



PR TOOLKIT

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America. The program starts on Memorial Day (Monday May 28, 2012) and runs through Labor Day (Monday, September 3, 2012).

The 2012 national launch announcement for Blue Star Museums will take place on Tuesday, May 22. Get ready for the big announcement date with the materials found in this virtual PR toolkit. Use the tips and tools in this PR toolkit to promote your organization's involvement in Blue Star Museums, on the launch date and throughout the summer. For example, you can use the "swiss cheese" press release to create a customized launch announcement in your community on or after the launch date.

The toolkit now offers **marketing materials** – posters, postcards, ads and logos – to enhance your promotions.

Thank you for sharing news about Blue Star Museums in your community now and all summer long.

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Questions on media outreach? Contact NEA Public Affairs at 202-682-5606.



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SWISS CHEESE BLUE STAR MUSEUMS LAUNCH PRESS RELEASE

Help amplify the national launch announcement for Blue Star Museums by posting your own press release on or after May 22, 2012. Use this sample “swiss cheese” press release, and simply fill in the holes (the date, a description of your launch, your contact information, etc.) and distribute it to media outlets in your area. If you would like “day of” coverage in your local media, you should plan on distributing this embargoed release 4-5 days before the Blue Star Museums launch. An embargoed press release can be sent in advance to select media, but it clarifies the particular date and time when the news may be shared publicly. The embargo date/time for the Blue Star Museums national launch is Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at 12:01 a.m.

Contact: [NAME, TITLE]
[ORGANIZATION | LOGO]
[ADDRESS]
[PHONE | EMAIL]
[WEB ADDRESS | FACEBOOK | TWITTER| YOUTUBE – EMBED HYPERLINKS]



Embargoed for release until
May 22, 2012, 12:01 a.m.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION] TO PARTICIPATE IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS

[Your organization] is one of more than 1,800 museums across America to offer free admission to military personnel and their families this summer in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and the Department of Defense

[CITY, STATE – DATE] – Today [YOUR ORGANIZATION] announced the launch of Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2012. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The complete list of participating museums is available at www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

[If you are planning a launch event, describe it here: [YOUR ORGANIZATION] will officially launch the program on [DATE] with [DESCRIBE YOUR LAUNCH EVENT- Will it be a press conference? Who will speak? Will there be a photo opportunity?]

[INSERT A QUOTE FROM AN ORGANIZATION SPOKESPERSON OR LOCAL OFFICIAL IN SUPPORT OF BLUE STAR MUSEUMS]



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“Through Blue Star Museums, the arts community is extending a special invitation to military families to enjoy over 1,800 museums this summer,” said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. “This is both an opportunity to thank military families for their service and sacrifice, as well as a chance to create connections between museums and these families that will continue throughout the year. Especially for families with limited time together, those on a limited budget, and ones that have to relocate frequently, Blue Star Museums offers an opportunity to enjoy one another and become more fully integrated into a community.”

“As we enter the third consecutive year of the Blue Star Museums program, we are happy provide an opportunity for our nation’s service members and their families to connect with our national treasures,” said Blue Star Families CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet. “Through this distinctive collaboration between Blue Star Families, the National Endowment for the Arts and more than 1,800 museums across the United States, military families have an unparalleled opportunity to visit some of the country’s finest museums for free.”

This year, more than 1,800 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative, including more than 300 new museums this year. Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer. The effort to recruit museums has involved the partnership efforts of the American Association of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Association of Children’s Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. This year’s Blue Star Museums represent not just fine arts museums, but also science museums, history museums, nature centers, and 70 children’s museums. Among this year’s new participants are the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond, Virginia, the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo, NM, the Cleveland Botanical Garden in Cleveland, Ohio, the Children’s Creativity Museum in San Francisco, California, the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, and the World Figure Skating Museum & Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

About Blue Star Museums

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 28, 2012 through Labor Day, September 3, 2012. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their family members (military ID holder and up to five family members). Active duty military include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and active duty National Guard and active duty Reserve members. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program. For questions on particular exhibits or museums, please contact the museum directly. To find out which museums are participating, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums. The site includes a list of participating museums and a map to help with visit planning.

Museums that wish to participate in Blue Star Museums may contact bluestarmuseums@arts.gov, or Wendy Clark at 202-682-5451.



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This is the latest NEA program to bring quality arts programs to the military, veterans, and their families. Other NEA programs for the military have included Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience; Great American Voices Military Base Tour; and Shakespeare in American Communities Military Base Tour.

About [YOUR ORGANIZATION]

[INSERT BOILERPLATE COPY ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION HERE]

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. In addition to morale and empowerment programs, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable through programs and partnerships like Operation Honor Cards, MilKidz Club and Blue Star Museums. Membership includes military spouses, children and parents as well as service members, veterans and the civilians who strongly support them. To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit www.bluestarfam.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at arts.gov.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Blue Star Museums?

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day, May 28, through Labor Day, September 3, 2012.

Which museums are participating?

More than 1,800 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are participating in Blue Star Museums. These include children's museums, fine art museums, history and science museums, and nature centers.

Who is eligible for free museum admission through Blue Star Museums?

The free admission program is available to any bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card, or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card, which includes active duty U.S. military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, active duty National Guard and Reserve members, active duty U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, active duty NOAA Commissioned Corps), and up to five family members. Please see the [chart of the acceptable IDs](#) (PDF).

