



# NCACDSS Personnel Conference September 27, 2023

Communications/Public Relations and Media Session  
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# Public Relations

## Create a Plan

- Who
- What
- When
- Where



# Developing a Public Relations Plan

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- Reviewing Agency Goals/Establishing Agency Priorities
- Conducting research
- Setting public relations priorities
- Establishing community partners
- Creating a calendar of events
- Creating materials/ Writing press releases
- Identifying and partnering with media/information outlets
- Creating a PR timing and distribution plan
- Tracking and measuring the goals to outcomes







## Reviewing Agency Goals/Establishing Agency Priorities

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- Your public relations goals should align with your agency goals. This helps staff craft the written materials for public consumption and keeps everyone is on the same page. Everyone shares the same vision.
- Agency goals may be broad and need to broken down into smaller segments for the public. By doing so, the public can engage in the success of the agency and often be a catalyst for attaining desired results.

# Conduct Research

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Thorough research can help you identify the proper channels, the right people, and the right message.

Demographics - basic details like age, sex, income, education helps create an initial level of understanding the audience. Segmenting the audience base on demographics can help you prioritize the right message to the right audience by the right platform.

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Geographics - news can mean different things in different regions. Tone and language widely vary from region to region and among differing cultures.

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Psychographics – know the people with which you are talking. Creating a story that's well-received by the masses requires striking a balance between being newsworthy and likeability. You need to understand your audience and what appeals to them.

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# Setting Public Relations Priorities



