



**Citizen Press Corps:  
A Webinar to equip  
community advocates with  
tools to engage the media**

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**Introduction**

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o Goals for Today

- Understand your role
- Learn best practices for media engagement
- Play an active role
- Learn where to find resources



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**Your Role as a Watchdog**

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o Follow the money

o Ask questions

o Partner with Media

o Support Web and social media



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## What's Your Message?

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- Main Messages:
  - Our purpose is to ensure transparency and accountability for the use of the \$11.3 billion provided for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
  - Exemplifying the best in citizen activism, IDEA Money Watch is built on a community of parents and advocates who are working together to protect the rights and interests of our nation's 6 million school-age children with disabilities.
  - By asking the right questions and reporting information to the public, we will ensure transparency in use of IDEA Recovery Act funds while educating others on important IDEA funding issues.




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## Why Partner with the Media?

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- They have:
  - Powerful pulpit
  - Lend credibility to your issue
  - Access you don't have
  - Wide audience of potential advocates
    - Or smaller niche audience
  - Monitored and cared about by key decision and policy makers




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## Connecting with Traditional Media

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### Questions for you to Consider

- What stories are you telling?
- What outlets attract the audiences you want to talk to?
- What sections of the paper or TV segment do they watch?
- Are there backdoors (health, education, policy, business?)
- Aside from newspapers, tv, radio, what other outlets might talk to your audience?
  - Newsletters, trade magazines, blogs, specialty publications?




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### Audience Question?

- Who else might be interested in covering your stories?




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### Sections for Your Media Hit List

- Education
- Politics
- Family and Parenting
- Youth
- Business
- News Desks – breaking news
- Letters to the editor
- Editorial Desk
- Op-Ed
- Lifestyles Specialty Magazines
- Professional/Civic Organization Newsletters/online publications
- Talk Radio
- Public Service/Issue TV




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### What's Newsworthy?

- Controversial issue
- Conflict/Resolution
- Trend
- New data
- Timeliness
- Compelling personal stories
- Local angle



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### Identifying Media

- Who is covering your subject
  - Dailies, TV, Radio
  - Weekly Community Papers
  - Cable TV
  - Public Access
- Who has a well-read blog, who tweets?
- Which are most important to your audiences and policy makers



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### Finding the Right Reporter

- Mine for contact information on free Web sites
- Who do you know in the media?
- Search on media outlet Web site
- Search by reporter - bios
- Call switchboard



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## How to partner with reporters

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- Do your research...
  - Topics covered
  - Reporter's interests
  - Position and tone of coverage
    - Objective?
    - Balanced?
    - Leanings?
- Identify opportunities to insert your issue into other coverage
  - Start an on-going dialogue
    - Seed comments, make connections




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## Help Them; Help You

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- Be a helpful resource
  - Make personal contact
  - Follow their work
  - Suggest stories not related to yours
  - Everyone wants to be helpful
  - Provide facts
  - Be their eyes and their ears
  - Be their on-site reporters




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## Talking to Reporters

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- What do you want?
- Why should they care?
- Tell them the story – make it concise!
- Call at the right time
- Be courteous, even when they're not
- Follow-up with an email




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## Nuts and Bolts

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- Deadlines
- What days topics are covered
- Make a media list
- Take inventory – who do you know in the media? Who can help?



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## Potential Opportunities

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- Fits into editorial Calendar
- Covers an event
- Special interest of reporter
- Backdoor, new angle
- Op Ed
- Letter to the Editor
- Editorial Board Meeting



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## The Importance of Good Storytelling

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## Elements of a Good Story

- Why should we care?
- Hot issue
- Timely
- Data
- Dynamic/compelling spokespersons
- Framed messages
- The ASK to the community



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## Deconstructing Coverage

### IDEA Money Watch Illinois

• 15, 15K Ratings Now Available!

**HW Herald: Area schools finalizing \$18.5M in spending.**

By ANDER KRUGEL - akrugel@herald.com  
[http://www.herald.com/story/2012/12/15/15k\\_ratings\\_now\\_available/1751757](http://www.herald.com/story/2012/12/15/15k_ratings_now_available/1751757)

After finding out that they'll be receiving federal stimulus funds, Henry County-area school districts are racing to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Locally, the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act awarded about \$18.46 million to 18 school districts to save and create jobs and improve education for economically disadvantaged youth and students with disabilities.

District officials have spent months fine-tuning their spending plans, some in light of public outcry that those proposals weren't entirely inclusive of all options or suggestions.

