your topic to having one or two questions added to an already-scheduled poll or "*omnibus*" *survey*. A number of firms and Web sites offer online polling at a reasonable cost. Check with local partners, other PSN programs, and colleagues about firms they've used. Find out what types of polling services each provides, and the benefits and costs associated with each.

---

**Focus groups** bring together relatively small groups—usually 6 to 12 people—to have targeted discussions with a trained moderator based on a predeveloped discussion guide. Focus groups usually last from 1 to 2 hours, and might be comprised of a mix of ordinary citizens, people from one particular profession, people in a particular locale or age group, or any group that represents the specific profile of the target audience you want to reach. Focus groups explore the range of attitudes and opinions of the participants toward the issue or item being presented. Because participants are not randomly selected, findings from focus groups can not be projected to the general population.

Because focus groups offer **qualitative** data, they are usually used to test messages, creative ideas, and other communications tools. You can conduct formal focus groups through a research firm, or—if time and dollars are at a premium—develop your own discussion guides and put together informal focus groups of people you know or that you can tap through schools, churches, community centers, and elsewhere. Just be certain that your group represents your target audience and that your questions probe the information that will be helpful to you as you refine your messages and materials.

#### **Make Pretesting Count**

- Be sure to test your messages and materials with actual representatives of your audience. Don't ask adults to provide opinions about youth-directed materials. Similarly, don't expect young people to respond to a poster directed at adults.
- Use what you learn! Take the feedback from your research and use it to revise, refine, and finalize your messages and materials so they really do their job!



# 4

## CUSTOMIZING YOUR MEDIA PROGRAM

### The Basics

#### Media Relations Building Blocks

#### Pitching Your Story

#### Responding To Media Inquiries

You know your communications goals; you've identified your target audiences; you have your messages for each; and you know how and where to reach them. With that roadmap in hand, you're ready to get going!

Although your full communications plan will involve many different layers and tactics, this section will concentrate on helping you to execute your *media outreach* efforts to maximize their impact and effectiveness.

### The Basics

Whatever the size of your *media market* or your available resources, a successful media outreach effort must incorporate certain fundamental elements. These can be as simple or as fancy as appropriate. But they must be there.

- Your *media list* should be complete and *always* up to date.
- Have one or more *spokespersons* who are comfortable with your messages and available to speak with the media. These can be experts in particular issues surrounding gun crime, victims willing to talk about their stories, partners, the PSN Coordinator and U.S. Attorney, or other credible representatives. For those who do not have much media interview experience, you may want to investigate *media training* to maximize their level of comfort.
- Your *PSN media contact* can be different from your spokesperson. This person—likely your Public Information Officer—is the one that media will call for more information, to set up an interview with the appropriate spokesperson, to ask questions, and more. Unlike the spokesperson, the contact's name and telephone number will appear on all media materials.
- Develop an outreach plan that lists all upcoming PSN events and announcements and outlines your planned media activities for *each*—ranging from a simple opinion piece about a promising statistic to a *news release* about a major event or a full media conference about an important new program.
- Implement a system to monitor the quantity and quality of your *earned media* coverage to aid in evaluating your communications efforts. *Media monitoring* is offered through monitoring companies for a fee. You also can track coverage internally, especially in smaller markets with fewer outlets, by conducting internet searches for PSN mentions in your local media.
- Use a variety of media materials—both general and event-specific—compiled in a special folder or as separate pieces. These materials will form the building blocks of your media outreach efforts.

---

## **Media Relations Building Blocks**

The foundation of all your media outreach efforts will be a variety of written materials that explain and answer virtually every question about PSN and gun crime. Basic materials will remain consistent from event to event. For specific efforts, your basic kit will be augmented with specific information about your event or story.

### ***The Media Kit***

Also called a media information package, press kit, or press packet, the media kit compiles important materials—usually in a two-pocket folder—that provide a complete picture of PSN, gun crime prevention, and the particular event or story at hand. Good media kits provide uncomplicated information that answers all questions the media might have about "who, what, why, when, where, and how." In fact, a journalist should be able to write a clear, accurate, and comprehensive story strictly from the material in your kit.

*You'll find examples of many of these Basic Media Materials in the tools and templates section.*

- Pitch Letter
- Media Advisory/Alert
- Media Kit containing:
  - New release(s)
    - Fact sheet/backgrounder about PSN
    - Fact sheet/backgrounder about gun crime in your community
    - As appropriate - Brief spokesperson profile
      - Photo(s) with captions attached to back
      - Copies of appropriate papers or articles
  - Local statistics
  - Partner profiles

Put the most important and time-sensitive information in the right pocket so it is seen immediately when the kit is opened. Background material can go behind it and in the left pocket. If you have printed folders for your PSN program, use them. If not, be sure to put a computer-generated label on the front of the kit with your name and a list of the contents.

---

***Pitch Letter*** – Paper-clipped to the outside of your kit should be a well-crafted, concise letter that makes the case for why the outlet should cover your story. Be sure that each letter is addressed to an *individual* on your media list (no "Dear Sirs" here!) and try to tailor it with a paragraph that makes it pertinent to each recipient's needs or interests. Talk about the uniqueness of what you can offer, and let them know you'll phone to follow up.

***Media Release*** – Also called a press release or news release, this item is *the* back-bone of each outreach effort and is the most important item in your media kit. It communicates the information you want to convey and immediately flags editors and journalists to the newsworthiness of the content. To maximize the chance that your release will be read, follow the accepted format for news releases.

### Writing an Effective News Release

- Use an active, informative, attention-grabbing headline.
- Make the release only as long as necessary to provide the information. Two to three pages is optimal. Other information can be included in your background pieces.
- Work your way from the *most important* information to the *least important*. In the first (*lead*) paragraph, note the importance of the subject and include as many of the five Ws (who, what, why, when, where) and H (how) as possible.
- Write in an active, engaging, and concise style that is easy to read and easy to understand. Avoid jargon. Spell out acronyms the first time they're used. Put technical ideas into lay language.
- Use quotes and attribute them appropriately.
- End with a "*boilerplate*" paragraph with standard, concise information about your local PSN organization and its purpose.
- Always include the name, phone, and e-mail of your contact person for more information.
- Don't trust your computer spellchecker! Take time to proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.

---

**Fact Sheets and Backgrounders** – Fact sheets and backgrounds provide additional information and insight. They can outline additional statistics, provide the history of a movement or organization, or expound on other details. Backgrounders usually are written in narrative style, whereas fact sheets provide information in “at-a-glance” formats (bullets, sections, and so forth). Both should follow the format guidelines used for news releases.

**Media Advisory** – Also called a media alert, this one-page document alerts or advises media of an upcoming event. It gives editors a heads up about items they may want to cover and tells why the event is happening, who is speaking or attending, when and where it is being held, how long it will last, what opportunities exist for interviews and photos, and whom to contact for more information. Media advisories should be sent by fax and e-mail a week before your event and again a day or two before. A copy may be included in the event media kit.

**Op-Ed** – Short for opinion editorial, op-eds are unsolicited, 500- to 800-word pieces sent to newspapers for use in the editorial and opinion section. More detailed than a letter to the editor, op-eds are well-documented and usually express intense personal views. Be sure your op-ed is timely and choose an “author” who will maximize its impact. Be sure to indicate that person’s connection to PSN.

**Letters to the Editor** – Letters to the editor are simple and efficient ways to voice an opinion or provide new perspectives. Usually in response to an item printed previously, these short (200–250 words) pieces in letter format can be used over and over again. Consider generating a letters-to-the-editor campaign and alert your PSN supporters to the opportunity to send similar letters about the same subject.

## **Pitching Your Story**

Ok. You have your story or event. It meets the criteria for being newsworthy. You’ve developed attention-grabbing, targeted, and appropriately formatted materials. So how do you get a newspaper or station to use or cover it? That’s where “pitching” comes in. It’s not enough to simply send out your information and hope that someone will find it interesting. You need to take proactive, creative steps to generate excitement and to sell your story to each outlet’s needs.

***Pitching*** usually involves sending printed information such as a news release or media advisory with a pitch letter or e-mail and then following up by phone (1) to ensure that outlets and journalists received it, and (2) to see how you might persuade them to cover your PSN story or event. Here are a few tips to help ensure a successful pitch:

### DOs

**DO** send out accurate news releases in a timely fashion, in the correct format, and with a pitch letter geared to get the recipient excited about the story.

