



FACTSHEET: How to Pitch Your Story

This factsheet was created to help rural community foundations create story pitches for news outlets. These pitches can be for funding announcements, Vital Signs reports, recipients' stories, and any other stories the CF would like to share with their community.

What is a pitch?

A story pitch is a written or verbal opportunity to show a media organization through their reporter or their editor that you have a story you'd like them to write about/broadcast. This can be in the form of an email, a phone call, or any other form of communication you use when talking to your local media outlet.

Why pitch your story?

There are many reasons you may want to pitch your story to your local media. This could be to share your impact with the community, which in turn could create trust, create new funding opportunities, or create more interest in your purpose. It could also be to get more applicants into your current funding opportunity. You could also help share the story of one of your recipients. There are many other reasons you may want to pitch your story.

Let's Write a Pitch!

Step 1: Reach out, introduce yourself and your community foundation, and be kind

The local reporter or editor is also a community member, just like you! Starting your interaction with kindness, a quick, 'Hello, I hope your day is going well!' goes a long way. Make sure you let them know who you are, the name of the organization you're contacting them for and what your community foundation does. This allows the reporter to get to know you quickly and brings legitimacy to your pitch. It also is the starting point for your relationship.

Step 2: Tell them what your story is

This is the part where you decide what you want your community to know in the story they write. Are you having an event? Did you fund x number of projects with \$x? Tell them why this topic is important and exciting for your community. Make your pitch interesting and engaging for their audience.



Step 3: Tell them why they should write the story

Why should this specific outlet be the one to write a story about you? Think about the region they cover, think about their audience and about the scope of what they cover. Then, share this with them: “We think your outlet would be well suited to cover this story because...”

Step 4: Let them know you’re ready to help them

Media outlets across Canada are writing the same, if not more stories each day than ever before with fewer and fewer reporters on staff. The stories they are more than happy to pick up are the ones that seem quick and easy. Let them know you can share photos with them of the event, your organization or whatever the story is about. Let them know who they can contact for an interview, along with that person’s email address and phone number.

Step 5: Keep pitching and making contact

They may not pick up the first story you send them. They might have three stories on the way and no space for a fourth. At some point, they will need a story, and they’ll be able to take up one of your pitches. This continued outreach will also help you start creating trust with the reporter, and it will help them know who to call when a story about community foundations, community funding or types of subjects like this come up. If News Outlet A doesn’t want to write this story, try sending your pitch to News Outlet B. They may be more interested or have more capacity to write the story



Template

Scenario: Your rural community foundation wants the community to know about your latest Vital Signs report on gender equality. You decide you'd like to reach out to Local News Outlet A to get this story out because they cover your community, their audience is members of your community, and they've done stories on community data previously.

Pitch email to editor/reporter:

Subject: Story Pitch: Community data report on gender equality to be released

Good morning [reporter name here],

I hope you're having a great morning so far and are enjoying the warm weather we're getting.

My name is [your name]. I'm the Executive Director of [community foundation]. It's nice to meet you! In case you haven't heard of [community foundation], we are a philanthropic organization in our community who supports and creates opportunities to get funding into the hands of many of our community organizations. Here is our website to learn more about us and what we do! [Link]

I'd like to share a story idea with you. We at the [community foundation] are finalizing a community data report called Vital Signs, which we've focused on gender equality in our community. This report will be published on [date] and will share what is being done in our community to address gender equality and the disparities that still exist. Many of our community members are invested in the gender equality movement, so I know they'd be very interested in learning more about this data.

Our organization has seen the recent stories you've written regarding community data and understand you may be interested in writing a story about the community your outlet covers.

If you'd like to write a story on this, I can send you our finalized version of the data booklet and can schedule an interview for you with myself about the reason behind this data and what it means. I'd also be able to send you photos of myself with the data booklet if that's helpful.

If you'd like to discuss this story more, feel free to email me at [email address] or call me at [###-###-####].

Thank you for your interest, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Take care,

[Name]