



## 2016 BLUE STAR MUSEUMS 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 2,000 museums across America. The program starts on Memorial Day (Monday May 30, 2016) and runs through Labor Day (Monday, September 5, 2016).

As a Blue Star Museum you are part of a national appreciation program for military families. Even if your museum is already free, this is an opportunity to be part of a national effort to say “thank you” to our military community.

The 2016 national launch announcement for Blue Star Museums will take place on Thursday, May 26, 2016. The national partners will conduct national media outreach, and we offer you these tools to help you reach local military families and local media. Use the sample media materials, tips, and tools in this PR toolkit to promote your organization’s involvement in Blue Star Museums, on the May 26 launch date and throughout the summer. The toolkit also offers downloadable **marketing materials** – posters, postcards, 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 202-682-5570.**



## SAMPLE 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 26, 2016. 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 announcement is Thursday, May 26, 2016 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 26, 2016, 12:01 a.m.**

### [YOUR ORGANIZATION] TO PARTICIPATE IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS

***[Your organization] is one of more than 2,000 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 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to the nation’s active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2016. Leadership support for Blue Star Families programming and promotional materials has been provided by MetLife Foundation. The program also provides families an opportunity to enjoy the nation’s cultural heritage and learn more about their new communities after a military move. The complete list of participating museums is available at [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://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]



“The Blue Star Museums program is a fun, free activity for military families to enjoy during the summer months,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “The program is also a great way for service member families to connect to their new communities, and it can provide a meaningful way for families to reconnect after deployment. The Blue Star Museums program is also a perfect way for the arts community to say ‘thank you’ to our service members and their families for the sacrifices they make on our behalf, every day.”

“Blue Star Museums has grown into a nationally recognized program that service members and their families look forward to each year,” said Blue Star Families Chief Executive Officer Kathy Roth-Douquet. “It helps bring our local military and civilian communities together, and offers families fun and enriching activities in their home towns. We are thrilled with the continued growth of the program and the unparalleled opportunities it offers.”

This year, more than 2,000 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative. Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer. The effort to recruit museums has involved partnerships with the American Alliance 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 dozens of children’s museums. Among this year’s new participants are the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, the Children’s Museum of New Hampshire in Dover, New Hampshire, the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History in Pacific Grove, California, the Rochester Museum & Science Center in Rochester, New York, and El Rancho de las Golondrinas, a living history museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

### **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 2,000 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 30, 2016 through Labor Day, September 5, 2016.

The free admission program is available to **any** bearer of a [Geneva Convention common access card](#) (CAC), a [DD Form 1173 ID card](#) (dependent ID), [or a DD Form 1173-1 ID](#) card, which includes active duty U.S. military - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps - and up to five family 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 participating museums and plan your trip, visit [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](#).

All summer long, Blue Star Museums will share stories through social media. Follow Blue Star Museums on [Twitter](#) @NEAarts and @BlueStarFamily, #bluestarmuseums, on [Facebook](#), and read the [NEA Art Works blog](#) for weekly stories on participating museums and exhibits.

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

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 the NEA Military Healing Arts Partnership; 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 spouses, children, parents and friends, as well as service members, veterans and civilians, dedicated to supporting, connecting and empowering military families. With our partners, Blue Star Families leverages data-driven insights to curate resources for military families, including career development tools, local community events for families, and caregiver support. Since its inception in 2009, Blue Star Families has engaged tens of thousands of volunteers and serves more than 1.5 million military family members annually. Blue Star Families also works directly with the Department of Defense and senior members of local, State and Federal government to bring the most important military family issues to light. With Blue Star Families, military families can find answers to their challenges anywhere they are. Visit [bluestarfam.org](http://bluestarfam.org) for more information.

## About the National Endowment for the Arts

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. This year marks the [50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts](#) and the agency is celebrating this milestone with events and activities through September 2016.

# # #



**SAMPLE BLUE STAR MUSEUMS MEDIA ADVISORY**

Planning a Blue Star Museum event? Add your information to this “swiss cheese” media advisory, and send it to local media. The advisory gives basic who/what/when/where information to get media outlets to attend an event. Send the advisory 4-5 days before the event, then resend it on the morning of the event. Make follow-up calls to editors and TV assignment desks to remind them that your story is worth covering. Give press kits to reporters who attend the event.

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 2016.

[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 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to the nation’s active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 30, 2016 through Labor Day, September 5, 2016. The free admission program is available to **any** bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card, which includes active duty U.S. military - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps - and up to five family 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 participating museums and plan your trip, visit [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).

