



CACHE was formed in 2019 to act as the central regional agency committed to connecting, supporting, and developing the region's arts, culture, and creative communities. CACHE brings a cohesive vision and strategy to the region's organic creative activities, uplifting local artists, the nonprofit sector, municipal leadership, creative industries, and arts philanthropy and investments. CACHE programs include The Medium, Arts and Economic Prosperity 6, Table Talks, Year of Learning & Outreach (YOLO), the Creative Exchange Fund, and the Artists Creative Fund. Learn more at cachecreate.org.

A photograph of a man with curly hair and glasses, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored shirt, speaking at a podium. He is gesturing with his right hand. The background is blurred, showing other people in the audience.

TOOLKIT: Working with the Media 101

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What's Inside...

This Toolkit will be broken into two parts:

PART ONE:

- Introduction to earned media and media relations
- Fundamental earned media materials, including how and when to use them

PART TWO:

- Introduction to speaking to reporters
- How to prepare for interviews





The Basics

Earned media is any media published about your organization that you haven't paid for or created yourself.

- It can come from newspapers, radio, television, and online outlets (blogs, digital news sites).

Media relations can be described as an organization's interactions with editors, reporters, and journalists.

- The goal of media relations is to communicate an organization's newsworthy message, story or information using the appropriate media outlets.

Why is it important?

- 01 Gets your organization into the public consciousness, establishing a reputation with the public.
- 02 Informs the public of your mission/identity through media channels they trust and choose to consume.
- 03 Creates positive relationships with media, leading to more coverage over time.

What are the types of Media Outreach Materials?

- Pitches
- Press Release
- Media Advisory
- Images (Photos + Graphics)
- Fact Sheet
- B-Roll
- Statements

What are the different types of media?

PRINT

- Longer, more detailed interview
- Chance to correct a misstatement
- Potentially more knowledgeable reporter
- Questions are repeated in different ways to get a response

AUDIO

- Emphasis on delivery: voice, inflection, and pace
- Need to speak "visually"
- Okay to use notes, but don't read



What are some important media terms?

➤ **Off the Record**

If a source asks for your conversation to be off the record, it cannot be used for publication, either as quotes or summarizations. Do not repeat this information to another source or anyone outside of colleagues working directly on the story, such as another reporter or your editor.

➤ **On Background**

Information shared on background can be published only under conditions negotiated with that source. This usually means you can't use their name or their exact title. Examples include "a senior White House official" or "a source familiar with the plans." The reporter and their editor need to agree how we can characterize the source on TV or in an article.

➤ **Not for Attribution**

Information that is communicated not for attribution is understood to be fair game for publication while preserving the anonymity of the person who gave the reporter the story.

➤ **On the Record**

Information that is on the record can be used with no caveats. If your source agrees to be "on the record," then you can quote the source by name and their affiliation.



- **Media Lists**
Check out CACHE's Northwest Arkansas Media List [HERE](#).
- **Media Advisories & Press Releases**

	Media Advisory	Press Release
Definition	A media advisory is a document used to invite reporters to cover some kind of event , such as a press conference, forum, or rally.	A press release is a document that informs the media about a key moment or announcement , and paints the whole picture to the narrative you wish to communicate to the public.
When to Use	Sent to the press in advance of an event , as it tells them key details to help them cover it (the "Who, What, When, Where, Why").	Sent to the press in lieu of an event , containing every detail about your story and quotes from your spokespeople that you'd like to make public.
	If your advisory is to be read and considered for coverage, it must:	
	➤ Be short & sweet, easy to quickly figure out details ➤ Sound interesting & newsworthy ➤ Spell out visuals that would make it more appealing for an outlet to cover	➤ Offer a newsworthy story stated clearly & simply ➤ Long on information, short on adjectives ➤ Highlight a unique angle or potential interview opportunity that enhances the outlet's coverage



Part One Earned Media Materials

What to Include:

The Who: Your artist, performer, special guest speaker, author, etc.

- You might be tempted for the organization to be the who, but it's probably the "why."
- Almost always, these events are made possible with an organization, but stick with what's new
- Always using the organization as the "who" can start to make a journalist's inbox look the same. Using what's fresh makes it stand out
- From the reader's end: if stories are well written, they can be/feel completely different while stemming from the same "source"

The What: Don't bury the lede, tell us why it's special!

