



Final Transcript

HUD-US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Capturing Media Attention

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SPEAKERS

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PRESENTATION

Moderator Ladies and gentlemen, we'd like to thank you for standing by. Welcome to the Capturing Media Attention TeleConference call. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later, we'll conduct a question and answer session with instructions to be given at that time. [Operator instructions]. As a reminder, today's call will be recorded.

I would now like to turn the conference over to our host and our facilitator, Miss Jane Charida. Please go ahead, ma'am.

Jane

Thank you so much, and hello, everyone. As the operator said, the audio is being recorded today. The playback number along with a copy of the PowerPoint and a transcript will be available on our training archive on HUD Exchange. We'll send a Listserv in about seven days with that link, so please be sure to take a look at that if you would like to check anything on the slides or the presentation. We will have polling questions, so we appreciate your response to those and also a Q&A period at the end of the webinar.

Another way to ask questions or comment throughout the presentation is to use the question box to the right of your screen. You can also send questions and comments to the housing.counseling@hud.gov mailbox, and please just put the name of today's webinar in the subject line, and we'll be happy to get back with you.

During the discussion, in this case I believe we're taking calls through the operator, so we'll handle it that way. We will have a survey at the end of the presentation, so it's really helpful if you provide comments; that helps us improve our future webinars.

You will get a certificate of training. It will be in an email that says this is your certificate, and there are no attachments. If you like, you can print out a copy for your records or just save the email. You can also get credit for the webinar. You would need to go to the training archive on HUD Exchange and click on the get credit button.

It's now my pleasure to turn over today's presentation to Benjamin Yanetta, Housing Program Specialist with the HUD Office of Housing Counseling.

Benjamin

Thank you, Jane. Hello, everyone, and thank you, all, for joining us today on this webinar on Capturing the Media's Attention. One of the goals of the Office of Housing Counseling is to increase the visibility of all the great work that you guys do. A really cost-effective way for people to learn about all the services you offer is through the media.

Today, you'll learn a little bit more about proactively engaging your agency with the local media and developing a contact list. Our presenter for today's call is Andrew Klain. He's a media relations manager at CMR, and I just want to take a minute to say that CMR has put together a lot of great information for us.

A lot of that's available on the HUD Exchange website. If you're not familiar with that page, we've already referenced it a few times. There are archived webinars that if you've missed one of the previous ones, they've done a series of presentations on social media, and there's also a lot of other topics that are relevant to Housing Counseling Agencies. So, if you're not familiar with that resource, I'd really urge you to take a look at the HUD Exchange page and search our archived webinars.

With that, I'd just like to turn it over to Andrew to begin.

Andrew

Thank you very much, Ben. Hello, everyone. Happy Friday. I hope you are doing swell wherever you are in the US of A.

Today, here's our agenda. We're doing our introductions. We're going to go over some goals and desired outcomes that us at Creative Marketing Resources want you to get out of our webinar today. We're also going to go over the outcomes that we hope you will get to take away from the information you receive.

Some of the stuff we're going to talk about is media relations basics.

We're going to go into the first steps into engaging the media. I've a game for everyone today, so hopefully you'll all stick around. I have a fun game that we're going to play, and then we're going to answer any questions that you may have.

Our goals today are to highlight the value of media relations. Like Ben said before, media relations is a great and cost-effective way to get your message out. We want to show you today how to identify the right media. We want to help you to create a contact list, and lastly, we want to share some best practices and tips and tricks to help you engage with the media.

What we hope you get out of this, we hope the material today will help you increase consumer engagement by using the media, increase consumer buy-in and trust for HCAs and media relations is a great way to build trust with your consumers. Ultimately, we want to get more consumers using the HUD approved Housing Counseling Agencies.

With that, let's dive right in. You may be asking, well, what are media relations? You may have heard of public relations. What's the difference?

Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. When we say publics, we mean essentially everyone that you speak to. One of the most important publics that any organization has is the media and that's where media relations comes in.

Media relations is the side of public relations that involves persuading journalists, reports, or editors to tell a positive story about your Housing Counseling Agency and the services you provide. Some of the mediums that can be used with media relations are newspapers, magazines, the TV, radio stations, and increasingly more now blogs on websites.

