

# The Editorial Section

## **What is the editorial section?**

The editorial section is the section of the paper in which the editors of the paper and others express their opinions on important issues facing the community. This section of the newspaper is typically well read by key community leaders and decision-makers who can help ensure the success of your efforts. Below are several tips for getting your messages and information on these pages. Keep in mind that the more you can tie your outreach efforts in to local happenings, the greater the likelihood of getting published.

## **What is a letter to the editor?**

Letters to the editor are written by readers in response to an article that appeared within the past few days and submitted for publication in the newspaper. Keep on top of local news coverage around hunger, poverty, or families in need. This type of news coverage provides an opportunity for you to respond with helpful information.

## **What if no one contacts me about my letter to the editor?**

If you have sent your letter to the editor and have not heard anything within a week, make a follow up call to check on its status. Be aware that editors receive hundreds of letters and may not immediately respond. A letter to the editor on a specific topic has a better chance of being published if more than one person or group responds. This is a good time to rally your partners and ask them to write to the paper as well; each letter, however, should be individually drafted. Form letters are usually ignored.

## **What is an opinion-editorial (op-ed)?**

An op-ed is an article written by someone expressing their opinion about an important issue. Op-eds are submitted by community members. Editors decide which to print in the paper. Op-eds are an excellent forum to let people know about the benefits of SNAP because they allow you to share your point of view with much greater detail and persuasion than a short letter will permit.

## **What if no one contacts me about my op-ed?**

Due to limited space, not every op-ed that is submitted can be printed. Most op-ed editors will respond to your submission within a week or two. If you have not heard back in that time frame, or if your piece is particularly time-sensitive, it is perfectly acceptable to call and ask about its status.



## Tips & Tools

### Tips to Write a Letter to the Editor

- Check out the newspaper's guidelines for publishing letters to the editor, usually printed on the editorial page itself.
- Begin by referring to the article to which you're responding, including its title and the date it appeared in print.
- Resist the urge to say everything you know. Keep your letter concise and make one clear point.



## Tips & Tools

### Tips to Get An Op-Ed Published

- Learn the rules. Research the newspapers' specific rules about submissions, such as word count, before you start writing. This information may be posted on the outlet's Web site.
- Make contact. Call the editorial page editors of the newspapers and talk to them about your column idea. They may have ideas about the direction you are taking that will increase the likelihood of being published.
- Use a hook. Include a "hook" or catchy aspect in your piece. Has there recently been a news story about hunger that would make an op-ed on SNAP timely? Perhaps there is new data on local poverty rates, or a special event coming up that will provide a hook.
- Use examples. Capture the reader's interest with illustrations, anecdotes, and personal stories. These persuasive tools help explain complicated issues and bring the human element to your op-ed.
- Stick to facts and solid arguments. Avoid alienating readers with inflammatory or accusatory remarks.
- Make a specific recommendation. State your opinion on the issue.
- Make a unique point. Offer a new point of view even if the newspaper itself editorialized recently about hunger or poverty.
- End with a bang. Summarize your argument and leave readers with information, advice, or an idea they or the community can act on, such as a challenge to increase enrollment of their neighbors and family members who are eligible.