

# Maximizing Communications in a Small Town

When creating a communications plan for a small town with limited media outlets, it's important to be strategic and creative in reaching your audience. Here are some tips:

- 1. Research and understand the local landscape:** Identify all available media outlets. Newspapers and radio stations are great to have relationships with, but also consider less traditional places like Facebook community pages and community newsletters. Does the Chamber of Commerce run a community calendar or similar community-wide information hub?
- 2. Work on your message:** Before engaging with the media, clarify your key messages and talking points to ensure consistency and coherence in your communication.
- 3. Build relationships:** Talk to people involved in the media! Personal connections can often open doors to coverage opportunities. Invite journalists and editors to events, provide them with stories or insights — these are people who love being connected with the community and are on the lookout for stories. Or simply establish a time to chat with a journalist or editor and ask what you can do to encourage coverage.
- 4. Leverage the power of your board:** Your board is full of people with great connections throughout the community: get them talking about your foundation to people in their lives. Ensure that each board member can give an elevator pitch for the foundation. Also, remember that each person on your board comes with a unique professional history and skillset — who is the most comfortable going out and shaking hands or presenting to a group? Who has a connection to the media?
- 5. Have compelling stories ready to go:** Highlight the impact of your work on the community. Tell the stories of unique donors (with their knowledge and permission). Plan events that demonstrate the work you do (grant presentations, groundbreaking ceremonies on projects you helped fund, etc.)
- 6. Partner with local organizations:** Collaborate with other local organizations, businesses or community groups to amplify your message. Co-host events, cross-promote each other's work or participate in community-wide campaigns to increase visibility and reach.
- 7. Be persistent and consistent:** Building visibility and credibility in a smaller community takes time and persistence. Be consistent in your communications efforts, regularly sharing updates and information with your target audience.