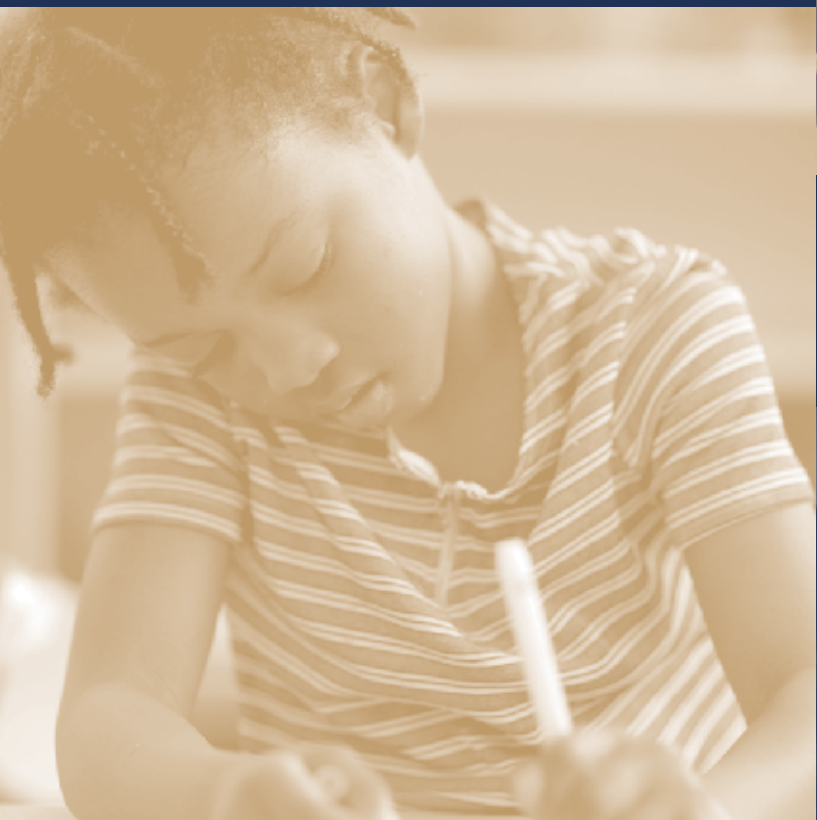


BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*



Grantee Communications Guide



**HOW CAN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION ACHIEVE ITS GOALS?**

**SHOULD YOU ANNOUNCE YOUR GRANT?**

**WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO ANNOUNCE A GRANT?**

**AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT, HOW CAN YOU CONTINUE TO BRING MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR ORGANIZATION AND CAUSE?**

## Overview

The following guide provides practical public affairs advice for Pacific Northwest grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The guide is intended to help you increase public visibility and support for your programs. Below, we have condensed some of the key “Do’s and Don’ts” about communicating news related to a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gift.

## Please do

- Notify Megan Sather at GMMB if you plan to issue a news release or hold an event announcing your gift. GMMB is the foundation’s public affairs agency in the Northwest and serves as a resource for local grantees. Megan Sather can be reached at **206.352.8598** or **[PNWgranteesupport@gmmb.com](mailto:PNWgranteesupport@gmmb.com)**.
- Notify GMMB of news coverage you generate following a gift or other milestones.
- Direct media inquiries about the foundation’s local giving initiatives to GMMB.
- Let GMMB know if you plan to hold a prominent event in the Northwest so we can keep our regional calendars up to date.
- Let GMMB know if you have any questions or if there are ways the foundation can further support your grant.

## Please do not

- Use the foundation’s logo on internal or external literature without prior approval.
- Name parts of buildings or programs after the Gates family without approval from the foundation.
- Offer a foundation spokesperson to contribute to your news story without first checking with GMMB.



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## I. WHY EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS?

Communicating your organization's story and describing your mission consistently can be some of the most effective ways to build support in the community. Non-profit organizations rely on community support, and those that are most successful tend to enjoy a positive public image. A strong reputation can enhance every aspect of a non-profit organization, from board development to advancing core issues, building new partnerships, and establishing long-term strategies for financial support.

### Maximizing the Effectiveness of Communications

It is essential to get the right message to the right people at the right time, especially when communications resources are limited. Without a clear objective, a defined target audience, and a message tailored to that audience, your communications efforts will suffer.

Every communications activity – a **news release**, a Web site, a special event, a brochure, a letter to donors, a public service announcement, or an advertisement – should be executed in a four step process:

- Establish a clear and achievable objective;
- Identify and prioritize the audience(s) needed to accomplish your goal;
- Develop messaging for each audience; and
- Develop **communication vehicles** to deliver your messaging to the audience(s).

