



HOW TO GET NEWS COVERAGE

MEDIA PITCH GUIDELINES

The most common way to get news coverage is by **pitching your story to journalists**.

HOW TO FIND JOURNALISTS

- **Make** a media list of print reporters, broadcast journalists, radio personalities and social media influencers in your region. Use the list to identify specific journalists who cover your topic.
- **Send** a brief email that appreciates their work, introduces your role and explains the purpose of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.
- **Build** relationships by following journalists on their media outlets and social media channels. Share only their news articles, not their general posts. Don't comment.

HOW TO FIND THE NEWS HOOK

- **Announce** upcoming events or program developments. The media is in the business of reporting on current events.
- **Demonstrate** how your story will affect the audience or community. Make it as easy as possible by lining up interviews with experts and/or residents.
- **Break** new ground. Present data or research that has not been reported yet.
- **Tell** the other side of a story. Provide a counterargument or a new angle to the prevailing narrative on a popular topic, backed by data, results or experience.

HOW TO IDENTIFY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PITCHES

- **News release/media advisory:** When you have something to announce (for example, securing funding or signing a new partnership), email a news release to your entire media list. They may publish the release as is or write their own article. When you want reporters to cover an event or meeting, send them a media advisory with event details. **Always distribute news releases and media advisories in PDF format, not as a Word document.**
- **Guest post/letter to the editor:** When you write an article that is published under your name, you serve as a guest of the publication, not a journalist.
- **Guest appearance:** When you appear as a guest, such as on a podcast or broadcast news show, send your pitch to an editor instead of a reporter. It is an editor's job to greenlight a guest article, not a reporter's.
- **Expert commentary:** When a journalist asks you to provide a comment for a story, you will be representing LWI as an expert.



- **Profile:** When a journalist writes a story about you, it is called a profile piece.
- **Interview:** When you get a feature interview in a publication, such as a trade journal, you will represent the LWI program in more depth than if quoted as an expert in a more general story.

HOW TO WRITE THE PITCH

- **Email subject line:** Must contain the condensed news hook—what makes your story stand out.
- **Spelling:** Spell all names correctly. Triple-check all names.
- **First sentence:** The first sentence of the pitch should get straight to the point.
- **Remaining sentences:** Keep it short and factual, just a few paragraphs.
- **Attachments:** Add a link and/or attach relevant documents.
- **Contact information:** Make it easy for journalists to get in touch by providing your phone number and email address.
- **Tone:** Be professional. Avoid jokes and sarcasm. It's hard for friendliness to come across in an email, so use "please" and "thank you."

HOW TO FOLLOW UP

- This is a crucial step. Once you have sent your story pitch, wait a few days for a reply. If you don't hear back from the journalist, send a brief follow-up, but don't be pushy.
- A follow-up email runs something along the lines of, "I know you're busy, so just touching base to see if you've had a chance to look at the story idea below or if you have any questions on this."
- Most journalists are busy people with a lot of their plate, so they may have missed your first pitch email. Sending a follow-up email will bump your pitch to the top of their inbox.

For guidance or assistance in corresponding with media, email watershed@la.gov.