

USING THE MEDIA

There are many ways to use local media (TV, radio, & newspapers) to tell the community about the Community Forum and the possibility of establishing a smoke-free ordinance.

FREE MEDIA

- * Many of the easiest ways to use the media to promote the forum are free, such as:
 - ◆ Calling a local radio call-in show
 - ◆ Writing a letter to the editor of local newspaper
 - ◆ Writing a feature story for a high school or college newspaper
 - ◆ Sending an announcement to the Community Calendar editors
 - ◆ Sending a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to the local radio and TV stations.
- * It's important to note that free media outlets often have strict deadlines that may be well in advance of the forum. Find out these deadlines **early** in the advocacy campaign.

EARNED MEDIA

- * Earned media refers to making the forum into a news story. To do this, you will need to know how to contact news editors at the local newspapers, TV station(s), and radio stations. Remember to include high school newspapers (their deadlines may be several weeks ahead) and college/university newspapers and radio stations.
- * While free media generally needs to be organized well in advance, earned media announcements should be done close to the event. Press releases to commercial news outlets should be sent no more than one week prior to the event. Use the release to alert the media when and where the Forum will be held and who the speakers will be. This **may** result in the Forum being covered on the local news and/or in the newspaper.
- * Regardless of whether or not a reporter attends the Forum, send a press release the day after the event. Highlight what happened at the Forum, approximately how many attended (especially if it's a large number), and include quotes from speakers.

PAID MEDIA

- * Paid media consists of purchasing advertising time or space. The advantage of paid media is that there are few restrictions on the message you can include.
- * Radio advertising is the least expensive, followed by newspapers, and then television.
- * Some cable television advertising can be relatively inexpensive and public-access cable channels may be free if your group produces its own ad.
- * Time or production costs may be donated, and your community's smoke-free coalition, public health department, or other group may be willing to help with purchasing time or space. If you are planning to use paid media, ask about submission deadlines and plan production accordingly.
- * Some newspapers will prepare an ad for you if you supply the copy and logos you want included, and you can proofread the ad before it is printed. Ask that the ad appear in the "News" section. In preparing a newspaper ad, avoid fussy fonts and/or white text in a black box. Make your ad as easy to read as possible.