How many military personnel and/or family members are allowed in for free per visit?

The military ID holder plus **up to five** family members.

How do you define a family member?

A family member of active duty military may include a spouse or child, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

What if my spouse is deployed? Can my family and I still participate?

Yes, spouses of deployed military are eligible for Blue Star Museums. Just bring your DD Form 1173 ID Card, or DD Form 1173-1 ID Card, for active duty military family members.

How many military personnel and/or family members are allowed in for free per visit?

The military ID holder plus **up to five** family members.

What if my child is under the age of 10 and doesn't yet have a military ID?

Children under the age of 10 without military ID are welcome to attend with their parents who either hold a Geneva Convention Common Access Card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID Card, or a DD Form 1173-1 ID Card.



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Does the Blue Star Museums program include admission for veterans and retirees? For unmarried partners? For parents with a child currently serving on active duty, or for those who have lost a child on active duty?

Admission for these individuals is not included in the scope of this program, unless they are the bearer of a Geneva Convention Common Access Card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID Card, or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card.

Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America to offer free admission to families with a member serving during this time of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially focusing on the approximately 1 million children who have had at least one parent deployed. This program offers these families a chance to visit museums this summer when many will have limited resources and limited time to be together.

Will I receive free entry to special, fee-based exhibits?

Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program. For questions on particular exhibits or museums, please contact the museum directly.

Is there a limit on the number of Blue Star Museums I can visit this summer?

No, there is no limit on the number of participating museums that eligible parties can visit.

If a museum already offers free admission, can it still participate in Blue Star Museums?

Museums with free admission are also welcome to join the Blue Star Museums list on the NEA website.

How can museums join the Blue Star Museums program?

Museums that wish to participate in Blue Star Museums may contact bluestarmuseums@arts.gov, or Wendy Clark at 202-682-5451.

Who are the national partners on Blue Star Museums?

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the [National Endowment for the Arts](#), Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America. Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. To learn more about Blue Star Families, please visit BlueStarFam.org.

The effort to recruit museums has involved the partnership efforts of The American Association of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Association of Children's Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, and the Association of Science-Technology Centers.



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WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

The Blue Star Museums program will launch nationally on Monday, May 28, 2012 and publicity efforts will continue until the program ends on Labor Day, Monday, September 3, 2012. Help amplify the national announcement with your own local media outreach efforts on or after the national launch announcement on May 22, 2012 to highlight your involvement in Blue Star Museums.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Think about media opportunities for highlighting your involvement in Blue Star Museums.

- Are you planning a launch event for Memorial Day weekend? Are you planning any other special events for military families throughout the summer or for the 4th of July?
- Make contact with the other museums in your area participating in this program and coordinate your efforts. See www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums for a full list of participating museums.

Become familiar with your local media outlets.

- Think about all types of local media—commercial newspapers, radio, and TV; public broadcasting stations; military, community, and alternative newspapers and newsletters; online news outlets, college and high school papers and stations; noncommercial and community access stations; listservs; and blogs.
- What is covered in different sections of your local newspapers, both print and online?
- Does a paper have a specific desk for covering the arts, or does that fall to the Metro desk? Is there a specific writer who covers the military?
- Does a paper print arts related stories on a certain day (or days) of the week?
- Does local TV/radio produce community news programs? Consider a guest interview about Blue Star Museums.
- Who are the local arts reporters on radio and TV? Who covers community events or human-interest stories?
- Will you use your website and social media channels (Facebook/Twitter/YouTube) as part of your publicity plan? See the Using Social Media section for more tips and tactics.



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Meet with editorial boards at local media outlets.

- Request a meeting with editorial board staff to educate them about your local Blue Star Museums program. The editors might write an editorial on the program, or assign a beat reporter to cover the local story.
- If a meeting is not possible, contact the arts or metro editor, or the military reporter for a discussion.

ORGANIZING A MEDIA STRATEGY

Set media responsibilities.

- Decide who will serve as your main media contact, this should be someone the media can always reach.
- Additional duties may include creating a media list, writing and distributing news releases and advisories, placing calendar listings, setting up interviews, securing photographers, developing social media content, and handling any sensitive issues that arise.

Develop a timeline for creating and distributing press information about the Blue Star Museums launch and any special events you might have planned.

- Include deadlines for writing releases, putting together press kits, confirming a photographer, etc. Remember to schedule dates for social media tactics, such as posting blogs or tweets.
- Remember that listings for the media outlet's calendar section will generally have to be submitted at least 1-2 weeks in advance of the event. Make sure to confirm the exact deadline with the outlet.

Develop a plan for “pitching,” or persuading reporters and editors to cover your museum’s involvement in the Blue Star Museums program.

- Highlight aspects of the event that are interesting and unusual. For example, are there multiple museums in your community participating in this program? Do you have special events planned for military families?
- Not all of your media pitches have to revolve around events. Consider pitching a feature story, such as an interview with a military family visiting your museum for the first time because of Blue Star Museums.



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Determine your spokesperson strategy (see the Choosing a Spokesperson section for more information).

- Assess the willingness of event principals to speak to press. These interviews may be scheduled in advance, or on the day of an individual event. Make sure you have current contact information for them.
- You may need to recruit and train spokespeople in addition to your staff to handle media inquiries.
- Develop media talking points for use by spokespeople. Talking points for Blue Star Museums are included in the virtual PR toolkit. Please note that these are generally not shared with media but are available to your spokespeople to answer questions consistently.
- Consider preparing, or having a prominent community leader write, an opinion piece for your local newspapers. (You also can encourage event participants to write letters to the editor.)