**DO** send out a media alert/advisory telling *who, what, why, when, where*, and *how* about a week in advance and again the day before a planned event.

**DO** follow up by phone a day or so before your event to ascertain interest, see if they'd like to interview your spokesperson, and encourage them to cover your event. When there is no event or time sensitivity, follow up your release within a day or two.

**DO** tailor your pitch for the needs of each medium or journalist. Be prepared to offer plenty of visual opportunities for television, human-interest stories for print, and interviews for radio.

**DO** respect their *deadlines* and time. Call at appropriate times, state who you are and why you're calling, and be brief and to the point.

**DO** ensure that you or your designated spokespersons are available and that they have been briefed about the key messages and *talking points* for this particular interview.

**DO** send a news release immediately after an event to those outlets that could not attend and encourage them to use the information.

### DON'Ts

**DON'T** write long pitch letters. Be concise and to the point.

**DON'T** tell the media what *you* want. Instead, ask them how you can help *them*.

**DON'T** forget to look for opportunities to tie your story to others that the journalist or outlet has been covering.

**DON'T** overwhelm reporters and editors with information that isn't newsworthy or timely. They may become desensitized to your information and might ignore a PSN story that would be of interest.

**DON'T** be a pest. If a reporter seems disinterested, ask how you might angle your story or find out who in the newsroom or program staff might be a more appropriate contact.

**DON'T** forget to approach talk and public service program producers in addition to news personnel to determine their interest in PSN stories and guests.

**DON'T** underestimate the importance of media such as community newspapers, cable TV, trade journals, and special-interest newsletters. They often can provide targeted coverage to help you get the word out.

**DON'T** be discouraged if your story is rejected. Persistence pays off—keep making those calls.

---

## **Responding to Media Inquiries**

When you contact the media, you're ready—notes and information at hand. When they call you, that may not be the case. Preparation is always key when you deal with the media. But how can you prepare for an unanticipated phone call from a journalist? First and foremost, remember that you're under no obligation to respond immediately. Take some time to organize your thoughts and get ready. Here's how.

- 1. Buy time**
  - Politely tell the journalist that you're unable to talk right now but will be happy to call back with the information.
  - Ask when it will be convenient for you to call back and find out about the deadline.
- 2. Gather information**
  - Find out what kinds of information the reporter is seeking.
  - Get the person's name, affiliation, and phone number(s).
  - If you're unfamiliar with the outlet, do a little Internet research.
- 3. Get ready**
  - Determine who should speak for PSN on this question. If it's not you, phone the appropriate spokesperson and brief him or her for the interview.
  - Gather any background that will be helpful. If you won't be responding, send it by e-mail or fax to your spokesperson. If you don't have what the journalist is looking for, find it or be prepared to say where it is available.
- 4. Respond**
  - Respond at the designated time and *always* well before the deadline.

### **When Media Call**

**Be Ready** – Have an internal system in place for media calls. All incoming calls should be referred to your designated PSN media contact.

**Be Sure** – There's no such thing as "*off the record*," so don't hesitate to pass on questions you are not prepared to answer. Offer to find the answer and get back to the reporter.

**Be a Resource** – Always follow up on an interview. Send information you've promised or background that might be useful.

**Be Practical** – Don't forget to evaluate the interview. Rate yourself, get feedback from others, and be sure to monitor the final story for tone and accuracy. If you find factual errors, be sure to make the journalist aware of them.

You'll find a detailed guide and specific tips for *media interviews* (telephone, radio, television, and others) in the Tools and Templates section.

# 5

## MAKING THE INTERNET WORK FOR YOU

E-mail is an excellent tool for communicating with media. It is a fast and cost-effective way to quickly distribute *press releases* and newsletters and is useful for submitting *letters to the editor* or *op-eds*. Electronic press releases and newsletters also can be posted to your Web site. NetAction, ([www.netaction.org](http://www.netaction.org)) a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting use of the Internet for effective citizen action campaigns, offers the following suggestions for online *media relations*.

**Distribute e-mail press releases in plain text in the body of the e-mail.**

Draft your press release as you would any other e-mail message, using an e-mail software program such as Microsoft Outlook®. Never send press releases as attachments to e-mail.

**Write a subject line that's compelling or provocative.**

Keep in mind that the subject line is the first thing reporters and editors see. Grab their attention so they open and download your release.

**Use *hyperlinks* where appropriate.**

If there is additional information available on your Web site—such as a white paper or an event announcement—include a hyperlink so reporters can click right to it. Online publications often will include these links in their stories, making this an effective way to direct visitors to your Web site.

**Send a test message before distributing your press release.**

Always send a copy of the press release to yourself or to a colleague before distributing it. Check the format to make sure there are no broken lines of text, and make sure all Web *URLs* work.

**Avoid disclosing the recipients' e-mail addresses.**

Always type the recipients' addresses in the "Bcc" field of your e-mail message header, rather than in the "To" or "Cc" field.

**Treat e-mail media inquiries the same as phone inquiries.**

Always respond just as promptly to e-mail media inquiries as you would to phone calls. Reporters who work for online publications are much more likely to contact you by e-mail than by phone.

---

**Set up an online archive for your media communications.**

Set aside an area of your Web site where reporters can locate past press releases. (If you publish a newsletter in electronic form, maintain an online archive of past issues.)

**Collect e-mail addresses from your media contacts.**

If you've been distributing your press releases by fax or postal mail, ask your media contacts if you can switch to e-mail distribution. Commercial media directories routinely include e-mail contact information. Major newspapers frequently have separate staffs for their online versions, so you'll need to include those contacts on your list, too. There are also media directories and news services specifically for online publications that may be appropriate to add to your *media list*.

# 6

## DEVELOPING OTHER OUTREACH TOOLS

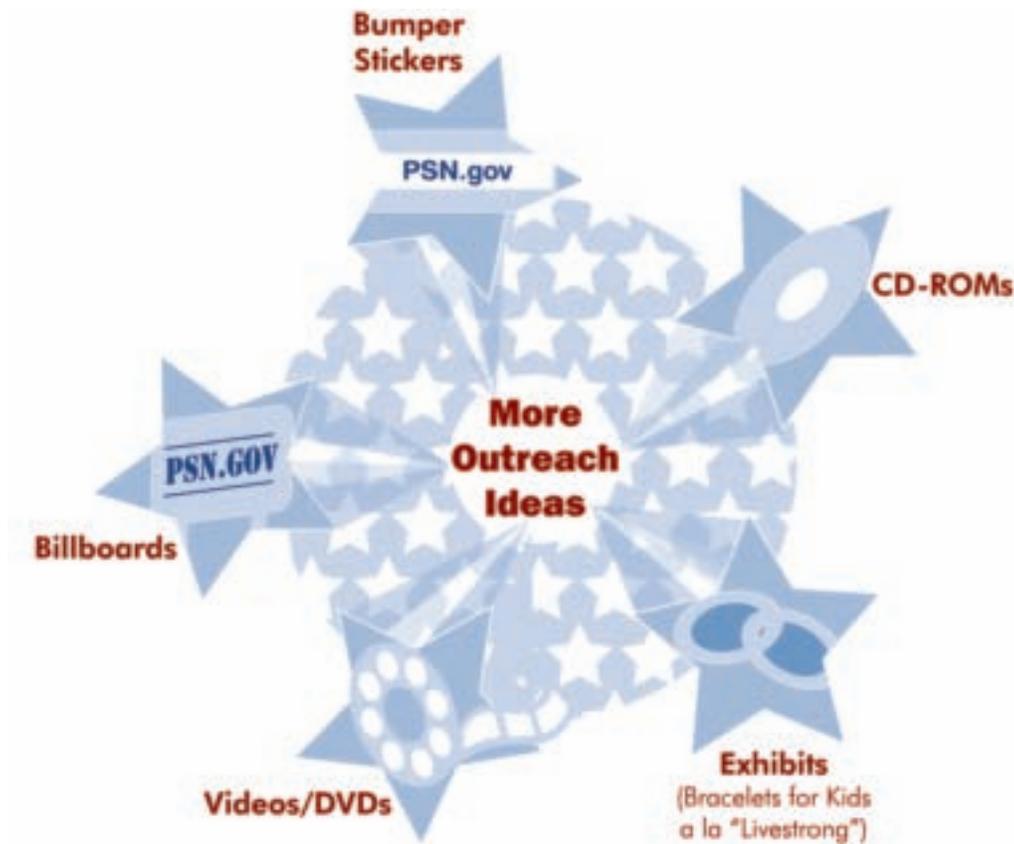
Media are only one consideration; you have many *target audiences*. Your communications plan and *pretesting*—and your budget—will determine what tools and materials you refine and develop for your other PSN outreach efforts. The options for getting your messages out are almost endless, and you should incorporate as many ways and as many vehicles as you can afford. Here are some ideas to get you started.

