

## Media Outreach

If you have planned an event such as a dinner, panel discussion, project, or interfaith service, we encourage you to invite members of the media. Look online at the local publications or outlets you would like in attendance and search for past articles on immigration or refugees. Consider pitching your event to reporters who frequently cover those issues or other community issues if there is not a designated immigration or refugee reporter. If you host a dinner, consider inviting the editorial director at your local newspaper. By inviting members of the press, you will be able to further share our message of welcoming to a larger audience and also inspire local media to cover refugee issues more frequently.

To invite multiple members of the press, send a media advisory at least two full business days ahead of the event. Ideally, send the media advisory one week and then the day before your event. Please see the draft media advisory below:

### \*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\*

DATE

**For Immediate Release**

Contact:

NAME, ORGANIZATION

PHONE, EMAIL

### **Local Faith Community Hosts Dinner/Interfaith Service to Welcome Refugees**

WHAT: As the (City/Town Name) community responds to the global refugee crisis, leaders from (Organization/Congregation) will host (event type). They will be joined by refugees from (country) and (list other special guests). Participants will discuss refugee resettlement, how it positively impacts the community, and what local organizations and individuals can do to welcome newly resettled refugees. All participants will be available for interview before and after the event.

WHERE: Address of event

WHEN: Date and time of event

SPEAKERS: List of all speakers and their titles

DETAILS: Add event details such as security (if applicable), special visuals (religious symbols, art pieces, etc), or any other important event information.

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## Writing & Pitching an Opinion Editorial

When drafting an opinion piece, research the outlet you are submitting to. Many have a word limit between 750-1200, though some can be as low as 500. Please feel free to use the points in the draft op-ed below as you write your own opinion article.

When pitching your event, op-ed, or other project, it is important to keep your pitch short and on message. You can pitch either in person, over the phone, or via email. It is important to keep your pitch as short as possible, as reporters are often on a deadline and receive many story pitches every day. Open your pitch with an interesting first line and relate the pitch back to another story the reporter has recently written to increase the likelihood of the reporter picking up your story. Please see the draft pitch below:

*Hello,*

*As the global community faces the largest refugee crisis since the end of World War II, our community is preparing to resettle refugees and do our part to create a welcoming community. Serving as a community leader with ORGANIZATION, I had the unique opportunity to host/attend EVENT, (include brief details).*

*The event inspired me to author the attached op-ed, detailing my experience and reaffirming the need for us all to work together and create an inclusive community. In light of recent anti-Muslim rhetoric in particular, this piece offers a timely response and highlights the urgent need to create a welcoming place for all people.*

*Please feel free to contact me at EMAIL or over the phone at PHONE NUMBER if you have any questions or would like to discuss the piece in greater detail. Thank you in advance for your consideration!*

*Sincerely,  
NAME*

## **Draft Op-Ed**

### **TITLE**

Last week, I joined a group of strangers for dinner. Abandoning my usual routine of eating in my own home, I accepted the invitation to dine with an incredible group of refugees, faith, and community leaders. Though we met as strangers, we left as friends, united in our dream to make our community one that welcomes people from all backgrounds.

While some have protested the recent resettlement of refugees from backgrounds that may be different than theirs, my experience has shown me that our differences are what make us a stronger and more diverse as a community. (Details about event/dinner/service should be around 250-400 words. Include stories, lessons learned, and your thoughts/experience).

As a community leader, I urge every member of our community to participate in similar events and challenge the growing Islamaphobia and xenophobia in our country. As residents of a country founded on the hard work, determination, and skills of generations of immigrants from all countries, religions, and backgrounds, we must not let our differences divide us, but instead strengthen us. Exclusionary mindsets will only lead to fear and hostility, neither of which have any place in our community.

Love will always overcome hate and as a member of this community, I am ready to stand alongside people of all backgrounds and faith traditions so that we can build communities of acceptance, inclusivity and welcome.

## Social Media

Social media is a great way to spread the word about these issues and to get your friends, family, and other community members involved. Using popular social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, we encourage you to post a picture of your event utilizing the signs found at [americawelcomes.us](http://americawelcomes.us) and using #RefugeesWelcome.

If you are not able to take a group photo of all people participating in your event, take individual photos with the America Welcomes sign and use #RefugeesWelcome – any and all posts are welcome!

Sample posts:

- The Congregation/Family Name is ready to welcome #refugees! #RefugeesWelcome #WelcomeTogether (photo)
- To welcome is to be whole. We are committed to welcoming #refugees in our community! #RefugeesWelcome #WelcomeTogether(photo)
- Visited @REPNAME's office to tell him/her to vote NO on anti-refugee legislation. #WelcomeTogether #RefugeesWelcome (picture)
- Visited @REPNAME's office to tell him/her to support legislation that will welcome #refugees and assist their new communities. #WelcomeTogether #RefugeesWelcome (picture)
- ORGANIZATION NAME stands with our neighbors of all faiths. @REPNAME, say NO to anti-Muslim rhetoric! #WelcomeTogether (picture)
- Our refugee brothers and sisters make our communities stronger. @REPNAME, vote NO on anti-refugee legislation! #WelcomeTogether #RefugeesWelcome

There is also already an incredible awareness on social media around refugee issues. Starting in September 2015, many international campaigns were launched to urge communities around the world to welcome refugees. Building off of those existing campaigns will allow us to connect with an already engaged audience, also providing us with an established platform to issue new talking points, news clips, events, and social media graphics to further our message. Existing campaigns and hashtags include:

- #RefugeesWelcome
- #OpentoSyria
- #WelcomeWorld
- #refugeecrisis

In addition to utilizing existing social media campaigns and hashtags, creating a unique hashtag for our campaign will allow us to engage a new audience and track how many people are engaged online with our campaign specifically. Suggested unique hashtags for our campaign are:

- #United4Refugees
- #Together4Refugees/TogetherforRefugees
- #WorkingtoWelcome

Through the use of both unique and existing hashtags, our campaign can engage and mobilize both existing and new community partners. Additionally, providing a unique hashtag will provide members of the media to track our campaign's online presence.

Feel free to also use photos, videos, or graphics from other supporting organizations. See the example graphic below. It is important to receive permission of all individuals in a photo or video before posting. Please see a draft media release below, or use one from your organization if available.



## Sample Media Release Form

I give ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL NAME and people acting for and with ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL NAME permission to interview, photograph, video, and/or audio record me to use and to edit, without compensation to me, the items listed below in any medium, including print and electronic (web-based) material for educational, promotional and marketing purposes:

1. Photographs or video footage of me;
2. Spoken (written or recorded) interviews of me and quotes from me;
3. My full name in connection with the photographs, video footage, interviews, or quotes; and
4. My location in connection with the photograph(s), video footage, interviews or quotes.

I have crossed out any points above to which I, or my signatory, do not agree.

I will make no monetary or other claim in connection with the authorized use of my name or photos, video, interviews and quotes, and I now release ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL and partner organizations and their employees and/or partners in education, promotion, publicity and marketing interviews from any claims, demands and liabilities in connection with the use authorized and agreed to here by me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature or thumbprint of subject (if over age 18)

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Printed name and signature of a parent or responsible adult (if under age 18)

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