At District 150, for example, a "series" of plans, with special needs children brought about 200 jobs (thanks to the district's \$1.6 million average enrollment) that those plans, decreasing the investment of a controversial reading program and increasing staff development and training.

"It looks good to go," District 150 Special Services Director Cheryl Lubitz said of the plan. "We feel like the list is complete."

Although public feedback might have been less intense at other



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## Deconstructing Coverage

District 150 is receiving \$1.6 million in total state money, most of which will go toward creating more than 1,000 opportunities for students.

A new electronic 150 system at a cost of \$200,000 complements the electronic plan updates, and will be for student assessments and other education.

"It allows us to track data on multiple levels," District said. "Contractors agreed on all expenses, and about \$200,000 will be spent on the education coaches, teacher aides and paraprofessionals. Districts expect that through the stimulus and other state aid be combined, some of the funding projects begin to be temporary."

She said the stimulus funds complement other District 150 aid, but she says they aren't "putting new changes in place."

"The stimulus money had really allowed us to move some of those things that we agreed to do, but in the stimulus, we have spent some of it."

How about?

The Henry County area school districts are spending spending plans on these 150 funding amounts from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:

- Allen-Henderson District 24 - \$117,500
- Cary Elementary District 26 - \$900,000
- Cooper-Rowe District 28 - \$2,742,000
- Crystal Lake Elementary District 47 - \$1,917,000
- Elm-Rock District 51 - \$116,500
- Hamilton District 56 - \$100,000
- Harvard District 58 - \$760,000
- Hopkins District 100 - \$1,400,000
- Lawrence District 41 - \$100,000
- Mowbray Community High School District 154 - \$100,000



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## Social Media: How It Can Help

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### Attracting Bloggers' Attention

- Find the right blogs and bloggers
- Determine notoriety
  - Technorati ranking
  - Blog roll
- Blogger outreach is unique
  - Seed comments/add value
  - Stroke ego
  - Establish rapport
  - Personalize your approach
  - Do NOT send a press release or advisory

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### Using Social Media: Facebook

- 74.1% of nonprofits maintain a presence
- To Group or to Fan?
- Tips for using Group and Fan pages:
  - Use the status bar to share your message, online action alerts, websites, etc.
  - Use your wall to post news articles
  - Use discussion board (Notes tab) to begin conversations
- Introduction of "retweets"

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## Using Social Media: Twitter

- 43.2% of nonprofits are using Twitter
- Follow reporters and organizations with similar causes
- Tweet!
  - And retweet
  - Use hashtags to tag your content by subject matter
- Post valuable content, others will follow you
- Track twitter activity and metrics




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## Rules of Engagement




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## Engaging with Reporters

- Its not the question, it's the answer
- Its not the reporter, it's their audience
- Expect a transaction
- Frame or be framed
- Don't Mislead, don't lie
- Never go off the record
- Say I don't know
- Pass them on
- Be a good source




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### Reporter Calling...

- Tell them you'll call back
- Play dumb and ask questions
  - Who else interviewing?
  - What type of questions?
  - What's the angle?
  - What's their deadline?
- Prepare your interview
- Call them back
- Get a number for follow-up



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### Always Be Prepared

- With stats
- Human impact story
- Anticipate questions – have answers at the ready
- Don't answer? Leaves door open to follow-up, always get a direct line, ask if there's a g-mail address that is easier to reach them with.



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### Resources



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## IDEA Money Watch: A Go To Resource

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- Resource for parents, advocates and reporters.
- Provides:
  - Comprehensive Recovery Act information including state and local allocations and rate of spending
  - State by state information & resources
  - Forum to share information
  - Media coverage from around the country
  - Facebook and Twitter presence




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## Additional Resources

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- Blog research:
  - Technorati
  - Google Blogsearch
  - BlogPulse
  - IceRocket
  - Nonprofit Blog Exchange and The Chronicle of Philanthropy blog rolls
  - List of Change
- RSS feedreaders
  - See About.com's [top ten feed readers](#)
- Twitter tracking
  - Hootsuite
  - TwitterEffect
  - Filterbox




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## Thank You

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Check out...

<http://childadvocacy360.wordpress.com/>

A blog initiative to support the work of child advocates and policy makers by determining what messages, frames and stories will move people to take action to help disadvantaged children and youth.

And for more information about our firm, please visit [www.douglasgould.com](http://www.douglasgould.com).




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