**Brochures** provide an opportunity to talk at length about your PSN program and its mission. They can be developed without time-sensitive information and used in a multitude of ways over time. Distribute them at speaking engagements and events. Include them as background in your media information package. Send one with letters to policy makers. Your brochure can be as simple as a one-page flyer created in a word processing program or as ornate as a multipage booklet created by a professional graphic designer.

**Speakers Bureaus** are a cost-effective way to maximize awareness and exposure of PSN and gun crime issues. Enlist police officers, representatives of the U.S. Attorney's Office, coalition members, *real people* with stories to tell, and your other partners. Develop *talking points* to remind your speakers of PSN's key messages, but encourage them to make their talks their own. Promote your speakers bureau to schools, civic organizations, churches, and other venues where your target audiences gather.

**Newsletters** can provide an effective and timely way to disseminate information about your PSN program and activities. If you can't afford to design and regularly distribute a printed newsletter, consider e-mailing it to your many constituencies.

**Posters** can communicate your key messages in simple direct ways to one or more target audiences, and can be used in a variety of venues from schools to police stations. Find out what's available from national PSN or other programs. Or, budget permitting, develop your own posters. Remember that unlike a brochure, people who see your poster regularly may tire of it. Try to have several posters that can be rotated or used at different times.



No matter what you create and for whom, try to maintain consistency that identifies your materials with PSN. As your efforts evolve, you'll want people to see your material and know that it's *yours*. Maybe color ties them together, or a particular graphic style. Before you begin, go to the PSN Web site ([www.PSN.gov](http://www.PSN.gov)). Make sure your materials are within PSN's requirements. *Always* identify them as coming from PSN, and make sure all advertising materials are approved by the DOJ's Office of Public Affairs.

## What IDEAS Do You Have?

---

---

---

---

---

---

# 7

## CHOOSING EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL HELP

Public Relations Agencies  
Advertising Agencies  
Graphic Designers  
Research Firms  
Video Producers

As you develop, refine, and expand your communications efforts, it may be necessary to enlist the help of a professional. After you determine your needs, see which type of professional can best meet them.

The Academy for Educational Development is available to work with PSN Coordinators and their media partners to generate awareness of local PSN efforts by assisting in message development, *earned media* strategy, *PSA* placement, and comprehensive communication plans. Feel free to contact us at [PSN@AED.org](mailto:PSN@AED.org). This assistance is available free of charge to local PSN programs.

### Public Relations Agencies

Public relations agencies provide a broad range of services to help you reach your *target audiences*. They can work with you for the long term, or on an as-needed basis for particular communications efforts.

#### **Some Public Relations Agency Services**

- *Strategic communications planning*
- *Media relations and earned media*
- *Creative services: graphic design, writing, materials development*
- *Meeting and event coordination*
- *Media and presentation training*
- *Issue and crisis management*
- *Stakeholder mobilization*
- *Government relations*
- *Web site creation and maintenance*
- *Research*
- *Much more*

Not all public relations firms provide the full gamut of communications services. Make sure that the firm you choose can deliver what you need. Look at their Web sites. Ask them for information about their services. Discuss their rates. Talk to references.

### Advertising Agencies

The right agency will understand your needs and should be able to translate your advertising goals into compelling ads. Although advertising agencies sometimes offer some of the same services as public relations agencies—especially in smaller markets—their primary focus is creation, production, and placement of print, broadcast, and Web advertising, *not earned media*.

As with public relations firms, find an advertising agency through recommendations and its ability to meet your needs. If you see an ad or TV commercial that draws your attention, call the media outlet and ask which ad agency placed the *spot*. Then call the agency and interview them. Find out their billing structure and how they deal with nonprofit clients. Remember that bigger isn't necessarily better. If the agency has the right expertise for you, go for it. Smaller firms may be able to give you more of the time and talent you need for a fraction of the cost.

---

## **Graphic Designers**

A graphic designer communicates your message visually for print, broadcast, and Web-based materials. Graphic artists creatively blend typography, color, illustration, and photography to create a comprehensive look for your message.

Independent or freelance designers may specialize in different areas, such as creation of corporate identities (logos), signage, exhibit design, or product package design. Many graphic artists are generalists. Ask your partners and other colleagues for recommendations and then invite designers to show you their *portfolios* with samples of their work. Get a sense of how similar their past business is to what you would like to produce. Check with your media partner, especially if it is an advertising or public relations agency, as these typically have a graphic artist on staff.

## **Research Firms**

Research firms offer a variety of research and polling services. You often hear the names of the large international firms associated with major public *opinion polls*. But smaller firms may offer research services at a much lower cost. Because staff skills, experience, and facilities will vary, first determine your needs—*focus groups*, for example—and then consult with partners, colleagues, and other associates about their experiences with firms on similar assignments. Discuss your needs with one or two firms to ascertain their grasp of your issues and to determine timing and cost parameters.

## **Video Producers**

Many television stations also provide production assistance for TV commercials and *PSAs*. If you need production assistance for PSAs or other purposes, check with them first. If they don't provide direct assistance, television stations often can refer you to facilities or freelance producers and *videographers*. Talk to your partners, and phone other local nonprofit organizations—such as United Way and the American Red Cross—that often hire producers to do films, videos, and PSAs. Ask for referrals. Look at the work of producers or production facilities. Then request proposals from several and compare what you're getting for your money.

# 8

## MOVING FORWARD

### Evaluating Your Efforts Refining Your Communications Program

Effective communications programs are in constant flux—being refined, updated, and improved based on new information, successes and failures, and ongoing input from a variety of sources. Build in mechanisms to ensure that your PSN program is always the best it can be.

#### **Evaluating Your Efforts**

Make sure your communications plan includes an evaluation component to measure your activities against your goals.

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- Why?

To judge the success of your local PSN communications efforts and *media outreach*, you can use a variety of techniques specific to the kind of work you wish to evaluate.

**Media Monitoring and Analysis** – Be sure to put in place a system for monitoring your *earned media* coverage. You can do it yourself or hire a service to provide newspaper clippings and information about broadcast coverage for television and radio. Compare the post outreach content of media coverage about PSN and gun crime prevention to the media environment before you began. Compare the number of media inquiries you are now receiving to those received before your media outreach. Look at *quality* as well as *quantity* of coverage. How many stories were positive? How many delineated your key messages? How many put forth your position appropriately? Did stories have more visibility and substance than before your efforts?

**Record of Events** – Take a look at your schedule of media and special events. Did attendance increase? Did media attend? If not, do you know why? Did you generate the quality of coverage you intended? What could you do to make them better?

**Trends in Community Participation and Interest** – Measure community and organizational involvement in PSN activities and note: Are you getting more calls for speakers? Have you had requests for information to disseminate? Are different segments of the community becoming involved?

---

## **Refining Your Communications Program**

These and other indicators that you identify will be invaluable as you hone your communications strategy and refine your tactics to maximize PSN's impact. Always incorporate what you learn to keep your program fresh, timely, and on target.



