



National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

March 10

Promoting Your Event: A How-to Guide for Media Outreach

Select a spokesperson

Choosing a spokesperson allows one person to be the face of your organization. Make sure this person is familiar with your organization, its mission, and the purpose of your National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day event or activity. He or she should also be comfortable speaking to reporters and doing television and radio interviews, if needed.

Create a media list

First, check with your organization's communications department. They may already have a list of local media, as well as established procedures for contacting media. If not, create a list of local newspapers, online news sources (which may include blogs), and TV and radio stations to contact in your area. Go online or call the station or publication to determine the best person for you to contact. For newspapers and online news sources, this may be the health editor or reporter. It may also be the Web editor, who is in charge of the newspaper's online content. For TV, contact a producer or the news assignment desk instead of a reporter.

Let the media know about your event

Pitch your event to daily newspapers, online news sources, and TV and radio stations one to two weeks in advance. For weekly publications, such as community newspapers, reach out at least one month in advance. Monthly publications often need anywhere from three to six months lead time.

Start by drafting a brief email that creatively tells the reporter about the event and why they should write a story about it. Direct the reporter to a media advisory for more information. The media advisory can be cut and pasted into the bottom of the email or included as an attachment. A media advisory states what the event is, why it is being held, who is attending, and when and where it is taking place. It is usually sent to the news desk or news assignment editors, who are in charge of assigning reporters to cover stories. A template media advisory is available at <http://go.usa.gov/4ZnW>.

A press release can be sent instead of a media advisory or when a reporter requests more information. Press releases are more in-depth than media advisories and should explain your event, detail how HIV/AIDS impacts women and girls in your community, and include a quote from your organization's spokesperson. A press release template is available at <http://go.usa.gov/4Znd>.

Reporters, editors, and producers receive dozens, and sometimes even hundreds, of emails a day. If you do not receive a response after a few days, follow up with a phone call.

Use data in the press release that shows the impact of HIV/AIDS in your community. Quick Health Data Online, a free and easy-to-use statistics database, is a great resource and is available at womenshealth.gov/quickhealthdata.

Let other organizations know about the event

Local businesses, grocery stores, health clubs, hospitals, shopping malls, libraries, retail stores, women's groups, churches, and other organizations can promote the event by hanging posters or fliers or sending information through their listservs, bulletins, or newsletters.

Utilize community calendars and websites

Ask local newspapers, TV and radio stations, and online networks to include information about your event in their community calendars and on their websites. Look for submission rules to make sure the event information is posted correctly and in a timely manner. Post information at least three to four weeks prior to your event or activity.

Promote your event online

Promoting National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and your event online is a great way to spread the word. Use your own website and social media channels to post information about your event. For a guide on using social media, go to <http://go.usa.gov/4BJz>.

Provide media with event photos and pre-written language

Some print and online outlets may not have the time or resources to come out and cover your event or activity; therefore, offer to write the story for and provide photos to the outlet. If the media outlet is interested, send the article and photos (with captions) to the media outlet so that it can include them in a future issue or post to their online pages.

Follow up with the media

Follow up with any reporters who attended the event, wrote a story, and/or added your story and photos. Send a quick thank you note or give them a call and encourage them to contact you if they need information or quotes for future stories.