



# Engaging the Media

Promoting Just and Inclusive Communities in Ohio,  
Kentucky, and Indiana: A “Whole of Community”  
Approach to Immigrants and Refugees  
& Refugee Empowerment Initiative



# Purpose

- How to build and maintain media relationships
- How to communicate with media (e.g., interviews)
- How to leverage media attention to further advocacy efforts

“The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses.”

--Malcom X

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# Co-Presenters

## Panelists:

- Jackie Congedo, Director Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC)
- Karen Dabdoub, Executive Director Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)
- Samantha Searls, Program Manager Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC)

## Moderators:

- Robyn Lamont, Executive Director RefugeeConnect
- Bryan Wright, Managing Director Cincinnati Compass

# Group Discussion

1. What would you like to be asked by the media? What stories would you like featured?
2. What are your media engagement fears?
3. Who in your organization speaks to the media?

# Breakout Discussion

- A. Collaborative/coalition media outreach
- B. Framing issues
- C. Community spokespersons

# Toolkit

- [Communicate Justice 101](#), from the Youth Media Council
- [The Art and Science of Framing an Issue](#), from The Center for Media Justice
- [Countering Anti-Immigrant Narratives](#), from CLINIC. Legislative testimony, social media, and local media with sample media advisories and press releases (submitted by Lynn)
- [Immigrant Integration Webinars and Resources](#), from The Immigrant Learning Center. Narrative tools (submitted by Lynn)
- [Sample Media Plan](#), from the Center for Media Justice
- [Press Release Template](#), from the Center for Media Justice
- [Pitch Rap: Worksheet](#), from the Center for Media Justice. How to pitch a story to a reporter. \*Could be good for breakout discussion\*
- [Pitching Dos and Dont's](#), from the Center for Media Justice
- [Interview Tips](#), from The Center for Media Justice
- [Letter to the Editor Worksheet](#), from the Center for Media Justice

Link to Resources: <http://bit.ly/2JAYBL1>

RefugeeConnect



### TAKING BACK THE NARRATIVE

#### HOW TO TALK ABOUT IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION

WEBINAR SUMMARY  
February 2017

**TO TAKE BACK THE NARRATIVE:**

- Don't expect myths when you're refusing them. Instead of saying, "Immigrants are not taking our jobs," say, "Immigrants create jobs." Always start with the facts.
- Be solution-oriented. The immigration system is difficult to understand, so make sure you propose solutions to show policy changes are possible.
- Focus on the whole rather than the individual. People don't necessarily substitute one person's story to an entire group. Balance individual stories with system-wide context.
- Emphasize the positive. We all want to live in safe and connected communities. Rather than focusing on immigration status, focus on the importance of coming together as a community.

**USE THESE FRAMES:**

- **Shared values:** Emphasize the need to treat others with compassion and respect.
- **Pragmatism:** Appeal to common sense and practical solutions.
- **Shared prosperity:** Highlight immigrant contributions that benefit all Americans.
- **Messaging game plan:** 1) American value, 2) immigration problem, 3) solution and 4) action

**TERMS TO AVOID**

- Coming out of the shadows ➡ **An outdated immigration system**
- Immigrant community ➡ **Neighbors, friends, coworkers, parents**
- Broken immigration system ➡ **Change is possible, feasible, practical**
- This is about immigrants' rights ➡ **This is about shared humanity/American values**
- Immigration reform ➡ **Immigration policy reform**

For more resources and recordings, go to [bit.ly/ILCNarrative](http://bit.ly/ILCNarrative)  
Contact Deniz Mohammed at [dmohammed@ilctr.org](mailto:dmohammed@ilctr.org)  
Visit us at [www.ilctr.org](http://www.ilctr.org)



Melissa González  
Peters, PhD  
Francisco  
Institute



Lynn Thomsen  
America's Voice



Hannah Caswell  
Welcoming America



Julie Fisher-River  
The Opportunity Agenda

# America's Voice Ohio Resource:

- Project of the national communications organization America's Voice (a 501c4 organization) and America's Voice Education Fund (a 501c3 organization)
- Mission: To harness the power of American voices and American values to enact policy change that guarantees full labor, civil and political rights for immigrants and their families.
  - Work in partnership with progressive, faith-based, labor, civil rights, and grassroots groups, networks, and leaders to policies and legislation that will stabilize the lives of 11 million Americans-in-waiting and put them on the road to full citizenship.
- Exists to help state and local organizations drive the media narrative about the role of immigrants and refugees in Ohio today, and the need for fair, inclusive, and welcoming policies.
  - Provide ways to temporarily increase your communications capacity, through assistance in developing media strategy, drafting press materials, sending them to local media, and helping arrange interviews.
- Communicate with activists across the state through an email distribution list and various Facebook groups. For more information on America's Voice Ohio, email Lynn Tramonte [ltramonte@americasvoice.org](mailto:ltramonte@americasvoice.org)

# “FRAMING” ISSUES

The “frame” answers three questions:

- What is the issue *really* about? (from your perspective)
- Why should I care about the issue? (why should your audience care?)
- Who are the good guys, bad guys?

# “FRAMING” ISSUES

Remember!

- You can't negate another person's frame if it's already been set. Try to “re-frame” the issue.
- Don't jump into a negative frame since this reinforces the frame.

# Framing: State of the Debate

- Determine who your target audience is and what is important to them.
- Example: Nixon said “I am not a crook.” Everyone then thought of him as a crook. When you negate a frame, you evoke the frame and reinforce it.
- **Frame:** Contours of the debate have not yet been set, so you set the frame.
- **Re-frame:** Contours of the debate have already been set so you are on the defensive. Try to re-frame the issue.
- **Amplify:** Debate is in your favor but more public attention is needed.
- Your job: Determine whether the current state of the debate requires framing, reframing or amplification & act accordingly.

# Prevalent Anti-Immigrant Messaging & Framing

- Criminals/gang members
- Immigrants/sanctuary cities = danger
- Immigration = national security
- “Pouring over our borders”/ “secure” the border
- “Chain migration”/ linking DACA & TPS
- Loopholes/ our immigration system is broken

# Framing Strategies:

*Tips from The Immigrant Learning Center*

- Don't repeat the myth
- Emphasize shared values (treating people with respect & dignity)
- Be pragmatic & solution oriented
- Avoid “in the shadows” language & “immigrant community” or terms that set people apart as others
- Changing minds takes time

# Communications Strategies: Changing the Culture

Tips from American Immigration Council & Welcoming American

- Devise approaches that are relevant locally
- Train community to have conversations
  - Give opportunity to share views and know each other
  - Listen with as much passion as you speak
  - Changing hearts and minds one person at a time
  - Meet people where they are

# Words Activate Frames: The Switch

## Tips from American Immigration Council & Welcoming American

- What do I want to say → Who do I want to reach and how do I want to shape my message so that they can hear it
- “Few words – indeed, few messages of any kind – whether in politics or in the business world, are ingested in isolation. Their meanings are shaped and shaded by the regional biases, life experiences, education, assumptions, and prejudices of those who receive them.” - Frank Luntz

# Actions for Organizations of All Sizes

- Help share stories & raise voices
- Press releases & op-eds
- Social media presence
- Educate your communities



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## Creating One Greater Cincinnati Community

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