## RESOURCES

Glossary Of Terms  
Directories  
National Media Contacts  
Public Relations References  
Media Event Checklists

### Glossary of Terms

<b>Advertising</b>	Promotional messages about an organization, event, or product that have advertiser-controlled content, timing, and presentation. Advertising can be paid—sometimes referred to as "unearned" exposure—or free public service announcements (PSAs).
<b>Angle</b>	The approach or focus of a story.
<b>Availabilities</b>	Unsold broadcast time or print space that may be made available to nonprofit organizations or causes on a reduced- or no-cost basis by the station or publication.
<b>Backgrounder</b>	One of several basic media materials – often written in narrative style – that provides in-depth background information about a subject and answers anticipated questions.
<b>Basic media materials</b>	A variety of information pieces-including pitch letters, media advisories, media releases, fact sheets, backgrounders, spokesperson profiles, photos, and other appropriate information-for use in a media kit or individually to educate journalists and to create awareness of an issue, event, or organization.
<b>Beat</b>	The subject or area usually covered by a particular reporter. Some common beats include sports, health, travel, city government, and crime/police.
<b>Boilerplate</b>	Standard wording about an organization that is usually included at the bottom of a media release, for example: "Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing those programs with the resources they need to be successful. PSN helps create safer communities through heightened coordination and cooperation among Federal, State, and local law enforcement and the community."
<b>Communications strategy</b>	Key directional principles of a communications plan that are designed to achieve specific objectives.
<b>Communications tactics</b>	Specific actions and activities that implement the communications strategy.

---

<b>Deadline</b>	The time by which a reporter must receive information to include in a story or article. Information supplied after a reporter's deadline likely will not be incorporated (i.e., it will be "dead").
<b>"Earned" media</b>	Coverage or exposure provided at no cost. Often the result of media outreach or media relations efforts, this coverage is generated by a story's newsworthiness and, as a result, usually is considered more credible than paid advertising.
<b>Editorial</b>	An article or broadcast story written by or on behalf of the media outlet and stating the outlet's "official" opinion, usually on a well-known or controversial issue.
<b>Editorial board</b>	A group of key staff members that determines the editorial positions of a publication. Editorial boards often agree to meet with representatives of local organizations to learn about issues of importance to the community.
<b>Editorial calendar</b>	A publication's week-by-week or month-by-month outline of what topics it plans to feature throughout the year. The calendar provides guidance to outside organizations regarding what types of stories might be of interest to the publication during certain periods (e.g., "back to school" in August and September).
<b>Fact sheet</b>	One of several basic media materials, a fact sheet usually is written in outline or bullet form and presents the essential facts (who, what, why, when, where, how) about a subject, often on a single page.
<b>Feature</b>	An indepth story that usually carries a strong element of human interest. Features usually lack the urgency of news.
<b>"Five Ws and H"</b>	The rule of thumb used by journalists and public relations practitioners to ensure that the basic elements of a story are included in a release, news story, or feature. The letters refer to Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How.
<b>Focus group</b>	A qualitative research technique in which an experienced moderator leads participants in a discussion of a particular topic according to a predetermined discussion guide. Focus groups explore participants' attitudes and opinions and often are used to test messages, creative ideas, and other communications tools.
<b>Hyperlink</b>	An element in an electronic document or Web page that facilitates an immediate link to another place in the same document or to an entirely different document or Internet location. A hyperlink usually is recognized by underlining and a different text color.
<b>Key message</b>	The combined words and images developed to achieve a stated objective with each target audience, i.e., what needs to be presented to each target to encourage the desired result.

---

<b>Lead paragraph</b>	The first paragraph in a press release or news story. It should contain as many of the 5 Ws and H as possible.
<b>Lead time</b>	The advance time required by a publication or program before it can print or air a story. Daily newspapers, television, and radio stations usually have very short lead times, i.e., they can print or air a story the day, or day after, they receive information. Monthly publications and professional journals often must plan months in advance.
<b>Letter to the editor</b>	A short article written in letter format and sent to newspapers and other publications, usually in response to an item printed previously.
<b>Media advisory Media alert</b>	A one-page document sent by fax or e-mail a week before and again the day before an event to alert or advise media about why the event is happening, who is speaking or attending, when and where it is being held, how long it will last, what opportunities exist for interviews and photos, and whom to contact for more information.
<b>Media analysis</b>	A detailed review and assessment of media coverage prior to and after media outreach to compare content, quantity, quality, positioning, and other pertinent factors.
<b>Media briefing Media conference Press conference</b>	A meeting called to simultaneously inform members of the media about an event or news subject. The format permits questioning of the organization or individual calling the meeting and is preferred only when there is significant news to communicate.
<b>Media or Press Kits; Media or Press Package</b>	A package of publicity material, typically containing media releases, fact sheets, captioned photos, and backgrounders. May also contain additional information such as an organization's newsletter, brochures, spokesperson biographies, and other materials as appropriate.
<b>Media list</b>	A complete list of publications; radio, television, and cable outlets and programs; and Internet vehicles including key reporters, editors, and producers at each location with their contact information. Usually tailored to reflect the angle of the story.
<b>Media market</b>	The geographic area served by nearby TV and radio stations and newspapers. Media markets usually incorporate a city and its surrounding areas.
<b>Media monitoring</b>	A system to obtain newspaper clippings and information about broadcast coverage of a particular subject or event. May be handled internally or through a fee-based monitoring service.
<b>Media outreach Media relations</b>	Working with journalists, producers, and other appropriate media personnel to encourage coverage of an organization, issue, or event on a discrete and/or ongoing basis.
<b>Media, News or Press release</b>	A written story following a standardized format and prepared for distribution for use by print and electronic media.

---

<b>Media training</b>	Activity in which spokespersons learn how to deliver concise, targeted messages during print and electronic media interviews. It usually involves role playing with both friendly and hostile "interviewers."
<b>"Off the record"</b>	Information shared with a reporter that is not intended for public consumption.
<b>Omnibus survey</b>	A fast and cost-effective way to obtain information about a variety of topics that do not warrant the cost or time of a dedicated, individual survey. Questions about numerous topics are included in each survey, which usually is conducted via telephone with a random sample.
<b>Op-Ed</b>	A short, well-documented article usually expressing an intense personal view and sent unsolicited to newspapers for use in the editorial and opinion section.
<b>Opinion poll</b>	A survey conducted with a scientifically drawn random sample from a specified group to produce top-line quantitative information about the level of support or interest.
<b>Pitch letter</b>	A well-crafted, concise letter accompanying a media kit that makes the case for why the media outlet should cover the story.
<b>Pitching</b>	Identifying and presenting a unique angle to a journalist or program producer to heighten interest in a story.
<b>Portfolio</b>	A representative sampling of work usually presented by or available from photographers, graphic artists, writers, and other communications specialists as a selling tool for their services.
<b>Pretesting</b>	A type of formative research that involves systematic gathering of the intended audience's reactions to messages and materials before they are produced in final form.
<b>Pro bono</b>	Latin meaning "for the good," the term refers to services and goods that are provided at no cost to the recipient.
<b>PSA</b>	Short for public service announcement (broadcast) or public service advertisement (print), PSAs provide information about a program, organization, or event in a noncommercial way as a service to the community. PSAs usually are aired or printed at no cost to the sponsoring organization.
<b>PSN media contact</b>	Likely the Public Information Officer, this is the person whom media will call for more information, to set up an interview, to ask questions, and more. The contact's name and telephone number will appear on all media materials.

---

<b>Qualitative research</b>	Obtaining insights into a target audience's reactions, opinions, and impressions about a particular issue, topic, or idea. Focus groups are a form of qualitative research often used to test messages and communications materials.
<b>Quantitative research</b>	Obtaining numerical and statistical data rather than qualitative information. It is useful for measuring the extent to which knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors are prevalent in an intended audience.
<b>"Real people"</b>	Individuals who speak or appear on behalf of an issue or organization because they have had a direct involvement with it. In PSAs, many organizations utilize the services of "real people" instead of actors.
<b>Spokesperson</b>	A respected or known authority who can speak knowledgeably with media and other audiences about an organization or specific topic.
<b>"Spots"</b>	Television and radio commercials, or PSAs, most commonly developed in 15-, 30-, and 60-second lengths. They may be pre-recorded or delivered live by station personalities.
<b>Talking points</b>	Approved statements that may be used by spokespersons and others to convey and support key messages.
<b>Target audience</b>	A group of people who share similar needs or characteristics and who have been identified as key to achieving the goals of a communication effort. Examples of target audiences include opinion leaders, government representatives, young people, media, partners and staff, the community-at-large, and others.
<b>"Unearned" exposure</b>	A phrase commonly used to describe advertising as well as other promotion (e.g., direct marketing efforts) over which the distributor has control of content, timing, and presentation.
<b>URL</b>	Short for Uniform Resource Locator, a URL is generally known as a "Web address."
<b>Videographer</b>	Also known as a camera person, these video photographers are employed by television stations to capture the visuals for a story.

