



BRIEF 4

WHERE: FIND THE RIGHT CHANNELS

You’ve carefully crafted your messages, produced quality translations, and assembled compelling multimedia to share. Now you’re ready to build a dissemination plan that ensures that your content reaches intended audiences in your community. From social media to news media to in-person networks, there’s no shortage of options. This brief will provide tips to help you determine the right mix of channels to connect with, inform, and engage local residents.

UNDERSTAND CHANNELS AND AUDIENCES

Just as newcomer groups have distinct language backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews, these residents also have varied preferences in how they receive information. As a general rule, the longer a group has lived in a community, the more infrastructure it will have—including dedicated community media (also known as “ethnic” media) and social media networks, plus other institutions. More recently arrived communities won’t yet have this infrastructure, but there are still plenty of ways to connect with these residents. [\(See Figure 3.\)](#)



Figure 3: Communications Channels to Reach Varied Audiences

COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL	AUDIENCE NOTES
Community radio	Strong presence in newcomer communities, including less-established groups. Effective in reaching audiences with developing literacy skills.
Community print media	Trusted news sources for more established groups. Many multilingual print publications tend to have limited staff, budgets, and capacity.
Community TV	Serve very established communities. Spanish-language broadcasters like Univision and Telemundo draw large numbers of viewers and tend to be located in larger media markets.
Social media groups & messaging apps	Most effective when trust has been established between local organizations and newcomers. Government offices and civic organizations have successfully used platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Weibo to directly deliver information to local residents.
Local organizations and in-person connections	Effective intermediaries when trust has not yet been established between local government organizations and newcomer groups. Local leaders can distribute information directly to residents on behalf of civic groups.
Email listservs and government websites	Most effective when trust, and familiarity is already established between newcomer communities and sending organizations. Develop communications following the tips in this document to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

CONNECT WITH “ETHNIC” MEDIA

Multilingual media outlets—including radio, print, and TV—exist for more established newcomer communities; smaller radio stations may also serve less established newcomer groups, and tend to draw large audiences due to accessibility, especially for people with emerging literacy levels.

Commonly known as “ethnic” media, these outlets provide news, information, and entertainment in relevant languages, filling a gap in reaching audiences that are traditionally underserved by English-language media. Ethnic media are trusted news sources that often have a very local, even niche, focus. Adding these outlets to your communications mix can increase your reach to your entire community.

The best way to determine which ethnic outlets to engage is to simply ask people in your intended audience. What media do they engage with? Where do they get their information? This will point you in the right direction. You can also check newsstands at libraries, organizations, and neighborhood businesses to get a sense of available publications.

Ethnic media directories are available online for many major cities across the country; the Resource Box below offers tips and links to find a directory for your community. Well-known outlets, like Univision and Telemundo, along with large newspapers and radio stations, have dedicated websites.

Outreach to ethnic media follows the same process as outreach to other media outlets: the process is built on trust, relationships, and a commitment to sharing important information. [If you’re new to media relations, or your office hasn’t worked with media in the past, see the Resource Box below for tips to get started.](#)

Universities, organizations, and government offices sometimes curate ethnic media directories to help you identify and connect with local outlets. These directories provide contact information for print and broadcast outlets, often grouped by community or language. Directories are most commonly available in places with large and diverse newcomer populations, like the following:

- Boston: [Ethnic Newspapers of Greater Boston](#)
- California: [Ethnic Media Directory](#)
- Chicago: [Public Narrative Media Guide](#)
- Florida: [Florida Media Directory](#)
- New York City: [Mayor's Office of Ethnic and Community Media](#)

Don't see your state or city listed? Consult this national [Ethnic Print and Internet News Sources](#) directory, curated by the University of Colorado at Boulder. Your local university may be able to provide you access to a resource called [Ethnic NewsWatch](#).