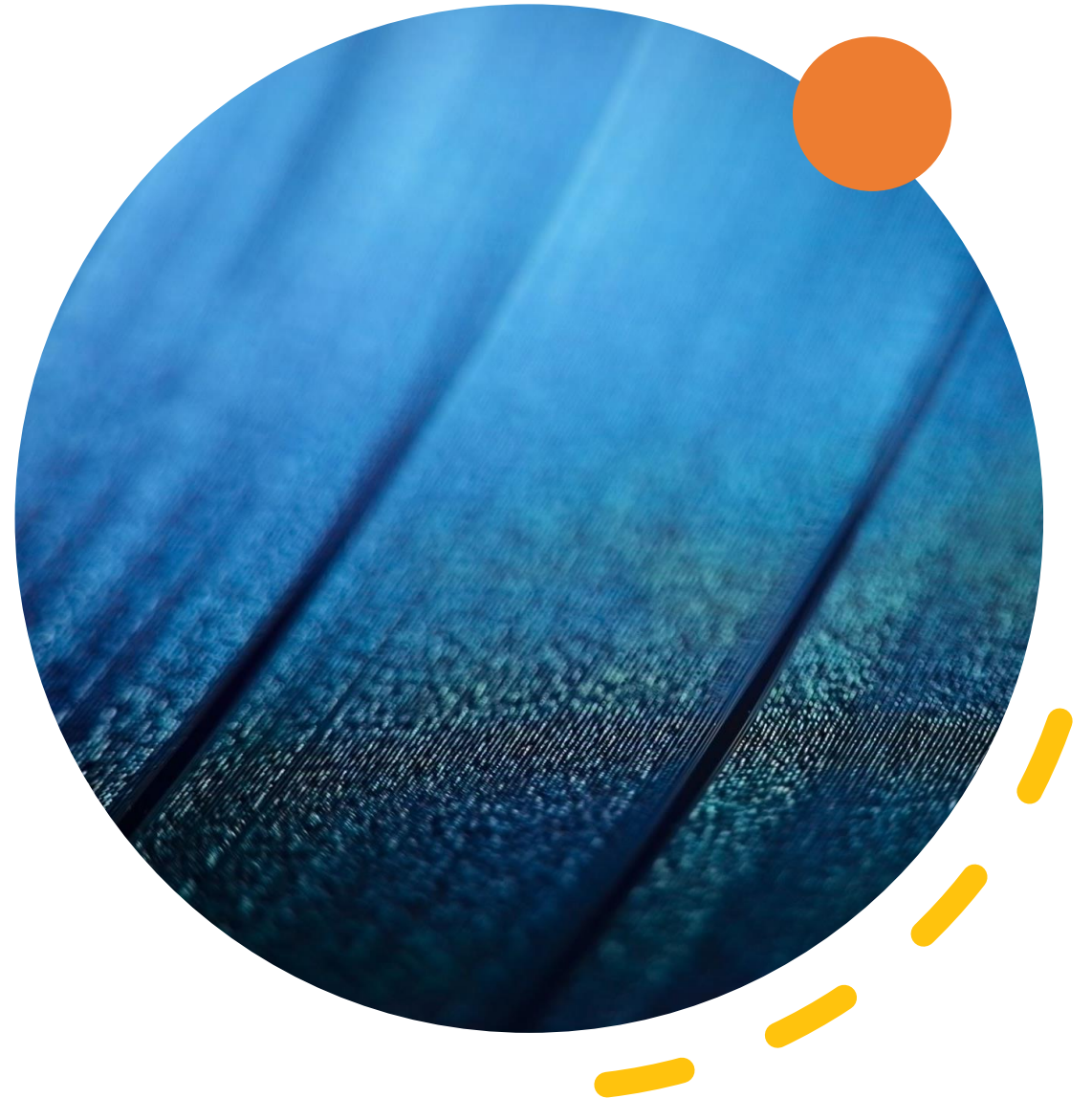
Know your budget



Know the optimal dates and timelines for your release



Know the schedules of partners for the event







# Establishing Community Partners

Invite the Community – sometime the  
story is best told by others

# Creating a Calendar of Events

- ✓ Pace Events
- ✓ Make Smart Choices – set priorities
- ✓ Give Yourself Permission to Say We are at Capacity

