

North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA)

Session #5

Editorial Partnerships

Handout

Presenters:

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Step-By-Step Process

To get from idea to a finished product takes time due to the nature of this work – pulling together, compiling information, identifying holes, getting more material, writing and finally editing. While this timeline is not exact, it does include the major steps so that you can see how your involvement is crucial to the success of this effort and what’s involved when it’s your turn to serve as the host paper.

Editor:

1. Send out a call for materials related to the topic (at least 2 months in advance of writing)

Make specific statement regarding needs

- Include sample interview questions (name, organization, phone number)
- Facts and figures needed (sources for validation: Wikipedia is NOT a “valid” source)
- Laws / ordinances (if relevant)
- Photographs (including photo credits)

Include the deadline

Provide contact information for questions/clarification

2. Send out reminder for materials needed (about 1 week before the deadline) : enlist the assistance of the NASNA executive director and board members as needed
3. Forward all materials to writer
4. Communicate questions and additional needs of the writer to papers
5. Forward any additional materials to writer
(after Editor/Writer collaboration below)
6. Send out articles and pictures with necessary photo credits ** to NASNA members
7. Return revised articles to NASNA members after reviewing changes with writer

** Editor/Writer decide who will track photos and related credits for sharing with NASNA members

Writer:

1. Review all materials provided looking for:

Usability of information provided

- Facts and data needed to support the story elements
- Geographic representation (Canada / United States and east coast, middle region, west coast)
- Diversity of voices (on-the-ground/grassroots, experts, politicians, activists/advocacy, etc.)

Identify gaps in all areas (e.g. not enough first-person accounts, no data from Canada)

2. Send request to editor for more information to fill gaps
3. Identify supplemental resources (experts, documents, advocacy groups, etc.)
4. If no additional information is forthcoming, conduct supplemental interviews and research
5. Write a draft of the article including headline, deck and subheads
 - Write long version first
 - Prepare copy in such a way that portions may be edited out for a shorter version
 - Provide supplemental information in side-bars/pull-out boxes (optional)
 - ** Ensure that as many geographic areas and voice as possible are included **
6. Review and recommend photographs based on final copy

Editor/Writer:

1. Work together to edit two stories:
 - Long version
 - Shorter version
2. Collaborate on any changes or revisions submitted by papers
3. Conduct a post-mortem of the process with contributors
4. Make suggestions for changes and modifications to the process

Quality Content

What can be used and what can't be used in a collaborative piece relies in some basic journalistic principles. While some of this might seem obvious or even simple, having some basic standards on hand can make it easier to qualify what information can be shared or might only serve as background material.

When it comes to providing information for a collaborative article, this is a sample of the materials you might submit for use:

What CAN be Used

- Data from a qualified source
- Public documents, such as:
 - Court rulings
 - City ordinance
 - Municipal codes
 - City council meeting minutes
 - Police policies and procedures
- First-person interview

What CANNOT be Used

- Third person accounts of an incident
- Blog posts

Collaboration Commitment

You are agreeing to do the work of a local journalist when you agree to participate in a collaborative article. The expectations follow accordingly; that you will provide data, interviews and other information relevant to your community that represents your local experience/situation related the chosen topic.

After some brief preparation, this process ought to take no more than two hours. Your contribution can take the form of:

- Interviewing some people from your community (use questions provided or crate new)

- Via email or transcribe a telephone or in person conversation
- Collect and compile data related to your local situation
- Taking pictures of current people, places

If you or a volunteer can't do the work, then prepare the writer to do it for you

- Collect and compile anecdotes related to your local situation
- Make referrals (introduce the writer via e-mail)
- Provide a list of contacts (name, agency, phone, email address) for possible interviews
- Send photos from your archive (including those you referred for interviews)

If editorial partnerships are to continue, a list of ideas and volunteer editors and writers will be needed to make this a success. Below are a few ideas already floated, but many more are needed. What would YOU like to see as a collaborative piece!

City plans to end homelessness/Tim Covi-VOIC

Tent cities
