



# Broadcasters' Playbook:

## Communicating with Congress



## A Call to Arms

Each and every day, broadcasters across the nation serve local communities in unique ways – fundraising for charities, serving as a lifeline in times of crisis and reporting the facts audiences need to know to keep safe and informed. Broadcasters also fuel the local economy, providing much-needed jobs and connecting local businesses with local consumers.

Hundreds of millions of Americans rely on their local TV and radio stations each day, but within the corridors of power in Washington, D.C., those shaping our future do not always understand broadcasters' immense value to their communities.

Your team at NAB is on Capitol Hill and at the Federal Communications Commission sharing these stories, but nothing is as impactful for a member of Congress as hearing directly from their constituents.

**Protect your license and your ability to serve your local communities. Take charge of telling your legislators what you are doing in the community and why it matters.**

The following is your playbook for educating lawmakers on broadcasters' vital role in reaching their constituents (and voters).

**Get started today at [nab.org/SpeakUp](https://nab.org/SpeakUp)**



## Speak Up With These Key Messages

### Amplify the many ways broadcasters are:

- First informers during times of crisis; we are reliable when other forms of communication are not.
- A lifeline during the pandemic; providing factual and timely updates to keep communities safe, informed and connected.
- The most trusted source of news, utilizing local reporters and investigative journalists to uncover stories.
- Supporting local and national charities and helping our listeners and viewers in times of need.
- Innovating and investing in new technologies to provide better services for listeners and viewers – online, on air and on the go.
- Providing jobs in every local community and connecting local businesses with local consumers, spurring economic activity.

# It's Game Time: How to Tell Your Story

Send a message from your leadership to station managers that communicating with policymakers is a priority.

Provide your station(s) with resources, advice and continuous encouragement to communicate your core local activities to your policymakers in real-time. Designate someone on staff at each station to serve as a contact for members of Congress.

## Do the math.



Have your station(s) track and assign a dollar amount to charitable and community service activities throughout the year, including production and airing of public service announcements (PSAs), local affairs programming, fundraising, in-kind contributions, election programming and disaster communications. Quantify the number of hours devoted to round-the-clock news coverage of emergencies and investigative reporting. Share your findings with members of Congress and other policymakers, as well as your audience.

## Put it in writing.



Make policymakers aware of all the ways your station benefits their communities in a letter or email. Include the latest figures on your contributions and illustrate the real-life impact with stories about individuals or groups from your community. Correspond at least once every quarter with members of Congress and their staff.



### **Meet face-to-face.**

NAB provides a congressional calendar highlighting district work periods (times when your legislators are more likely to be in the state or district offices). Invite members of Congress to your station during these recess periods to see your business in action and meet with members of your staff.

Host a town hall meeting for members of Congress together with other stations in the community. Help build your relationship with policymakers by having a presence at local events where they are in attendance.

### **Connect through social media.**

Be sure you follow your policymakers on social media channels. Look for opportunities to engage with them in this forum to tout your public service and local activities. Follow your legislators' Twitter handles and tweet thank-you messages to them following a meeting or share a photo or video. Urge public service partners and audience members to do the same. Post photos of legislators' visits on your station's Facebook page and tag your member of Congress. Tweet a message to your member of Congress, thanking him/her for visiting your station. Tips for connecting through social media are at [nab.org/SpeakUp](http://nab.org/SpeakUp).



**Contact NAB for help at  
PublicAffairs@nab.org.  
(202) 429-5310**



### **Provide on-air opportunities.**

As opportunities arise, engage your policymakers in news stories. Consider providing a forum for two-way communication between members of Congress and their constituents on a regular basis (such as a call-in segment or take questions via social media).

In off-election years, invite your members of Congress and their families to record PSAs as part of NAB's Congressional PSA program. Air the spots prominently, particularly during district work periods.

### **Get the word out.**



Use all communication tools available, including on air, social media, blog posts, press releases, newsletters, websites, apps, speeches, presentations and your annual report, to amplify the diverse portfolio of your station's contributions to your community and ensure these messages are reaching your legislators.

Enter public service award competitions. Many organizations honor exceptional public service, including NAB, state broadcast associations, the Chamber of Commerce and United Way.

Develop a portfolio. Illustrate the value of your station's public service, economic impact and investigative journalism with a Web page, brochure or video. Share this information with policymakers and community leaders.



## It's Not as Hard as You Think. Start with These Five Steps.

1. Make sure you know which congressional districts are touched by your station's signal. (NAB's advocacy team can help if you're not sure. Email [advocacy@nab.org](mailto:advocacy@nab.org)).
2. Ensure every member of Congress your station reaches receives your press releases (NAB can help you find contact information for press secretaries and district directors. Email [advocacy@nab.org](mailto:advocacy@nab.org)).
3. Ensure you follow every member of Congress your station reaches on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Urge your legislators to follow your station in return to keep abreast of local station activities. Use these platforms to communicate with them on important local initiatives. Find social media tips at [nab.org/SpeakUp](http://nab.org/SpeakUp).
4. Send a quarterly email letting members of Congress know about your stations' efforts in these main categories:
  - Lifesaving role in times of crisis
  - Charitable contributions
  - Investigative reports
  - Economic impact (jobs you provide and small businesses you aid through advertising)
  - Innovations to better serve your audience (including apps, social and online)
5. Invite your members of Congress and their district directors to visit your station regularly and participate in charitable events you sponsor in your community.



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