Your ultimate goal is to capture the media's attention by communicating your newsworthy story to the right people at the right media outlets using the appropriate tools. So, we're going to cover all that today and hopefully at the end if you have any further questions, I can answer those for you.

Why use media relations? It creates exposure for your Housing Counseling Agency. Again, it costs less than advertising. The main

spender in media relations is your time. When done correctly and consistently, media relations can help you raise awareness in your community about your Housing Counseling Agency's services. Because news stories about your Housing Counseling Agency are written and published by unbiased and trustworthy local media sources, it adds credibility to your reputation and your message.

If somebody writes a story or a piece about you, and that is a local community newspaper, having them write about you as a third-party elevates your reputation and adds credibility to your agency. This credibility can also motivate consumers to take specific actions, and that could mean if you're hosting an event and you want to motivate consumers to go to your event using media relations is a great tool for that.

If you want consumers to be more conscious about their budgets, using media relations you can encourage consumers to think about budgeting when they're purchasing a house, or maybe remodeling, or making any financial decision. Finally outside of an investment of your time to write the materials and send to the media, there's really no cost to place a news story, unlike advertising, which makes it cost-effective.

One important caveat with media relations, though, is that nothing is guaranteed because it's free, essentially free, nothing can be guaranteed. But, if you follow our steps and you write an effective message to the media, you have great chance of being covered in the media.

I want to talk a little bit about [audio disruption] stakeholders. I know a lot of Housing Counseling Agencies serve many different types of consumers. We've picked these five as examples, and then of course there are other consumers as well. One of the most important ways to insert yourself in the media is to listen for stories that are already out there and that are directly affiliated with your consumer audiences. I'm going to give you a few examples today for each audience.

For renters, let's say in your area, there's an increase in the median rental cost for the average apartment due to a high demand. Because of your expertise as a Housing Counseling Agency, you can pitch the media about your services you offer that can help folks who might be concerned that their monthly rent will go up. Or, maybe there's a story about the bad landlord that hasn't taken care of his or her rental unit, and they are in the news. As housing efforts, Housing Counseling Agencies can leverage their expertise and pitch your services to the news to show how renters can

protect themselves from bad landlords and offer advice on specific situations.

For first-time homebuyers, an example that we thought of is—well depending on where you're at in the country, and of course folks along the coast are experiencing this far more than the folks in the Midwest and in the middle of the country, but housing costs are rising. For first-time homebuyers, that creates a barrier for them to purchase a home. So, many first-time homebuyers are waiting to actually purchase their home.

A lot of this may be due to the fact that they are intimidated by the process and don't really know all their options. So, if you hear a story, or a hot topic in your community as first-time home buying, you can pitch a story about how your services can help shed light on the process of home buying and alleviate any of those concerns that new homebuyers may have.

A lot of the stuff with media relations, particularly with HCAs, will be your expertise in the housing industry. For instance with people in default and foreclosure, let's say in your community, there's a study that's put out that foreclosures are decreasing in the area. You may think that, oh,

because foreclosures are decreasing that there's really no need for you to speak because the services you offer are for people in foreclosure when in fact, this is an opportunity for your agency to play the hero in this story that's playing out.

Let's say, in your community, there's a decrease in foreclosures, you can actually pitch the media as experts and talk about why services like the ones that you offer at your Housing Counseling Agency are contributing to the decrease in foreclosures. By positioning yourselves as a hero in this story, that makes it newsworthy. That makes it relevant to your consumers, and that will elevate your position in the media with folks who are in default and foreclosure and consumers in general.

With reverse mortgages, I'm going to use a story or an anecdote. I live in Milwaukee. In Milwaukee, there's a suburb where the largest age demographic that is increasing in the population is folks who are older than 60 years old. This was just put out in a local newspaper.

For those Housing Counseling agencies that offer HECM loan counseling or reverse mortgage counseling, this is an opportunity to take this upon yourselves to get into the media and talk about the advantages of HECM

loans to that community. Because reverse mortgages or mortgages are so specific, it's important that you keep your ear out for stories like this where they talk about aging populations or areas where people are moving to to retire or sell their homes because they want to move to a warmer climate or something. That's probably specific to Milwaukee because a lot of people move out of Milwaukee to warmer climates. Anyway, it's important to just keep your ear out for stories that talk about aging populations when we're looking at reverse mortgages.