Decide how to handle potential controversy.

- Prepare for a potential crisis or negative publicity by drafting a list of questions and answers you may receive from the media in such a circumstance. For instance, how will you respond if a crisis forces you to close the museum? How will you respond if visitors object to works in your collection?

Create a media list (see the Media Resources section for ideas on how to research outlets).

- Develop a media list for your launch, targeting all local print and broadcast outlets. Make sure to include military outlets, university news outlets, community or civic organization newsletters, local wire service bureaus (e.g., Associated Press), and online media, such as influential local bloggers.
- Include newspaper photo editors on your media list; they may cover the event in lieu of a reporter.
- You also should include newspaper columnists on your list, as they often write about a variety of subjects.
- Include each reporter's name, address, e-mail, phone number, and fax number on the media list. Note if the contact prefers releases via fax or e-mail.

Plan what and when to announce to the media.

- Create a calendar with the launch date and any other special events.
- Announce to the media that your organization is participating in the nationwide Blue Star Museums program. Use the "swiss-cheese announcement press release" provided by the NEA.



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- If you are planning multiple events around this program, announce your schedule of events to the media. Send media advisories 3-4 days before each event, highlighting the who/what/where/when of the event.
- Prepare a press kit for media that includes the press release, biographical information for any speakers (if you are holding a launch event), a schedule of any other special events you may have planned, a fact sheet about your organization, and general information on Blue Star Museums.
- Newspapers often will request pictures to illustrate articles. Think about staging some interesting publicity shots prior to launching Blue Star Museums. You should have a print-quality (300 dpi or more, and at least 4x4 inches in size) electronic versions of the images available for emailing or downloading from your website. Make sure to include information about the availability of any photos in your press kit. Please note that before distributing photographs you should obtain permissions from anyone in the photographs.

Follow up after you distribute the press release or media advisory.

- Make follow-up phone calls to key reporters or editors to whom you have sent the press release or advisory. Be prepared to briefly pitch the story, emphasizing the main points of your press release, and offer interviews with key spokespeople.
- Keep track of potential media attendees so that you know how many press kits you'll need.

THE MEDIA AND YOUR EVENT

Plan to take hi-resolution, print-friendly pictures of your launch event and any accompanying events.

- Assign a person to take photographs at your launch and any other events. It is useful to have high quality, high-resolution photos to distribute to media with a follow-up press release. Photographs are also useful for posting on your organization's website to encourage more families to take advantage of this program.
- Some recommended photos for your "shot list" may include candid shots or posed shots of families enjoying the exhibitions at your museum, or a museum staffer explaining artworks to families.
- Images should be at least 300 dpi resolution, and a minimum size of 4x4 inches for print or web publication.



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- Inform the photographer of your expectations, including length of coverage, important shots, and post-event delivery of images.
 - ✓ Plan a shot list for the photographer, which is a detailed list of which photographs to take, e.g., opening remarks at your launch event or a shot of families touring your museum.
 - ✓ Arrange with the photographer to receive electronic copies of 2-3 of the best photos immediately after the event to include with the follow-up news release or post on your website.
 - ✓ For each photo, make sure to include caption information (each person that is in the photo, what's taking place) and the photographer's name. Even if your photographer is a volunteer, track this information.
 - ✓ Make sure that your contract with the photographer is clear on what usage rights you have.
- Make sure to obtain permissions from anyone in the photographs.
 - ✓ Have a plan for getting subjects to sign a release form that will allow you to use their images in future advertising or media coverage. It is best to have subjects sign a release form at or soon after the event.
 - ✓ A release should include information about how the photographs will be used (e.g. in print publications, on your website, etc.) and for what purpose (e.g. for media or educational purposes).
 - ✓ If you're photographing children under 18, their parents or guardian will have to sign the releases.
 - ✓ In addition to individual releases, consider making a general announcement at the beginning of each event alerting attendees that their likenesses may be used for future publicity.

Prepare for TV or radio coverage of your launch.

- Check if the venue is equipped with a mult box, which allows TV and radio crews plug in their equipment and record directly from the venue's sound system.
- If the venue does not have a mult box, make sure there is ample room close to the action for camera and/or microphone set-up. Make sure the camera crews know of any restrictions to the recording of your event (eg. no flash or restrictions to the number of cameras that can be near the stage).
- On the day of the event, you may want to have this area roped off or otherwise reserved for media crews.
- Make sure to give each producer or camera tech a press kit. Have extra copies of the press release on hand as camera techs will sometimes only want a page that easily fits in a pocket.

Welcome media to the event.

- Designate a welcome area for media, such as a media desk where you can hand out press materials.
- The media contact (or a designated greeter) should welcome members of the media to the event, get their contact information, hand out press materials, and show media to the press seating area.



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- Have a sign-in sheet for media to help track resulting stories and enhance your media database.
- Ask the media representative if he/she is interested in interviews with any of the principals, if these interviews are not already scheduled.
- Designate an area for interviews. A member of the media team should escort any media to and from the interview site. This area should be as quiet as possible to facilitate any audio recordings.

Follow up with media after the event.