## II. ESTABLISH A CLEAR AND ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVE

You should tie specific communications objectives – *“Inform elderly residents in the Fremont neighborhood about new care services in their neighborhood”* – into the larger goals of the organization – *“Establish organization serving Seattle’s seniors as one of the preeminent sources of care to aging populations.”* If your communications plan does not fit into these broader goals, the communications activity may need to be re-evaluated.

### Your objective can be far-reaching or limited, but it should always be specific.

The differences in language between an effective goal and an ineffective goal can be subtle, but the outcomes between the two are often obvious. For example, a goal such as, *“Announce the establishment of a statewide organization to assist children with disabilities”* leads to more questions than answers:

- Do you want people to volunteer at the center?
- Do you want donations to the organization?
- Are you looking for clients?

A better and more well-defined objective would be: *“To attract 100 new clients, announce the opening of a statewide care center to aid children with disabilities.”*

The more specific goal provides clear direction and implies an effective strategy. Even if the opening of the care center was a featured story on the evening news, without the message that the center is seeking new clients, the organization benefits little.



### III. IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCES

With a clearly defined objective in place, the next step is to ask, “*Who do you need to get your messages to in order to accomplish this goal?*” Again, the more specific you can make your audience(s) the better. It is better to have multiple audiences with well-crafted messages for each than to provide a broadly defined audience with a general message. Each audience will have different levels of familiarity with your organization, different priorities, diverse demographics, and even competing interests.

#### Commonly targeted audiences in non-profit communications include:

- Existing donors
- Potential donors
- Board members
- **Opinion leaders**
- Clients
- Volunteers
- Members of the neighborhood surrounding your organization’s site(s)

#### Helpful Tip

Only in rare instances should communications be targeted to the general public. This method is simply too broad to be very effective.

When you have multiple audiences to reach, they should be prioritized based on their importance to the objective. This will be your guide for allocating resources as you execute communications activities.



## IV. DEVELOP MESSAGING FOR THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

Once your target audience has been identified, the next question to ask is, “*What do you need to say to your audience to achieve your goals?*” **Messaging** should be tailored to each audience.

For example, a news release noting the announcement of a challenge grant should be tailored for an audience open to donating money to reach the matching funds goal. At the beginning of the release, feature compelling quotes from the director of development, an explanation of how the funds will be used, and a timeline describing the campaign. The release should be delivered to appropriate media outlets – consider philanthropic trade journals and business sections of local papers.

## V. DEVELOP COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

With your **target audiences** and messages in place, you can develop communication vehicles to deliver those messages. The range of communication vehicles is almost endless, but most often communication efforts will involve one of the following:

- Outreach to the news media
- Special events
- Collateral materials (including your Web site)
- Advertising (or public service announcements)

The communication vehicles you choose will develop out of a clear understanding of your goal, audience, and messages.

For example, if you need to get information to existing clients about changes in a particular service, you should not choose mass communication vehicles such as advertising or public relations. The most appropriate way to get the message out would be a flyer given directly to your clients or posted on your organization’s Web site.

Even mass communications such as the news media and advertising can be leveraged to ensure you reach your target audience. Thoughtful consideration should be given to identify specific media outlets and reporters who cater to your audience’s interests. For corporate audiences, consider reaching out to business publications. For the opening of a senior center, seek out reporters who cover aging populations.

# Steps to Consider When Making a Grant Announcement

## I. SHOULD YOU PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE YOUR GRANT?

This decision is entirely up to your organization. There is no requirement or expectation on the part of the foundation. Some things other grantees have considered:

- Receiving a grant is a good opportunity to tell your story. It gives you a reason to go to the press, potential supporters, or other key audiences.
- A grant is a public, third-party endorsement. An announcement can attract the attention of potential supporters or highlight an issue for opinion leaders.
- In fundraising campaigns, grants should be announced when they will boost morale and people's desire to give, not leave individual donors feeling that there is no need for their personal gift.

