

Pitching 101

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LSC | America's Partner
for Equal Justice
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION






Making Contact

Identify reporters who cover you and related issues:

- Pattern search topics
- Ask LSC

Build relationships with these reporters

- Follow on Twitter 
- Retweet when you 
- Send info related to their tweets 
- Old-fashioned ways—invite to lunch and events
- Don't be a source, be a resource

Making the Pitch

Find multiple hooks for each pitch

- Focus on benefits, not features or methodology
- Focus on ultimate as well as immediate benefits
- Know your facts, but don't drown them with detail



Think like a reporter:

- Pitch local angle on national stories
- Know the publication's audience and tailor pitch to it

Rules of the Road

- Never call on deadline
- Spin your message, but don't exaggerate or lie
- Don't expect reporters to be advocates
- Remember that a reporter's focus is his/her readers, not sources
- Never call to confirm the receipt of a press release

Engaging Members of Congress

Overview

- Requesting quote from MOC announces that LSC and the grantee are bringing money into his/her district for useful project
- Adding quote to press release gives it more resonance with journalists
- Holding press event with MOC brings even more resonance
- Messaging: Constituent services and access to justice not anti-poverty program

D.C. v. District Office



- Easier to deal with district office
- Caseworkers in district office more aware of grantees as resources; deal with constituent problems vs. policy staff in D.C. more removed

Requesting Quotes

- Start with district office, might be bumped up to Communications Director in Washington
- Explain why grant matters to constituents in the district or issues the MOC cares about (do your homework)
- Be concise in explaining the grant
- Begin with email—but follow up with a call if you do not hear back in a day or two
- Be prepared to write the quote for them



Planning & Staging Press Events

- Congressional Calendar: plan around when working in the District (District Work Period)
- If not, Monday or Friday
- Let MOC speak first or after short intro

Restrictions

- Not okay to discuss appropriations
- Okay to respond to Qs on impact of potential cuts—
not okay to ask