Lastly, existing homeowners, when we want to talk about existing homeowners to the media, this is probably the trickiest stakeholder because of how general the audience is. The range of age and financial situation is across the board. Anybody really could be an existing homeowner in terms of demographic.

My greatest advice is that if your strength is in talking to existing homeowners, again keep your ear out for events that are happening in your community that deal with home remodeling expos. My point is this, keep your ear out for events that are specific to people who have existing homes. If there is an expo going on where they invite businesses to talk about their new countertops or the state-of-the-art gutters, this is an

opportunity for you to talk through the media about the importance of budgeting for remodeling a garage or a kitchen and the importance of keeping your finances at top of mind when you're doing this to your house, how can it affect the value of your home and to make sure it doesn't put you into a default or a foreclosure.

Those are just a few examples. I know a lot of you may serve others, other different stakeholders, but overall, keep your ear out for things that are happening in your community. If it relates to housing, and if it relates to the service that you provide, that's an opportunity for you to pitch the media. We'll get into how to do that in a few slides.

Next I want to talk about the basic media relation tools. First and foremost, the press release, this is your catchall tool for media relations. It's truly the main way to reach out to any media. Technically anything deliberately sent to a reporter or media source is considered a press release, but press releases follow a certain format which is helpful to journalists to separate the release from other communication methods such as pitch letters or media advisories. Writing a solid press release is very important.

In general, a press relation will consist of about 4 to 5 paragraphs and be about 300 to 800 words. It'll include structural elements such as a headline, a dateline, introduction, a body, a boiler plate at the end, and then contact information. Now, in my next webinar that's happening June 1st, we will go over the specifics of putting together a press release for you. So, please join us for that one that's happening June 1st. In general, that's the structure of a press release.

With media alert and advisories, these are much more succinct in that they usually are about events and/or celebrations where you actually want to have the media join you at your event location. They're usually bulleted with very specific bullets like the who, what, where, when, how, and why of the event that's happening. A lot of times, we will use media alerts and advisories to try and get TV media and press out to an event. Again, this will be covered in our next webinar happening June 1st so mark your calendars, and sign up for that.

Media interviews, it's pretty self-explanatory. Media interviews is where a person from your Housing Counseling Agency will be interviewed by a publication, a TV station, or a radio station. They can happen prerecorded

or live, and both are excellent opportunities for you to get your message out to your community.

My recommendation is to find and know your most confident and smiley person at your agency, and have them represent you. The media loves energy, and an energetic person who's not crazy energetic but passionate or having a positive passionate energy will be great to position your agency in the media's eyes and in the consumer's eyes. So, if you're thinking about doing an interview, know that the media and consumers love positive passionate energy and that will be great for your agency.

Another tool that a lot of media like to have is photos, graphics, and charts. A piece of advice if you haven't already started, begin taking professional photos, and what I mean by that in professional context is you don't necessarily have to hire a professional photographer, but take professional photos of your office, your co-workers, and with their permission, your happy consumers. Documenting your services is a great way to arm yourself with materials the media wants to have and consumers want to see. They will want to see smiley faces and folks hard at work. This is how you build your trust with your community.

Other ways graphics and charts that show the success your agency is having, so for example let's say, you have a statistic that says you helped 1,000 first-time homebuyers buy their first home. That's something that's important and that should be shared with the media accompanying a press release or media advisory that you will send them.

Lastly, social media, Ben alluded to this earlier. We just completed a social media webinar series that was given by my colleague Kevin. I bet some of you or a lot of you were already on that webinar series. Social media is a great tool to use. It is extremely cost effective. It really only requires your time, and it's a great way for you to control the message. By building your community through likes and follows on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, that's a way that it sheds light on how your agency works, what your look and feel is in your agency, and that's a great way to build trust is through social media.

So, I encourage you to go back on the HUD Exchange and look for those social media webinars. I think there's about four of them, and you can learn a lot and I encourage you to use social media.

We are going to ask our first question here. Have any of you created or used a press release or media alert or advisory to reach out to the media? Great, actually it looks like—well it says about 60% of you have. That's fantastic. So, 40% haven't which is great, too. I hope those folks can learn something today, and we can teach you how effective they can be. For the folks who have used them, hopefully I'm giving you some great advice to help you to continue to reach out to the media.

