AAC logo cmyk

**2014 All-America City Award**

#### Marketing Manual

Contents

A Unique Marketing Opportunity 3

Maximizing a Powerful Marketing Tool 4

Benefits to All Finalists 5

Promoting Your Community 7

Community Celebrations 7

Coordinating Your Campaign with Local Media 8

Using the AAC Logo 10

Posters, Signs, Banners 11

Online Marketing 12

Creating Promotional Materials 13

Funding Your Marketing Plan 14

Getting Coverage: What is News? 16

Directing Your Story to the Right Medium 17

Getting the Message Through 17

News Conferences 18

Making Headlines 18

Sample Letter to the Editor 19

AAC Fact Sheet 20

Sample Media Release 21

National Civic League: Headquarters

1889 York St.

# Denver, Colorado 80206

Phone: (303) 571-4343

Fax: (888)314-6053

Email: [aac@ncl.org](mailto:aac@ncl.org)

Web site: [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org)

AAC Blog: [www.allamericacityaward.com](http://www.allamericacityaward.com)

© 2014 National Civic League

The All-America City Award

A Unique Marketing Opportunity

**As an All-America City (AAC) Award Finalist**, your community has earned a tremendous marketing opportunity. Applied to its full advantage, the designation can place your community in the media spotlight locally and nationally. Each year, All-America Cities receive extensive media coverage within their regions and across the country.

Since the All-America City Award was founded in 1949, more than 600 communities have been recognized as All-America Cities—some multiple times. Depending on each community’s goals and resources, AAC finalists and All-America Cities have marketed their designations in various ways. This information provides dozens of examples of how past communities have publicized their All-America City designation for their benefit, including:

1. Encouraging Economic Stimulus
2. Promoting Community Pride
3. Reinforcing Community Collaboration

An investment of your time and energy in a marketing strategy will yield significant dividends. The marketing guide will assist All-America Cities and Finalists in designing, funding, and implementing an effective marketing program.

### Promote Your Finalist Status

Being selected as one of the Finalists indicates that the National Civic League has spotlighted your community as a model for the rest of the country. Your community obviously works collaboratively with stakeholders throughout your area and has demonstrated its ability to overcome challenges. That’s what the All-America City Award is all about.

As a finalist, your community has already earned valuable recognition, regardless of whether your community is ultimately selected as an All-America City. Your community should proudly proclaim your achievement locally, regionally, and nationally.

Plus, applying for the All-America City Award helped you identify the good things that your community is doing, and helped you identify new ways of solving problems. The process has hopefully presented a unique opportunity for your community to evaluate itself and foster new community partnerships.

A wonderful example of raising the level of awareness and marketing a community’s efforts is when the City of York, Pennsylvania, was selected as an All-America City Finalist; the *York*

*Sunday News* printed hundreds of copies of a special section devoted exclusively to the community’s status as a Finalist. The section included:

* Articles about the projects discussed in the application;
* A message from the Mayor outlining why York was an All-America City;
* Quotes from citizens about what they liked (and disliked) most about their community; and
* A historical timeline of the development of the City of York. The section provided a great rallying point for the community to celebrate York’s Finalist status.

You can also post your AAC application on your Web site to better inform your community about its status as an AAC Finalist and the programs spotlighted in the application.

***A Powerful Marketing Tool***

One of the key benefits of the All-America City Award program is that the recognition associated with the All-America City Award provides Finalists with an important avenue to market their communities nationally to prospective businesses and corporations.

“The NCL’s All-America City program is paramount, and it continues to be the most prestigious civic award in the country.”

Mandy Pitts,

Communications Director,

City of Hickory, NC

2008 All-America City Award Winner

"Neighbors accepting responsibility for themselves and each other is key to civic accomplishment. The All-America City designation acknowledges the great things that happen in New Haven when we work together."

Mayor John DeStefano, Jr.

New Haven, Connecticut

2008 All-America City Award Winner

“Having been chosen as an All-America City is a reflection of the hard work our community has undertaken to face its challenges. It is work done collaboratively with a can-do attitude by community members, non-profits, business, and government agencies. We are proud to receive this award and hope that it represents not only what we have accomplished together but also what the future holds for our City.”

Mayor Bob Blanchard

Santa Rosa, California

2007 All-America City Award Winner

“The AAC competition brought our community together like never before. The Award has highlighted the great accomplishments of our citizens. It is a seal of approval for our City which says that our Community is moving in the right direction and has the civic infrastructure in place to solve any problem that we may face in the future. It is an affirmation of the great work being done in our community and tells others that our City is the place you want to be.”

