

Coordinator's guide to media outreach

Media coverage can not only provide students and coaches with the recognition they deserve, but will also help increase awareness about LifeSmarts, making it easier for you to attract sponsors and find new fundraising opportunities.

This guide is meant to help make it easier to get media coverage for your state program. It takes a little time, but it's not difficult, and the payoffs are priceless. In addition to the basic guide below, you can find many additional tools at LifeSmarts.org under the Coordinator's Resources section. Additional items include:

- Basic information and statistics about the LifeSmarts program
- Sample LifeSmarts quiz questions
- Quotes from LifeSmarts participants
- Sample Media Advisory (to be distributed before a state competition)
- Sample Press Release (to be distributed after a state competition)

Use this step-by-step guide to pitch stories to local media to help raise the profile of the LifeSmarts program. As a member of your community, you are in the best position to attract local media coverage.

Questions? Comments?

If you have any questions or would like assistance creating a local media plan, please feel free to contact us!

Carol McKay
National Consumers League Communications
carolm@nclnet.org, (412) 945-3242

Getting started

- 1. Find a hook:** There are many angles you can focus on to hook a reporter. If a reporter is interested in writing one story about the LifeSmarts programs and the students participating, they are likely to want to follow the program and write more stories. Reporters look for stories that are new, feature human interest, and have a local angle that will interest a local community.
- 2. Get the facts:** Gather all the information you want the media to know. Reporters will need to know the Who, What, When, Where, and Why.
- 3. Identify interested reporters:** Local newspapers and television stations love to cover high school events. Look through the local paper or watch the local news to see who writes and reports stories similar to LifeSmarts. Find out how to identify those reporters. Often times, you can find contact information for reporters through the newspaper or station's Web site. Local newspapers are always looking for new, interesting stories about students in the community. If a high school event has received media attention, ask the teacher involved how to get in touch with the reporter.
- 4. Send a media advisory or press release.** Reporters are often pressed for time and much of what they will eventually use comes from these sources. Find a sample press release and a sample media advisory in the Coordinator's Resources section at LifeSmarts.org.
- 5. Ask us for help!** If you have any questions about how to pitch stories to reporters or are simply not having any luck getting reporters to cover your events, get in touch with us!