Let's talk about making the right connections with the media. You might be asking yourself where do you start. How do I start this process? How do I make sure that I'm organized and I'm the most effective media relations person I can be?

The best place to start and the place I start, and I know a lot of my colleagues start, is by assembling a media outreach list. What I want to determine is which media talk to the consumers I want to reach. Is that daily consumer newspapers, is that community newspapers and magazines, TV news stations, radio talk shows? Don't forget culturally-focused media too?

By determining the organizations that will reach your audience, it makes it a lot easier to pitch to them because both of your audiences will be aligned. They're more likely to pick up your story. It'll be easier for you and the person at that organization, that news outlet to create a story that will effectively reach your audience.

I have another question here. Do any of you have a target list of your local media on file? Okay, so it looks like 54% don't and 46% do. That's great. For those folks who do have that, that's a great thing to have. It's a good tool to use especially when you have stories that you want to pitch. For the folks that don't, and want to increase their effectiveness with media relations, a great place to start is to collect a list of your target local media.

Now, you may be asking, well, how do I do that? Who do I go to? How do we decide who do I contact? What you first need to do is identify media contact names. After we decided that we're going to reach out to this publication and this TV station because they reach our consumer audience, we have to now identify the right reporter.

As you may know, a lot of larger publications have reporters that are specific to an industry. That could be real estate, finance, business, general news. It's important that we actually identify the folks that will write about what we're talking about.

If we're talking about budgeting, finance is a great place to pitch a story or a finance writer. Of course, anything housing always because HCAs are very focused on housing. If you find a housing reporter, make sure you write down that information so that you have them when you want to reach out to them for future press releases and media opportunities.

First we want to determine who is that person that writes about the topic that we want them to cover after we've determined the organization. You might be asking, okay that's good information but that's got to be difficult to do, finding that specific person. Here we have a website. It's called usnpl.com and you can go there. You can actually search for that specific person and it will give you their name, their professional phone number and email address that you can reach them at, their beat or what they want to cover.

That's a great way to determine the right person to contact, and I'll go into an example in the next slide. You can also go on a search engine and type in the media name and topic. CBS 28 housing in a search engine like Google or Bing, and usually you can see news stories that have been written by specific reporters. If you click on the story, you can find out that person's name and then you can contact them.

Most, if not all, publications will have the Contact Us section as you may see on many websites. Click on that, and usually you can find at least somebody who can help you determine who the right person is.

Lastly, you can actually just call news organizations. Many organizations will have a news room or a news desk. That's similar to an administrative helper where you can call and you can ask who's the housing reporter for the 5:00 news on Channel 14. Usually, most times they will give you that information right away. They'll be like, oh, that's so-and-so. You can reach them at this number, or you can email them here. So, there's a lot of ways to determine who is the right person to contact.

This is one of our favorite websites to use. There's many others, but this is a free resource that you can use, usnpl.com. If you look at the top, you

can actually segment all the reporters by mobile, TV, radio. They even go into colleges, so if you're looking to do some advice on dorm or student housing, you can find people to contact through here and social media, so Twitter, Facebook, etc.

You can also search by state. I know a lot of us are in different states. So, you can click on a state. Then after you do that, if you look towards the bottom left of the screen, it actually segments it out by city so you can determine the right publication to reach out to based on your city.

I encourage you to go to this website and this will be in the toolkit that we will provide after both our webinars are done for media relations; we'll have the information in there for you. By clicking through, you can actually find the exact person you want to reach out to through this website.

Then, here's an example of if you went to Channel 14, CBS, or NBC, whatever, if you clicked on their Contact Us page, this is something that you will see at most organizations. It will show you the leadership, and the editorial writers, and then the news reporters. Usually and as a rule of thumb, you don't want to contact the leadership right away especially if

you don't have a relationship with them. They manage most or if not all the publication's stories. Who you really want to contact is those folks at the bottom under news reporting. You want to get as specific as you can with the story you're pitching.

As you can see, you'll see the names. You'll see their titles and their beats. Christopher is a political editor. Lisa is a night metro editor, and then their phone number.

This is all, most, if not all, organizations will have this contact us information, and that will make it easy for you to reach out to the right reporter.

What do you do with this information? We have to create a media contact list. For those folks who love Excel, this will be great for you. It's very important to put this all in an Excel sheet or a spreadsheet in general to keep yourself organized. To be effective, you need to be organized, and it will help you in the future, too, as well so you don't have to repeat the parts of identifying the right people to reach out to.

