



KEEP PENNSYLVANIA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE MEDIA & COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT



WELCOME

Purpose of the Toolkit

A practical, easy-to-use communications resource that helps Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful affiliates become trusted community storytellers, strengthen community pride, support tourism stewardship, demonstrate measurable impact, and inspire volunteer action. A resource for practical tips, tools, and best practices to help you maximize your impact and engagement within your community.



Contents

- Why Community Communications Matter
- Media Relations 101
- Communications Planning & Calendars
- Visual Storytelling
- Media Materials Templates
- Recovery Guide for Communication Slip-Ups

INTRODUCTION

You Don't Have to Be an Expert

You Just Have to Be Authentic

People connect with people—not organizations, statistics, or programs.

The most effective affiliate communicators are community members who care deeply about where they live and can explain why that matters.

Example

"Last year, residents told us they were frustrated by litter along this gateway corridor. Volunteers stepped up to clean the area, removing nearly two tons of trash. Today, it's cleaner, more welcoming, and a source of community pride. We'd love more people to join us this year."

Quick Reference

Personal Story **First**, Action **Second**, Statistics **Third**, Clear Call-to-Action **Last**

LEVEL 1

BEGINNER
COMMUNITY
STORYTELLER

LEVEL 2

COMMUNITY
COMMUNICATOR

LEVEL 3

COMMUNITY
AMBASSADOR

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TEMPLATES
GUIDES

BEGINNER COMMUNITY STORYTELLER

Level 1

Chapter 1: Why Community Communications Matter

Litter is more than an appearance issue.

Core Narrative

Community Pride

Clean spaces reflect community values

Tourism Stewardship

First impressions matter

Measurable Impact

Volunteer action creates visible results

Key Message

“Volunteers help create cleaner, more attractive communities that residents enjoy and visitors remember.”

Try It Yourself

Write a one-sentence answer to:

“Why does your cleanup matter?”

Real-World Example

[Pick Up the Poconos Volunteer Stories](#)

Quick Reference Checklist

- ___ Lead with community pride, not just cleanup statistics.
- ___ Connect every project to a real community benefit residents can see and feel.
- ___ Explain how cleaner spaces support a positive visitor experience and local economy.
- ___ Highlight the role of volunteers and community partners in creating change.
- ___ Pair impact numbers with a human story or example whenever possible.
- ___ End every conversation, interview, or post with a clear call to action for people to get involved.

Cleaner Communities

- Strengthen local pride
- Improve visitor experiences
- Support tourism economies
- Encourage investment
- Increase volunteer engagement
- Create healthier public spaces



BEGINNER COMMUNITY STORYTELLER

Level 1

Chapter 2: Know Your Audience

Different audiences care about different outcomes.

Residents



Care about:

- Pride
- Safety
- Neighborhood appearance

Businesses



Care about:

- Economic vitality
- Customer experience
- Community Image

Visitors



Care about:

- Experience
- Natural Beauty
- First Impressions

Local Officials



Care about:

- Quality of life
- Results
- Partnerships

Media



Cares about:

- Human stories
- Local angles
- Timely relevance

BEGINNER COMMUNITY STORYTELLER

Level 1

Chapter 3: Message Discipline

Every Interview Should Answer:

Why This Matters

Why should people care?

Why Now

Why is this important today?

What Can People Do Next

What action should they take?



Sample Messaging Prompts

"What's most important for people to understand is..."

"What we're really seeing in our community is..."

Do Not

- Chase every question
- Overcomplicate
- Introduce unrelated topics



Chapter 4: Community Communications

In small communities, trusted relationships and local connections often carry more influence than large advertising campaigns. By leveraging community groups, local leaders, schools, civic organizations, and neighborhood networks, affiliates can reach residents more effectively and inspire meaningful participation in local beautification efforts.

- Local Facebook groups
- Community calendars
- Churches and civic groups
- Main Street/Downtown organizations
- School partnerships



COMMUNITY COMMUNICATOR

Level 2

Chapter 5: Media Relations 101

Understand the difference between various media different outcomes.

Earned Media



Coverage from:

- Newspapers
- TV/Radio
- Community Publications

Owned Media



Content from your:

- Website
- Social Media Channels
- Newsletter

Shared Media



Amplified by partners:

- Municipalities
- Tourism Agencies/Chambers
- Community Groups

Building Media Relationships

Do:

- Respond promptly
- Be helpful
- Provide photos
- Meet deadlines

Don't:

- Mass email irrelevant stories
- Be unavailable
- Demand a story
- Wait to contact media

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATOR

Level 2

Chapter 6: Interview Playbook

Before the Interview Know:

- Three key messages/talking points
- One volunteer story
- Two impact statistics
- Call-to-action

During the Interview:

- Pause before answering
- Speak slower
- Smile during TV interviews
- Use examples
- Bridge back to key messages
- Keep answers concise

Don't:

- Guess at numbers
- Speculate
- Use jargon
- Ramble
- Say "No Comment"

If You Don't Know

"I don't have that information with me, but I'll gladly follow up."



Chapter 7: Interview Samples

Why is this event important?

"Our volunteers are helping create cleaner and more welcoming spaces while building community pride and supporting the visitor experience."

What difference does this actually make?

"When people see roadsides, parks, and public spaces cared for, it changes perceptions of the community. That benefits residents, businesses, and visitors alike."

Why should someone volunteer?

"It's a simple way to make a visible difference in just a few hours while meeting neighbors and improving the places we all share."

What results have you seen?

