



Pitch Yourself to a Local Radio Talk Show

Want to be on local talk radio? It's easier than you might think. Here's how:

First, scout local talk shows. Most medium-size or larger markets have a talk-news station, and that's probably where you'll have the best luck. Check listings for that and other stations carefully - they're often available on the web. Don't overlook public radio and college/university stations. See which programs are locally produced - you're not likely to be on a national program on National Public Radio or a nationally syndicated one like the Rush Limbaugh Show.

Then listen to each show to get a sense of whether any of them would give you the chance to get your message out.

Put together a three-paragraph "pitch letter" like the sample that follows. It should explain briefly (in one page or less) why quality afterschool programs are important, why and how these programs are threatened, how funding shortages affect local children and their families, and why you are qualified to talk about it.

Don't forget to mention that you recently traveled to Capitol Hill to talk with Members of Congress and their aides. Address the letter to the show's producer (call the station and ask for the name). Send the letter, then call to follow up the day after it arrives. When you call, be ready to repeat a distilled version of your basic "pitch" to the producer.

Sample Pitch Letter to Radio Talk Show

[May 19, 2011]

[Name of Producer]

[Name of Show], [radio station name]

[Address]

Dear [Mr./Ms. Producer]:

As any working parent in [name of community] can tell you, the hours immediately following the regular school day can be a time when parents worry about what their children are doing - whether they're safe and constructively engaged, or getting into trouble. Over the last two decades, afterschool programs have helped millions of families across the nation. But millions more are without the afterschool programs they need because of severe funding shortages, a problem made even worse by the current recession and by budget cuts.

As the director of the [name of program] in [name of community], I've seen first-hand what a difference afterschool makes in the lives of our kids, our families, and our communities. I've just returned from Washington, D.C., where I joined with hundreds of afterschool advocates from across the country in educating our Senators and Representatives about the benefits offered by afterschool programs and the need for more resources to support them. I met with several elected representatives from [state] and their aides, [including any Senators or Representatives with whom you met], for a wonderfully successful day of education on behalf of our kids.

I think this issue would be of interest to your listeners. According to recent research, the parents of more than 18 million children nationwide would sign their children up for afterschool programs if programs were available. Many of your listeners are probably in that group! If you're interested in doing a segment or show on the subject, I'd be happy to join you, and to help identify a parent or student who has benefited from afterschool, as well as a teacher or school principal who could describe the vital role afterschool programs play in reinforcing academic learning from the regular school day. I'll be in touch to follow up. Thanks very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your phone number]