WORKING WITH THE MEDIA TOOLKIT

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The National Endowment for the Arts will announce the recipients of the 2023-2024 NEA Big Read grantees on **Wednesday, June 14, 2023**. The following documents are designed to guide you in creating and implementing your own media plan for your NEA Big Read program.

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Questions on media outreach? Contact NEA Public Affairs at publicaffairs@arts.gov.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Think about media opportunities as you plan your events.

- Look for "media-friendly" events such as those that will provide unusual photo opportunities or a performance component that will translate well to television and/or radio.

Become familiar with your local media outlets.

- Think about all types of local media—commercial newspapers, radio, and TV; public broadcasting stations; community and alternative newspapers and newsletters; college and high school papers and stations; noncommercial and community access stations; listservs; and blogs.

- What is covered in different sections of your local newspapers?

- Does a paper have a specific desk for covering the arts, or does that fall to the Metro desk?

- Does a paper print arts-related stories on a certain day (or days) of the week? Does it print articles covering different disciplines on certain days of the week?

- Does your paper have an online arts section or arts blog?

- Do your local TV or radio stations have a locally-produced interview or magazine program? Is there a local radio show that includes guests?

- Who are the TV or radio stations' local arts reporters? Who covers community events or human-interest stories?

- Is there a local newspaper columnist willing to do a series on your project?

- Find out the outlet's view on what makes a good story and how best to secure coverage of your project.

- Contact the section editor that covers arts news and speak with them directly.

- Think about if you'll want to have a website, Facebook page, Twitter or Instagram account, or another online platform as part of your publicity strategy. (See the Using Social Media document for more information.)

ORGANIZING A MEDIA STRATEGY

Set media responsibilities.

- Determine who will serve as the main media contact. Ensure that the media can always reach your main contact.

- Additional duties may include creating a media list, writing and distributing news releases and advisories, placing calendar listings, setting up interviews, securing photographers, developing social media content, and handling any sensitive issues that arise.

Develop a timeline for creating and distributing press information about each NEA Big Read event.

- Include deadlines for writing releases, putting together press kits (digital and/or hard copy materials), confirming a photographer, etc.

- Remember that listings for the media outlet's calendar section will generally have to be submitted at least 1-2 weeks in advance of the event. Make sure to confirm the exact deadline with the outlet and how they prefer to receive information.

Develop a plan for "pitching," or persuading reporters and editors to cover your event.

- Highlight aspects of the event that are interesting and unusual. For example, you might pitch a read-a-thon by confirming the participation of the Mayor or other local celebrities.

- Not all of your media pitches have to revolve around events. Consider pitching a feature story about your program, such as an interview with your NEA Big Read author or featured speaker; a feature about the book, perhaps including a reading; or a human-interest story or series of stories about people or groups reading the book.

Determine your spokesperson strategy (see the Choosing a Spokesperson document for more information).

- Assess the willingness of event principals to speak to press. These interviews may be scheduled in advance, or on the day of an individual event.

- You may need to recruit and train spokespeople in addition to your staff to handle media inquiries.

- Develop media talking points for use by spokespeople. Sample talking points are included in the PR toolkit. Please note that these are generally not shared with media but are available to your spokespeople to answer questions consistently.

- Consider preparing, or having a prominent community leader write, an opinion piece for your local newspaper. (You also can encourage event participants to write letters to the editor.)

Decide how to handle potential controversy.

- Prepare for a potential crisis or negative publicity by drafting a list of questions and answers you may receive from the media in such a circumstance.

- How will you respond to an argument or fight within a community over a concept presented in a book? How will you respond to a group that speaks out against a book?

Create a media list.

- Develop a media list for each event, targeting all local print and broadcast outlets. Make sure to include university news outlets, community or civic organization newsletters, local wire service bureaus (e.g., Associated Press), and online media, such as influential local bloggers.

- When contacting broadcast stations, it is best to send your release and advisories to the news desk and/or assignment manager.