As an example, and in our toolkit, we'll have an example for you to fill out and we'll show you how to do it. As our example here shows, we organized it by the media names, so radio, TV, print. Then, we could put the station in there, the contact name, the phone number, and then their email. I would also encourage you to add an additional column that talks about their specific beat that they report on. A lot of the people that we'll probably reach out to is housing related, but we can also do business and finance and college even if we're talking about student housing.

All right, we're going to get into some useful tips. These will help you how to determine if your story is good for the media, if the media will even pick it up. You might be wondering, well what do I have to share that the media actually cares about? Turns out, probably a lot.

Some of the things that you need to keep in mind when you're thinking of stories is first, is it timely? So, holidays, budgeting tips for Christmas and gift buying season, you want to make sure that your story is relevant within the context of the time that we're in.

Also, if it's an event, you probably don't want to pitch the day before. You may want to pitch a week before and the day before. You want to

make sure that when you're getting your information out there, it's strategic in terms of a time frame. Things to look forward to are holidays, seasons, and celebrations.

Is it consumer-focused? A lot, if not all the information that you send out because your services deal with consumers should be consumer-focused. We need to connect the reporters to information that will be beneficial to their audience in connection with our audience, too.

Some of the ways we can do that is talk about tips for improving your credit score, local ACA workshops or seminars, a new financial service that you're offering. These are consumer-focused and appropriate for the reporter to cover and this will benefit both audiences, you and the reporter.

Our last tip is be local. The power of local news should not be set aside, especially with Housing Counseling Agencies. My advice and a lot of success comes from local news coverage. The *USA Today* might not cover the success you've had in your local community, but your community newspaper will because that's important. Being community-focused also elevates trust. Being local elevates trust. It's important to,

while you should always think big, think big in terms of your community.

How can you make the biggest impact with your local community?

Some of the things that you should think about, does it affect or take place in our community, like events, workshops, and seminars. Maybe you switched locations and people should know that. An addition of a new housing counselor at your HCAs or a counselor certification—hint, hint, I know that's coming up soon. All these things are local and relevant to your community and the media should know about it.

All right, we are now going to play a game. I call this game, Is It Newsworthy? It's a simple poll game. I'm going to ask a question, and you're just going to tell me yes or no, is it newsworthy.

Our first question, you want to pitch a story about how your office just got a bunch of new furniture, and you especially like the couch at the front. Is this a newsworthy story to pitch to the media?

That is correct. All of you said no. Thank you very much for all saying no. That is not something that the media is concerned about. While you may appreciate that couch in the front that is perfect for afternoon naps,

the media does not care about that, nor do consumers. So, this is an example of something that isn't relevant about your services. Even though it's great for you, we have to make sure that it's great for the consumers and it benefits the consumer in some way.

Our next question, your office is recognized for helping a number of consumers get out of debt in your community. Is that newsworthy?

All right, that is wonderful. Everyone selected the correct answer again, yes. Yes, it is newsworthy. Anytime your news agency or an employee or multiple employees are recognized for a service, an award, an accolade, a certification, hint, hint, we all know that's coming up, relating to your services, it is newsworthy and should be shared with your local community press.

This is important. These can be very simple. It's important to elevate the image of your agency in your community to show that you bring value to your community. The media will love that. Consumers will love that, and that will increase engagement with consumers, and hopefully it will increase demand for your product and services, and we believe it will.

Our next question, you have a first-time homeowner's workshop coming up. Is that a newsworthy story?

All right, you guys are geniuses. Yes, you all answered correctly. It sure is. Just remember that all events that are happening are celebrations. That is newsworthy and should be pitched.

A lot of community newspapers have an events section that is dedicated to just events that are happening, so it's important to spread the word. It's a free resource to do so if you just spend a little bit of time writing a press release or a media advisory to pitch that event. The word will get out, and it's a great way to reach your consumer audience.

All right, our last question, this August, you write a press release to the media and pitch a holiday season budgeting piece. Is that newsworthy?

I can't ring the bell for this question because it is not, or at least not yet anyway. The folks who said no, you are correct. I'm sorry for tricking you by the way.