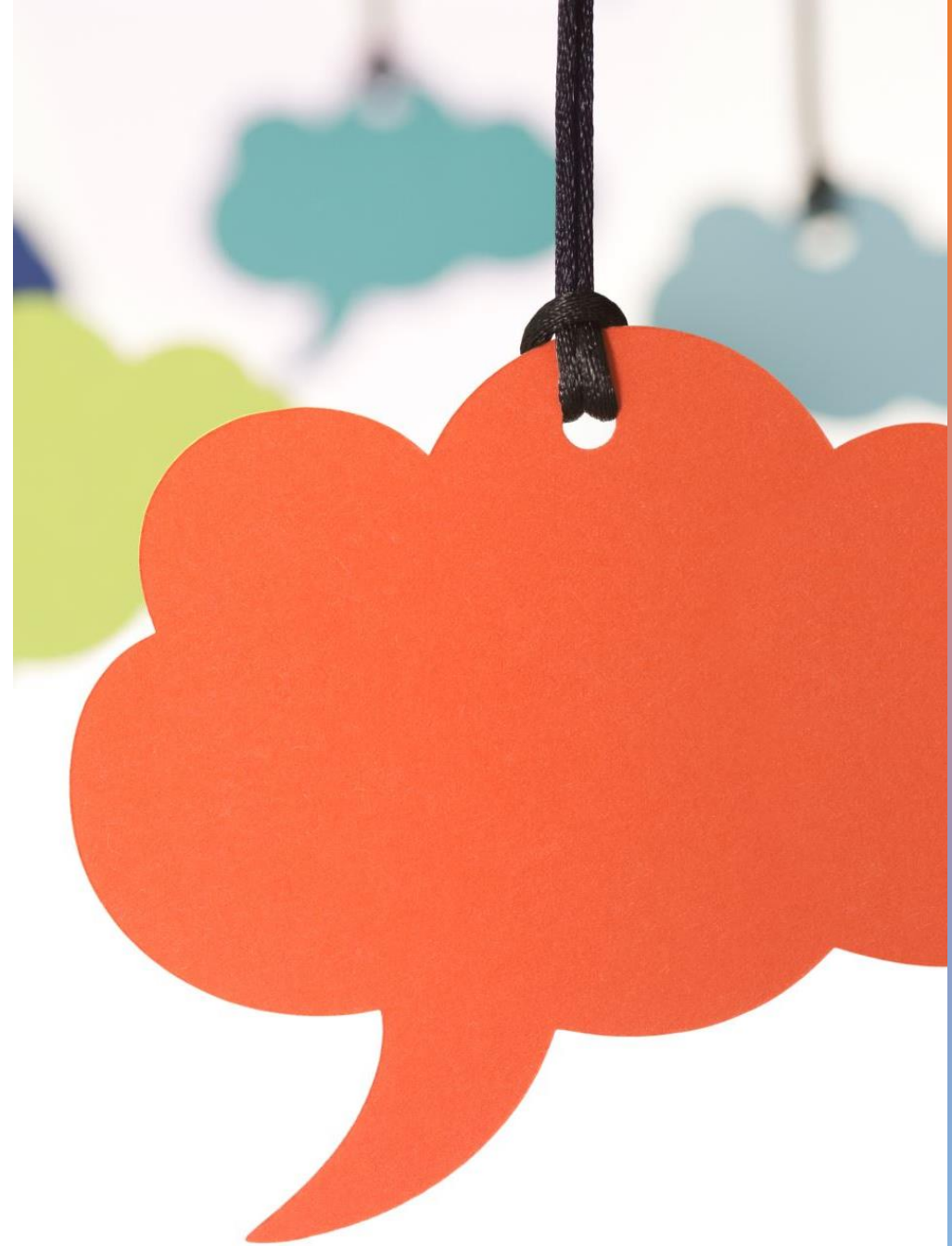




Creating Materials/ Writing  
Press Releases

Content should be Created  
by those Who Know the  
Content

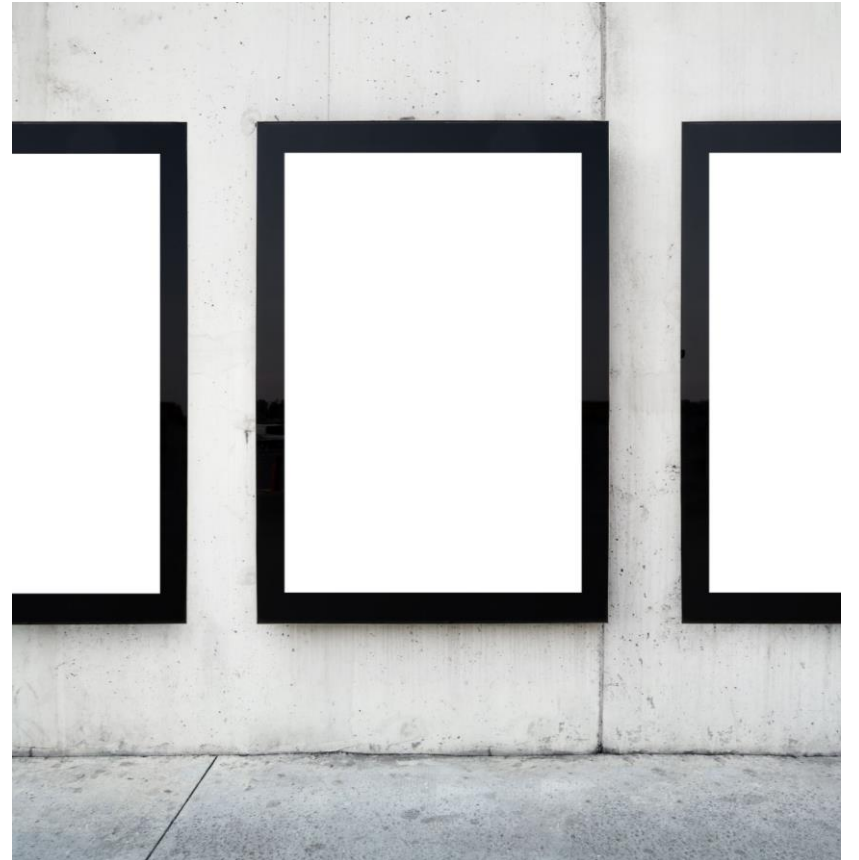
Content Design should be  
Created by those Who  
Design