- Keep the nature of the event in mind when deciding which newspaper editors or reporters to pitch. For example, you might invite the local film critic to movie events, while a book critic might be more appropriate for read-a-thons. A political reporter might cover an arts event if local politicians are involved.

- Include newspaper photo editors on your media list. A photographer may cover an event even if a reporter is not available.

- You also should include newspaper columnists on your list, as they often write about a variety of subjects.

- Include each reporter's name, address, e-mail, and phone number on the media list.

- Since your NEA Big Read project includes an array of events over several weeks, you may want to add a "notes" column to your list to track if a reporter requests an interview, attends an event, writes a story, etc.

Plan what and when to announce to the media.

- Create a calendar of important dates for media announcements and advisories.

- Announce to the media that your organization has received a grant to participate in the NEA Big Read. (See the template press release provided by the NEA.)

- Announce your schedule of events to the media. You may want to announce the schedule and your kick-off event in the same release. This release should go out at least 3-4 days before the first event.

- Send out media advisories 3-4 days before each of your events highlighting the who, what, where, and when of the event.

- For each event, prepare a press release to distribute to media the day of the event. Plan to send the release to anyone on your targeted media list who does not attend the event.

- Prepare a press kit for media that includes the press release, biographical information on the event principals, the entire NEA Big Read schedule, a fact sheet on the organization(s) presenting the event, and general information on your NEA Big Read program, including contact information in case they have questions or want to schedule a follow-up interview.

- Newspapers and blogs often will request pictures to illustrate articles. Think about staging some interesting publicity shots prior to launching your NEA Big Read. You should have a print-quality (300 dpi or more, and at least 4x6 inches in size) electronic versions of the images available for emailing or downloading from your website. Make sure to include caption/credit information.

Follow up after you distribute the press release or media advisory.

- Make a follow-up phone call to each reporter or editor to whom you have sent the press release or advisory. Be prepared to pitch the story, emphasizing the important information in your press release, and to offer interviews with event principals.

- For any events requiring tickets, make sure to let reporters know where they can pick up tickets. (Note that media tickets to an event are always complimentary.)

- Keep track of potential media attendees so that you know how many press kits (and tickets) you'll need.

THE MEDIA AND YOUR EVENT

Plan to take high-resolution, print-friendly pictures of your event.

- You will want to have a designated person assigned to take photographs at every event. It is useful to have high quality, high-resolution digital photos to distribute to media with a follow-

up press release. Photographs are also useful for posting on your organization's website and social media, as well as documenting the event in your final grant report or future grant applications.

- Think about what makes an interesting photo when staging your shots. An "action" shot is always more interesting than a "talking heads" close-up.

- Images should have a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and a minimum size of 4x6 inches for print or web publication.

- For key events, consider hiring a professional photographer.

- Inform the photographer of your expectations, including length of coverage, important shots, and post-event delivery of images.

    - ✓ Determine how much of an event you'd like the photographer to cover. For example, if the event is a 24-hour read-a-thon, you may want the photographer to shoot only "high profile" readers, while for a keynote presentation you would want the photographer present for the whole event.

    - ✓ Plan a shot list for the photographer, which is a detailed list of which photographs to take, i.e., the Mayor's opening remarks or a group shot of participants at an open mic night.

    - ✓ Arrange with the photographer to receive electronic copies of 2-3 of the best photos immediately after the event to include with the follow-up news release or post on your website.

    - ✓ For each photo, make sure to include caption information (each person that is in the photo, what's taking place) and the photographer's name. It's a good idea to track this information even if you're working with a volunteer photographer.

    - ✓ Make sure that your contract with the photographer is clear on what usage rights you have.

- Make sure to obtain permissions from anyone in the photographs.

    - ✓ Have a plan for getting subjects to sign a release form that will allow you to use their images in future advertising or media coverage. It is best to have subjects sign a release form at or soon after the event.