- Send the press release to any targeted media who did not attend the event.
- Send one or two photos from the event with the follow-up release.
- Post downloadable images from the event on your website's media page. You also can upload photos to your site and instruct media to follow up with your media contact to receive copies of images.

MONITORING YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE

Keep track of all earned media in print, broadcast, and online outlets. Earned media is any news coverage of your project.

- Monitor local print, online, and broadcast news for coverage of Blue Star Museums.
- Draft a "media highlights" report of top earned media placements to share internally. How many articles were placed, and in which outlets? If possible, capture circulation numbers to quantify your PR results. Analyze the tone of coverage, and the types of stories produced.
- Add links to online news stories to your website.
- Keep the NEA informed of your local Blue Star Museums media success by sending us sample clips and media highlights about your local program. Contact us at bluestarmuseums@arts.gov.



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REQUESTING CORRECTIONS

- Monitor coverage for accuracy. Though you will send media accurate information about Blue Star Museums there may be instances in which the resulting coverage is inaccurate.
- Prevention is the best medicine: Always send media written copies of your program information before or as a follow-up to an interview, even if those program basics are covered in the interview.
- You can request a correction for any information that is factually inaccurate. Examples include the name of your organization, or the dates of the Blue Star Museums program.
- Before you contact the news outlet, make sure the mistake is their fault. Double-check the accuracy of program materials you've sent to media. Make sure that the briefing materials you have given to your spokespeople are accurate. You can still ask for a correction even if it was your fault, but it's good media etiquette to acknowledge if it was your mistake.
- Always be polite and professional when asking a media outlet for a correction. In your phone call or email, frame it as a request, not a demand. Just point out the error and provide the correct information.
- Make sure to also emphasize the correct information during your next media opportunity.
- If the print outlet cannot include a correction in its print edition, ask for a correction in the online version.

MANAGING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA

If a reporter expresses an unfavorable opinion of your project, you might want to schedule a conversation to clear up any misunderstanding. Keep in mind that the reporter may not change his/her mind, and the outlet does not have to issue a correction unless it is a factual mistake.

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MEDIA RESOURCES

Your list of media contacts should include your community's print, broadcast, and social media outlets. Use the resources below to research the local media community. Also ask your local reference librarian or use an online search engine.

DIRECTORIES FOR PRINT (Newspapers/Periodicals) and BROADCAST (TV and Radio)

- [News Media Yellow Book](#)—This resource, published quarterly, provides a directory of contacts for the country's largest daily, weekly, and trade newspapers and magazines. It also contains lists of radio and television networks, television channels, and radio stations. An assignment index includes arts, culture, and entertainment reporters.
- www.usnpl.com— Contains a list of local newspapers, local magazines and college newspapers.
- [Newslink.org](#)— This website sorts outlets by state and contains lists of business and specialty newspapers. Also covers TV and radio stations.
- [NPR.org](#)—The National Public Radio (NPR) website offers information on local NPR affiliates.
- [Stationindex.com](#)—Lists most TV stations in the top 210 media markets.
- [Radio Station World](#) —You can search this page of the radiostationworld website for television and radio stations in several categories.

DIRECTORIES AND RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- [Technorati](#) is the leading blog search engine and directory, it indexes more than a million blogs, tracks the authority and influence of blogs, and popular topics in the Blogosphere.
- [Listorious](#) is a search engine to find people with Twitter feeds. It allows you to search for Twitterers by topic, location, or profession.
- [Patch.com](#) is a community-specific news and information platform that provides comprehensive local coverage for individual towns and communities.
- [Mashable](#) is the top source for news in social and digital media, technology and web culture.
- The U.S. Department of Defense offers a variety of social media resources for military families, including [Blog Brigade](#), [DoDVclips on YouTube](#), and [MilitaryOneSource on Facebook](#).

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CHOOSING A SPOKESPERSON

Choosing the person or persons who will be the “public face” of your museum is an important decision. The people you want should be completely at ease with public speaking, talking with the media, and being on camera in either a taped or live situation.

You may want one person who talks to the media and one person who does community outreach such as to business, community, or education leaders. But whether you have one or more people in that role, you need to have someone who is up to the task. Sometimes even the best program administrator is not the best public spokesperson, so please consider this role carefully.

The person you want:

- Is fully knowledgeable about Blue Star Museums.
- Is outgoing and at ease speaking in front of an audience.
- Is comfortable speaking with reporters.
- Isn't afraid of a microphone or a video camera.
- Has a degree of familiarity with local media.
- Understands deadlines and the importance of disseminating information in a timely manner.

The person you don't want:

- Is juggling so many other tasks that returning reporter inquiries or making media pitches falls to the bottom of the list.
- Is extremely knowledgeable about Blue Star Museums but gets nervous talking to a reporter or a room full of people.
- Is uncomfortable with the idea of being on television.
- Doesn't normally read the local paper or watch the local news.

Use the Blue Star Museums **Talking Points** to brief your spokesperson. The talking points should be given to your spokesperson(s) to study so that there is a familiarity with why this program was begun and what it means to your local community. It's important to remember that while your programming is localized to your community, you are part of a national initiative.



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RADIO AND TV ETIQUETTE

The following tips are meant to help with radio and TV interviews about Blue Star Museums. Relax, and have fun! For a story like Blue Star Museums, most broadcasters will want to help you promote the program in your community. The following points will help you with next broadcast opportunity.

