



## Leveraging Your Local Media

Take advantage of your local media to raise awareness of neuroscience priorities. Policymakers are keenly aware of local news so there is a high probability they will see this, especially if you mention them by name.

### Opinion Pieces

Letters to the editor (LTE) and op-eds can help to inform readers about neuroscience issues and can include calls to action, especially during key moments in a legislative campaign.

LTE's are written in response to a news article (150-200 words), while op-eds are organic content that stand on their own (700-900 words).

Each newspaper will have different requirements for length and submission process. Look in the "Opinion" section on your local newspaper's website to find a submission form or email the "Opinion" editor directly. When in doubt, call the publication and ask for the appropriate contact person and submission guidelines. Be sure to follow all instructions carefully or your op-ed may be rejected.

When making your "pitch" you should include:

- ▶ 3–4 clear and concise sentences to capture the reader's attention;
- ▶ A local connection about the importance of this topic; *why here, why now?*
- ▶ Your fully written and polished op-ed article pasted directly into the body of the email and attached.
- ▶ Your most relevant contact information.

If you don't hear back within 3 business days, follow-up via email or call the publication to determine the best contact person. Request to hear back by a certain deadline before moving on to another media outlet.

If your op-ed is rejected or you receive no response, submit to another outlet. While one publication may not be interested in your opinion piece, another may pick it up right away; this is highly dependent on their readership. While not a perfect science, connecting the piece to the local audience will give you the best chance of being published.

### Press Interviews

Journalists need subject-matter experts who can give context and insight for stories related to neuroscience research, trends in the field, and funding issues. By being a source for the local media including print news, radio, and TV, you can garner support for science and establish yourself as resource.

Prior to engaging with the press, work with your Public Relations office if you'll be portrayed as a representative of your institution.

### Press Conferences

In the event of a major breakthrough or discovery in your research, consider holding a press conference to discuss the implications. Use the opportunity to discuss how this breakthrough would not be possible without the robust funding of federal agencies such as NIH and NSF. Consult your institution's press office, which will be instrumental with coordinating this type of event.

Be sure to email [advocacy@sfn.org](mailto:advocacy@sfn.org) to share your success! SfN staff can help to get your message in front of policymakers and will amplify your reach through social media.