# Identifying and Partnering with Information Outlets

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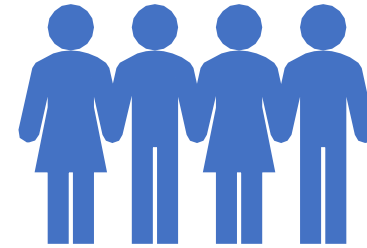
Media Choices are Numerous –  
Pick the One that is Right for the  
Audience and Community



# Creating a PR Timing and Distribution Plan



Project Manage the Plan



Logistics Matter

# Tracking and Measuring Goals to Outcomes

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ROI

Did We Achieve What We Set Out to Achieve?





Remember  
you are always  
Leading

As a leader, your role is to have a positive impact in the agency, in the community and with the people being served. You want your actions and decisions to lead to something better for the customers/clients, employees, partners and taxpayers.

# Headline: State DHHS Readies for Shutdown - AGAIN



# I Did It Again

COST, assuming it gets back on track. DHHS estimates have ranged from less than \$100 million to \$400 million. The current estimate is \$188 million — two-thirds from various federal agencies and one-third from the financially strapped state treasury.

• “Any number that you’ve seen, in my opinion, is a guess,” Bradsher said.

Headline: **Cases remain in queue, but DHHS says food stamp deadline met**

By Matthew Burns and Laura Leslie

Story length: **2minutes 28 seconds**

Actual interview **1 ½ hours**

Online video: **17 minutes 6 seconds**

Source: WRAL.com





# What is Media

Anything from printed paper to digital data, and encompasses art, news, educational content and numerous other forms of information.

Anything that can reach or influence people, including phones, television, and the Internet can be considered a form of media

Source: Dictionary.com

# Print Media

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- Newspaper
- Magazines
- Newsletters
- Other Publications



# Broadcast Media

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- Television
- Radio



# Digital Media



Social Media



Video Media



Websites



Podcast



# “When” Question

**When “they” think there is a story or they need a story**

**When “you” invite a story - Now is the perfect time**

# Words Matter

## Be succinct, compelling and remember every word matters

- The average TV soundbite that makes the air is around seven seconds. Practice your interview with a stopwatch to get a feel for the time needed to communicate your message.
- Make sure you are using words and phrases that can easily be extracted by reporters and editors and will be easily understood by the audience.
- Treat the interview as if the entire conversation were going to be aired. Today, many news channels will post unedited versions of your interview.

# Word Banks



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# Tell your Story through Visuals

Visuals help you tell the story, help the reporter back up their story and help others to understand your message to them.

Visuals will often air during the story itself, can be used as background or cut-away material

The more ideas you give them, the more certain you can be that the visual elements match what you are saying.



# Participate in Messaging Opportunities



Let the reporter know you want to prepare for the interview. Ask them to share goal for the interview and the topics to be discussed.



This gives you the chance to prepare and identify ways to include other messages you may want to get across.



The interview is an opportunity for both sides. The goal is a to create a win-win.



# You Matter

## Match the Moment and the Story



Match your clothing to the story



Let your demeanor, body language and expressions align with the story



Choose an appropriate interview space



Reinforce the story with your speech tone and eye contact. Back up what you are saying by how you are saying it.