### Who is your target audience?

- Your staff
- Your board members and key volunteers
- People you serve
- Other donors and potential donors
- Other groups with which you associate and work: professional organizations, volunteer groups, churches, and community leaders
- The media



## II. HOW SHOULD YOU ANNOUNCE YOUR GRANT?

A news release is the most common choice for a public announcement. However, do not feel obligated or limited to that form of communication. Below is a short list of other possibilities:

- Letter or printed announcement to key audiences (postcards, printed Post-It notes attached to correspondence...be creative!)
- Newsletters, bulletins
- Email
- **Reception, open house**, or other gathering (it may be an event specifically to celebrate the grant or an already scheduled occasion during which you can make the announcement)
- **Press conference** (used only for big grants that have a broad impact on large numbers of people)
- **Press briefing/tour** (less formal than a press conference; useful if you have something to show off)
- **Media advisory** (usually in conjunction with a photo or audio opportunity, such as a press conference or an open house)
- **“Op-ed” piece** or **letter to the editor** (use these if you have an important comment or call to action to the community—something that should be said regardless of the grant)
- Word of mouth, whether through a speech at a community gathering or talk around the dinner table

## III. TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

Timing is everything, and it’s good to keep in mind that reporters and editors have strict deadlines. Here are a few considerations for planning an announcement or event:

- **Other events** – Consider where your announcement or event falls on the calendar. Is it near a holiday or a partner organization’s event?
- **Does your event coincide with an upcoming milestone?** – If so, you may want to consider either announcing your news in conjunction with the upcoming milestone or holding your announcement so that it’s not overshadowed by other events.
- **News releases** – If you choose to distribute a news release, it should be sent out within five days of receiving your grant (unless you choose to package the news with other gifts to be received on a later date). Follow up with reporters the day you distribute the release.
- **Consider the political climate** – Consider other news you will have to compete with.
- **Guidelines for events** – Start early. Depending on the scope of the event, planning should begin weeks or even months in advance.

## I. SHOULD YOU WRITE A NEWS RELEASE?

One of the most basic and important tools for gaining public attention is a news release (*See Appendix B*). Releases, while sometimes printed in the newspaper verbatim, are intended to interest a reporter to write a more in-depth story. News releases should be issued when you have a legitimate news item. So before you generate a news release, try to answer the following:

- Can we use this grant announcement to tell a broader story about our organization?
- What can we say about our organization or cause that is unique or especially compelling? Does our program impact many people? Are we doing anything from which others can learn?
- How can we take the news release or printed news story and circulate it further in the community? (For example, attach it to letters to potential funders.)
- Will this news release help build credibility and media relationships for future stories?

### Creating a compelling news release

Before you begin writing, define your purpose. Identify the three most important messages you want to convey to the world about your program. Some basic guidelines for writing a release include:

- Write a compelling headline and sub-headline that draws the reader to the lead paragraph announcing the main ideas of the news release.
- The lead paragraph should be short (about 30 words) and should convey the key message of the release. Who, what, when, where, and why are questions frequently addressed in the lead, but a good lead should be compelling and not simply list facts.

- Frame your lead to highlight how the grant will impact or increase services rather than the news of the grant itself. Many local media are more interested when they see an agency poised to serve more deserving people in the local community.
- Use active, not passive verbs.
- Avoid technical jargon. Keep the language simple and short.
- Write in an inverted pyramid style – most important facts on top, least important at the bottom. If an editor cuts the last paragraph or two off your story, it shouldn't cut out essential information.
- Include human interest with stories or quotes from people you have served.
- Support your statements with facts.
- Put your organization into context within the community. Why is it important that you do what you do?
- Keep it as brief as possible – one or two pages maximum. If you wish to provide more detailed information, do so in **backgrounders** or **FAQ** sheets that can be attached.
- Provide contact information and make sure your contact person will be available to reporters at the time the release is sent.
- Verify dates, times, facts, statistics, and spellings of all names that appear in the release.
- Include background information about your organization and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This information should appear at the end of the release (*See Appendix A*).
- Think about potential visuals to send with the release. Do you have a good photo or graphic that helps tell your story?
- Proofread your release. Always send a draft of your release to GMMB.

## II. WRITING BACKGROUNDER AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION (FAQ) SHEETS

Backgrounder and FAQ sheets can accompany a news release. FAQ sheets can be especially useful in providing additional facts about your organization to media and potential donors, and in answering general press inquiries. You can send it with the news release or you can give it to reporters and others who request further information. *Helpful hints:*

- Keep in mind that backgrounders and FAQs provide more detailed information than a news release but should be no more than two pages in length.
- Use a backgrounder to provide history on your organization, biographical information on organization leaders, and other supportive information such as research, endorsements, and short case histories.
- The FAQ should include questions that an interested person who knows only a little about the issue would ask. Include answers to some of the questions critics might ask of the program. Put the question in bold and the answer in normal type for readability (See the *Pacific Northwest (PNW)* section of the foundation's Web site for backgrounder and FAQ examples).

