



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 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 less than one side of a piece of paper) 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 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

[April 30, 2009]

[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.

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 urging our Senators and Representatives to support the President's call for increased resources for afterschool programs. I met with several elected representatives from [state] and their aides for a wonderfully successful day of advocacy on behalf of our kids.

I think the issue would be of interest to your listeners, many of whom would sign their kids up for an afterschool program if one were available to them. 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]