- ✓ A release should include information about how the photographs will be used (e.g. in print publications, on your website, etc.) and for what purpose (e.g. for media or educational purposes).

- ✓ Keep in mind that if you're photographing children under 18, their parents or guardian will have to sign the releases.

- ✓ In addition to individual releases, consider making a general announcement at the beginning of each event alerting attendees that their likenesses may be used for future publicity.

Prepare for TV or radio coverage of the event.

- Check if the venue is equipped with a mult box, which allows TV and radio crews to plug in their equipment and record directly from the venue's sound system.

- If the venue does not have a mult box, make sure there is ample room close to the action for camera and/or microphone set-up. Make sure the camera crews know of any restrictions to the recording of your event (e.g. no flash or restrictions to the number of cameras that can be near the stage).

- On the day of the event, you may want to have this area roped off or otherwise reserved for media crews.

- Make sure to give each producer or camera tech a press kit. Have extra copies of the press release on hand as camera techs will sometimes only want a page that easily fits in a pocket.

Welcome media to the event.

- Designate a welcome area for media. You may want to have a table for handing out press kits, tickets, and any other press materials.

- The media contact (or a designated greeter) should welcome members of the media to the event, hand out press materials, and show media to the press seating area.

- Ask media representatives if they are interested in interviews with any of the principals, if these interviews are not already scheduled.

- Have a sign-in sheet for media to help you track where stories might appear, as well as improve future media lists.

- Designate an area for interviews. A member of the media team should escort any media to and from the interview site.

Follow up with media after the event.

- Prepare a follow-up news release to share your program's achievements.

- How many people participated in your NEA Big Read programming? What goals did you achieve? What are the short- and long-term effects in your community?

- Also send the press release to any targeted media who did not attend the event.

- Send one or two photos from the event with the follow-up release.

- If your NEA Big Read project has a website, post downloadable images from the event on a media page. You also can upload photos to your site and instruct media to follow up with your media contact to receive images.

MONITORING YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE

Keep track of all earned media in print, broadcast, and online outlets. Earned media is any news coverage of your project.

- Request corrections to earned media as necessary. Remember you can only request a correction for a factual mistake. (See the Requesting Corrections document for more information.)

    - ✓ Verify if the error is the news outlet's mistake or if they received incorrect information from the project's media contact.

    - ✓ Contact the reporter or editor ASAP after the story runs.

    - ✓ Be polite. Point out the error and provide the correct information. Make sure to acknowledge and apologize if the mistake was your organization's fault.

    - ✓ The news outlet may decline to run a correction. If that happens, just make sure to reinforce the correct information during your next media opportunity.

- If a reporter expresses an unfavorable opinion of your project, you might want to schedule a conversation to clear up any misunderstanding. Keep in mind that the reporter may not change their mind, and the outlet does not have to issue a correction unless it's a factual mistake.

- Draft a "media highlights" report of top earned media placements.

- Consider adding links to online news stories to your website or sharing them via social media.

- Share information on the success of your NEA Big Read media outreach efforts with Arts Midwest so we can share your successful efforts with a national audience.

MEDIA RESOURCES

Your list of media contacts should include all of your community's print and broadcast media outlets as well as bloggers and pertinent national outlets or trade publications. You can use the resources below to augment your efforts to research the media community. This is not an exhaustive list. You may be able to find other resources through your local reference librarian or an online search engine.

- **Online Databases**—There are a number of online media databases that track news outlets and reporters. You can search for print, online, radio, TV, etc. and create media lists for specific projects. These services often include information from specific reporters about what they do/do not cover as well as how they prefer to be contacted. These services usually are available by subscription.

- **www.usnpl.com**—This website contains a list of local newspapers, as well as local magazines and college newspapers.

- **Newslink.org**—Similar to http://www.usnpl.com, this website sorts outlets by state and contains lists of business and specialty newspapers. This website also contains lists of TV and radio stations by state and by category.

- **NPR.org**—On the National Public Radio (NPR) website, you can search by city to find local NPR affiliates.

