

Building Local Media Relationships

(BEFORE you pitch or invite them to an event!)

Step 1: Do the research to identify opinion editors and beat reporters covering RESULTS issues.

There are several ways you can find out which local reporters cover issues or opinion sections in news outlets. Here are some ways:

- *Set up a Google News Alert* for the topic and the name of the news outlet with which you want to connect. You can create the alerts here: [Google Alerts - Monitor the Web for interesting new content](#). An example alert might look like “Tuberculosis Portland Tribune.” All the Google search tools/tricks apply to alerts. They will appear in your Gmail inbox.
- *Read and scan the news outlet often* for any coverage of RESULTS issues. Take note of not only the reporters who cover RESULTS issues but what those articles say about the issue (Does the article seem supportive? Skeptical?).
- *Use the outlet’s “search” function* to search for RESULTS issues. You can often sort the search results to show the most recent first. Authors of recent articles likely still work there and still report on those topics. For example, search “Farm Bill SNAP”.
- *Read regularly the editorials and op-eds* the paper publishes. Get to know who the opinion editors are and what they tend to publish or write about.

Step 2: Learn about the reporters/editors you identified in step 1

- *Google them!* Start by simply searching the reporter’s/editor’s name in a search engine. This will tell you more about their background and their interests. When you Google their name, be sure to check out their [MuckRack](#) profile if one pops up in the search results. This is also a good time to identify their email address if you haven’t already.
- *Be sure to review their most recent content.* Be thinking about if any of their recent content is relevant enough to a RESULTS issue to be a reason to connect with them.

Step 3: Send SHORT thank you notes introducing yourself (journalists don't often get notes that are purely for the purpose of thanking them for their work so they stand out in a good way!)

- *Thank the reporters for authoring something that spotlights a RESULTS issue.* Then, also briefly introduce yourself as a RESULTS grassroots volunteer.
- *Thank an opinion editor for an editorial or for publishing an op-ed on a RESULTS issue.* Then, also briefly introduce yourself as a RESULTS volunteer.
- *If they publish a letter-to-the-editor (LTE) you wrote, thank the editor(s) and in the thank you note, introduce yourself as a RESULTS volunteer.*
- *Don't ask for anything right off the bat.* Initially, just thank them for writing about issues you care about. If the person thinks you are only thanking them to get them to do something for you, it won't work. After several thank you messages, you can try asking them to consider writing about one of our issues (sometimes, they might ask you!). While it takes some patience, it's worth it. Persistence usually pays off! (PUPO!)

Here's an example of a note you could send:

Subject: Fantastic piece on tuberculosis

Email: Hello, [reporter or editor name]! Wanted to say thank you for the great piece on the rise in local tuberculosis infections from [date of piece]. This issue is so important to my community and often under-reported. I'm [your name] and I'm a grassroots volunteer with [RESULTS](#). We advocate to our members of Congress here in [state] on health issues like this that worsen issues of poverty. (I'm also a longtime subscriber). This piece helps us move the needle, so thank you again!

[Alternative step 3 for only opinion editors] Suggest an already published op-ed for re-print

RESULTS advocates, especially the [Experts on Poverty](#), publish opinion media regularly in national market outlets. If a RESULTS advocate — ideally one located in your state or region — publishes a national market op-ed, you can send it to the opinion editor, suggesting they pick it up (and you can introduce yourself). Keep an eye on RESULTS social media handles and blogs spotlighting a new national market op-ed from another advocate. The op-eds centering domestic issues often originally appear in the Institute for Policy Studies publication, [Other Words](#). If one gets published on a topic you know your opinion editor(s) are interested in, you can send it along to them while briefly introducing yourself.

Here's an example of a note you could send:

Email: Hello [opinion editor]!

Thank you for publishing the editorial last month calling for decision makers to take action on rising rents here in [state/city]. An impactful op-ed on lived experience of homelessness due to rising rents by a [name of state] resident was recently published by the Institute for Policy Studies. News outlets all over the country are picking up this insightful piece and I wanted to send it to you to consider republishing here in the author's home state/city/region.

My name is [your name], and I'm a local volunteer with **RESULTS** (I'm also a longtime subscriber). I advocate alongside volunteers like the author of this op-ed for policies that reduce poverty. We connect with our members of Congress here in [state], and I know content on these issues from [name of paper/outlet] is crucial to moving the needle.

Thank you so much! Happy to answer any questions!

Warmly,

[Your name]