---

## **Directories – North American Media**

American College Media Directory. Shambu Ltd., 61-20 Grand Central Parkway, B-408, Forest Hills, NY 11375. Phone: 631-235-8963. Fax: 718-592-1696. E-mail: [vinecom@webcom.com](mailto:vinecom@webcom.com)  
Web site: <http://www.amercollegemedia.com>

Bacon's Media Directories. Bacon's Information Inc., 332 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604. Phone: 800-639-5087 or 312-922-2400. Fax: 312-987-9773.  
E-mail: [media@bacons.com](mailto:media@bacons.com) Web site: <http://www.bacons.com>  
Media Directories webpage: <http://www.bacons.com/media-directories.asp>

Broadcasting & Cable Yearbook. R.R. Bowker LLC (also PubEasy, Pubnet), 630 Central Ave., New Providence, NJ 07974. Phone: 908-286-1090 or 800-526-9537. Fax: 908-665-6688 or 800-464-3553. E-mail: [CustomerService@bowker.com](mailto:CustomerService@bowker.com)  
Web site: <http://www.bowker.com/catalog/000061.htm>

Burrelle's Media Directories. 75 East Northfield Road, Livingston, NJ 07039. Phone: 800-631-1160 or 973-992-6600. Fax: 800-898-6677 or 973-992-1736.  
E-mail: [info@burrelles.com](mailto:info@burrelles.com) Web site: <http://www.burrelles.com>

Encyclopedia of Associations (3 Volumes). Associations Unlimited Reference, Gale Research, 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535. Phone: 800-877-4253 or 248-699-4253. Fax: 800-414-5043 or 313-961-6083. E-mail: [galeord@gale.com](mailto:galeord@gale.com)  
Web site: <http://www.gale.com>

Gebbie Press All-in-One Directory. Gebbie Press, P.O. Box 1000, New Paltz, NY 12561. Phone: 845-255-7560. Fax: 845-256-1239. E-mail: [gebbie@pipeline.com](mailto:gebbie@pipeline.com)  
Web site: <http://www.gebbieinc.com>

Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory. 738 Main Street, Suite 447 Waltham, MA 02451. Phone: 781-647-3200. Fax: 914-876-2561.  
Web site: <http://www.hudsonsdirectory.com>

---

Leadership Directories Yellow Books. (Including volumes on Congress, State, municipal, corporate, news media). 104 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212-627-4140. Fax: 212-645-0931. E-mail: [info@leadershipdirectories.com](mailto:info@leadershipdirectories.com)

Web site: <http://www.leadershipdirectories.com/products/directories.htm>

New York Publicity Outlets. Bacon's Information Inc., 332 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604. Phone: 866-639-5087. Fax: 312-987-9773. E-mail: [media@bacons.com](mailto:media@bacons.com)

Web site: <http://www.bacons.com/ny-publicity-outlets-directory.asp>

News Media Directory (Formerly Working Press of the Nation). (3 volumes) R.R. Bowker LLC (also PubEasy, Pubnet), 630 Central Ave., New Providence, NJ 07974. Phone: 908-286-1090 or 800-526-9537. Fax: 908-665-6688 or 800-464-3553. E-mail: [CustomerService@bowker.com](mailto:CustomerService@bowker.com)

Web site: <http://www.bowker.com/catalog/000060.htm>

Oxbridge Directory of Newsletters. Oxbridge Communications, 186 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Phone: 800-955-0231 or 212-741-0231. Fax: 212-633-2938.

Web site: <http://www.mediafinder.com>

Oxbridge National Directory of Magazines. Oxbridge Communications, 186 Fifth Avenue, Suite 302, New York, NY 10010. Phone: 800-955-0231 or 212-741-0231. Fax: 212-633-2938.

Web site: <http://www.mediafinder.com>.

Pocket Media Guide. Free. Media Distribution Services, 307 West 36th Street, Dept. P., New York, NY 10018. Phone: 800-MDS-DATA or 212-279-4800. Fax: 212-643-0576.

E-mail: [services@mdsconnect.com](mailto:services@mdsconnect.com) Web site: <http://www.mdsconnect.com>

Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies. (The Agency Redbook). National Register Publishing. Reed-Elsevier, 121 Chanlon Road, New Providence, NJ 07974. Phone: 800-521-8110. Web site: <http://www.redbooks.com>

Standard Periodical Directory. Oxbridge Communications, 186 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Phone: 800-955-0231 or 212-741-0231. Fax: 212-633-2938.

Web site: <http://www.mediafinder.com>

---

## **National Media Contacts**

Updated April 2006

### *Network/Cable Television*

#### **ABC**

ABC News  
77 W. 66th Street, New York, NY 10023  
Phone: 212-456-7777  
Nightline: [nightline@abcnews.com](mailto:nightline@abcnews.com)  
20/20: [2020@abc.com](mailto:2020@abc.com)  
Primetime: [abc.news.magazines@abc.com](mailto:abc.news.magazines@abc.com)

#### **CBS**

CBS News  
524 W. 57th Street. New York, NY 10019  
Phone: 212-975-3247  
Fax: 212-975-1893  
CBS Evening News: [evening@cbsnews.com](mailto:evening@cbsnews.com)  
The Early Show: [earlyshow@cbs.com](mailto:earlyshow@cbs.com)  
60 Minutes II: [60m@cbsnews.com](mailto:60m@cbsnews.com)  
48 Hours: [48hours@cbsnews.com](mailto:48hours@cbsnews.com)  
Face The Nation: [ftn@cbsnews.com](mailto:ftn@cbsnews.com)

#### **CNN**

CNN  
One CNN Center, Box 105366, Atlanta, GA  
30303-5366  
Phone: 404-827-1500  
Fax: 404-827-1906  
[www.cnn.com/feedback](http://www.cnn.com/feedback)

#### **FOX**

FOX News Channel  
1211 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036  
Phone: 888-369-4762 or 212-301-3000  
Fax: 212-301-4229  
FOX News.com comments:  
[foxnewsonline@foxnews.com](mailto:foxnewsonline@foxnews.com)  
FOX News Channel comments:  
[comments@foxnews.com](mailto:comments@foxnews.com)  
Special Report with Brit Hume:

[special@foxnews.com](mailto:special@foxnews.com)

FOX Report with Shepard Smith:

[foxreport@foxnews.com](mailto:foxreport@foxnews.com)

The O'Reilly Factor: [oreilly@foxnews.com](mailto:oreilly@foxnews.com)

Hannity & Colmes: [hannity@foxnews.com](mailto:hannity@foxnews.com) or  
[colmes@foxnews.com](mailto:colmes@foxnews.com)

#### **NBC**

NBC  
30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10112  
Phone: 212-664-4444  
Fax: 212-664-4426  
NBC Nightly News: [nightly@nbc.com](mailto:nightly@nbc.com)  
NBC News Today: [today@nbc.com](mailto:today@nbc.com)  
Meet the Press: [MTP@nbc.com](mailto:MTP@nbc.com)  
Dateline NBC: [dateline@nbc.com](mailto:dateline@nbc.com)

#### **MSNBC**

One MSNBC Plaza  
Secaucus, NJ 07094  
Phone: 201-583-5000  
Fax: 201-583-5453  
[world@msnbc.com](mailto:world@msnbc.com)  
Hardball with Chris Matthews:  
[hardball@msnbc.com](mailto:hardball@msnbc.com)

#### **CNBC**

One CNBC Plaza  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632  
Phone: 877-251-5685 or 201-735-2622  
Fax: 201-583-5453  
[info@cnbc.com](mailto:info@cnbc.com)

#### **PBS**

PBS  
1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA  
22314  
Phone: 703-739-5000  
Fax: 703-739-8458  
The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer:  
[newshour@pbs.org](mailto:newshour@pbs.org)

---

## National Radio Programs

### *NPR*

National Public Radio  
635 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,  
Washington, DC 20001-3753  
Phone: 202-513-2000 or 202-513-2300  
Fax: 202-513-3329  
<http://www.npr.org/contact/>

