

# **PROJECT 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State**

## **A Tool Kit for Community Action**

### **Media Supplement**

In undertaking a project of this magnitude, how effectively the media is used is one of the keys to its success. For purposes of *Project 2015*, the media can be used directly and indirectly.

Direct use of the media requires you to involve the media in the process. Select a prominent daily newspaper or television station in your county and make them a key stakeholder and part of a small planning group.

As a stakeholder, this media outlet brings a certain expertise to the process; has access to decision-makers; has resources; and provides you an opportunity to reach all your intended audiences.

#### **What Can This Stakeholder Do For You?**

- Sponsor community meetings and forums on *Project 2015*.
- Help publicize meetings and forums.
- Write articles on the various aspects of *Project 2015* that are most appropriate for your county.
- Bring in additional stakeholders.
- Help provide resources that might otherwise not be available.
- Help generate discussion.
- Prepare public service announcements that can help publicize *Project 2015*.

As a stakeholder, your media partner will have a vested interest in the success of this project.

Indirect use of the media requires greater effort on the part of the county and its partners. It will also require formation of a media group as a part of your organizational process to get your information out to the public and other stakeholders. Using a proper structure, your needs can be accomplished efficiently and cheaply.

Once you have established your structure, designate a spokesperson. If a media person from the County Executive's Office is involved that may be the appropriate person the designate. Develop a media strategy to get maximum exposure for *Project 2015*.

© New York State Office for the Aging

## **How to Get Your Message Across Cheaply!**

Following are some examples of how you can involve the media in *Project 2015* without their having a direct role.

### **NEWSPAPERS AND NEWSLETTERS**

1. Get to know local reporters who cover issues related to *Project 2015*.
2. Pitch to them a story idea on the purpose of *Project 2015*.
3. Write a letter to the editor whenever an article may appear about the *Project 2015* initiative
4. Write a brief article for the local area agency on aging or senior center newsletter. That same article can be offered to local senior centers that may have a newsletter of their own.
5. Submit an article on *Project 2015* to local state legislators who may use it in their constituent newsletter.

### **RADIO**

1. Offer to appear as a guest on a local public affairs program. The FCC mandates that radio and television stations devote a certain amount of their programming time to public affairs programming. Stations that carry a talk radio format tend to draw more seniors as listeners and would be an appropriate outlet. Try to reach as many stations as possible.
2. If you hear a story on a local radio station about *Project 2015*, contact that station's news director to see if he/she is interested in a follow-up story that takes a different angle.
3. Prepare public service announcements that promote *Project 2015* and shop them to radio stations. Some may air the announcements as a community service, while others may charge for them. The PSA may run 15, 30 or 60 seconds.

### **TELEVISION**

1. Same as radio, make the spokesman available as a guest on a local television public affairs program. Many program directors and hosts are looking for new topics to cover. If they are not aware of *Project 2015*, you provide them with the perfect opportunity to provide a public service.
2. Make the spokesperson available for comment at local meetings and forums. Always keep the focus on the role of *Project 2015*.
3. Most state legislators have their own television programs that air on cable. Offer to come to Albany and tape a show about the local *Project 2015* efforts that have been undertaken and what it means to the community

4. Look for opportunities to appear on a local cable access programs. Local cable companies are expanding the number of programs they produce and they are always on the lookout for new ideas and topics.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Offer to speak to local civic organizations (Kiwanis, Elks, Red Cross and any other organization whose members may benefit from learning more about Project 2015).
2. Promote Project 2015 at local senior center programs.
3. Participate in local health or information fairs, as appropriate. This helps make people aware of Project 2015 and what it means to their community.
4. Meet with county legislators to educate them about Project 2015.

### **THE BOTTOM LINE**

1. Don't be afraid to bug members of the local media. The more they are reminded about the existence of Project 2015, the more likely they will be to incorporate information about it in future articles and news stories.
2. Knowledge is power. The more people are made aware of the Project 2015 and its implications, the more successful the program will become.