

Get your Alpha-1 story covered in your local newspaper

The following is a step-by-step guide offering tips on how to get your Alpha-1 story into your local newspaper. Getting this kind of coverage can help to raise awareness of Alpha-1, and can increase donations toward research that can create better forms of treatment for Alphas and, ultimately lead to a cure for Alpha-1.

1. News Outlets

News outlet selection is very important, and it's important to make sure your story is relevant to each outlet you pitch. For example, TechCrunch covers tech while TMZ covers gossip.

For basics, we recommend you **tell your story to local newspapers** because:

1. They are easier to obtain coverage because they cover a niche area, so there will be less competition.
2. Your story is likely to be about someone in the community, so it's very relevant to the readers; therefore, very likely to be covered.

Local newspapers include community papers, county papers, municipal papers and provincial/state media.

If you don't know any local media sources in your area, a simple Google search termed "____ area newspaper" will give you plenty to choose from.

To ensure coverage, we recommend that you **contact at least 3 media outlets** (TV, newspapers, online news, radio). After all, the more people you pitch to, the more likely your story will be covered.

2. Contact

To contact a news outlet, you must first find their contact information. For most sites, the contact page is located in the footer. However, the contact page link isn't always obvious, so you can use CTRL and F (for PCs) or command F (for MACs) to find the contact page link. There are also tools like MailTrack.io to help scan the internet for email addresses. Once you are on the contact page, you will usually be faced with three kinds of submission structures:

- a) The simplest format is the News Outlet giving you an email to submit your news tip/story. The email address will usually be tip@____news.com or news@____news.com. You simply copy down the email address and send them your pitch.
- b) The second type of format is a hosted submission box. This format is also very straightforward as you just copy and paste your story into the box and press send.
- c) The third format is a long list of reporter/editor emails. For this format, you should look through the list and find the reporter/editor you think would cover your story. For example, because Alpha-1 is a health condition, you may want to start with the health reporter or editor. If you are conducting a local event, you may want to contact the reporter who covers the city or area where your event will take place. This format often has the general email address like Tip@____news.com available as well, so you could opt to send the story to the general email as well as a reporter's email.

Note: Do NOT send your email to more than 2 reporters from the same site. Reporters in the same newsroom talk to each other, so the same email to too many of them could be viewed as spam, and be sent to the junk or trash file.

3. Content

Although your email is telling a news outlet your Alpha-1 story, the most important aspect is to emphasize how the story is relevant to a news outlet and why they should cover it.

Your pitch email should include the following:

- Reasons why your story is relevant to a particular news outlet
- The main points of your story (Don't be too long, just need to get the main points across. They are writing the story, not you, so just answer the big questions)
- Previous news coverage (links!)
- The Alpha-1 Foundation website link (www.alpha1.org)
- Your contact information

4. Template

Dear ____ (“reporter name” or “editor” for general email),

Considering your previous coverage of local health and philanthropic stories, I thought I would share with you an inspiring story of an 8-year-old boy, Lucas Johnson. Lucas has Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (Alpha-1), a genetic condition that can cause lung and liver disease, and he is raising money at his school for research to find a cure.

Lucas has placed posters with information about Alpha-1 all over Patriot Oaks Academy in St. Johns FL. On Tuesday, May 24, at 9 a.m., he will collect money for Alpha-1 research during a classroom “flea market” at the school, 475 Longleaf Pine Pkwy, St Johns, FL. Lucas made an announcement early Monday morning over the school’s public address system, giving a brief description of Alpha-1, and urging everyone to contribute at least one dollar to his effort.

Lucas, his 9-year-old sister Grace, and his parents, Richard and Sarah Johnson, have been covered in previous years by news outlets such as The Miami Herald, The Jacksonville Times-Union and the St. Petersburg Times. Given the local angle and the touching story of a young boy raising money and awareness to fight his health condition, your readers would be



interested in this story. To see this story on the Alpha-1 website, click here:

<http://bit.ly/20sxN23>

For additional inquiries, please contact [Your Name] at [your email] or [phone number]

Sincerely,

[name]

[email]

[phone]

5. Follow up

You are not guaranteed to get coverage from a news outlet by sending just one email. Often, **you would have to send the email two to three times before you receive a reply** from the news outlet. We recommend sending a follow-up email if you don't hear back from a particular news outlet after 3 days to stay top of mind.

6. Sample press release

Contacting a reporter or editor at your local news outlet directly with information about your story is your best bet for getting coverage.

Additionally, on the next page is a sample press release that might prove useful in case you are holding an event, and want multiple news outlets to cover it. Try to keep it to one page (reporters get a lot of these, and have little time to read each one), and send it to as many news outlets as possible, using the tips above about reaching out to media:

#Alpha1 Awareness
alpha1.org/awareness



For information contact:

Your Name

Leader, Your City/State Alpha-1 Support Group

Your email address

Your phone number

Brief headline about what your group is doing

In the first sentence, give a summary of what your group is doing. Try to keep it to 25 words or less.

In the second sentence, state why your group is doing the activity in question, and provide a little bit of background information about the event or the person who will be featured.

In the third sentence, try to offer a quote from the leader that steps back from the facts and provides context in simple language about what your group would like to accomplish through the activity, i.e. "Len Geiger will share his amazing lung transplant experience as an inspiration for all Alphas to overcome our challenges, and to keep fighting for a cure," said Tom Corron, the Fort Wayne, Indiana Support Group Leader.

In the fourth sentence, give the date, time and address of the event in question, i.e. Geiger will speak on Sept. 23 at the Indiana Alpha-1 Support Group meeting, 5:30-7 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library Main Branch, Meeting Room C. The library is at 900 Library Plaza in Fort Wayne.

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About the Alpha-1 Foundation:

The Alpha-1 Foundation is committed to finding a cure for Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency and to improving the lives of people affected by Alpha-1 worldwide. For information, visit www.alpha1.org.

#Alpha1 Awareness

alpha1.org/awareness