## III. DEVELOPING MEDIA LISTS

A thorough and accurate distribution list is as important as a compelling news release. Your good work will be wasted if it doesn't reach the right person.

### The media list

- Include your community's daily and weekly papers, news and music radio stations, and broadcast and cable television stations.
- Call the news or city desk to find out who covers the issues in which your organization is involved and find out deadlines for print publications. Search media Web sites for past articles on related topics.
- Go beyond the traditional media. Are there local company or organization newsletters or Web sites that might be interested? Specialty publications that focus on a particular segment of the population or a field of study or work? Church bulletins?
- Get complete information: company name, reporter or contact name, address, phone number, and email address if appropriate. Verify the spelling and pronunciation of each name.
- Follow local news carefully and keep track of reporters' interests by noting the stories they cover.



## GRANTEE PROFILE



### **United Way of Pierce County:** *Writing that gets results*

In 2006, the United Way of Pierce County announced a \$1 million challenge matching grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Part of a \$1.6 million campaign to raise funds for food banks, shelters, and health care access programs, the gift helped bring the United Way closer to its goal.

The United Way issued a compelling, clearly written news release detailing the community need and the parameters of the challenge matching grant. The Tacoma News Tribune ran two stories about the matching challenge grant encouraging the community at large to step up and support the United Way's campaign. The United Way also worked closely with the paper's editorial board to place two editorials during the fundraising campaign, one in the heat of the campaign and another at its close.

The press release and editorials helped the United Way inform the community about its campaign and the area's human services needs and effectively leveraged the challenge matching grant to inspire others to give to the campaign.

## IV. DISTRIBUTING NEWS RELEASES

News releases should be sent by email or fax, and in some situations, hand delivered. Releases should also be posted on your organization's Web site and stay archived for future reference. It is best for reporters to receive information on an event no more than two weeks and no less than two or three days prior to the activity. Any longer and they may forget it; any shorter and they don't have time to prepare. Unless you are giving an **exclusive** to one reporter, send information to all media at the same time. Remember to send the release to your opinion leader list.

### **Follow up**

Reporters and editors see many releases every day. A follow-up call will help to bring their attention to your release. Call reporters on the same day you send the materials. Reporters do not like to be bothered if you are simply calling to see if they received your release. If you call, offer them something – and be quick. It is best to script your call before you dial. Try to:

- Draw their attention to the connection between your story and a recent trend or event.
- Offer to set up a tour of your facilities or an interview with your organizational leader and some of the people you serve.
- Identify a photo opportunity or a compelling human-interest story to enhance the release.
- Note if a prominent local spokesperson is available for an interview.
- Keep your pitch no longer than 10 seconds in length if you can.

## V. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

If you want coverage of your organization, build good relationships with the media. You will be most effective if you are a reliable, responsive, respectful, and genuine source for them.

### Do

- Get to know the reporters who specialize in or who have shown interest in your cause.
- Make sure your “news” is truly newsworthy. Don’t waste their time.
- Return reporters’ calls promptly. All reporters work on deadlines. This may be your only opportunity to tell your side of the story.
- Ask what deadline a reporter is working against and accommodate that time restriction.
- Be flexible. If the reporter can’t talk now, offer to stop by or call at an agreeable time.
- If you offer the same story to competing news organizations, try to give them each a different angle on the story.
- Follow the publications (and the specific reporters) you’re trying to get news coverage from.

### Don’t

- Don’t tell the reporter how to handle the story.
- Don’t expect the reporter to be overly sympathetic about your situation.
- Don’t talk “off the record” or respond with “no comment.” If you don’t want to see it in print or hear it on the news, don’t say it.
- Don’t ask to review the story before it is printed or aired.

### When being interviewed:

- Be available and prepared for interviews. Brief your spokesperson on possible questions before an interview, especially if the subject is controversial.
- Make an extra effort to give reporters background information.
- Be honest. Never embellish. If you don’t know an answer, say so and then find the answer and get back to the reporter.
- Make your point and stop during an on-air or live interview. Don’t ramble, even if the interviewer leaves dead space. The responsibility to fill it is theirs, not yours.