- **Stationindex.com**—This website lists most of the TV stations in the top 210 media markets with call sign and network affiliation.

REQUESTING CORRECTIONS

It's a good idea to monitor the earned media your project garners for accuracy. Though you'll do your best to make sure that media receives accurate information about your project, there still may be instances in which the information that gets into the news is incorrect. Here are a few tips on deciding when to request a correction and approaching the news outlet about the correction.

- Prevention is the best medicine: Always send media written copies of your program information before or as a follow-up to an interview, even if those program basics are covered in the interview.

- You can request a correction for any information that is factually inaccurate. Examples include the amount of your NEA Big Read grant or the dates of your programming.

- Before you contact the news outlet, make sure the mistake is their fault.

  - ✓ Double-check the accuracy of any program materials you've sent to media.

  - ✓ Make sure that the briefing materials you have given to your spokespeople are accurate.

  - ✓ You can still ask for a correction even if it was your fault, but it is good media manners to acknowledge if it was your mistake.

- The number one rule of approaching a media outlet to ask for a correction is be polite and professional.

  - ✓ Whether contacting the writer or editor by e-mail or phone, frame the "ask" as a request not a demand.

  - ✓ Don't cast blame. Simply point out the error and provide the corrected information.

- Make sure to also emphasize the correct information during your next media opportunity.

- If the print outlet can't or won't include a correction in its print edition, ask that the story be corrected in the online version.

CHOOSING A BIG READ SPOKESPERSON

Choosing the person who will be the "public face" of your NEA Big Read is an important decision. The person you want is someone who is completely at ease with public speaking, talking with the media, and being on camera in either a taped or live situation. Sometimes even the best program administrator is not the best public spokesperson, so please consider this role carefully.

The person you want:

- Is knowledgeable about the NEA Big Read as a national program and the specifics of your project.
- Is outgoing and at ease speaking in front of an audience.
- Is comfortable speaking with reporters.
- Is comfortable being on camera.
- Has a degree of familiarity with local media and keeps up to date with local news.
- Understands deadlines and the importance of disseminating information in a timely manner.

Provide talking points and background on the NEA Big Read to brief your spokesperson. The talking points should be given to your spokesperson(s) to study so that there is a familiarity with why this program was begun and what it means to your local community. If you have held an NEA Big Read program in the past, be prepared with information about the program's impact, such as number of partners and number of participants.

RADIO AND TV "ETIQUETTE"

Not everyone is used to being on radio or television and sometimes all the equipment, the precise timing, the unusual jargon, and even being in the presence of local "celebrities" can be a little intimidating. The following points are meant to make giving radio and TV interviews as uncomplicated and as smooth as possible.

RADIO

Before the interview:

- Find out who will do the interview and how long it will be. Plan your answers accordingly. If the interview is five minutes long, keep your comments concise and don't ramble (but don't give monosyllabic answers either). If the interview is 30 minutes, you can respond in more detail or perhaps be ready with an anecdote or two about the program.

- Find out the format so you'll know what to expect. Is this a live interview? Is it live-to-tape? (Meaning it will be recorded as if it were live, with no editing when it is played back.) Is it recorded in order to be edited for sound bites? (Meaning the reporter/producer/announcer will pick out some of your answers and play them.) Is it a call-in format such that listeners can ask questions of the interviewee?

- Send your interviewer or the producer information about the NEA Big Read in advance of the interview. There's no guarantee they'll read it, but the more you can do to inform the interviewer, the better the whole exchange will be. If you want to talk about specific events, make the host and producer aware of that.

The interview:

- **IN PERSON/IN THE STUDIO**:

    - Be on time. Radio and television work in precise time. Programming is scheduled to the second. If you're told to be at the studio for a 10:30 a.m. interview, it's not okay to show up at 10:32. Arrive with about 15 to 20 minutes to spare so that there's time to get some water, get a mic on, and take a breath.

    - They may or may not give you headphones to wear.

