



How to Get on Television & Local Radio

Sharing positive messages about immigrants and immigration is an integral part of our work as advocates for immigration reform. Immigration is a highly contentious political issue that is debated with passion and vigor from all sides of the political aisle. Too often, and especially during heated on-air debates, radio personalities mischaracterize immigrants and present misinterpretations of the policies that regulate immigration. Sadly, these one-sided messages currently dominate the airwaves. We need knowledgeable speakers to counter the rhetoric and thinly veiled intolerance of the shock jocks on the radio.

AILA members are well positioned to be spokespeople on talk radio because your experience as an immigration attorney gives you qualifications most of these radio personalities don't have- an understanding of the real life impact of immigration law and policy. Lori Chesser is a great example of an AILA member who tackled talk radio – and won!

Lori had heard a Des Moines talk radio host put down immigrants one too many times when she decided it was time for an immigration advocate's voice to be heard on Iowa's airwaves. Although admittedly nervous the first time, Lori thinks it was a highly effective way of communicating our message to a broad audience. She said,

"I was incredibly nervous before going on talk radio the first time, but then my colleague assured me - lawyers are great on radio! We like to talk and we sound good talking. Talking is what we do for a living.

The show reached people who would never come to an immigration program or maybe even read about it in the newspaper. I encourage AILA members to try talk radio. If they only hear the other side, how can people make an informed decision?"

Steps to Getting on the Air (see also [Pitching a Story](#))

1. Contact local public and commercial radio stations. You can find station lists and contact information on InfoNet on the Advocacy and Media Tools section of the Advocacy homepage.
2. Ask to speak with the Station Manager. Explain to the Station Manager that you are a professional immigration attorney and are knowledgeable about immigration law and policy. Tell the Station Manager that you are available for live interviews and background information about your areas of specialization in immigration law.
3. Review AILA.org or contact advocacy@aila.org for key messages and talking points.
4. Contact George Tzamaras, AILA's Director of Communications, for speaking tips and mock interview questions to help you feel comfortable taking tough inquiries and speaking for a broad radio audience. George can be reached by phone or email at (202) 216-2410 or gtzamaras@aila.org.