## VI. PRESS KITS

A **press kit** is a collection of publicity and informational materials that gives reporters a variety of information but highlights important facts. Here are the basics:

- **News releases** – In addition to the news release of the day, consider including another recent release so reporters can gain a better sense of the organization.
- **Overview sheet/backgrounder** – This is a profile of the organization, which should include the organization’s history, mission, goals, and recent accomplishments. *(See the PNW section of the foundation’s Web site.)*
- **FAQ sheets** – Usually a page or two in question/answer format that talks in more depth about the organization and answers commonly asked questions. FAQ sheets should also include some well-documented organizational facts and figures. *(See the PNW section of the foundation’s Web site.)*
- **Bios** – Biographies of important people working with the organization, including directors, staff, members of the board, etc.
- **Photos, diagrams, and graphs** – These pieces can add credibility and provide a visual case for your organization. Add captions to make them clear.
- **Recent clips** – Copies of recent news stories that highlight your organization.
- **Interview lists** – A simple list of everyone available for interviews.





## I. CHOOSING THE EVENT

Your grant announcement may lend itself to an event. You could hold a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony, a press conference, or an open house with snacks and beverages. Consider and agree on the following before you begin planning:

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- Who will be interested?

### **Ribbon-cutting, reception, dedication**

At a ribbon-cutting or similar event, you “unveil” a new facility or program to a small gathering. Don’t take the ribbon-cutting name literally; there are any number of creative ways you can mark the start of a new venture. The more creative you are, the more likely people will attend. Typically, a short program includes speeches from your organization’s leader, a prominent community supporter, or a representative of the people you serve. You might invite influential members of your community, volunteers, elected officials, and the media. This type of event is excellent if your community is large and an open house could be unmanageable, or if you want to give special recognition to people who have been generous to your organization.

### **Open house**

An open house is designed for the whole community (or sections of it) to be invited into your facility for “show and tell.” The open house can last a couple of hours and is usually scheduled at a time when many people can attend, such as after work. Since people come and go at will, you don’t have to have a program per se, but it’s important to provide printed materials that explain your work. You can also use this time to demonstrate your services.

### **Press conference**

A press conference is an event where you invite the press to your facility or a related location to make a significant announcement. Remember this word: SIGNIFICANT. Attending a press conference requires reporters to make a considerable investment of their time, so you must make it worthwhile. You will also be competing for their time with many other stories of the day, so avoid scheduling conflicts with known events in your community. Some things to consider:

- Hold your press conference in the morning to avoid newspaper and TV afternoon deadlines.
- Choose a location that is relevant to your announcement and visually interesting for TV.
- Make sure the location is well lit and has adequate space, electrical outlets for TV lights, no visual interferences, and no background noise or echoing. Have all presenters speak from one location. If you use a podium, leave room for the media’s microphones.
- Press conferences should not last longer than 20 minutes, including time for questions.
- Choose one or two people to be spokespersons. They should be knowledgeable and credible. Prepare their comments or talking points in advance, including answers to anticipated questions.
- Include other participants, such as an articulate student or client, to provide added human interest. But don’t include too many people.
- Alert the media to the event through a media advisory.

# GRANTEE PROFILE



## **YWCA GirlsFirst:**

*Targeted pitch garners feature story*

In August 2005, the YWCA of Seattle-King County-Snohomish County (YWCA) received a \$672,000 award from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to expand its mentoring program GirlsFirst to reach girls living in South King County.

The YWCA incorporated beneficiary stories and data on program outcomes in a targeted exclusive pitch to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. The pitch resulted in a lengthy feature story highlighting the unique issues young girls of color face during the critical period of transition from middle school to high school.

The YWCA followed its pitch to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer with a broader news release to illustrate how the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gift would expand their work and impact more people in South King County.

## II. PLANNING THE EVENT

### **Identify a theme and name**

Organize receptions and open houses around a theme that reflects both your work and your audience. The theme should be catchy, brief, and consistent with the basic messages you want to tell the world about your organization.

### **Choose a date**

- Check the community calendar for conflicting dates. Does the timing work out with schools? Local elections? Annual community fairs or events?
- Determine a schedule and assign tasks.
- Define your budget.
- Keep your team up-to-date on the latest activities.

### **Develop your program**

- Keep your event short to allow people time to talk with others.
- You may want to invite your mayor or other local supporters to speak. Try to involve a beneficiary to tell his/her story (be sure to properly vet and brief all spokespeople). Invite speakers well in advance and confirm their participation several times.
- Keep comments under two or three minutes each.
- Have printed materials (your release and background sheets) available after the program.