    - Feel free to bring some notes if you like. It's radio. No one can see you looking at your notes.

    - Radio is an intimate medium, so relax and have a conversation. Don't think of it as talking to thousands of people. Think of it as a one-on-one conversation.

- Always assume your microphone is “on.” Never say anything while you’re in the studio that you don’t want the listening audience to hear.

- **OVER THE PHONE**:

  - Make sure you’re clear on whether you’re supposed to call the station or someone from the station is supposed to call you.

  - Radio stations may ask that you use a land line for the radio interview, rather than a cell phone. However, many radio stations are now using cell phone apps or a web platform to conduct recorded interviews. If so, they should provide you with instructions in advance. Make sure you take the time to download any apps in advance of your interview and familiarize yourself with the instructions. Make sure you have a contact’s phone number in case of any technical issues.

  - If you’re supposed to call the station, make sure you get the correct phone number as well as a back-up number just in case. Find out how long before the interview they want you to call in and make that call on time. Be prepared to stay on hold for a few minutes, during which you’ll likely hear the on-air product.

  - If the station is calling you, make sure they have the correct number and a back-up number and make sure you are available at the appointed time.

  - Everything else is the same as above.

<u>TELEVISION</u>

Before the interview:

- Just as with radio, find out who will do the interview, how long it is, and in what format. Is this for a news story? Is it for a public affairs program? Is it a live shot? Is it taped? Etc.

- Live television works in even more precise times than radio. Everything about being on time applies double to TV. Most often, a TV interview won’t be in the studio, but if it is, be on time, and dress appropriately.

The interview:

- Everything that applies to radio applies here as well.

- Where do I look?

  - If the interviewer is with you, look at the interviewer. Don’t worry about the camera.

- If the interviewer is in another location (such as with some live shots, when the anchor speaks from the anchor desk to the subject who is on location), look directly into the camera.

- TV news is fast-paced. Be ready to talk about the top three messages about your local NEA Big Read program. See the talking points for messages you can tailor to your local needs.

- What do I wear?

  - Wear flattering, professional clothes in solid colors or soft patterns. Avoid wearing lots of white as this "flares" on camera.

  - One thing to bear in mind is that TV studios are often chilly.

TIPS FOR DOING INTERVIEWS VIA COMPUTER

Many media outlets are using web platforms to conduct interviews, both for radio and television. The media outlet will usually provide instructions in advance as well as technical support. Make sure you take the time in advance to download any needed platforms and make sure you're familiar with how they work. If you can, test them in advance to work out any issues.

Before the interview:

- Find a suitable location and prepare it for the interview.

  - The space should be free of any bright lights or windows visible on camera. If the space cannot be changed, steps should be taken to minimize bright lights such as closing curtains or blinds, and adjusting or turning off lights.

  - Position yourself where there is light to illuminate your face. Desktop lamps can be positioned behind or next to the computer. If a lighting device is not available try to make use of natural lighting like sitting near a window positioned behind the computer so it illuminates your face.

  - Find a location that minimizes external noise. If located in a room, close the door and windows.

- Prepare technical equipment for the interview

  - Ensure your webcam and microphone are working. If using the built-in microphone on a computer or laptop try to position it no more than two feet away

from where you are sitting.

- Sit center in front of the webcam. Position the angle so that your face is in the upper half of the frame. If the webcam is separate from the computer/laptop, place it as close as possible to the area you'll be looking during the interview.

- Have a set of headphones or earbuds ready to wear for the interview so that audio doesn't feedback into the microphone.

The interview:

- Where do I look?

  - Try to look at the camera as much as possible. If you're interacting with others who are visible on your screen it okay to look at them as long as the camera is close to where you're looking.

- What do I wear?

  - Try to use headphones or earbuds during the interview. It will prevent the microphone from picking up unwanted computer audio and creating feedback.

  - Use the similar guidance for television interviews but know your interviewer will likely only see you from the waist up.