For more information on this event, please contact [contact person.] For a full calendar of Blue Star Museum events at [YOUR ORGANIZATION], visit [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.]

###



## 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 can also ask for the PSA to be read before local events, including religious services, school assemblies, and arts festivals. Make sure your PSA is 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 2, 2016]

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

Blue Star Museums are more than 2,000 museums nationwide which offer free admission to active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2016.

For a full list of museums nationwide, visit [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).

# # #

## MARKETING MATERIALS

**The world is your billboard!** Use these [downloadable marketing materials](#) this art work to create ads, posters, flyers, stickers, banners, online graphics, and more. The materials are available in variety of formats, including customizable file formats for you or your graphic designer to create a customized Blue Star Museum image.

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.
- **"We are a Blue Star Museum"** - use this artwork on your website, to create a window decal or a tabletop display, and more! Available in several formats.



### [DOWNLOAD BLUE STAR MUSEUMS MARKETING MATERIALS](#)

**Need ideas on how to use the marketing materials? See below, or add your own ideas!**

- 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
- Share flyers with your local military installation
- Create a Blue Star Museums banner using the logo provided
- Create a "We are a Blue Star Museum" window decal at a local print shop or online vendor

# # #



## 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 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Memorial Day, May 30, through Labor Day, September 5, 2016.

### **Which museums are participating?**

More than 2,000 (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 \(dependent ID\)](#), or a [DD Form 1173-1 ID](#) card, which includes active duty U.S. military - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps - and up to five 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. The military ID holder can either be active duty service member or other dependent family member with the appropriate ID card. The active duty member does not have to be present for family members to use the program.

### **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.

### **What if my spouse is not deployed, but cannot come to the museum with the family. Can my family and I still participate?**

Yes, your family can still participate, as the active duty member does not have to be present to use the program. 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.

**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 is an effort to improve the quality of life for active duty military families, especially focusing on the approximately 1 million children who have had at least one parent deployed. Blue Star Museums was created to show support for military families who have faced multiple deployments and the challenges of reintegration. 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](mailto: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 2,000 museums across America. [Blue Star Families](#) is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, dedicated to supporting, connecting and empowering military families. The effort to recruit museums has involved partnerships with the American Alliance 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.

# # #



## 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 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to the nation’s active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Memorial Day, May 30, 2016 through Labor Day, September 5, 2016.
- The free admission program is available to **any** bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card, which includes active duty U.S. military - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps - and up to five family members.
- To find participating museums and plan your trip, see the map on [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).
- Our museum is proud to be part of Blue Star Museums, a national appreciation program to thank our military families for their service and share with them America’s cultural treasures.
- Our museum is already free, but we participate in the Blue Star Museum program as a way to say “thank you” to our military families.

# # #



## WORKING WITH YOUR LOCAL MILITARY INSTALLATION

The Blue Star Museums program is a great opportunity to introduce your organization to local military installations and make them aware of your cultural resources. Connect with these departments.

**The Public Affairs Office (PAO)** coordinates all media efforts on a military base or installation. They manage internal and external media that cover installation news. Each PAO has its own approach, so contact the PAO before your Blue Star Museums launch to discuss how they can help spread the news. A few ideas:

- Contact and exchange information with the Public Affairs Office's chief officer.
- Give the PAO your local Blue Star Museums press release, and a calendar of any related events.
- Ask the PAO to share your press 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.
- Ask the PAO if the base commander or other senior officer might contribute a quote to your press release.

**Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)/ Special services** manages recreational activities such as social clubs, fitness centers, child, youth, and school services, arts & crafts groups, movie theaters, and more. Here are some ways you can connect with the MWR department at your local installation:

- Send marketing flyers to post at the fitness center, child services center, library, or movie theater.
- Ask MWR to announce Blue Star Museums at live events
- Ask MWR to post the electronic marketing materials on their web pages.
- Request to make a live presentation for the arts & crafts social group.

**Community Services/Family Support Centers.** While each branch has a slightly different name for this department, they all provide first-stop information for families that are new to the base, such as employment and volunteer opportunities, personal financial education, and information about local resources and services. Contact the Community Services/Family Support Center director at your nearby installation and share Blue Star Museums resources and promotional materials with them.

**DoDEA** manages all schools for military children and teenagers in the United States. [Contact your local School Liaison Officer](#) to find out how they can connect parents with information on Blue Star Museums.