This story is relevant to your consumers and the services you provide, but most consumers and the media won't even be thinking about the holiday shopping season until at least October. So, wait then and pitch, and you'll have a much better chance of obtaining press.

This is an example of being timely. We know folks love to shop for the holiday seasons to buy gifts. We know that that's a strain on their finances. Pitching a story around October would be perfect for helping folks keep in mind that budgeting is important and while giving gifts is a great, we still have to take care of our finances as well. Just remember August is a little too early. In fact, at least here in the Midwest, if you mention snow in August, people are not happy. We try to wait until October to start realizing that the weather's going to get cold again.

Now, I'm going to end with a few more best practices for you. Just always keep in mind that with the media, they deal with a lot of information. Be brief but informative. Be very sincere and intentional about the messages that you give them. They want statistics and facts, and they also want your perspective. By being brief and informative, it will help you and help them write a story for you.

Always meet their deadlines. Again, they deal with a lot of information, and deadlines come and go very quickly. So, you should always be cognizant of their deadlines and be respectful of them, too. We understand life happens and sometimes things don't work out, but just understand that they are busy and you have to be respectful of their deadlines.

Be available to answer questions. A lot of folks will pitch the media, but then maybe they just don't want to answer questions to reporters. Maybe it's not you specifically, but find somebody in your agency that is willing to talk about your services to reporters. It's important that you share your perspective from the agency's point of view to the public. That's what the reporter wants. That's what the consumers need to hear.

Always remember nothing is guaranteed. We're not saying this to discourage you from using media relations. But, it's one of those things where if it doesn't happen, try again, and it will happen. As a PR professional, we try to get all the press that we possibly can, but sometimes it just doesn't work out or an event happens that overshadows your event. So, you always have to keep an open mind. Stay optimistic. Stay positive, and you will get media if you stay positive and optimistic.

Before we get into questions, just a reminder that two Fridays from now, June 1, 2018 at the same time 12:00 p.m. Eastern, we'll have our second media relations webinar. We're going to be talking about communicating with the media. So, we're go into a little more detail about press release writing, and we're going to talk about a little more tips and tricks to help you stand out. So, I hope you all can join me for that and we might have another game involved, too.

Does anybody have any questions? These questions, if you're curious about something that if it is newsworthy or not, you can ask that, too.

Moderator Ladies, and gentlemen, we'll now begin the question and answer session of our conference. [Operator instructions.] One moment please, we do have a question queuing up.

Benjamin While we're waiting for that one to queue up, there was a question that came in through the webinar interface that was if a website redesign was considered newsworthy.

Andrew Absolutely, any positive change to the way your agency operates, which includes a new website, that is very much newsworthy material. It's something that we pitch a lot of times. It's a great way to stay engaged with your audience to let them know that you're modernizing, you're updating, and you're staying with the times. So, yes, that is a great newsworthy story that should be pitched.

With that, you should also remember that because of that medium you're pitching a new website, your best bet is to pitch more digital media, so news blogs and also pitch through social media. You would want to stick to digital presence with that because it's a digital story, the website being digital.

Moderator We have a question from the line of Aaron Leonard. Please go ahead.

Aaron Thank you so much. This has been really informative. The gentleman prior to me asked my question about the website that we're building. We're out here in Los Angeles, California. This is something that we have not had was a media strongpoint. So, I appreciate this webinar today.

My last question would be, we will get a PowerPoint of this after the June 1st presentation? We'll receive that in the email?

Andrew

Thank you very much for your comment, by the way. Yes, I believe both this PowerPoint, this webinar will and the next week's webinar will be posted on the HUD Exchange. Then we will also be following up with the toolkit that you can download that will go into great detail about how to pitch to the media and what's newsworthy. That will be a packet for you to have and keep.

Benjamin

I just want to add to what Andrew just said. There is a handout available. It is a PDF file of this webinar. It's available on the handout section of the webinar's interface. You can actually just click on that and it'll download. It's titled Media Relations Webinar: Capturing Media Attention Web 1 Final 2.pdf. So, you can download it right there.

Again, the HUD Exchange website is a phenomenal tool. There's more than just our webinars archived up there. There are toolkits based on the social media and this training today. So, yes, definitely take a look at our web presence on HUD Exchange to see all the fun little goodies we have available to you guys.

Moderator [Operator instructions.]