FOLLOW UP

It's always a nice touch to send your interviewer a note of thanks for the opportunity to publicize the NEA Big Read via their program. It lets them know that their efforts were appreciated and made a difference—and leaves them inclined to work with you again on either another NEA Big Read event or something else your organization may do in the future.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

There are many options for publicizing your NEA Big Read outside of traditional media (newspapers, radio and TV, magazines, online versions of these outlets). Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, and blogs complement the role of print, radio, TV, and online news sites. With social media, you are the reporter as well as the PR contact. You can tell your story directly to the public, and your audience can share their stories, too. Consider social media tactics in your #NEABigRead communications plan.

Here are some key ideas to consider when planning your use of social media:

Explore the field – Spend some time getting familiar with the social media platforms you're considering by setting up and using a personal account before you take part on behalf of your organization.

What's your goal? – Clarify why you are using particular social media channels as tactics for your organization or announcement. Are you trying to reach a new audience? Drive more people to your website? Position yourself as an expert in the field? Is this a short- or long-term campaign?

Pick and choose – There are many social media channels to choose from, but you do not need to use all of them. Select platforms that meet your needs and time and people resources, and that reach your target audiences. Social media involves time-intensive writing, editing, and sometimes, media production. Also consider what types of high-quality content you are able to produce or already have on hand when considering your social media choices.

Make a game plan – Make a plan for your social media efforts. Who will write and/or edit the content? How long will it take to write/edit/get any necessary approvals on the content? How often do you plan to publish fresh content? Who will monitor and respond to public queries on social media channels?

Engage! – It's called social media for a reason. Aim for two-way interactions and conversations. That means enabling comments on your blog, or YouTube, for example. Respond to comments people make about events, or about your NEA Big Read book. Ask questions, and encourage others to ask questions.

Make it easy to share – Include your social media channel information on your press materials. Include icons and links for your social media channels on your website home page. Remember that social media is part of your branding effort; if possible, be consistent with the names you use on each of your social media platforms.

Use visuals—Social media content with visuals often has a better success rate. Use a cell-phone camera to capture high-quality, digital images of your events. Encourage others to share their event photos using the same hashtag. Make sure you have permission to use the images you've selected. There are many sites, including the Library of Congress, many museums, and Wikimedia Commons, where you can find images to use that are in the public domain or free to use under a Creative Commons license.

Use ALT tags
To make sure your content is accessible to people with low or no vision, it's best practice to write ALT tags for any images included in your content. ALT tags are short descriptions of what is shown in each image. Each social media platform has different character limits and procedures for adding ALT tags; you should be able to access this information on the platform's help page.

Measure what you want to know – Every organization has different ways of measuring engagement. Is it the number of clicks on a certain link? Is it the amount of time a user spends reading your content? Is it ticket sales? Think about which metrics are important to your organization, and develop a strategy for measuring those elements. While there are paid services out there to help with this step, there are also many free services available—including those available in the apps themselves—that you can bundle to get a fairly robust picture of your content's performance.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

BLOG

- Blogging is an easy entry to social media. Try free blogging hosts available online. Remember that blogs tend to be more conversational in tone, and can be customized to reflect the personality of your NEA Big Read. Post first-person narratives as well as news announcements. Read blogs from other Big Read programs or from organizations similar to yours to get a sense of the length, tone, and types of content. If you enable comments to interact with readers, develop a comment policy and plan to review comments on a timely basis.

- Aim to publish new content at least once a week. If you publish less than 3x/week, choose consistent dates. Possible content can include an interview with a local author; articles about related exhibits; or photographs with detailed captions from your NEA Big Read events.

TWITTER

- When you register for a free Twitter account, you'll have to select several Twitter accounts to follow (get their Twitter messages sent to you). To start you may want to follow arts organizations in your community, especially those who are your partners for the NEA Big Read; experts/leaders in your field; print and online journalists who cover your organization; and other supporters. There are online search engines to help you find Twitter users with similar interests that you can follow. You can also find interesting people to follow by browsing the follower lists of those you already follow.