RADIO

Before the interview:

- Talk with the media outlet representative (reporter or producer) to clarify all the relevant details on the interview. Who will interview your spokesperson, when, and where the interview will take place (in the studio or via phone), and how long will the interview last? What questions will be asked? If it is a phone interview, clarify if you call the station or if they will call you.
- Find out the format so you'll know what to expect. Is this a live interview? Is it live-to-tape? (Meaning it will be recorded as if it were live, with no editing when it is played back.) Is it recorded in order to be edited for sound bites? (Meaning the final story may include some edited quotes). Is it a call-in show?
- Gather all the information (who/what/when/where/format/questions/talking points/contact information) into an interview memo for your spokesperson to review before the interview.
- Send an advance press kit to your interviewer or the producer information before the interview. Also notify the producer if you would like to talk about specific events.
- Rehearsal time: once you know the timeframe for the interview, plan your answers accordingly. Most radio and TV programs use short formats, so you may only have 30 seconds to a few minutes to tell your story. Be ready to talk about your top three points about Blue Star Museums. If the interview is longer, respond in more detail, include an anecdote about the program or your museum. Tailor the talking points provided in this toolkit to your local needs.

The interview:

IN PERSON/IN THE STUDIO:

- Be on time. Broadcast programming is scheduled to the second. If you're told to be at the studio for a 10:30 a.m. interview, arrive 15 to 20 minutes early to allow time to prepare and relax.
- Technical details: You may receive headphones to wear. **Always assume your microphone is "on,"** and don't say anything you wouldn't want the listening audience to hear.
- Feel free to bring some notes if you like. It's radio. No one can see you reading.
- Radio is an intimate medium, so relax and think of it as a one-on-one conversation.



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OVER THE PHONE:

- Radio producers prefer that you use a land line over a cell phone, and call from a quiet space.
- If you are calling the producer, get the correct phone number and a back-up number. Find out how long before the interview they want you to call in and make that call on time. Be prepared to stay on hold for a few minutes, during which you'll likely hear the on-air product.
- If the station is calling you, make sure they have the correct number and a back-up and make sure you are available at the appointed time.
- Everything else is the same as above.

TELEVISION

Before the interview:

- Just as with radio, find out who will do the interview, how long it is, and in what format. Is this for a news story? Is it for a public affairs program? Is it a live shot? Is it taped? In the studio or remote? Prepare an interview memo with all the relevant details for your spokesperson.

The interview (Everything that applies to radio applies here as well):

- **How do I act on TV?** TV notices everything, especially posture, energy, and facial expression. Focus on being relaxed, comfortable, and confident. If you are sitting, sit up and lean forward to prevent slouching into your seat. Speak louder than normal, and with more energy. Smile! **What do I say?** A typical local TV news story is 80 seconds long. Be ready to convey your top three messages about Blue Star Museums in short, concise soundbites, about 10 seconds long. Speak clearly and not too fast. After you convey the key messages, add anecdotes about your museum. Practice out loud to get rid of audible pauses like “uhm” and “you know.” **Where do I look?** If the interviewer is with you, you can look at the interviewer, rather than the camera. If the interviewer is elsewhere (if the anchor is the a studio, and you are in a remote location), the producer may ask you to look into the camera. **What do I wear?** Wear flattering, professional clothes in solid, neutral (not too dark) colors or subtle patterns. Avoid wearing white, black, or red, and distracting jewelry. Makeup should be subtle, but powder and lipstick help with bright TV lights.

FOLLOW UP

Send your interviewer a note of thanks for the opportunity to publicize Blue Star Museums via their program. It lets them know that their efforts were appreciated and made a difference – and leaves them inclined to deal with you again on another event your organization may do in the future.



PR TOOLKIT

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

In the last few years, the media environment has expanded beyond print, radio, TV, and websites to include a range of social media channels such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, and YouTube. These social media channels can help you extend the reach of your message. With social media, you are the reporter as well as the PR contact - you get to tell your story directly to the public. Social media channels also enable military families to share their Blue Star Museums experiences with family members near and far. Use social media tactics as part of your larger strategic communications plan. This section will highlight some of the most popular social media channels you can use to augment your Blue Star Museums communications plan.

Here are some key ideas to consider when planning your use of social media.

- While there are many social media channels out there, use only those which meet your needs. Social media involves time-intensive writing, editing, and in some cases, media production. Learn about the options and choose the tools that work for you and the type of content you want to produce.
- The type of content you have will also help guide your social media choices. For example, do you always have a lot of high-quality photographs from events? Then consider Flickr.
- Make a plan for your social media efforts. Who will write and/or edit the content? How long will it take to write/edit/get any necessary approvals on the content? How often do you plan to publish fresh content? Who will monitor and respond to public queries on social media channels?
- When developing content remember social media users are looking to build a community around interesting, informative, useful, and fun content. In other words, they're looking for personality and good writing. Make sure your content is a mix of hard news (press releases), narrative content (blog posts, or video stories) and external content. Consider applying the 80/20 rule to your social media. Be a shameless self-promoter for about 20 percent of your social media posts, and use the other 80 percent to share interesting news in or outside of the museum world, connect your readers with events in your community, and otherwise share information that positions you as an authority in your field.
- All your press materials should include information on your social media channels (e.g. your blog, your Twitter name, the URL for your Facebook group, your RSS feed, etc.). Include icons and links for your social media channels on your website home page. Remember that social media is part of your branding effort; if possible, be consistent with the names you use on each of your social media platforms.