### Resources

Find military installations in your community with this [directory of military installations nationwide](#).

[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.

# # #



## MORE IDEAS ON HOW TO REACH THE LOCAL MILITARY COMMUNITY

Need more ideas on how to reach your local military community? Here are some best practices used by Blue Star Museums in past years. Some of these ideas may work for your museum.

### Host a Family Day

Consider hosting a free “Blue Star Museums Family Day” to help increase military community engagement at your museum. Does your museum already host a “family day?” Add a “Blue Star Museums” element to that event to target military families alongside the general public. Or designate a separate, free “Blue Star Museums Family Day” specifically for military families. Use this event to target local military families, let them know they are welcome at the museum, and promote the family programs available at your Museum. Some activities that other museums have used as part of their family days:

- Scavenger hunts - one museum hosted a family history scavenger hunt, which gave families an opportunity to interact. Another museum hid toy soldiers in each gallery for military kids to discover.
- Hands-on drawing or other artmaking sessions for families.
- Distribute kids gallery guides as a takeaway.
- Storytelling, performances, or other entertainment for families.

### Other ideas to reach military audiences

- Armed Forces Day is May 21, 2016. Call the Public Affairs Office at your local installation and ask if you can offer Blue Star Museum flyers as handouts. Are there events at your nearby installation that can help you connect with the PAO or MWR offices?
- Attend an orientation event for new arrivals at your local installation. Contact the Public Affairs Officer at the local base to ask them for an invitation and if you can offer a flyer to include in any orientation packet or brainstorm other ways to let new arrivals know about Blue Star Museums. Use the downloadable marketing artwork provided.
- Need a state list of military installations? Start with this [database of military installations nationwide](#) or check out this [map of installations](#) nationwide.
- Not sure what a military ID looks like? Here are links to the [Geneva Convention common access card](#) (CAC), a [DD Form 1173 ID card \(dependent ID\)](#), or a [DD Form 1173-1 ID](#) card.
- Are you using social media to share news of your free admission to military families? Ask the Public Affairs Officer at your local installation if they have a Facebook page or a Twitter feed. You can also share your story on the social media channels for [Military One Source](#) and [Blue Star Families](#).

# # #

## Military Life 101

### Military Structure

Department of Defense (DoD)

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard (reports to Dept. of Homeland Defense in peacetime)
- Reserves and National Guard

### Military Culture

- A generally young workforce with close to half of its members having children.
- The majority of military personnel are men, though women and dual career families continue to increase in numbers.
- Military life is marked by frequent relocations and often living far away from extended family. The average military child moves 6 to 9 times between kindergarten and high school.
- While base housing is offered on many installations, many military families live within the community. In fact, over 70% of military kids attend public schools in their local communities.
- In addition to moving due to a permanent change of station (PCS) every few years, some families also voluntarily move to be closer to family support systems during deployments.
- Military spouse employment is also an issue for many families, as frequent and unpredictable moves interrupt a spouses' civilian career advancement.



## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

The Blue Star Museums program will launch nationally on Wednesday, May 26, 2016 and publicity efforts will continue until the program ends on Labor Day in September. Help amplify the national announcement with your own local media outreach efforts on or after the national launch announcement on **May 26, 2016** to highlight your involvement in Blue Star Museum.

**Organize your media strategy** - Your goal: promote your Blue Star Museum to local military audiences. How will you deliver that message, and what specific tactics will you use to reach this goal? Will you host a launch event on Memorial Day weekend? Will you partner with other museums to issue a joint announcement to local media? Or will you focus on direct outreach to the local military installation? Perhaps you will concentrate on social media to reach your target audience. Create a plan that is practical for your time and resources, and feel free to use the following tips.

**Assign media responsibilities** - Decide who will be your main media contact. Other duties may include creating a media list, writing and distributing news releases and advisories, placing calendar listings, arranging interviews, securing photographers, developing social media content. Determine who will be your Blue Star Museums spokesperson (see the Spokesperson section).

**Create a timeline** - Set a schedule for creating and distributing press information about the Blue Star Museums launch and any special events. Include deadlines for writing releases, booking a photographer, and scheduling social media tactics, such as blog posts, YouTube videos, and Tweets. Check with local media on their deadlines for news releases, advisories, online and social media content, and factor that into your schedule.

**Connect with partners** - Consider coordinating efforts with other local Blue Star Museums, and reach out to local military installation. See [www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](http://www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums) for all participating museums.