When you're building your ethnic media outreach plan, consider a few key strategies:

- **Connections:** Ethnic media editors, reporters, and producers are often trusted community leaders who understand the needs and priorities of local residents. As with any media contact, building connections with these leaders requires time and trust and plays a key role in a successful outreach strategy.
- **Language preferences:** Just because a media outlet is serving a local community doesn't necessarily mean they will publish or broadcast in languages other than English. Some outlets publish in English; others are bilingual or multilingual. Confirm language preferences in advance of contacting the media outlet, and make the effort to produce high-quality translated materials when needed, using tips in [Brief 3](#).
- **Format:** Well-established "ethnic" media outlets can offer highly sophisticated distribution strategies, including subscriptions, digital platforms, newsletters, and social media outreach. Smaller, independent outlets may operate with limited budgets and staff. While some employ journalists that write and produce original stories, others may be willing to publish or broadcast content that you provide, like a press release or a public service announcement (PSA). Follow the tips in this toolkit to produce relevant, resonant content that will inform and empower local residents.
- **Advertising and editorial:** Ethnic media, like other media outlets, rely on advertising revenue to fund their operations. Ask for a press kit if you are interested in running an ad or announcement; many press kits will also provide an editorial calendar, which can help you plan pitches and outreach around future topics of focus.
- **Spokespeople:** Sometimes ethnic media outlets will want a community representative to be interviewed to support your story. Partner with local residents who are seen as trusted messengers in their communities; their voices can help share your organization's messages in meaningful and credible ways.

LEVERAGE DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media provides low-cost, highly targeted platforms for organizations to share messages. A growing number of platforms attract distinct groups; many also host interest groups that may reflect or resonate with local residents. Platforms are optimized for different content types. In general, social media is an ideal great place to publish videos, graphics, photos and organizational updates.

Digital channels, such as private social media groups and messaging apps, can also be used to reach your community. For example, [WhatsApp](#), a free and secure messaging platform that lets users send texts and make phone voice and video calls over the internet, is [popular](#) amongst many newcomer groups.

Resource

MEDIA RELATIONS 101

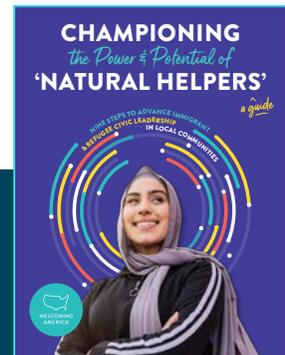
Are you new to media relations, outreach, or pitching? The University of Minnesota’s National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM) has produced a “[Guide for Traditional Media Relations](#)” that offers tips on working with broadcast and print media. Produced in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the guide offers examples of public health communications and story ideas. The resource can be used to inform other public-interest communications work.

ENGAGE COMMUNITY LEADERS

If you’ve followed the tips in other sections of this toolkit to build inclusive content, you’ve already engaged local residents along the way, centering their voices, perspectives, and needs throughout your communications process. Don’t forget to consider these community connections in building dissemination strategies: The individuals best equipped to share information are not found at city hall or local newsrooms, but rather in newcomer communities themselves.

Communities across the country are creating [Natural Helpers](#) programs that engage newcomers in unique training programs focused on accessing civic services, promoting workforce participation, and leadership development. These “helpers,” in turn, share that information within their communities—and become go-to sources for resources and support. The model is successful because it builds on the reality that newcomers tend to look within their communities for information, given shared language, cultural ties, and trust. [The Resource Box below offers for more information on Natural Helpers.](#)

Many Natural Helpers programs use WhatsApp groups and convene regular meetings with their program cohorts and alumni; these groups become effective messengers to connect local residents with important messages and information.



Resource

NATURAL HELPERS COMMUNITY GUIDE

Welcoming America interviewed leaders in Portland, Maine; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Aurora, Colorado to learn about their highly successful immigrant civic engagement programs, called Natural Helpers and My City Academy. A Welcoming America [toolkit](#) offers step-by-step support for creating a similar program in your community.

PUTTING STRATEGY INTO PRACTICE

In communities with linguistic and cultural diversity, building and delivering inclusive communications is both essential and complex—especially in times of crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lancaster, PA, a mid-sized city with a multilingual population, met this challenge with creativity and care. The city launched a multi-pronged communications strategy that prioritized access, trust, and cultural relevance. From multilingual mailers and social media broadcasts to community-led PSAs and vibrant public art, Lancaster’s approach reflected deep local insight and a commitment to connection. [Read how](#) this inclusive response became a model for culturally responsive communication in urgent moments.



Read Case Study:
Lancaster, PA



Explore Next Brief



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