"We've seen volunteers remove significant amounts of litter while strengthening local partnerships and fostering greater community pride."

COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR

Level 3

Chapter 8: Visual Storytelling

People notice images before they read text, making photos and videos some of the most powerful tools for capturing attention and communicating impact.

Strong Photos Include:

- Volunteers in action
- Groups working together
- A clear subject
- Genuine emotion
- Community landmarks

Before-and-After Photos

Capture:

- Same angle
- Same location
- Same framing

Photo Do's

- Show people
- Show impact
- Show teamwork

Photo Don'ts

- Piles of garbage only
- Empty landscapes
- Staged-looking images

In Practice

Create a before-and-after photo gallery that clearly shows the transformation of a cleanup site, using images taken from the same location and angle whenever possible.

Pair the visuals with a brief impact statement, volunteer quote, or key statistic to help audiences understand not just what changed, but how community members made that change happen.



COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR

Level 3

Chapter 9: Video Storytelling

Litter is more than an appearance issue.

Content Capture Checklist

Photos

- __ Before photos
- __ Volunteers
- __ Community leaders
- __ Action shots
- __ After photos

Video

- __ 10-second landscape clips
- __ Volunteer testimonials
- __ Cleanup activity
- __ Results footage

Quotes

- __ Volunteer quote
- __ Partner quote
- __ Organizer quote

Statistics

- __ Volunteers
- __ Pounds removed
- __ Bags collected
- __ Locations improved

Sample Volunteer Question

“Why did you choose to volunteer today?”

Ideal Clips

- Volunteer Interviews
- Cleanup Action
- Community Scenery
- Results Reveal



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS BASICS

Why This Matters

Events do not always go as planned. Weather can change, volunteers may be injured, information can be shared incorrectly, or unexpected situations can attract public attention. How an organization responds in those moments can have a lasting impact on its credibility, relationships, and reputation.

Having a basic crisis communications plan helps affiliates respond calmly, accurately, and confidently when challenges arise. The goal is not to have all the answers immediately, but to communicate what is known, demonstrate responsibility, and keep stakeholders informed as more information becomes available.

Response Model



Acknowledge | Assess | Respond | Update

Common Issues

- Volunteer injury
- Weather disruption
- Misinformation
- Public criticism

Statement Framework

"What we know..."
"What we're doing..."
"What happens next..."

Crisis Do's

- Be timely
- Be factual
- Stay calm

Crisis Don'ts

- Speculate
- Assign blame
- Share unverified information

PLANNING AHEAD

90-Day Communications Roadmap

90 Days Out



- Announce event
- Secure partners
- Create media list
- Begin recruitment

60 Days Out



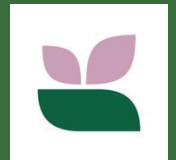
- Share volunteer stories
- Publish partner content
- Open media outreach

30 Days Out



- Issue news release
- Increase social posting
- Confirm interviews

14 Days Out



- Daily countdown
- Volunteer spotlights
- Media reminders

Week Of



- Final interviews
- Event previews
- Community call-to-action

Event Day



- Live updates
- Photos
- Videos
- Volunteer quotes

PLANNING AHEAD

90-Day Communications Roadmap (continued)

One Week After



- Results release
- Impact graphics
- Thank-you campaign
- Begin recruitment

One Month After



- Community success story
- Volunteer recognition
- Lessons learned

Annual Communications Calendar

Winter



- Planning
- Partner outreach
- Volunteer recruitment

Spring



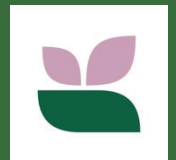
- Cleanup promotion
- Earth month storytelling

Summer



- Community pride campaigns
- Tourism stewardship stories

Fall



- Cleanup results
- Volunteer recognition

MEDIA MATERIALS TEMPLATES

News Release Template

LOGO

CONTACT:
NAME
EMAIL
PHONE

Title (capitalized)

Subtitle (first word and proper nouns capitalized)

LOCATION, PA, -- (DATE example: July 4, 1776) –

- Body includes 4-5 paragraphs including a quote from someone affiliated with organization
- Event Details
- Volunteer Information
- Quotes
- Call-to-Action
- Remember to include the following info: who, what, where, when
- Include a link to the organization website

About Organization
Brief description of organization

MEDIA MATERIALS TEMPLATES

Media Alert Template

LOGO

CONTACT:

MEDIA ALERT
Title

WHAT:

WHEN:

WHERE:

WHO:

Visual Opportunities
Interview Opportunities

###

About Organization

SPOKESPERSON QUICK GUIDE

Our Core Message

Volunteers make Pennsylvania communities cleaner, more welcoming, and more attractive places to live, work, and visit.

Three Talking Points

Community Pride

People care for places they love.

Tourism Stewardship

First impressions matter.

Measurable Impact

Volunteer action produces visible results.

Top Statistics

Local affiliates:

- Volunteers
- Pounds removed
- Miles cleaned
- Event participation

Likely Questions

- Why does this matter?
- What results have you seen?
- How can people help?
- Why should businesses care?

What's next?

- Connect
- Be authentic
- Use examples
- Share impact
- Invite participation



RECOVERY GUIDE FOR SLIP-UPS

If You Misspeak

Correct yourself and continue.

If You Forget a Statistic

Provide it later.

If You Get Off Track

Bridge back to your message.

If You Feel Nervous

Slow down.

Pause.

Breathe.

Continue.

Final Reminder

You are not a spokesperson reading talking points.

You are a **community storyteller** sharing real examples of neighbors improving the places they care about.