### *Rush Limbaugh*

The Rush Limbaugh Show  
1270 Avenue of the Americas, NY 10020  
Phone: 800-282-2882  
Fax: 212-445-3963  
E-mail: [rush@eibnet.com](mailto:rush@eibnet.com)

## National Newspapers

### *Los Angeles Times*

202 West First Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 800-528-4637 or 213-237-5000  
Fax: 213-237-4712  
Letters to the Editor: [letters@latimes.com](mailto:letters@latimes.com)  
Readers' Representative:  
[readers.rep@latimes.com](mailto:readers.rep@latimes.com)

### *New York Times*

229 W. 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036  
Phone: 212-556-1234  
Fax: 212-556-3690  
D.C. Bureau Phone: 202-862-0300  
Letters to the Editor (for publication):  
[letters@nytimes.com](mailto:letters@nytimes.com)  
Write to the news editors:  
[nytnews@nytimes.com](mailto:nytnews@nytimes.com)

### *USA Today*

7950 Jones Branch Drive, McLean, VA 22108  
Phone: 800-872-0001 or 703-854-3400  
Fax: 703-854-2165  
Letters to the Editor: [editor@usatoday.com](mailto:editor@usatoday.com)

### *Wall Street Journal*

200 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10281  
Phone: 212-416-2000  
Fax: 212-416-2658  
Letters to the Editor: [wsj.ltrs@wsj.com](mailto:wsj.ltrs@wsj.com)  
Comment and Feedback:  
[newseditors@wsj.com](mailto:newseditors@wsj.com)

### *Washington Post*

1150 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: 202-334-6000 or 800-627-1150  
Fax: 202-334-5269  
Letters to the Editor: [letters@washpost.com](mailto:letters@washpost.com)  
Ombudsman: [ombudsman@washpost.com](mailto:ombudsman@washpost.com)

---

## Magazines

### *Newsweek*

251 W. 57th Street, New York, NY 10019  
Phone: 212-445-4000  
Fax: 212-445-5068  
Letters to the Editor: [letters@newsweek.com](mailto:letters@newsweek.com)

### *Time Magazine*

Time & Life Bldg., Rockefeller Center, New York,  
NY 10020  
Phone: 212-522-1212  
Fax: 212-522-0323  
Letters to the Editor: [letters@time.com](mailto:letters@time.com)

### *U.S. News & World Report*

1050 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Washington,  
DC 20007  
Phone: 202-955-2000  
Fax: 202-955-2049  
Letters to the Editor: [letters@usnews.com](mailto:letters@usnews.com)

## News Services / Wires

### *Associated Press*

50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020  
Phone: 212-621-1500  
Fax: 212-621-7523  
General Questions and Comments: [info@ap.org](mailto:info@ap.org)

### *Reuters*

Three Times Square, New York, NY 10036  
Phone: 646-223-4000

### *United Press International*

1510 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202-898-8000  
Fax: 202-898-8057  
Comment and Tips: [tips@upi.com](mailto:tips@upi.com)

---

## **Public Relations References**

*Benton Best Practices Toolkit.* This area of the Benton Foundation's Web site offers practical advice to help nonprofits make effective use of communications and information technologies to achieve their public awareness and education goals.

Web site: <http://www.benton.org/publibrary/toolkits/stratcommtool.html>

*Profitable Public Relations for Nonprofit Organizations.* A concise and comprehensive primer of public relations wisdom aimed at nonprofits and produced by the community outreach arm of the Chevron Corporation. Includes models of news releases, PSAs, a flyer, and even a thank-you note to donors.

Web site: <http://www.chevron.com/about/programs/pub-relations/>

*The Public Service Advertising Research Center.* A site maintained by Goodwill Communications that offers an online library covering all aspects of print and electronic public service advertising.

Web site: <http://www.psaresearch.com/>

*The Media Tool Kit for Anti-Drug Action* has been created to help organizations participate in the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. This version on the Web allows you to view, print, or modify files and to link to the many Web-based resources highlighted in the text. It contains background information, ideas for engaging the community, materials for contacting the media, samples of handouts and camera-ready art, and many more resources to help build healthy, drug-free communities. PSN Task Forces will also find these resources of value.

E-mail: [PSN@aed.org](mailto:PSN@aed.org)

---

## **Media Event Checklist**

### **PRESS KITS**

- Cover memo or press release  
(With contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and Web site information)
  - Fact sheet
  - PSN background information
  - Press clippings
  - Charts or visuals
  - Spokesperson bio and contact information
  - Local statistics and analysis (if available)
- 

### **PRESS BRIEFINGS**

- Call and personally invite 6-10 reporters.
  - Limit spokespeople to three.
  - Develop main themes and message points.
  - Assemble written documents and background information.
  - Introduce reporters to speakers—keep session informal and informative.
  - Keep a record of who attended and who declined the invitation.
  - Follow up with the reporters who attended. Call those who didn't and offer to send them an informational package.
- 

### **BROADCAST INTERVIEW**

- Research the program and the host—consider ways to maximize the interview.
  - Send background materials and press kit to the host or producer a day or two before the interview.
  - For office radio interviews, choose a quiet location without external noises.
  - For TV interviews, look directly at the host and/or camera.
  - Send a note of thanks to the producer and host after the interview.
  - Add the producer and host's name to your press list.
- 

### **PRINT INTERVIEWS**

- Research the reporter's previous work.
  - Two or three days before the interview, send the reporter background materials and a press kit.
  - Supply a photograph or visual.
  - Inquire about the length and focus of the interview and prepare your message and talking points.
  - Before the interview, give the reporter the correct spelling of your spokesperson's name and title.
  - Follow up—after the interview, call the reporter and answer any additional questions he/she may have, or add supporting information.
-

# 10

## Appendix: Tools and Templates

PSN Background  
Sample Campaign Fact Sheet  
Sample Letter to the Editor  
Media Interview Guide

Media Advisory Template  
Press Release Template  
Media Campaign Talking Points  
Pitch Letter Template

All of the resources in this section are available to PSN Task Forces in MS Word format. To obtain a copy, email AED at [PSN@aed.org](mailto:PSN@aed.org).

### Project Safe Neighborhoods-Background Information

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a comprehensive, strategic approach to reducing gun crime in America. By linking together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and community leaders, PSN provides a multifaceted approach to deterring and punishing gun crime. The program was announced in May 2001 and implements President George W. Bush's promise to fight gun crime by building on effective programs across the United States.

Under this initiative, the number of federal firearms prosecutions has increased significantly—up 76 percent in the past 4 fiscal years (FY 2000 to FY 2004). In FY 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed 11,067 federal firearms cases and prosecuted 12,962 offenders with federal firearms offenses. In FY 2004, 93 percent of defendants charged with federal firearms offenses were sentenced to time in prison for convictions on firearms charges or other offenses.

The U.S. Attorney in each of the 94 federal judicial districts, working side by side with local law enforcement and other officials, has tailored the PSN strategy to fit the unique gun crime problem in that district. Criminals who use guns are prosecuted under federal, state, or local laws, depending on which jurisdiction can provide the most appropriate punishment. Each district engages in deterrence and prevention efforts through community outreach and media campaigns and ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors have the training necessary to make the program work.

The Administration has devoted more than \$1 billion to PSN since its inception. The funds are used to hire new federal, state, and local prosecutors; provide training; hire research and community outreach support; and develop and promote effective prevention and deterrence efforts.

## The Challenge

Despite progress in the fight against gun crime in America, gun crime rates continue to be among the highest in the industrialized world. In 2003, for example, nearly 10,000 of the nation's 14,400 murder victims died from gunshot wounds. In that same year, murder victims ages 13 to 24 were over four times more likely to be murdered with a gun than with all other weapons combined.

Nearly half a million people are victims of firearm crime each year. Of particular alarm is the high toll gun crime takes on young people. Nearly a third of those murdered in 2003 were between the ages of 13 and 24, though this age group represents just 17 percent of the country's overall population. Young people also use guns to commit criminal acts. In 2003, about 30 percent of all murderers were between the ages of 13 and 24, and the vast majority of these criminals used firearms to kill their victim.