**Perfect your pitch** - Hone the story you will tell reporters to get them to cover Blue Star Museums. What's unique about your involvement? Are there multiple Blue Star Museums in your area? Will you host special events for military families? Consider pitching a feature story, such as an interview with a military family.

## MEDIA OUTREACH

Develop a media list for your launch announcement. Target local print, online, and broadcast news outlets. Include military outlets, university news outlets, community or civic organization newsletters, local wire service bureaus (e.g., Associated Press), and local bloggers. Remember to gather all contact information, including title, outlet, address, phone, email, and Twitter handle, for example.

As you build your list, find out who are the local arts reporters for print, radio, TV, and online. Who covers community events or human-interest stories? Who covers military news? Which columnists write about local affairs? Find out who are the assignment editors at your local TV news stations. Remember to include photo editors on your list.

Announce to the media that your organization is participating in the nationwide Blue Star Museums program. Use the sample toolkit release/advisory.

Send a photo of your museum alongside your release. Make sure it is print quality (300 dpi, at least 4"x4") and make sure you have the rights to distribute the photo.

Follow up! After you send your release, call the reporter, editor, or blogger, confirm they received the release, briefly pitch your story or event, offer interviews with spokespeople, and ask if they will cover your Blue Star Museum news or event.

## **PLANNING A MEDIA EVENT**

Are you planning an event as part of your announcement of Blue Star Museums? Here are some tips on organizing the event and promoting it to the media.

- If you are planning or more events around Blue Star Museums, announce your schedule of events to the media. Customize the "sample advisory" in this toolkit and send it to media to promote your event. Send media advisories 3-4 days before each event, highlighting the who/what/where/when of the event.
- Prepare a press kit with a press release, biographical information for speakers (if you are holding a launch event), a schedule of any other special, related events, and fact sheets or FAQs for your organization and Blue Star Museums.
- Make follow-up phone calls to key reporters or editors to whom you have sent the press release or advisory. Confirm they received your press release, briefly pitch your story, and ask the reporter, assignment editor, or blogger if they plan to cover your event. Also remember to offer your spokesperson for interview.
- 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/event.
- Keep an RSVP list of potential media attendees so that you know how many press kits you'll need.

## **Photography at your event**

- Assign a person to take photographs at your launch and any other events. Inform the photographer of your expectations, including length of coverage, important shots, and post-event delivery of images.
- Right after the event, have the photographer email you 2-3 photos to post in your newsroom or social media.
- Each photo must have caption and credit information (names of each person in the photo, what's taking place, photographer's name). Confirm usage rights with photographer via contract or otherwise.
- Suggested photos include candid or posed shots of military families enjoying your museum exhibition.
- Images should be at least 300 dpi resolution, and a minimum size of 4x4 inches for print or web publication.
- Send these high quality, high-resolution photos to distribute to media with a follow-up press release. Post these photos on your organization's website to encourage more families to take advantage of this program.
- At the event, consider having subjects sign a release form to allow their permission to use their images in future advertising or media coverage. Check with your marketing team if you have a media release form on file. At the event, you might post a notice or announce at the start that participants' images may be used for future publicity.

### **Prepare for TV or radio coverage of your launch**

- Ask if the venue has a multibox, audio equipment that allows a camera/audio crew to record straight from the venue's sound system. No multibox? Place camera crews where they can record audio. Tell the camera crews if the venue has restrictions (i.e., no flash, no roaming cameras, etc).
- Reserve seating for media, and rope off camera crew space for media crews. This may be near the multibox.

### **Welcome media to the event**

- Designate a welcome area for media, such as a media desk where you can greet media and give out press materials.
- At the welcome area, assign a person as the designated media contact. That person should greet attending media, have them sign-in (to collect phone and email), give them a press kit, and bring them to the designated media space.
- Ask the media representative if he/she is interested in interviews with any of the principals, if not already scheduled.
- Designate an (ideally quiet) location for interviews. Assign a person to escort media to and from the interview site.

### **Follow up with media after the event**

- Send the press release or a follow-up press release, and one or two photos to media who attended.
- Post an item (with photos) on your blog/social media platform. Email reporters with a link to your follow-up story.
- Post downloadable images from the event on your website's media page, offer a media contact for more assistance.

### **Monitor your media coverage**

- 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.
- Share your media. Keep the NEA and Blue Star Families 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](mailto:bluestarmuseums@arts.gov).