- Topics on Twitter are often grouped by hashtags, e.g. **#NEABigRead**. Consider creating a hashtag around your NEA Big Read to encourage community comments and feedback. Advertise this hashtag on Twitter, in print PR, and at the relevant event.

- Your Twitter frequency will vary based on the content you have to publish. Aim for 1-2 pre-written tweets/day. Consider "re-tweeting" (RT, or copying) relevant Tweets from others you are following on Twitter. Be selective and develop guidelines for the types of content you will RT.

- Possible content can include trivia or fun facts about your NEA Big Read book or author; quotations from your NEA Big Read book; interesting questions related to your book; links to news articles about your NEA Big Read; fun pictures from events; press releases; notices of blog updates; or you might live-tweet (share tweets in real time) a special event.

- Include an image with your tweet (Twitter will allow you to attach up to four images with a tweet). The image can be your logo or photos from your NEA Big Read events. Just make sure to verify that you aren't using someone else's copyrighted image. When selecting which images to include with your content, if you are using only one image, try to use one that's oriented horizontally so the platform won't cut the top off your image.

- Share your tweets with the NEA Big Read community by adding @NEAarts, @NEABigRead, and/or #NEABigRead to the end of your tweets. It is also common practice to tag interested parties in the photos you attach to your tweet, rather than in the tweet itself. (Be aware that not all Twitter users allow themselves to be tagged in tweets.)

FACEBOOK

- Facebook is an online community space; you can register for a group page, and invite people on Facebook who are participating in your NEA Big Read to join the group. A group page is a great way to keep participants updated on events, share photos, and encourage conversations before and after your events. You can set up your Facebook group page to be public or hidden, and you can also make it a moderated forum. Make sure to create a comment policy for your Facebook page.

YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM, AND MORE

- YouTube is an online community video platform, and can be a powerful way to promote your NEA Big Read news. The average YouTube video is 1-2 minutes, so plan your videos accordingly. Viewers may comment on your videos and, if you allow it, share your video on other social media sites, extending your message. Need tips on producing a video? Search YouTube for thousands of "how-to" videos, or to find existing #NEABigRead videos. Possible content can include videos of members of your community responding to questions such as: What's your favorite author? What did you like best about your NEA Big Read book? What made you come to today's event, etc.; brief interviews with local authors; or excerpts from NEA Big Read discussions or events.

- Instagram is an easy way to share visual content and short videos. Instagram is geared toward capturing moments as they happen. You might Instagram inspirational quotes by artists featured in your programming, or do a series of snaps from your event. You can also post short videos on Instagram. Instagram content is easily shareable to both Facebook and Twitter, so it's a great way to get a lot of bang for your buck from one piece of visual content. As with Twitter, images on Instagram are often grouped by hashtags, e.g. #NEABigRead. You can also encourage members of your community to share photos from your events on their own Instagrams with the hashtag you've created. There are many tools available that will enable you to #regram, or share photos by other people in your organization's Instagram stories. Instagram stories are a great way to share photos live from an event.

There are many more social channels to help share news about your NEA Big Read. On platforms that use hashtags, make sure to tag your content to help people who are interested in the program find your content.

MAXIMIZING MEDIA INTEREST FOR MULTIPLE NEA BIG READS

In some instances, your organization may find itself hosting an NEA Big Read along with a group in a nearby community or in your region, or even with another organization in your own community. Here are some tips and talking points for leveraging multiple NEA Big Reads into more media exposure for your programs.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

- These are competitive grants. The fact that more than one organization in your community or region was selected is a testament to organizational excellence and strong commitments to improving your communities.

- The NEA Big Read is about getting Americans to read and discuss great books and create opportunities to explore together the issues that are relevant to our lives. The more organizations involved, the better.