## Creating invitations and the invitation list

Spend as much effort getting people to your event as you spend planning it. *Consider the following:*

- **Create a comprehensive and accurate mailing list** – In addition to your members or community supporters, remember the media and community leaders.
- **Create an invitation that goes beyond naming time, date, and place** – People who read the invite and can't attend the event should still come away knowing a little more about your organization.
- **Use other resources** – Find out if a local printer will donate all or a portion of the printing of your invitations, flyers, or posters. Offer to let them include their logo on the flyer as a thank you. Mailing can be quite expensive if you have a lengthy invitation list or a heavy invitation. If you are doing a mass mailing, consider bulk mailing. Check with your local post office for details; the rules change often, so make sure you get the most current guidelines.
- **Be sure to follow up** – If it is appropriate in your community, follow up with emails and phone calls to program participants, invitees, and the media a few days prior to your event.

## III. PROMOTING THE EVENT

### Media advisory

A media advisory informs print and broadcast media about your event. It differs from a news release because it offers basic information only. Media advisories are usually sent to arrive two days before the event, and should include:

- Basic information like time, date, place (include the street address and parking information if necessary), who is sponsoring the event, and who will be attending. Highlight any interview or photo opportunities.
- Contact information for the person handling press inquiries.
- As with a news release, your contact person should be prepared to answer questions and provide additional information.

Media advisories should be directed to the news or assignment desk or to the reporter who covers your cause. The Associated Press (AP) is a wire service that manages a day book of events and activities that many journalists rely on. If your story has possible interest outside your community, send a copy to the AP bureau nearest you to the attention of their “day book.”

### Other opportunities

- Ask community organizations if they will print a complimentary ad or article about your event in their publications.
- Make an informal announcement at a meeting of the local chapter of Kiwanis or the Chamber of Commerce.
- Add your event to the local newspaper, TV, or radio station's community calendar.
- Hand out flyers and post them in restaurants, libraries, and other public places.
- Don't forget email and word-of-mouth.



# I. OPINION LEADER OUTREACH

Educating community leaders about what your organization has accomplished builds influence and credibility. Whether you receive a grant, reach a programmatic milestone, or hold an event, informing opinion leaders increases your organizational reach and ultimately your ability to serve the community.

Opinion leaders are people with access to funds, decision-making power, and other leaders.

## **Brainstorm a list of influential leaders in your community.**

### **Some ideas include:**

- Organizational board members
- Members of the media
- Local elected officials (mayor, city council, county commission and executive, legislator)
- Directors of organizations with similar missions
- Individual donors and/or foundations that support your organization
- Community group leaders (Rotary, Kiwanas, Chamber of Commerce, and small business owners)
- Academic leaders who influence public policy

Once your list is developed, outline methods of communication.

## **Consider the following methods to reach out to these leaders:**

- Add them to your news release or newsletter distribution list. Make sure your organization's leader adds a personal note to anything sent to elected officials.
- Send letters about pertinent issues from your leader, board chair, and constituents.
- Invite these opinion leaders to any events that may fall in their areas of interest.
- Know the issues that are the most important to each opinion leader. When you can, show how your program helps in those areas.

## **When appropriate, meet with priority community leaders:**

- Contact the community leader's scheduler to ask for a meeting. Be clear on what you want to discuss and its importance to the community. If the opinion leader is unable to meet with you, ask if you can meet with one of his or her staff members.
- Research the opinion leader's views on your cause or issue.
- Know what you want to communicate (your key messages) and what you want to ask for.
- At the meeting, be prompt and patient. Be prepared to wait and recognize that your meeting may last, at best, a half-hour.
- Be prepared to listen. This is a two-way exchange.
- If you are meeting with an elected official, be political. Demonstrate the connection between your cause and the official's constituents, and be ready to name your supporters.
- Follow up with a thank-you letter that outlines the points covered in the meeting.

Finally, develop a plan to keep opinion leaders informed of your accomplishments on a consistent basis. Create an email list-serve, distribute regular newsletters, or send out your annual report. If an opinion leader is connected and informed about your organization, he/she will be more willing to provide political or financial assistance in the future.

## II. HOW CAN YOU KEEP YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE PUBLIC EYE?

So you have planned and executed your event with resounding success. What's next? Publicizing grant announcements or milestones is a smart first step for generating interest in your organization; however, cultivating sustained media coverage will help to ensure broad-based support for your group's goals. Dedicate some time to brainstorming creative ways your organization can continue to educate the public about your message. Here are some simple ideas with which to start:

- **Become an expert** – Be a source. Make yourself or a senior member of your organization available for comment as an expert in your industry. If your organization focuses on mentoring at-risk youth, call a local reporter offering your expertise when a national story breaks on new trends with America's youth.
- **Notify the media of milestones** – Noteworthy donations, new accomplishments, milestone numbers of people served, and key staffing appointments are just a few possible newsworthy announcements.
- **Use awards** – If your organization does not have an award already, create one. Awards are an excellent way to give back to your supporters and volunteers while also generating publicity for the organization.
- **Use the news of the day** – Look at national news issues and determine ways your organization is impacting them.
- **Publicize staffing changes** – Staff appointments or departures are excellent opportunities to remind media and the public about your organization. With new staff, send a press release announcing the position and giving background on the new appointee.

