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## How to Write and Submit an Op-Ed

1. An Opinion-Editorial, also referred to as Op-Eds, is an opinion piece a publication's reader writes and submits to a newspaper or magazine on a topic relevant to the publication's audience.
2. Learn the name of the newspaper's op-ed page editor and the length specifications for op-eds and the address or fax number. Most are 700-800 words long, so you need to be succinct in your writing.
3. Monitor your paper's op-ed page to see what kind of op-eds it publishes. If the paper recently ran a piece on a position that your nonprofit disagrees with, you might have a better chance of getting your organization's position in print.
4. There should be a compelling hook to generate interest in the op-ed and demonstrate its relevance to the readers and the community. Give it a strong local angle. The reader needs to be able to relate quickly and easily to your story.
5. Decide what message you want to convey. Write it in a brief sentence. Decide the key arguments supporting your message and develop each in turn.
6. Have an opinion and state it assertively. Make your case from the top down. Begin with the premise of your opinion and then back up your opinion with facts. Don't present facts first and save your opinion for the conclusion.
7. Print your op-ed on your organization's letterhead and sign your name and title.
8. Send your op-ed with a cover letter and background information on your nonprofit to the op-ed editor. Include your business card with both home and work numbers. Make a follow-up call a day or two after the editor has received your op-ed. Ask if the paper intends to print it. If so, find out when. Get a copy.

### **Op-ed Questions: Prior to writing an op-ed, answer the following list of questions to ensure that you make the necessary points for an effective piece.**

- What is the problem in the community that your organization is solving?
- How does your organization help to solve this problem?
- Describe your organization. How does it work?
- Why wasn't the problem solved before? What was the obstacle?
- Is there a villain in the story?
- What is the cost of the solution you propose?
- How can you "paint a picture" in someone's mind through your words?
- Which community leaders, groups or people in the community agree with you? Why?
- Which community leaders, groups or people in the community disagree with you? Why?
- What is the urgency?
- Who does this affect?
- What is the history of this story? What has been done before? What was the process to get to this point? Was there a cliffhanger or suspenseful event?