- Generate excitement over the fact that your area has more than one NEA Big Read. Use the fact of multiple NEA Big Reads in the same area as your hook, i.e. "Organization X, Organization Y, and Organization Z are working together to present the state's largest book club."

- Consider making a joint grant announcement to state media, i.e. your state's AP bureau, about all of your state's NEA Big Read programs, in addition to announcing the grants locally. Then you can announce the kick-off for each individual program at the local level.

- Consider organizing good-natured competitions between local mayors to generate awareness.

SELECTING MEDIA TARGETS

- Pitch larger media outlets together.
    - Larger newspapers
    - Local network affiliates

- Pitch more localized media separately.
    - Neighborhood newspapers
    - Organization newsletters
    - Local cable access channels

- If possible, touch base with the other organizations about their public relations strategies and be willing to share information about successful and unsuccessful pitches. Staying in communication with each other will keep each NEA Big Read from "stepping on the toes" of the neighboring programs.

- Increase the visibility of the team effort by sharing anecdotes and stories on your social media outlets, such as blogs, Twitter, and other platforms.

MEDIA SPONSORSHIPS

Consider how a media outlet's services would best enhance your publicity strategy before soliciting a sponsorship.

- Consider all types of media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, and online news sources.

- A media sponsor can assist with coverage through placement of advertisements, promotions, or substantive features on your community's NEA Big Read program.

- A media sponsor can support your community's NEA Big Read program through monetary or in-kind donations or a combination of both.

In-kind donations can take a variety of forms.

- A media outlet can donate advertising space or airtime for running your public service announcement or promoting NEA Big Read events.

- The media outlet can match purchased ad space or airtime with additional space or time.

- Other opportunities include having an on-air personality from a local broadcast affiliate emcee an event, having a local newspaper columnist moderate a panel discussion, or having local TV and radio personalities participate in a display advertising campaign.

- In exchange for donated time or space, the media outlet is given recognition on all promotional materials.

- Remember to clarify what type of recognition your media sponsor expects and on what materials.

  - ✓ For example, would the sponsor prefer to use a logo and/or a text crediting line?

  - ✓ Will the sponsor be recognized on all materials or only on materials related to a particular event?

Include key personnel from your media sponsor on the guest list for NEA Big Read events.

WORKING WITH YOUR LOCAL MILITARY INSTALLATION

The NEA Big Read is a great opportunity to introduce your organization to local military installations and make them aware of your cultural resources. Consider connecting with these departments:

The Public Affairs Office (PAO) coordinates all media efforts on a military base or installation. They manage internal and external media that cover installation news. Each PAO has its own approach, so contact the PAO before your NEA Big Read launch to discuss how they can help spread the news. A few ideas:

- Contact and exchange information with the Public Affairs Office's chief officer.
- Give the PAO your local NEA Big Read press release and a calendar of any related events.
- Ask the PAO to share your press release with local military media (such as the base newspaper or website), or ask them to share their military media list with your PR team to distribute the news.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)/ Special services manages recreational activities such as social clubs, fitness centers, child, youth, and school services, arts & crafts groups, movie theaters, and more. Here are some ways you can connect with the MWR department at your local installation:

- Send marketing flyers to post at the fitness center, child services center, library, or movie theater.
- Ask MWR to announce the NEA Big Read at live events.
- Ask MWR to post the electronic marketing materials on their web pages.
- Request to make a live presentation for the arts & crafts social group.

Community Services/Family Support Centers—While each branch has a slightly different name for this department, they all provide first-stop information for families that are new to the base, such as employment and volunteer opportunities, personal financial education, and information about local resources and services. Contact the Community Services/Family Support Center director at your nearby installation and share NEA Big Read resources and promotional materials with them.

DoDEA manages all schools for military children and teenagers in the United States. Contact your local School Liaison Officer to find out how they can connect parents with information on the NEA Big Read.

Resources

Military OneSource is provided by the Department of Defense to active duty, Guard, and Reserve and their families. It is a virtual extension of installation services. They have a directory of military installations nationwide.