Blog

- Blogging is an easy way to get started with social media. There are many free blogging hosts available to get started. Keep in mind that blogs tend to be more conversational in tone. Post first person narratives as well as pointing to news announcements. Read blogs to learn about the length, tone, and type of content.



PR TOOLKIT

- Consider enabling the comments feature on your blog to give your community a way to interact with your organization and with each other. Develop and post your comment policy: will the comments be moderated or unmoderated? If comments are moderated, what's the review process? Think about how you will respond to comments, e.g. questions about your exhibits, interesting discussions, etc.
- Aim to publish new content at least once a week. If you publish less than 3x/week, choose consistent dates.
- Possible content may include interviews with curatorial staff, visiting scholars, military personnel and/or their families who have participated in Blue Star Museums; articles about exhibits or items in the collection; excerpts of essays from exhibit catalogs; photographs of exhibits from visitors; essays about featured artists.

Twitter

- [Twitter](#), also known as microblogging, allows you to send out a maximum message of 140 characters. Since this maximum includes your "Twitter name," make sure to choose something recognizable as your organization but not overly long. Register for a free Twitter account, and start to develop a community by "following" people (sign up to get their Twitter messages sent to you) and by getting others to follow you.
- To start you may want to follow organizations in your community, experts/leaders in your field, print and online journalists who cover your museum, and other museum supporters. Several [online search engines](#) can help you find Twitter users with similar interests that you can follow.
- Conversations on Twitter are often grouped by hashtags, e.g. #royalwedding, #justinbieber, etc. The official Blue Star Museums hashtag is #bluestarmuse. Use the hashtag #bluestarmuse to search for others who are tweeting about Blue Star Museums, and help them find you. Add this hashtag to your Blue Star Museums "Tweets," and mention it on other Blue Star Museums PR materials.
- Your Twitter frequency will vary according to the content that you have to publish. Ideally, aim for 1-2 tweets/day. Consider "[re-tweeting](#)" (RT, or copying) interesting/relevant "Tweets" from your followers. You will not want to retweet everything that the people/organizations you're following post, so develop guidelines for the types of content you're RTing. For example, your organization might decide not to RT anything that includes links to a commercial site, such as Amazon or Ebay.
- Content may include trivia or fun facts about exhibits; significant dates in your field (such as Pablo Picasso's birthday, the invention of the jet engine); quotes about your field; provocative questions related to your field/exhibit; links to news articles about your museum or field, fun pictures from museum events; press releases; notices of blog updates; or [live tweet an event](#).



PR TOOLKIT

Facebook

- [Facebook](#) is an online community space; you can register for an organization page. The main element of the Facebook page is the “Timeline,” where you post status updates about your organization and your Facebook fans/friends can write comments about your organization. A Facebook page is a great forum for soliciting feedback, anecdotes, and photographs from Blue Star Museum visitors. Ideas to consider: host a special event just for your Facebook fans with a special code just on Facebook; have a live Facebook webchat.
- Aim to update your Facebook status update at least 1x/day. You can set up your Facebook page to also have feeds from your other social media accounts, e.g. your blog, Twitter, YouTube, etc. so it will also be updated every time one of these channels is updated.
- Repurpose content from your blog and other social media channels on Facebook, such as Twitter or YouTube. Create “photo albums” from museum events, or host live chats with curators, experts, or others. It’s a good forum for posting extended answers to questions from your constituents.
- On Facebook, you have to decide how “public” you want your presence to be. You can configure your settings to let only your “friends” view your content, or you can allow everyone to view your content, even those who don’t have a Facebook account.

YouTube

- [YouTube](#) is an online community space for posting videos. YouTube is the #2 search engine after Google, making it a powerful channel to promote your Blue Star Museums news. The average YouTube video is 1-2 minutes, so plan your videos accordingly. Viewers may comment on your videos and – if you allow it – share your video on other social media sites, extending your message.
- There are many low-cost, upload friendly video cameras on the market as well as free or low-cost editing software, which make it relatively easy to turn around short, high-quality videos.
- Possible content may include videos of museum visitors responding to questions such as ‘What did you like best about your visit/the exhibit?’ ‘What made you come today?’ Other ideas include brief interviews with curators or guest lecturers; features on specific objects in the collection; “how-to” videos related to your collection; video-tours of exhibits.

Flickr

- [Flickr](#) is an online photography community. Consider posting photos of special events or photos of museum objects not currently on view. Encourage visitors to submit their own photos of visits to your museum; post “mystery” pictures from your collection and invite users to guess what the object is; post photos for a scavenger hunt and recognize the winner on your website.



PR TOOLKIT

PARTNERING WITH OTHER MUSEUMS TO MAXIMIZE MEDIA INTEREST

In many communities and/or regions, multiple museums have joined [Blue Star Museums](#). Here are some tips and talking points to leverage this opportunity into more media exposure for Blue Star Museums.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

- The fact that multiple organization in our community joined Blue Star Museums is a testament to the strength of the arts in our community.
- Our museums are proud to be part of Blue Star Museums. Together, our museums have the opportunity to thank our military families for their service and share with them America’s cultural treasures.
- Use ‘power in numbers’ as a story ‘hook.’ For example, “Museum X, Museum Y, and Museum Z have joined Blue Star Museums, which offers free museum admission to military families this summer.”
- Consider making a joint grant announcement to state media, i.e. your state’s Associated Press bureau, about all of your state’s Blue Star Museums involvement, in addition to announcing your involvement locally. Then you can announce the kickoff for each individual museum at the local level.
- Point out the different experiences the museums provide and how these experiences can be linked. For instance, a history museum might highlight Lewis and Clark while an art museum might highlight its collection of western landscapes.

