

Involving the Media and Legal Community

After your school has picked a program, it's time to start getting the media and local legal community involved.

The Legal Community

Celebrate the Constitution offers your school a unique opportunity to involve members of the legal community in your classroom activities and/or assembly program. Bringing years of legal experience to this project, local judges and lawyers can help you create enhanced learning opportunities for your students.

Your local bar association can help you identify judges and lawyers in your community who would be willing to take part in your activities. If you are not already partnering with your local bar association, please call the PBA at 1-800-932-0311, Ext. 2256, to find the appropriate person to contact in your county. (Hint - elementary and middle school students typically respond well to judges who wear their robes for presentations.) Make sure to invite these people well in advance of your program. Their calendars fill up quickly. For more tips, refer to "Effectively Using Judges and Lawyers as Community Resources in Your Classroom" found in this publication.



The Media

The media can help schools demonstrate their commitment to excellence in learning by reporting on *Celebrate the Constitution* events and activities in local newspapers and television news programs. You may want to consider asking a local television news anchor or newspaper editor to be a speaker at your program. They are great resources to talk with students about the First Amendment and other related constitutional issues.

Below are some tips to help you to get the media to cover your program. If you are partnering with your local bar association on this project, make sure to work with its staff and members. Local bars are great resources because they have relationships established with local media and may be willing to help you with some of the following:

1. Compile a current list of local newspaper editors, TV assignment editors and radio station managers. Make sure you have their fax and phone numbers.
2. One week prior to your program, mail or fax your media advisory to the local media (a sample media advisory is included in this packet — feel free to use it and fill in the blanks). Include a contact person on the advisory and a daytime phone number in case the media have questions prior to the program.
3. One day prior to the program, make follow-up calls to the media that received the advisory. Ask for the newsroom when you call. During the call, confirm that they received the advisory, offer to fax it if they did not and mention how exciting the program will be for students. It's always good to put in a last-minute pitch.
4. Prepare a news release to give to the media at the program (a sample news release is included in this publication and on the PBA Web site - feel free to use it and fill in the blanks). After the program is over, mail or fax the news release to any invited media that did not attend.

Inviting local lawyers, judges, legislators and members of the media to speak during your program is a great way for your school to reach out to the community. Your students will enjoy hearing their perspectives on the Constitution.