



## COMMUNIQUE 5:

### *Advertising on a Budget*

In communiqué 4, we discussed alternatives to traditional earned media outreach, highlighting grassroots strategies as an effective and cost-effective way to reach target audiences. Advertising is a traditionally expensive outreach tool; however, there are low-cost options for ads that are targeted and effective.

One way to really target your advertising efforts is to focus on radio. Research consistently identifies radio as an effective way to reach youth audiences. If you are reaching out to oral-based cultures, like African-American youth, you can get even more out of your advertising. (African-American teens listen to more than 18 hours of radio per week, compared to 13.5 hours of radio per week for other teens.)

To keep ad costs low, consider reaching out to youth through public service announcements on the radio. Most radio stations commit a portion of their ad time to airing ads that are in the public interest at no cost or at a reduced cost to nonprofit organizations. In this communiqué, we walk through tips for developing and placing a radio PSA and other options for securing low-cost ads.

#### Developing PSAs

Here are tips to think about when planning for radio PSAs as part of your College Goal Sunday campaign.

- *Start Early:* The process for developing and securing PSAs can take several months. If you would like your PSAs to air in the month prior to your event, give yourself plenty of lead time to start working with radio stations and developing an ad.
- *Identify Target Radio Stations:* Early in your planning process, identify the key radio stations that reach your target audiences. Review media kits at the top radio stations in your state to learn more about their listenership and talk to youth advisory board members or others that fall in your target audience categories.
- *Follow Guidelines:* There are basic guidelines for PSA formats (most are 15-second or 30 second ads, and stations usually prefer a script of the ad *and* a taped version of the ad). An important step in developing PSAs is to check

with the radio station to gather any additional guideline specifics. Public affairs/PSA directors at the radio stations you plan to target can give you more information on their PSA process. Ask about format guidelines and test the waters as to their willingness to run a PSA for College Goal Sunday.

- *Emphasize Community Value:* When writing your PSA, stress the direct value to the community. Highlight the relevance of College Goal Sunday to the station's listeners (who should also be your target audience). You will likely have to create a different script for each radio station (e.g., the PSA you send to an adult gospel station will likely be quite different from a script for an urban hip-hop station).

### Pitching PSAs

Since radio stations receive hundreds of PSA requests every year, remember to tailor your pitch to the station's audience. The more you can make this connection, the better your chances will be for placement of your PSA. When you are pitching, keep in mind that the low-cost of PSA placements means that you may lose some control over when the ad will be aired. PSAs often run at odd times. While you can request placement times, keep in mind that your ad may play during non-peak listening hours.

An alternative to placing a taped ad is to consider asking a prominent DJ to read the PSA on air (rather than submitting a pre-recorded PSA). For teens, DJs can be a great messenger – and the mention of College Goal Sunday as part of the programming (rather than a standalone ad) can be great exposure for the event.

Pitching radio ads for College Goal Sunday should not only be about placing a PSA. Use this opportunity to build a relationship with key radio stations in your state. In the coming years, building on an established relationship with a radio station can help you to recruit DJs as spokespeople, secure PSA packages, or schedule your College Goal Sunday messengers for on-air interviews.

For more tips on pitching PSAs, see the College Access Marketing Toolkit resources below.

### Beyond Radio

Radio ads can be inexpensive to produce and targeted to your audiences, making them great options for College Goal Sunday campaigns. Depending on your budget and audience targets, there are other options for low-cost ads that may be available through print and TV outlets.

Local cable companies often provide air time for nonprofit ads. These ads will run across many channels hosted by the company. Another option is to work directly with specific community stations (such as public access or local broadcast stations) to place individual ads. As you develop relationships with TV stations, discuss opportunities for interviews with your messengers as part of local news coverage or to mention College Goal Sunday in their on-air local news calendar.

Local newspapers and weeklies also frequently dedicate space for nonprofit ads. Look into community calendars in these publications and submit detailed information about College Goal Sunday events. Depending on audience targets, foreign-language print publications can also be a good option for print ads.

## Challenges

We heard your questions on PSAs and here are the some recommendations.

1. *Can College Goal Sunday campaigns partner with banks to display promotional materials?*

Yes. Both Lumina and NASFAA encourage partnerships for College Goal Sunday. Make sure that you read the Sponsorship Guidelines provided on the national Web site, [www.collegegoalsundayusa.org](http://www.collegegoalsundayusa.org). If you are still unclear, contact Marcia Weston at [westonm@nasfaa.org](mailto:westonm@nasfaa.org). If your program decides to approach banks, make sure that you will be using this tactic to strategically reach an adult target audience that would frequent the specific banking location.

2. *Is the Internet an effective way to advertise on a budget?*

College Goal Sunday coordinators have reported that certain Web sites offer deals on Web banners (e.g., [www.ihigh.com](http://www.ihigh.com)). Just remember to advertise on sites that are tailored to communities in your state and that your audiences would likely visit.

3. *How do you prioritize advertising methods?*

Balance the cost versus the benefit. Some advertising options may be more costly, but more effective in reaching your target audience. Don't only go after ad opportunities that are low-cost, also ensure that they are an effective and credible means to talk to your target audiences.

## Interested in More? Check Out These Resources

The College Access Marketing Toolkit has more tips, resources and samples you can use as you develop and pitch PSAs.

- Research Report (Tab #2) – Reviews research on teens' radio listening trends.
- Media Tips: Radio Advertising (Tab #6) – Provides a sample PSA script format and text, as well as tips for developing a PSA.
- Media Tips: Sample Radio Pitch and Call Notes (Tab #6) – Includes sample pitch notes and scripts you can use when pitching target radio stations with your PSAs.

If you don't already have the College Access Marketing Toolkit, visit the College Goal Sunday Web site ([www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/support/presentations.asp](http://www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/support/presentations.asp)) to download a copy.