## III. ENGAGING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

**Consider the following methods to engage business leaders**

- Add key business leaders to your news release or newsletter list. Include a personal cover note explaining why your work or issue is important.
- Seek opportunities to talk in front of Rotary and other business and service organizations. Make the connection between what you do and what they do.
- Seek to involve business employees as volunteers or mentors. You may be able to hold a brown bag lunch to tell employees about your program.
- Work with professional organizations that have service programs or may be looking for causes to which they may contribute time and talent.
- Ask businesses to sponsor an event or program that helps them get in front of their key audiences. Sponsorships take many different forms and depend on the type of business involved. For example, your local newspaper might run a series of stories about your library, while an office supply store might donate paper.

### Hints about asking for a business sponsorship

- Create incentives for a company or organization to sponsor your program. Make sure you can deliver the benefits you have promised.
- Pick a business that has some sort of natural tie-in with the organizations and people who support you. Don't approach more than one of the same type of business in your town. Remember that businesses are sensitive to competition issues.
- Find the right person to contact. Depending on the size and type of business, it could be the owner, manager, or public affairs director. Once you know the appropriate person, send a brief, enthusiastic letter asking for a short meeting.
- After you have scheduled a meeting, send a letter confirming the date, time, and subject matter.
- Have two people attend the meeting. More than two can be overpowering, and going alone might not convey the importance of the issue.
- Prepare talking points on why they should sponsor your program. Companies and organizations receive an abundance of solicitations. Yours must be compelling, yet brief.
- When you meet, be specific about your program and ways they can help.
- Send a quick thank-you letter and make sure it includes a recap of commitments that were made. If the businessperson didn't make a commitment, let them know how eager you are to have their support and that you will follow up soon.
- Don't be afraid to use contacts. If the businessperson is hesitant to commit, consider having someone who knows him or her well make a phone call.

## IV. PARTNERING WITH OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Regardless of your focus – youth, families, shelter, education, etc. – other organizations in your community share your commitment. Whether you are part of a formal organization or just a loose network of like-minded groups, there are any number of advocacy tools that benefit from the group approach. At your next meeting, consider working together on:

- A public forum on your cause.
- An op-ed piece, an opinion article opposite the editorial page that discusses an issue of concern in the community, offers possible solutions, and asks for community support. They have more impact when leaders of several community organizations sign them.
- A meeting with your local newspaper's editorial board to ask for an editorial in support of your issue.
- A public awareness campaign. This can be very simple, such as a joint resource brochure that is distributed throughout the community. Or, it can be very comprehensive and include events, advertising, publicity, and community outreach.

## BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION STYLE GUIDELINES AND BOILERPLATE

**When developing a release, newsletter article, letter to members, or any communications that refer to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, please use the following guidelines.**

- **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** – always use the ampersand rather than spelling out “and.” Please use “the foundation” in later references, rather than abbreviating the name to BMGF or Gates Foundation.
- GMMB must review any news releases before they are sent to the media.  
Send all draft news releases to:  
**Megan Sather, GMMB**  
Phone: 206.352.8598  
Email: PNWgranteesupport@gmmb.com
- At the conclusion of the release, please include the following foundation boilerplate:

*Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people — especially those with the fewest resources — have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.*

## FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE TITLES

Per AP style, titles should be capitalized only when they are used immediately before one or more names: Pope Paul, President Washington, Vice Presidents John Jones and William Smith. If the title appears after the name it is as follows: “...,” said Allan Golston, president of the United States Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Patty Stonesifer	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
William H. Gates Sr.	Co-chair
Allan C. Golston	President, United States Program



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **YWCA GirlsFirst™ receives \$672,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

### **Program to expand into South King County in 2006**

SEATTLE, WA – October 11, 2005 - The YWCA of Seattle • King County • Snohomish County today announced that its GirlsFirst leadership program, for girls of color facing economic and social barriers to success as they enter their freshman year in high school, received a \$672,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant allows GirlsFirst to expand its services in 2006-2007 to serve 30 new students in South King County in addition to the more than 60 girls already served in the City of Seattle.