Faced with these startling statistics, Project Safe Neighborhoods is working to stop the destructive cycle of gun violence by vigorously enforcing firearms laws and sending the clear message that gun crime means hard time.

## Project Safe Neighborhoods: A Comprehensive Enforcement Strategy

Five essential elements are required for a vigorous and successful gun crime reduction strategy: (1) Partnerships, (2) Strategic Planning, (3) Training, (4) Community Outreach and Public Awareness, and (5) Accountability. Mindful of the varying problems facing each district, Project Safe Neighborhoods does not mandate a "one-size-fits-all" approach that supplants effective strategies already in place in each district. Instead, these elements are tailored to the needs of each individual district and the gun crime problem therein.

To effectively deploy the substantial resources dedicated to this effort, each district has designated a Project Safe Neighborhoods point of contact in the U.S. Attorney's Office to serve as the project coordinator and help streamline communication about the initiative. Each U.S. Attorney also is encouraged to create a specialized unit within his or her office to target the most significant gun crime problems within the district to maximize the impact of this initiative and help ensure the safety of our nation's communities.

## Accomplishments Under PSN

- Federal firearms prosecutions have increased 76.2 percent in the past 4 years (from FY 2000 to FY 2004). In FY 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice filed 11,067 federal firearms cases—the highest number ever recorded by the Department.
- In FY 2004, federal prosecutors charged 12,962 offenders with federal firearms offenses, an increase of almost 61 percent from FY 2000 figures.

- Defendants charged with federal firearms offenses are being sentenced to significant jail time. In FY 2004, approximately 73 percent of these offenders were sentenced to prison terms greater than 3 years for convictions on firearms charges or other offenses. In FY 2004, over 93 percent of defendants charged with federal firearms offenses were sentenced to time in prison for convictions on firearms charges or other offenses.
- During 2003, only 7 percent of violent crimes were committed with a firearm, down from 11 percent in 1993. The rate of violent victimization by an offender armed with a firearm has declined by approximately two-thirds over the last decade.
- In the past 3 years, while law enforcement has worked hard to prosecute and prevent gun violence, 350,000 fewer Americans were victims of gun crime than in the 3 years prior to Project Safe Neighborhoods.

More information can be found at <http://www.psn.gov/about/execsumm.html>. This information accessed from that site on January 5, 2006

## Project Safe Neighborhoods

[insert name of campaign here]

**Campaign Sponsor:** The U.S. Department of Justice

### BACKGROUND:

Despite progress in the fight against gun crime in America, gun crime rates continue to be among the highest in the industrialized world. In 2003, for example, nearly 10,000 of the nation's 14,400 murder victims died from gunshot wounds. In that same year, murder victims aged 13 to 24 were over four times more likely to be murdered with a gun than with all other weapons combined.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing those programs with the resources they need to be successful. PSN helps to create safer communities through heightened coordination and cooperation among federal, state and local law enforcement and the community.

### CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE:

Engage potential offenders to help reduce gun violence by portraying its consequences not just for the offenders but their families too.

### TARGET AUDIENCES:

At risk youth (14-25) and their families.

### DID YOU KNOW:

- Firearms were used in nearly 67% of all homicides in 2003, and murderers were over five times more likely to use a gun than any other single weapon.
- In 2003, about 30 percent of all murderers were between the ages of 13 and 24, and the vast majority of these criminals used firearms to kill their victims.
- Project Safe Neighborhoods is the Bush Administration's initiative to combat gun violence. Already, the program has demonstrated success in addressing this important issue. Since the Administration began implementing Project Safe Neighborhoods in 2001, federal firearms prosecutions have increased over 76%. In the past year, a record number of defendants were charged and convicted of violating federal firearms laws, and nearly all of those who were convicted are serving significant sentences in federal prison.

### FOR MORE CAMPAIGN INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Insert here the name of the  
**US Attorney Office's  
Public Information Officer**

E-mail:

Phone:

Fax:

Web:

### OR

Insert here the name of  
**a media partner**

Phone:

Fax:

Web:

### TO ORDER ADDITIONAL CAMPAIGN MATERIALS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Name and address of  
**contact who can provide  
additional  
advertising or media  
materials**

Phone:

Fax:

## **Facts Show U.S. Attorney's Vigilance: Project Safe Neighborhoods Works**

Under President Bush's leadership of Project Safe Neighborhoods, gun-crime prosecutions have reached record levels, increasing \_\_\_ in the past \_\_\_\_ years. Last year, the Justice Department set a new record by charging \_\_\_% more individuals for violating gun laws. At the same time, the violent crime rate has plunged \_\_\_%.

We're also shutting down and prosecuting corrupt gun dealers in higher numbers. Since 2000, the number of dealers charged with violating gun laws has risen \_\_\_\_\_. More than \_\_\_\_\_ dealers have had their licenses revoked in recent years, and many more surrendered their licenses or closed their doors after our inspections.

**(Highlight recent case)** This is just one of many cases showing the Justice Department's aggressive targeting of those who believe they can violate our nation's gun laws with impunity.

The Bush administration is targeting its resources on one mission: keeping guns out of the hands of criminals. It's a priority we take seriously — one the facts show is being accomplished. Project Safe Neighborhoods works, and it deserves continued support.

## Media Interview Guide

### Before the interview:

- Know the reporter, publication/program, interview format, audience.
- Know the goal for the interview.
- Know what you want to say: review your "key message points."
- Jot down likely questions, and appropriate answers.
- Prepare for a range of questions: hard and easy.

### Interview tips:

- Speak in "headlines": Offer conclusion first, briefly and directly, and back it with facts or "proof points"
- Don't over answer. Short answers are better than long.
- Don't be fixated by the question. "Bridge" to a related point you want to make.
- Asked about a problem? Talk about a solution.
- Don't let false charges, facts, or figures offered by a reporter stand uncorrected.
- Don't repeat a reporter's negative statements or slurs. Frame your reply as a positive statement.
- Don't fall victim to hypothetical situations and "A or B" dilemmas.
- Speak clearly. Avoid jargon and bureaucratese.
- Be engaging. Be likeable.
- Don't know the answer? Don't fake it. If appropriate, assure the reporter you will find and provide the needed facts or assist the reporter in finding another source.
- Don't overlap the interviewer's question; begin your answer when the reporter is finished.
- Keep cool. Don't be provoked.
- Never lie.

### For telephone interviews:

- Buy preparation time by asking to call the reporter back if deadline allows.
- Establish an "interview atmosphere" and mindset.
- Use notes.
- Ask questions in order to gain feedback.
- For radio interviews, speak visually-use words to paint pictures.

### **For television interviews:**

- Avoid clothes with checks, stripes, and patterns. Medium-tone grey, blue, brown, or mixed colors are preferable.
- Avoid solid white blouses and shirts. Grey or light blue shades give the best effect.
- Avoid flashy accessories and jewelry that will catch the light. Don't wear glasses that turn dark in sunlight; they will darken under the strong TV lights.
- Resist the temptation to bend into the microphone; sit or stand up straight. Don't fold your arms.
- Keep your eyes on the interviewer. Do not look at the camera or studio monitor.
- Keep a pleasant expression; smile when appropriate.
- Use natural gestures, but avoid rapid hand movements that are difficult for the camera to follow.
- Hold your interview attitude from the moment you are lit until the interview is completely over and the camera is off.

For Immediate Release  
**(insert date)**  
**(insert Web site url)**

**(insert contact information)**

## **NEW PSN ADS DRIVE THE MESSAGE HOME**

Gun crime means hard time

United States Attorney **(name)** announces the launch of a new Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) public service advertisement campaign aimed at reducing gun crime.

This new PSA campaign realistically portrays the far-reaching consequences of gun crimes, and how they adversely affect the families of those who choose to use guns illegally. This advertisement complements the previous PSN ads: "Mothers" and "Sentenced." Violent crime not only affects the victim and the perpetrator-it inflicts financial, emotional, and psychological harm on all of the families involved.

