



Reaching out to Reporters, Editors and Producers

Arranging Meetings with Reporters & Members of the Media

1. Hone in on a specific topic or issue that you want to focus on in your relationship
2. Develop talking points & organize and compile supporting documents (use AILA.org or contact advocacy@aila.org for resources and information).
3. Determine if a client will agree to be interviewed – personal, real life stories are generally the most compelling substance you can provide to a journalist
4. Try and tie your story idea into a larger issue or theme – especially if it fits in the specific journalist's interest area.
5. Contact the journalist – often times news outlets post journalists' e-mail addresses at the end of their articles or on news organizations' web sites.
6. Identify who you are and why you are getting in touch. Be persistent, it may take multiple emails and/or phone calls to get a response.
7. Let the reporter/editor/producer know you are familiar with their news organization and their coverage of immigration stories – be as specific as possible.
8. Briefly explain the idea and why the audience will be interested. Be succinct, but provide interesting details that the journalist may want to hear more about.
9. Consider teaming up with a coalition partner and community groups to broaden the reach of your story.
10. Ask them if they would like to meet for an interview over coffee or lunch.
11. Maintain your relationship so that when a story comes up in your issue expertise the journalist reaches out to you.

Sample Pitch

Hello my name is _____ and I am the media liaison officer with the (YOUR STATE) Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Our Association is currently making a coordinated effort to reach out to key members of the media who cover immigration and immigration-related issues.

Knowing you have written/covered several immigration related stories for (**Name of News Organization**) I wanted to contact you with some story ideas that I believe are important for our community to be aware of. For example, at the Federal level, some Members of Congress have introduced legislation that would mandate employers to electronically verify that new hires are authorized to work by using a system called E-Verify.

At the same time, it seems like there is momentum building in our STATE legislature to pass a bill that would make E-Verify mandatory (or law) and if this were to happen it would impact our community in this way:

- Turn to AILA/IPC Talking Points on E-Verify to detail the impact to the community: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/e-verify-resource-page>
- Alert reporter to the fact you have reports and studies from AILA/IPC that document what has happened in other states that already have adopted E-Verify
- Point out the real flaws of E-Verify
- Discuss the impact E-Verify would have on local and state businesses as well the economy
- Let them know you can provide access to others such as business leaders and clients who can comment on this pending issue and fear the impact this law could have on their operations

Invite the reporter to discuss this further over coffee or lunch, provide your contact information, and thank them for their time.