- Has it been a decade since they showed work? Has this person/product/circumstance been available before?
- Include some connection that can add meaning, like a personal experience or family tie. Are they known for one thing, but are now debuting something else?

The When & Where: None of this matters if nobody knows what time, date, and place this special thing is happening.

- Don't make them hunt for this kind of info. You'll easily lose them at this stage.
- If they Google you and hit your website or your Instagram, how quickly can they find the event?
- Make sure the person you offer for interviews knows the details.



Opinion Editorials (“Op-Eds”) and Letters to the Editor (“LTEs”) are similar in nature:

They can take a position for or against an issue, simply inform, or both. They can convince readers by using emotions, facts, **or** emotions and facts combined.

	OP-ED: Proactive Media	LTE: Reactive Media
Definition	A guest-written piece submitted to a media outlet that makes a clear argument about a self-selected topic usually (but not always) in the news.	A letter submitted to a media outlet in direct response to an article about issues of concern from its readers.
Length	Generally 600 - 900 words	Short and tight, rarely longer than 300 words



What are the rules of an official interview?

Know that there's no such thing as an "official" interview.

- Anything you say before, during, or after the "official" interview — including any telephone or email exchanges — can be quoted in a story.
- If you don't want to be quoted, be sure that you tell the reporter that it's off the record before you say it.

What are the most common reporter interview styles?

- 01 **STACCATO**
Questions in rapid succession.
- 02 **THE INTERRUPTER**
Tries to get you off balance.
- 03 **THE JOKER**
Best of friends — then "boom!"
- 04 **THE SHRINK**
"You mean to say that..."
- 05 **THE PIGEON**
Swoops in and drops some surprises
- 06 **THE HYPOTHETICAL**
"What if...?"
- 07 **THE PREGNANT PAUSE**
Lets you fill the silence.



Should you agree to an interview?

Most of the time, the answer is “yes.” But not always. You might consider turning down an interview in these scenarios:

- The topic isn’t relevant to your work.
- You would gain absolutely nothing by doing the interview.

If the story is about you or your organization, and it will be written with or without your participation, you should probably agree to the interview because of the **Rule of Thirds**:

- 1/3: Your Voice
- 1/3: Opponent’s Voice
- 1/3: Reporter’s Voice

What should you know before the interview?

Some reporters will probably offer some of this information on their own before an interview, but you may want to fill in any gaps by asking the most relevant of these questions:

- Can you tell me about the story you’re working on?
- Are you approaching this story from any particular perspective?
- Who else are you interviewing?
- What’s the format?
- What do you need from me?
- When are you publishing or airing the story?



What do you need to know to prepare for an interview?

- 01 **Know your message.**
Develop three simple messages.
Repeat them over and over.
- 02 **Know your audience.**
It's not the reporter.
- 03 **Know your facts.**
Always tell the truth and don't guess.
- 04 **Know your vulnerabilities.**
Anticipate tough questions.
Know how to get out of them.
- 05 **Know the ground rules.**
They can only print or air what you say.

How do you play the interview game?

It's a game. The beginning, middle, and end approach to answering questions is ineffective in most forms of media interviewing.

State your main point first, then offer supporting points.
If you don't get it out fast, you might not get it out at all.
End decisively. Don't wind down your answers slowly.
Trailed-off responses are hard to edit into a quote.

- Inject your message wherever possible.
- Answer the question you wish you were asked.
- Put it in your own words. It's your story to tell.
- Don't waste any answers. Today's wasted answer may become tomorrow's quote.
- Don't wait for the right question—it may not come.
- Stick to what you know, and don't guess.
- Be concise.
- Avoid jargon, complex statistics, and hard-to-understand concepts.



Why should you speak in complete sentences?

In almost all interviews, the audience will never hear the reporter’s questions, only your answers. Therefore, you should begin each answer with a complete sentence that includes relevant parts of the question.

Example:

	Question: How many people are affected by this change in Medicare policy?	
Wrong Answer	“Twenty million.”	Not Quotable.
Right Answer	“This senseless cut to Medicare will affect 20 million people and will be absolutely devastating for millions of low-income seniors who will no longer be able to afford their medications.”	Quotable, answers the direct question but also advances a clear message.

THANK YOU!



This toolkit is made up of resources from Northwest Arkansas journalist April Wallace and the communications advocacy group, Rally.