Benjamin If you prefer to type your question into the webinar, we will see that in the queue. For example, right now, there is a question that asks if a copy of the Excel file of the media contact list will be available.

Andrew Yes, I believe in our toolkit, we'll be providing an Appendix of materials that includes at least an example if not the actual Excel file sheet for you to fill out or it will show you the best way to organize it, and we'll have an example for you in our toolkit that will be coming out in a few weeks.

Benjamin Another question that's popped up in queue, "Could we use a press release from HUD and add our own statistics in the area in which we operate?"

Andrew That's a good question. It's relevant to the situation. My advice to that would be you can use any information that HUD sends out to the public, but I would reference it in your own press release and provide some local context to it unless you're a national organization.

Most HUD press releases, I believe, are nationally focused. My advice would be to reference any HUD press releases but always make sure that you're pitching local because that will make you more relevant to the consumers that you serve.

Benjamin Another question has appeared in the queue, and this was a good question that could actually have a very long response. "How would you handle media for different cultures?"

Andrew That's a great question. That really has to do with knowing your community. It's a tricky one. For example, we have a partner at our agency that deals with Spanish media, and they're all Spanish-speaking folks. They understand the culture, and cultural nuances, and celebrations, and certain dialects of the Spanish language.

I think it's more about if it applies to your community. That's complicated, but yes, it does matter. Not all press releases are one-size-fits-all for all communities. Here in Milwaukee we have a lot of Hispanic presence, so we do have a Spanish partner that helps us with making sure that our message hits on point with that community and that's something that we rely on their expertise to guide us in.

My advice to that would be to find a partner who is an expert in that community that you're trying to reach. If you believe that's you, that's great, but if you have questions, I would consult with somebody that's a member of that community. They will probably be able to help you with communicating to them.

Benjamin

I just want to add on that briefly, that actually does look great in terms of the grant applications that a lot of the agencies have to write because one of the questions that we really focus on is, how are you providing your counseling services or how are you providing outreach to people that are least likely to know about your services or to come in and see you on their own. So, if you're able to come up with a strategy to reach these underserved markets, it's definitely something that we would like to see in your grant application, and it does make you look a little bit better.

So, yes, if you can find ways to make inroads and find culturally sensitive ways to do this, so you're not—I don't know how to phrase the response, but basically, we just want you to be doing it in an effective, and I probably shouldn't use this word, but non-patronizing fashion. If you're

able to create that sort of outreach, that would be fantastic. We'd love to hear about it when you're writing your grants.

Moderator There are no questions on the phone line at this time.

Benjamin The next question that came up in the queue is, "Is there a rule or a number of media outreach that you should aim for?"

Andrew There really is no rule of thumb. I would keep it within your bandwidth. So, if you have, let's say, what's a good example? Let's say you have three main newspapers in your community, and two of them are housing-focused, and one of them is entertainment-focused, you would only reach out to the two that were housing-focused obviously not the third. I guess my point is it really depends on the media in your community, and then the amount you actually cover relevant material that deals with housing or budgeting or finances. It really depends on the story.

However with events, I can say this that spreading word about events to as many people as possible can only be beneficial to you. So, with events, I would encourage you to try as many outlets as possible. With specific stories or shedding light on first-time homebuyers, that gets a little tricky.

You would have to make sure that the reporters you are talking to cover that specific topic.

The long way to answer your question, there really is no rule of thumb. Just understand that a lot of it comes with managing your relationship, so make sure that you stick within your means of bandwidth for handling this. Then, within the context of the story itself, again events, celebrations, send it to everyone. If it's a story, be more intentional. I hope that answered that question.

Benjamin Are any other calls coming in?

Moderator There's none on the phone lines at this time, sir.

Benjamin Okay, good, well, then it looks like no other questions have appeared in the queue so do you have any final words or thoughts, Andrew?

Andrew No, thank you, everyone. Thanks for sticking with me and playing the game. That was fun. I encourage you to join me June 1st for our next webinar, and we'll get into more specifics on press releases and we'll go

into a little more detail about some fun tricks that you can use with the media. I hope to see you all there.

Moderator

Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude our conference call for today. We'd like to thank you for your participation in today's Capturing Media Attention teleconference call. Thank you for using our service. Have a wonderful day, and enjoy your weekend. You may now disconnect.

