**COALITION/NETWORK EARNED MEDIA PLAN GUIDANCE**

**PRIMARY COMPONENTS OF AN EARNED MEDIA PLAN**

* **PURPOSE:** What goal(s) do you hope to achieve through your communications and earned media efforts? It’s recommended that you not set more than three goals as any more than that becomes difficult hard to track.
	+ Examples: Increase awareness of tobacco’s burden; Raise awareness of coalition activities; Promote cessation resources; Increase web/social media visitation/following; Establish yourself as trusted source for news media
		- NOTE: Make sure that every media outreach you make connects to one of your goals and that you know which goal it supports ahead of time
* **AUDIENCE(S):** Who do you want to reach through your efforts?
	+ Examples: Parents, State Leaders, Teachers, Health Professionals
		- NOTE: Try to be more specific in identifying your audience than “General Public”. Think about who most needs to hear the information you’re providing or who is likely to take action on the information. The audience should directly connect with the goal you hope to achieve.
* **MESSAGING:** What messages will connect with your audience(s)?
	+ Keep your messages simple and clear
	+ Limit the number of messages for each story. People can only process so much new information, so try to limit yourself to two-three key messages per story
	+ Repeat your messages often to increase their chances of being remembered
* **TACTICS:** With your messages determined, identify how best to communicate them
	+ [Letters to the Editor](http://tobwis.org/files/download/5a10dba292adbab) (LTEs) – Ideal for responding to other stories or to bring attention to issue
	+ [Press Releases](http://tobwis.org/files/download/a0963689beaafd5) – Promote events or highlight a local angle on a national or state story
	+ [Opinion Editorials](http://tobwis.org/files/download/14ff3d1402a2490) (Op-Eds) – Typically longer than LTEs and a good venue for a local expert to weigh in on an issue
	+ On-air Interviews – Usually come after establishing yourself as an authority on the topic
* **FREQUENCY/TIMELINE:** How often do you plan to outreach to the local media?
	+ You don’t have to get too specific on timing, but a general outline is helpful.
	+ Remember that not every story is newsworthy. The best stories:
		- Are timely
		- Have a local angle
		- Feature a compelling human story
		- Affect a lot of people
* **MEDIA CHANNELS**
	+ Identify the media in your community and who the contacts are at each outlet
	+ Try to match your stories to the right medium. Here are some things to keep in mind regarding broadcast vs. print
		- Broadcast (TV, Radio)
			* Greater focus on personal stories
			* Should include a compelling visual or audio component
			* Generally shorter lead times for stories
		- Print
			* Greater focus on statistics and research
			* Personal stories help, but not always required for coverage
			* Typically more in-depth with more lead time
* **SPOKESPEOPLE:** Identify who you want media to talk to on tobacco issues
	+ Your spokesperson can vary depending on the story. Think about who can help you best communicate your messages. Possible spokespeople could include:
		- Coalition representative – Teacher, parent, health care provider, etc.
		- Health Dept./Coalition Leader/Network Lead
		- FACT member(s)
* **CALENDAR:** Keep a calendar of key dates for media outreach
	+ Visit the [Media Opportunities](http://tobwis.org/media-opportunities) page on tobwis.org for current/upcoming templates and other ideas for earned media
	+ Leave flexibility as compelling stories may emerge with no advanced notice. Think about how you can take advantage of fast-developing tobacco-related stories
	+ Take the time to make a calendar or planning grid (see template) and make sure someone is responsible for reviewing and updating it. This will help make sure the work gets done and can prevent you from over-relying on communicating a specific type of story
* **Evaluation:** How will you measure your efforts?
	+ Keep track of attempts, coverage, web hits, etc.
	+ Use tools like [Google Alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts) to watch for media hits