**(insert local focus)**

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is the Bush Administration's comprehensive strategy to combat gun violence. By linking together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors and community leaders, PSN provides a multi-faceted approach to deterring and punishing gun crime. It is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun violence by providing locally-based programs with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

**What:** News Conference to announce the release of new PSN PSAs  
and a renewed commitment to the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative

**Who:** United States Attorney **(name)**  
**(partner)**  
**(partner)**

**Where:** **(insert location)**

**When:** **(insert date and time)**

**(list local PSN partners)**

Project Safe Neighborhoods' public service announcements are available at <http://psacentral.adcouncil.org> for access by local media. Please contact **(insert contact information)** for additional information or interview requests.

###

**Please do not send this Press Release Template to the media.** This template is designed to help you draft a press release by describing the type of information that should be included in each paragraph within a Press Release.

For Immediate Release  
**(insert date)**  
**(insert Web site url)**

**(insert local contact information)**

## **PSN AIDS IN THE REDUCTION OF GUN CRIMES**

**(City, State)**—United States Attorney for the **(insert District)** **(insert U.S. Attorney's name)**, today announced the release of new crime data, which shows decreases in all violent crimes committed during the last year, including gun crimes. **(This paragraph includes the "who, what, when, and where" of your news story).**

The announcement was made at a press conference where local community advocates and law enforcement renewed their commitment to continue ridding \_\_\_\_\_ **(insert city, State or District)** neighborhoods of gun crime. This renewed commitment comes on the first anniversary of U.S. Attorney (insert name) launching Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), the Bush Administration's initiative to combat gun crime. "The reduced number of gun crimes represents the progress made as a result of implementing PSN. We are working tirelessly to return our neighborhoods back to law abiding citizens. To date, this initiative has generated **(insert local statistics including innovative partner programs)** convictions in **(insert district)**, said U.S. Attorney **(name)**. **(This paragraph includes more information about the event or activity and a quote by the U.S. Attorney.)**

By linking together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors and community leaders, PSN provides a multi-faceted approach to prevent and prosecute gun crime. While national in scope, each community's PSN task force is working to design and implement a local approach to combat the unique gun crime problem that area faces. Prosecutors pursue the most appropriate punishment for those who violate firearms statutes. Community partners, through services and resources provided by PSN, work to prevent gun violence before it occurs. PSN's outreach component works to aggressively educate the public and at-risk youth about the consequences of gun crime. **(This paragraph can include additional information about PSN or your local PSN Taskforce.)**

Please visit <http://www.psn.gov> for additional information about this important initiative.

###



**Project Safe Neighborhoods Launches a New Media Campaign to Prevent Gun Crime: Public Service Advertising (PSA) Campaign warns criminals of the impact of illegal gun use**

- Project Safe Neighborhoods is continuing its aggressive community outreach campaign to prevent and deter gun crime with new advertisements that are launching in March 2005.
- The PSA campaign is a simple and direct warning to would-be criminals: When you go to jail for a gun crime, your family pays a price. It's really that straightforward — gun crime means hard time, for you and your loved ones.
- This advertising campaign reaffirms the Justice Department's commitment to create safe neighborhoods for our children and their families, and includes print advertising, a TV spot called "Family Prison," and radio PSAs called "Mirror" and "I Can Do Anything." The PSA campaign specifically targets at-risk youth (ages 14-25) and their families, and will be distributed nationwide.
- Developed by the Department of Justice, in collaboration with the Ad Council and the Mullen advertising agency, this campaign is the latest in a series of PSN public service announcements that highlight the many consequences of gun crime.

**PSN Background**

- Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is the Bush Administration's comprehensive strategy to combat gun crime. By linking together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors and community leaders, PSN provides a multi-faceted approach to deterring and punishing gun crime. It is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun violence by providing locally-based programs with the tools and resources they need to make their communities safer.
- U.S. Attorneys in each of the 94 federal judicial districts, working side by side with local law enforcement and other officials, tailor the PSN strategy to fit each district's unique gun crime problem. Criminals who commit gun crimes are prosecuted under federal, state, or local laws, depending on which jurisdiction can provide the most appropriate punishment. In addition, each district works to deter and prevent gun crime through community outreach and media campaigns, and ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors have the training necessary to make the program work.

---

## Sample Media Campaign Talking Points

*Adapted from the 2005 Campaign*

- This increased focus on gun crime is showing results; since PSN's inception in 2001, federal prosecutions of gun crimes have increased 76%. At the same time, violent crime rates have plunged to a 30-year low. **(insert local statistics)**
- We are proud of the partnerships PSN has developed with our local community leaders. Together we have established **(name local initiatives or programs and their focus)**
- The Bush Administration devoted more than \$1 billion to PSN during its first four years (FY 2001 to FY 2004). These funds have been used to hire new federal, state, and local prosecutors; provide training; hire research and community outreach support; and develop and promote effective prevention and deterrence efforts.

### **Crime Statistics**

- The per-capita number of violent crimes involving firearms dropped 24 percent since the start of the Bush Administration, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).
- BJS also reports that there were approximately 254,000 fewer gun crimes in the first three years of the Bush Administration (2001-2003) than in 1998-2000 (the three years prior).
- There were approximately 21 percent (almost 363,000) fewer victims of gun crimes in the three-year period 2001-2003 than in the prior three-year period (1998-2000), according to BJS.
- **(insert current local statistics)**

**(insert date)**

Dear **(insert name of television/media representative)**

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is the Bush Administration's comprehensive strategy to combat gun violence. By linking together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors and community leaders, PSN provides a multifaceted approach to deterring and punishing gun crime. It is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun violence by providing locally-based programs with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

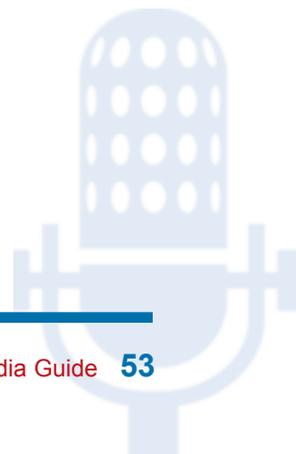
While the PSN initiative is national in scope, each community's PSN task force is working to design and implement a local approach to combat the unique gun crime problem that area faces. Prosecutors pursue the most appropriate punishment for those who violate firearms statutes. Community partners, through services and resources provided by PSN, work to prevent gun violence before it occurs. PSN's outreach component works to aggressively educate the public and at-risk youth about the consequences of gun crime.

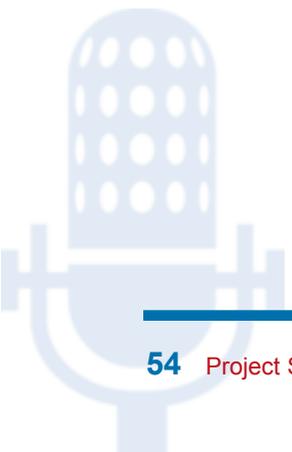
The current nationwide PSN multimedia campaign will focus on key media outlets in the **(local)** area, as well as other state and national media markets across the country. It includes print, radio, and TV PSAs designed to educate offenders and their families about the serious consequences of gun crime.

We urge you to embrace this issue and help us alert our local community about this new initiative and how they can contribute to reducing the incidences of gun violence in their neighborhoods. Media coverage is one of the many ways we hope to raise awareness and motivate change. Enclosed is a press kit that includes a press release, fact sheet, speaker bio, and local gun violence statistics. For more information on the national Project Safe Neighborhoods Program please visit <http://www.psn.gov>.

Please contact **(insert contact name and information)** to discuss the proposed article. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,







## **PSN Technical Assistance Providers**

The Department of Justice has partnered with several agencies that provide integral support to the PSN initiative through training and technical assistance. These national partners include the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), Michigan State University (MSU), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), the Institute for Law and Justice (ILJ), the Academy for Educational Development (AED), the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), and the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC). It is through these national partnerships that PSN offers its expansive network of training and technical assistance opportunities.

If you would like to pursue training or technical assistance for your agency or your PSN Task Force, please contact your district PSN Coordinator in the local United States Attorney's Office. A listing of United States Attorneys' Offices can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/offices/index.html>.





**Academy for Educational Development**  
Connecting People > Creating Change

For additional information, please contact:

AED Center for Health Communication  
Academy for Educational Development  
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20009-5721  
United States

Tel: (1+202) 884-8737  
Fax: (1+202) 884-8760  
Email: [PSN@aed.org](mailto:PSN@aed.org)

Web site: [chc.aed.org](http://chc.aed.org)