SELECTING MEDIA TARGETS

- Consider coordinating your media outreach efforts with other local participating museums. If you release a joint announcement, keep in touch with local Blue Star Museums to best coordinate your media efforts. Here’s an [example of joint coverage](#) in Connecticut.
- Decide which outlets and reporters to target for your joint announcement (daily and weekly newspapers, local network TV affiliates, cable access channels, and online news outlets).
- Increase the visibility of the team effort by sharing anecdotes and stories on your social media outlets, such as blogs, Twitter, and other platforms.

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PR TOOLKIT

HOW TO USE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Make the placement of public service announcements part of your publicity plan.

Another promotional tool to consider is the public service announcement (PSA), which is an advertisement carried free of charge by local media (radio and TV) to publicize a message in the public interest. A sample PSA script is available in this PR toolkit.

- You may want to develop your own PSAs for broadcast use.
- Ask a local radio show host, mayor, or other public official to read your PSA.
- If you produce your own PSA for radio or TV it should run either 15 or 30 seconds.
- Consider asking your community radio or TV stations to produce a PSA in support of Blue Star Museums.

How to work with broadcast outlets.

- Contact the public service manager of your local commercial and public broadcast outlets to ask how to submit a PSA for broadcast. Stations often air PSAs during non-peak broadcast times (after 11:00 pm or before 6:00 am), although stations sometimes have a policy of airing one PSA in each newscast.
- Contact university and public access cable broadcast outlets—including your local educational channel—that may have more flexibility with airtime.
- Because airtime for public service announcements is free, it is also highly competitive. If your budget allows, consider purchasing some ad time on a commercial station and asking for additional free time.
- Encourage a local commercial broadcast outlet to become a Blue Star Museums sponsor and to air the PSA as an in-kind contribution.

Ask non-media outlets to broadcast the PSAs.

- Ask local schools to show the video PSA as part of a student assembly, or play the radio PSA, or read the PSA script during morning announcements.
- Ask playhouses, music venues, and other performing arts spaces to play a PSA before an event.
- Contact your local movie theaters about showing Blue Star Museums PSA as part of pre-movie advertising.

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PR TOOLKIT

MEDIA SPONSORSHIPS

Consider how a media outlet's services would best enhance your publicity strategy before soliciting a sponsorship.

- A media sponsor can assist with coverage through placement of advertisements, promotions, or substantive features on your community's Blue Star Museums program for free or at a discounted rate.
- Consider all types of media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, and online news sources.

In-kind donations can take a variety of forms.

- A media outlet can donate advertising space or airtime for running your public service announcement or promoting Blue Star Museums events.
- The media outlet can match purchased ad space or airtime with additional space or time.
- In exchange for donated time or space, the media outlet is given recognition on all promotional materials.

Remember to clarify what type of recognition your media sponsor expects and on what materials.

- For example, would the sponsor prefer to use a logo or a text crediting line?
- Will the sponsor be recognized on all materials or only on materials related to a particular event?
- Will the sponsor be recognized verbally at events?

Include key personnel from your media sponsor on the guest list for Blue Star Museums events.

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PR TOOLKIT

WORKING WITH MILITARY BASE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICES

The Blue Star Museums program is an excellent opportunity to introduce your organization to local military installations and make them aware of your cultural resources.

All media efforts on a military base or installation are coordinated by the Public Affairs Office (PAO). Here are some tips for working with these PAOs. Each base will have its own approach to media outreach, so these tips should serve as general guidelines. It's best to speak with the PAO before your Blue Star Museums program launches to find out the base's specific guidelines for media efforts.

- Share materials, such an overview of the Blue Star Museums program and a calendar of any accompanying events with the PAO to give them an understanding of the program.
- Exchange contact information between your primary Blue Star Museums publicity contact and the PAO's primary publicity contact. Also, let the PAO know who your official Blue Star Museums spokespersons are.
- Make sure that the PAO has enough Blue Star Museums press kits and other publicity materials onsite to handle any media requests that they might receive directly.
- Discuss and clarify the expectations for media outreach and press releases.

Press Releases and Media Advisories

- Ask the PAO if the base commander or other senior officer might contribute a quote to your press release.
- Ask the PAO to share your media release with local military media (such as the base newspaper or website), or ask them to share their military media list with your PR team to distribute the news.

Follow Up

Ask the PAO to send you print or electronic copies of any Blue Star Museums coverage by their installation's media outlets, since you may not have access to these outlets.

Resources

This link to a [directory of military installations nationwide](#) will help your Blue Star museum locate and reach out to the bases in your communities as necessary.

[Military OneSource](#) is provided by the Department of Defense to active duty, Guard and Reserve and their families. It is a virtual extension of installation services.