GirlsFirst is designed to support students who demonstrate potential and who also face significant economic and social barriers. There is a critical need for the GirlsFirst program in South King County as many poor and ethnic families have relocated to the area yet services to support these families are limited. The YWCA's GirlsFirst program's goal is to increase graduation rates and to teach the girls what it means to be a leader in their own lives and in their community by providing the skills necessary to set and reach their own personal goals.

“We hope that by expanding GirlsFirst into South King County, we can increase the number of young women in that region who graduate from high school by providing them with the leadership skills and positive self-esteem they need to succeed,” said Jennifer Martin, YWCA director of leadership programs for girls and young women.

GirlsFirst will provide at least 30 girls in South King County with year-long support of intensive programming during their freshman year of high school including: a three-week Summer Leadership Academy preparing girls for high school, a weekend overnight leadership retreat at Seattle University, monthly Leadership in Action days - which help girls develop essential life skills and employment skills, skill-building after-school workshops during the school year, intensive computer training, adult mentoring and opportunities for paid summer internships following completion of the program. There is also an alumni programming component which allows for follow-up services throughout their high school career.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funding also will be used to increase GirlsFirst’s capacity to collect short- and long-term data relating to program participants’ academic and social achievement. GirlsFirst hopes that 95 percent of its participants will graduate from high school in four years, and that 80 percent of those who graduate will go on to post-secondary education or training programs.

“The Gates Foundation is dedicated to supporting at-risk families in Washington state,” said Kara Palmer, advocacy officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “GirlsFirst builds on the best practices of the former YWCA leadership programs to provide at-risk girls of color the support and skills development they need to succeed in school and life. By supporting the YWCA’s efforts to collect data and evaluate the program’s impact, we hope to improve the lives of more girls throughout our state.”

### **About the YWCA of Seattle-King-Snohomish County**

The YWCA of Seattle • King County • Snohomish County has a proud history of advancing the quality of life for women of all ages, races and faiths, and their families. Since 1894, the YWCA has provided services to meet critical needs, promote self-sufficiency, reduce violence and achieve equal opportunities for all people. The YWCA serves nearly 60,000 women and families in King and Snohomish counties each year with these critical services: Housing, Employment Training, Job Placement, Domestic Violence Advocacy, Health Care Services and Child and Youth Development. For more information, visit the web site at [www.ywcaworks.org](http://www.ywcaworks.org).

### **About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people — especially those with the fewest resources — have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

# COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE GLOSSARY

**Backgrounder Sheet** – A one-page document describing the history and purpose of your organization.

**Clips** – Copies of recent or prominent news stories about your organization.

**Communication Vehicles** – The means by which your organization delivers its messaging and communicates its goals. These vehicles often include outreach to news media, special events, promotional/collateral materials, and advertising.

**Exclusive Story** – When one reporter or news organization is given advance or sole access to a story. This often involves early interviews with key spokespeople.

**FAQ Sheet** – Short for Frequently Asked Questions, this one or two page document gives in-depth information about the programs and goals of your organization.

**Letter to the Editor** – Only a couple of paragraphs in length, this is an open forum to give opinions on recent news, discuss your organization's new programs, or comment on a recent story in that publication.

**Media Advisory** – An alert to inform print and broadcast media about an event. It is usually issued two days to one week before the event.

**Media List** – An organization's comprehensive contact list of members of the media. The list should include basic contact information.

**Messaging** – Statements tailored to your target audiences that communicate your organization's goals or state a position on news of the day.

**News Release** – A story prepared by an organization to share information and generate publicity and news coverage.

**"Op-ed" Piece** – Short for "opposite the editorial page," an op-ed is an article that discusses an issue of concern in the community, offers possible solutions, and asks for community support. Op-eds are usually no more than 750 words and should not be used to discuss an organization's programs.

**Open House** – An event for the public (or invited guests) to tour your organization's facility for "show and tell." Serves as a time to demonstrate your services or open new buildings or facilities.

**Opinion Leaders** – People who are instrumental in influencing other people's attitudes or actions.

**Press Conference** – A press event held to announce significant news.

**Press Kit** – A collection of background materials packaged to provide a more in-depth description of an organization.

**Press Briefing** – An informal meeting with reporters to present in-depth information or give a major program update. Briefings can be held every one or two years, specifically when you have new information to share like a new initiative or set of evaluation data.

**Press Tour** – A series of events or individual briefings to provide background on an organization's recent news, policy positions, or upcoming plans.

**Reception** – An event that often includes a short program, meant to celebrate a particular milestone in an organization's history.

**Target Audience** – The primary group an organization is trying to influence.