### **Requesting corrections**

- Monitor coverage for accuracy. Despite your best efforts, media coverage may include inaccuracies. Prevent mistakes before they happen by sending media written copies of your program information.
- Does coverage include a factual mistake? Request a correction for factual errors, such as the name of your organization, the target audience, or the dates of the Blue Star Museums program.

- Was the mistake really the media's fault? Perhaps there was a typo in the program materials, or maybe your spokesperson went off message. Either way, it's still okay to ask for a correction, just acknowledge the gaffe.
- Be polite and professional when asking for a correction, frame it as a request, not a demand. Just point out the error and provide the correct information. Too late for a print correction? Ask for a correction in the online version.

### **Managing your relationships with the media**

If a reporter expresses an unfavorable opinion of your project, consider a conversation to clear up any misunderstanding. Keep in mind, that unless there is a factual mistake, there's no obligation to issue a correction.

# # #

## 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](http://www.usnpl.com)— Contains a list of local newspapers, local magazines and college newspapers.
- [Newslink.org](http://Newslink.org)— This website sorts outlets by state and contains lists of business and specialty newspapers. Also covers TV and radio stations.
- [NPR.org](http://NPR.org)—The National Public Radio (NPR) website offers information on local NPR affiliates.
- [Stationindex.com](http://Stationindex.com)—Lists most TV stations in the top 210 media markets.
- [Radio Station World](http://Radio Station World) — Search this website for television and radio stations in several categories.

### DIRECTORIES AND RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- [Mashable](#) is the top source for news in social and digital media, technology and web culture.
- [Patch.com](#) is a community-specific news and information platform that provides comprehensive local coverage for individual towns and communities. Community members have the option of creating Patch blogs for their local Patch network. You could be the next blogger on culture in your community!
- 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](#).
- The [NEA Art Works Blog](#) and [Blue Star Families Blog](#) will feature posts about Blue Star museums through the summer. Feel free to share or point to these articles and interviews on participating museums and the military families that enjoy them!

# # #

## 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 calling reporters or returning their calls falls to the bottom of the list.
- Is knowledgeable about Blue Star Museums but is uncomfortable with public speaking.
- 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.

**Issues management** - Make sure your spokesperson is prepared to answer questions from the media about any potentially contentious topics. Draft a list of questions and answers you might 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?

# # #

## RADIO AND TV ETIQUETTE

**Before a radio or TV interview** - Clarify the interview details with the media outlet representative (reporter or producer). Who will interview your spokesperson? When and where the interview will take place (in the studio or via phone)? How long will the interview last? What are the questions? What's the format of the interview (live interview, taped for future editing, or 'live-to-tape' [to be aired 'as-is,' with no editing]). Where/when will the interview air (on a news program, or a local entertainment show? Is it a call-in show? If you are calling the studio, confirm who is calling to commence the interview.

After you've collected the details, create an interview memo that outlines the "who/what/when/where/why/how" information and give it to your spokesperson to review before the interview. Include the producer's contact information. Send your media contact an advance press kit and ask them if you can talk about specific events.

### During the interview:

- If you're taping at a studio, be on time. Broadcast programming is scheduled to the second. Plan to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to the scheduled recording time, so you can prepare and relax. If you are calling in to the studio, know that producers prefer that you call from a landline and in a quiet location.
- You may wear a microphone or headphones; always assume your mike is "on" and speak appropriately. For radio, feel free to bring notes, since no one can see you reading. Relax and enjoy the conversation.
- 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.
- **How do I act on TV?** TV notices everything, especially posture, energy, and facial expression. Be 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 (the anchor is in 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.

### After the interview

Send your interviewer a note to thank them for sharing your Blue Star Museums news. It's a great way to show you appreciate their efforts and helps cultivate your relationship for future coverage of your museum.

# # #



## **SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS #bluestarmuseums**

Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, and blogs complement the role of print, radio, TV, and online news sites. With social media, you are the reporter as well as the PR contact. You can tell your story directly to the public, and your audience can share their stories, too. Consider social media tactics in your Blue Star Museums communications plan.

### **Key ideas for social media planning**

There are many social media channels, use those that meet your needs and reach your target audiences. Social media involves time-intensive writing, editing, and sometimes, media production. Your content will guide your social media choices. Do you have lots of high-quality photos? Consider posting on Facebook, Flickr, or Instagram.

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?

Include your social media channel information on your press materials. 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.