# The Crisis

Natural Occurrence – (floods, fire, wind, tornadoes, hurricanes, public health crisis)

Community Specific – (housing shortage, resource depletion)

State Level – (policy change, IT challenges)

Federal Level – (budget challenges – shutdown)

Program Specific – (backlog of cases, child/adult situation)

Agency Focused – (staffing, infrastructure)

# Are you Ready?

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**Having a Crisis Plan is  
essential**

# Crisis Plan

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**Respond quickly** -In the era of social media, anyone can tell your story. It is important to own your own the narrative – speak first when possible

- Activate your communications team -Everyone should know who the spokesperson will be – need consistency to stay the course
- Activate your communications chain
- Activate your approval/review protocol
- Communicate with Confidence, Transparency and Clear Message
- Communicate even when there are unknowns. It's okay to share the information as you have it - keep the lines of communication open and flowing

# Crisis Plan cont.

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**More often than not in a crisis there is no such thing as too much information**

Speak often, honestly and with transparency

Anticipate the questions the public might have and respond accordingly  
This includes answering the questions when there are no answers to give



# Be Transparent

Honesty is always the best policy

Admit what you don't know

Own failures/shortcomings

Share mitigation strategies/plans  
as they become available

# Accountability

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**Be accountable to key stakeholders, the agency and the public**

- Take ownership of the issue when needed and required through a sincere, public-facing apology
- Take steps internally to correct the situation while externally managing the story

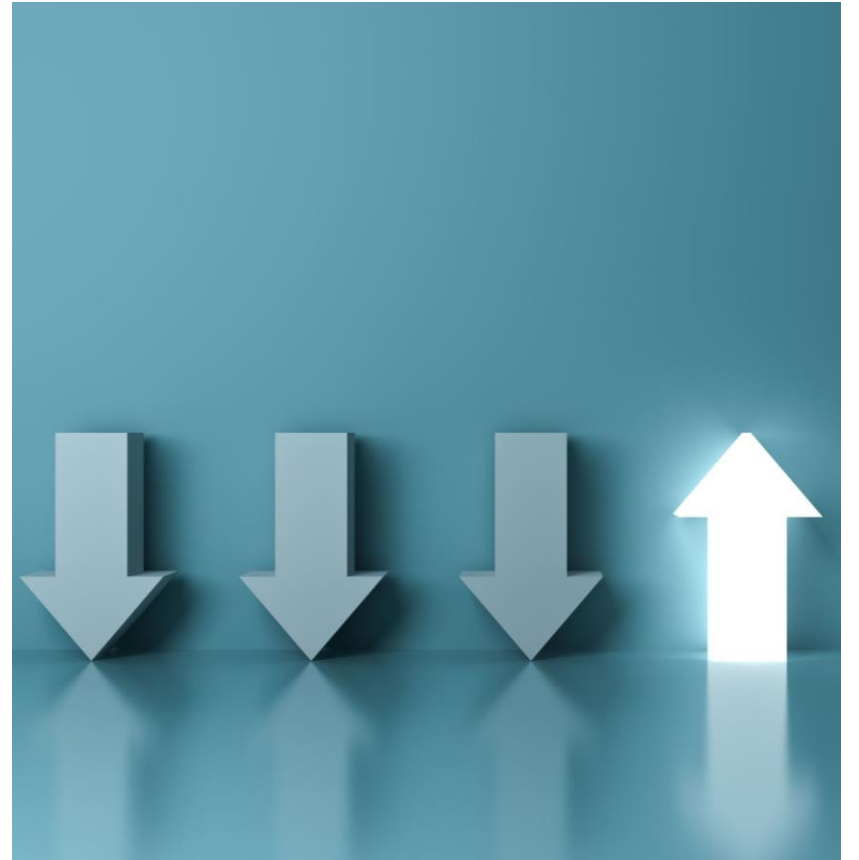


# The Wind Down

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**Wrap up the Story in your own way**

- Communicate next steps or changes
- Thank key supports
- Thank the public



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# Evaluate

## **Reflect, Learn and Update your Crisis Plan**

- Post- crisis discussions are necessary for continuous improvement. Debrief openly and transparently using a SWOT approach
- Create a plan for the agency to move forward





# Thank You

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Questions  
and  
Open Discussion