

Making Contact with Broadcasters

There is no single individual or department that controls PSA access in all media outlets across the country. The decisionmaking process differs from one station to another, from one market to another, and by the size and budget of the media outlet. Generally, the media contact you want to reach at larger broadcast stations is the *community affairs*, *public affairs*, or *public service director*. At smaller broadcast outlets, the title will most likely be *program director*, *news director*, or perhaps even *general manager*.

You will find a complete list of all broadcast stations that received the PSAs, *along with the names and contact information for the staff member* to which the Broadcaster PSA Kit was actually addressed, at: www.psaresearch/jusreports.asp. These staff members have been identified by the campaign's PSA distribution firm as the key decisionmaker regarding PSA airplay at their respective stations. We strongly suggest that you make your initial contact with the staff person listed, but keep in mind there may have been staff turnover, so if the person listed is no longer there or no longer in that position, you may need to ask the station to identify his or her replacement.

The distribution list for the Broadcasters PSA Kit includes Spanish-speaking broadcast stations. Include any local Spanish-speaking stations in your PSA Campaign outreach to encourage airing of the PSAs—specifically, the 20-second “Victims Have Rights” PSA, which is in Spanish. If your organization or agency provides victim services to Spanish-speaking crime victims, ask the station to tag the PSA with your organization's contact information.

Contact Considerations

Here are the things you will want to keep in mind when making contact with broadcasters:

- Learn as much as you can about the station(s) you are contacting—what type of PSAs they already air, the types of public service activities they engage in, and the issues they typically cover in the news and through on-air editorials. Be prepared to explain how the PSA Campaign fits with their current policies and practices.
- Call the identified station staff person. Explain who you are, the organization or coalition you represent, and ask if you can make an appointment to **briefly** speak with them—preferably in person, or, otherwise, over the telephone—about the PSA Campaign.
- If the person you contact at the station declines your request for a face-to-face meeting, do not press the issue. Simply ask if you can send them the information you had planned to provide at the meeting, along with a letter that describes the PSA Campaign (see the Tips for a Powerful Pitch included in Appendix A).
- Provide them with brief written information about your organization, its mission and goals, and how you assist victims of crime and the community.

- If you decide that you want to personalize one or more of the PSAs with your organization's or coalition's tag, ask if they would be willing to use their staff, editing equipment, and expertise to create one for you. Explain how this will help you help victims.
- Explain that they will be receiving a special Broadcaster PSA Kit around the week of April 4, 2005. If time allows, you may even want to suggest that the broadcaster preview the PSAs by directing them to the PSA Video Clips on PSA Project Web site (www.crimevictims.gov).
- If a station representative agrees to a face-to-face meeting, consider taking a victim who is comfortable talking about his or her experiences to "personalize" your pitch, and/or a well-known community leader who is active in the victim assistance field. Both can add tremendous credibility to your request.
- If you sense a strong interest and positive response from your contact, feel free to explore other opportunities, such as news coverage, talk show appearances, editorials, or broadcast actualities, or even co-sponsorship and/or a partnership. Don't press the issue if you don't sense real interest. Although it is important to urge them to play your PSAs, don't expect them to promise you that they will air the PSAs. Remember, PSAs are played only when broadcasters have open slots of opportunity in their lineup.

Tracking and Followup

- Regardless of the outcome of your initial meeting with the station representative, send a note thanking him or her and asking if there is any additional information or assistance you can provide (see sample thank you letters included in Appendix B).
- Consider sending a reminder note or e-mail a few days before NCVRW, encouraging them to air the PSAs sometime during the week.
- You will have the ability to track if and when each station airs any of the PSAs during the month after NCVRW by going to the online tracking Web site (www.psaresearch/jusreports.asp). The site will be updated each month thereafter (for 12 months), so that you can determine airplay for each PSA on each station during the previous 30 days. (Online usage reports are updated around the 15th of each month.)
- If the station airs one or more of the PSAs, be sure to send a thank you note to your contact. Also, be sure to send a letter to the station manager expressing your gratitude and explaining how helpful your contact had been in assisting you (*send a copy of the letter to the station manager to your contact*). Also point out the positive impact that the airing of the PSA(s) has had for your organization and for your community, such as an increase in victim referrals or volunteer support from the community.
- If your station contact and/or the station itself was extraordinarily helpful, consider giving them an award—either a certificate or a plaque—that highlights

their “Outstanding Contribution to Crime Victims by the Media.” Such recognition can help build strong, ongoing relationships with broadcasters.

- Consider participating in the **OVC Web Forum** that has been specifically created to allow you and your fellow PSA Partners to share ideas, compare notes, share successes, solve problems, etc. The success of one Partner contributes to the success of all. To participate, please visit online: <http://ovc.ncjrs.org/ovcproviderforum/index.asp>.
- If tracking shows that the station has *not* shown any of your PSAs, consider making a followup phone call or sending a followup letter or e-mail that asks if there is anything further you can do to facilitate airing of the PSAs.
- Remember, the PSAs are designed to have a long “shelf life.” All your communications with broadcast media should request airing of the PSAs during 2005 NCVRW, and ***throughout the year***. The generic nature of, and powerful messages included in, the PSAs combine to make them just as effective at any time of year.
- Be sure to register as a PSA Partner by clicking on the “Register as a Partner” button on the OVC PSA Web page (www.crimevictims.gov) or by going directly to the sign-up page at: www.justicesolutions.org/PSAPARTNER.

Be sure to pass along the Web address for the online PSA Partner Kit to everyone you think might be interested. Copy or “cut and paste” the PSA Web site address (www.crimevictims.gov) into an e-mail to all your colleagues and contacts, and ask them to do likewise.