Social media users want to build community around interesting, informative, useful, and fun content. Make sure your content is a mix of hard news (press releases), narrative content (blog posts, or video stories) and external content. Consider the 80/20 rule: have 20 percent of your posts promote Blue Star Museum news, and use the other 80 percent to share interesting news about your community, the museum field, and more.

Social media content with visuals often has a better success rate. Use a cell-phone camera to capture high-quality, digital images, or use sites like Flickr or Wikimedia Commons to find high-quality images that are available under a Creative Commons license. There are many [free online tools for digital editing](#) and creating eye-catching graphics.

### **Blog**

- Blogging is an easy entry to social media. Try free blogging hosts available online. Blogs tend to be more conversational in tone. Post first person narratives as well news announcements. Read blogs to learn about the length, tone, and type of content. If you enable comments to interact with readers, develop a comment policy.
- Publish new content at least once a week. If you publish less than 3x/week, choose consistent dates. Need content ideas? Consider interviews with curatorial staff, artists, scholars, or military personnel and families who have participated in Blue Star Museums; articles about exhibits; or photos of military families visiting your museum.

### **Twitter**

- [Twitter](#) allows you to send out a maximum message of 140 characters, including spaces. The ideal character count is around 100 characters, which allows people to RT (or share) your tweet without much editing. Since this maximum includes your “Twitter handle,” choose a name that’s brief and recognizable as your organization. When you register for a free Twitter account, you’ll have to select several Twitter accounts to follow (get their Twitter messages sent to you) so use [Twitter directories](#) to find journalists, military audiences, museum experts and other supporters.



- Twitter hashtags (e.g. #justinbieber) make it easier to follow Twitter conversations. The official Blue Star Museums hashtag is **#bluestarmuseums**; use it to find others who are tweeting about Blue Star Museums, and help them find you. Add #bluestarmuseums to your “Tweets,” and note it in your PR materials. You might also include hashtags popular with military audiences such as #milfam, #military, and #SOT (Support Our Troops).
- Your Twitter frequency will vary based on the content you have to publish. Aim for 1-2 pre-written tweets/day. Consider [“re-tweeting”](#) (RT, or copying) relevant Tweets from others you are following on Twitter. Be selective and develop guidelines for the types of content you’re RTing.
- Content may include trivia or fun facts about exhibits; important dates in your field (a Blue Star Museum event, Pablo Picasso’s birthday); quotes from and about your field; provocative questions about your field; links to news about your museum, pictures from your events; blog updates, or press releases; or [live tweet an event](#).
- The NEA and Blue Star Families use Twitter extensively to share Blue Star Museum news. Share your Tweet with a cc @NEAarts @BlueStarFamily, and/or #bluestarmuseums.

## Facebook

- [Facebook](#) is an online community space; you can register for an organization page. Post status updates on the “Timeline,” and your fans/friends can respond with comments. A Facebook page is a great forum to solicit feedback, anecdotes, and photographs from Blue Star Museum visitors. You can set up your Facebook page to be private so only “friends” see your content, or make it public to all Facebook users, even those without Facebook accounts.
- Update your Facebook status at least 1x/day. You can even set up your Facebook page to automatically post content from your other social media accounts (blog, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).
- Need content ideas? Consider hosting a special event just for your Facebook fans with a special code just on Facebook, or host a live Facebook webchat with a curator. Create “photo albums” from museum events.
- You are welcome to “like” the [NEA](#) and [Blue Star Families](#) Facebook pages, and you may also share our #bluestarmuseums content. “Tag” us when you post about #bluestarmuseums so we can follow your news.

## YouTube, Google + and more

- [YouTube](#) is an online community video platform, and can be a powerful way 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. Need tips on producing a video? Search YouTube for thousands of “how-to” videos, or to find existing #bluestarmuseums videos.
- There are many more social channels to help share news about Blue Star Museums. Host a [Google Hangout](#) on Google + to share your summer offerings. Is your local military audience on photo/video sharing platforms like [Instagram](#), [Vine](#), or [Pinterest](#)? Consider those platforms to post or share photos or brief videos about Blue Star Museums, special military family events, or exhibits. On platforms that use hashtags, make sure to tag your content with #bluestarmuseums to help people who are interested in the program find your content. Here’s [one smart idea](#) to inspire your own.

# # #

## 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.

# # #



## **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.**

# # #



## **PARTNERING WITH OTHER MUSEUMS TO MAXIMIZE MEDIA INTEREST**

In many communities and/or regions, multiple museums have joined [Blue Star Museums](https://www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums). 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.

###