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PR TOOLKIT

SWISS CHEESE BLUE STAR MUSEUMS MEDIA ADVISORY

This is a “swiss cheese” media advisory that you can customize and send to local media to announce local Blue Star Museums events. Unlike the lengthier and more narrative press release format, the purpose of a media advisory is to get media outlets (print, broadcast, and online) to attend and cover an event, so the document is pared down to the basic “who, what, when, and where.” If you send out a media advisory, plan to provide reporters who attend the event with the full press kit (press release, FAQ, and other event information). Distribute the media advisory 4-5 days before your event. Redistribute the advisory the morning of the event to facilitate coverage by local TV news, which has a 12-24 hour planning cycle. A follow-up call to the editor or TV assignment desks will help remind them that your story is worth covering.

Contact: [NAME, TITLE]
[ORGANIZATION NAME/ LOGO]
[ADDRESS]
[PHONE | EMAIL]
[WEB ADDRESS | FACEBOOK | TWITTER | YOUTUBE *EMBEDDED HYPERLINKS*]



MEDIA ADVISORY
For Immediate Release
[DATE]

[YOUR ORGANIZATION] TO PRESENT [INSERT NAME OF EVENT]
AS PART OF BLUE STAR MUSEUMS

[CITY, STATE—DATE]—[YOUR ORGANIZATION] will present [YOUR EVENT] as part of Blue Star Museums, a program offering free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2012.

[YOUR EVENT] will feature [insert brief description of your event including key participants and specific event activities].

About Blue Star Museums

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 28, 2012 through Labor Day, September 3, 2012. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their family members (military ID holder and up to five family members). Active duty military include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and active duty National Guard and active duty Reserve members. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program. For questions on particular exhibits or museums, please contact the museum directly. To find out which



PR TOOLKIT

museums are participating, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums. The site includes a list of participating museums and a map to help with visit planning.

Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities.

For more information on this event, please contact [insert contact person.] You can view a full calendar of Blue Star Museum events at [YOUR ORGANIZATION] at [CALENDAR LOCATION].

WHO: [INSERT LIST OF SPEAKERS/PERFORMERS/ETC.]

WHEN: [INSERT DATE AND TIME]

WHERE: [INSERT LOCATION INCLUDING ANY FLOOR OR ROOM NAME/NUMBER]

OTHER: [Who is the RSVP contact for media? Is it a ticketed event?, etc.]

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PR TOOLKIT

SWISS CHEESE BLUE STAR MUSEUMS PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

This is a sample 30-second public service announcement (PSA) that you can customize for use by radio announcers in your community to publicize Blue Star Museums. You also can ask for the PSA to be read before local events, including church services, school assemblies, and performing arts events. Remember to keep the PSA to no more than 30 seconds and use language that generates interest. It's a good idea to read the PSA out loud several times while you are drafting it, to get a sense of how it sounds and how easy it is to read.

Contact: [NAME, TITLE]
[ORGANIZATION NAME/ LOGO]
[ADDRESS]
[PHONE | EMAIL]
[WEB ADDRESS | FACEBOOK | TWITTER | YOUTUBE *EMBEDDED*
HYPERLINKS]



For immediate release
[DATE]

Public Service Announcement
30-second live read script

start date: [DATE]
end date: [September 4, 2012]

:30 – Calling all active duty military! If you are looking for family vacation ideas this summer, you can visit [NAME OF LOCAL MUSEUM] for free through the Blue Star Museums program.

Blue Star Museums are more than 1,800 museums nationwide which offer free admission to active duty military and their families between Memorial Day and Labor Day, 2012.

For a full list of museums nationwide, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

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PR TOOLKIT

BLUE STAR MUSEUMS TALKING POINTS

This document is for internal use by Blue Star Museums spokespeople. Feel free to use this language in your interviews with the media. This document is not intended for distribution.

- Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,800 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day, May 28, through Labor Day, September 3, 2012.
- The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their family members (military ID holder and up to five family members). Active duty military include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and active duty National Guard and active duty Reserve members.
- To find out which museums are participating, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums. The site includes a list of participating museums and a map to help with visit planning.
- Our museum is proud to be part of Blue Star Museums, which gives us a chance to thank our military families for their service and share with them America's cultural treasures.

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PR TOOLKIT

MARKETING MATERIALS

You asked for it, you got it! New in 2012, the PR toolkit now includes a range of marketing materials to help enhance your promotional efforts. Complement your existing “earned media” activities with these marketing materials, available in a variety of formats, in color and black and white versions, and in some cases, customizable file formats. The marketing materials include:

- A **Blue Star Museums logo** in both color and black and white versions. Available in several formats (JPEG, EPS, TIF). The EPS file allows for size adjustment and customization
- A **downloadable color poster** - sizes 8.5” x 11,” 8.5” x 14,” and 11” x 17” in PDF format. Each file includes a version that you can customize with your logo or other information.
- A **downloadable color postcard** - size 5.5” x 8.5” in PDF format.
- A **downloadable black and white ad** (6” x 11,” in PDF and EPS [scalable vector graphic] formats). The EPS file allows for size adjustment and customization.

[DOWNLOAD BLUE STAR MUSEUMS MARKETING MATERIALS](#)



Consider these marketing ideas, and add your own!

- Post the Blue Star Museums logo on your website homepage
- Print out postcards and mail them to your membership
- Hand out flyers at your local Memorial Day Parade
- Hang a poster in your museum window so everyone knows you’re a Blue Star Museum
- Place an ad in your community newspaper
- Leave flyers at the front desk for visitors
- Create a Blue Star Museums banner using the logo provided.

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