Bill Bruton

City Manager

Marietta, Georgia

2006 AAC Winner

## *Benefits to All Finalists*

1. **Economic Stimulus:** AAC finalists and winners find it easier to attract and retain businesses that generate jobs and a stronger tax base. They also attract and retain residents who want a healthy community. Finalists and winners also have seen an increase in tourism, grants and bond ratings. For instance:
   * *Cynthia Steinhauser, Assistant City Manager of Dubuque, Iowa, a 2007, 2012 & 2013 All-America City, says that the All-America City Award “helped us land a BIG project in the midst of major economic recession in 2009/2010. IBM located their first data center in 10-15 years in downtown Dubuque and created 1300 new jobs with an annual payroll of 58 million! We feel truly blessed.” Cynthia comments on their continued economic success, “In 2013 Forbes ranked us 14th in the nation for Best small places for Business and Careers. Last year we had a job growth of 1200 new jobs, that represented 9.38% of the state's total job creation even though we are only 3% of the states total population and according to Site Selection Magazine we are tied for #1 in the US for Metro areas under 200,000 in population. This recruitment recognition and ability to grow employment in our community are a testament to our AAC award and what that award stands for in terms of a community's can-do spirit”.*
   * *“Michael Schmit, city administrator of Wilmar, Minnesota, a 2005 All-America City, says his community has used to award in an extensive marketing campaign to promote economic development…’Our bond rating has increased,’ he adds, ‘and to be sure, we talked to the rating companies about winning the award.’ Schmit attributes much of this economic activity to the increase in community cooperation and price. He advises future winners to take pride in their achievement and to (leverage) the award as a basis for ‘doing bigger and better things.’” National Civic Review, Winter 2007, page 11*
   * *“Since winning the award in 1990, 71 companies have relocated here, bringing in 3,900 jobs. These new jobs are generating an annual payroll of more than $100 million. The Award gave us the credibility to encourage these companies to relocate,” Paul Anderson, Jobs Plus, Coeur d’ Alene, Idaho.*
   * *“We have created an average of 1,000 new manufacturing jobs per year since winning the All-America City award in 1989,” said Shane Homan, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce in Tupelo, Mississippi. “Our service sector jobs have grown equally as fast. The Award validates our community’s quality of life and is used proudly in all of our economic development and corporate recruitment efforts.”*
   * *In Tallahassee, Florida the award helped them to keep SunBank from moving its headquarters out of the city.*
   * *Lindsay, California added 1,475 jobs to its economy in the first five years following its All-America Award.*
   * *“Publicity we received from the All-America City Award helped change our negative industrial image to that of a major recreational and tourist area.” Lois Glewwe, City Council Member, St. Paul, Minnesota.*
   * *“The award demonstrates a high quality of life and a community of caring individuals. This is impressive to companies looking to relocate or start a new business in the area,” Bill Shendow, Winchester-Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, Winchester, Virginia.*
2. **Community Pride:** The award has reinvigorated communities with a new sense of pride, accomplishment and teamwork. People are proud to live in an All-America City and they work to keep their reputation.
   * *“All-America City was truly the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my professional life. I honestly believe, I feel it in my heart, that I left a different person from the person that arrived…carrying a fire back to my community…to bring people together civilly, civically, humbly”* *Miguel A. Seco, Governmental Affairs Manager, City of North Miami, July 2010*
   * *“To the city and to the whole area, it’s like having that five-star seal on a restaurant,” (Mayor Pro-Tempore Karen) Papouchado said. “In the local sense, it demonstrated that in Aiken, the Aiken County, turf and ego do not get in the way of what needs to be done. Those are the two things that seem to impede the rest of the world. That’s something we’ve gotten past here in Aiken and this area, and that’s a very unique thing.” From “A decade as an All-America City,” Aiken Standard.com, June 18, 2007.*
   * *“The All-America City Award is like a Good Housekeeping seal of approval,” Worcester (Massachusetts) Telegram & Gazette.*
   * *“We are very proud of our All-America City Award and will continue to earn its respect,” Larry R. Stobbs, Mayor, St. Joseph, Missouri.*
   * *“We are trying to bottle the excitement from the awards ceremony for everyone back home. We found the energy and excitement somewhere between the Final Four and the Super Bowl,” Larry Kaufman, Project Manager, Independence, Missouri.*
3. **Community Collaboration:** The application process itself encourages communities to evaluate themselves and fosters new partnerships.
   * *“…being an All America City means that our community realizes the great potential of our democracy to move us all forward, and has proven that citizens, businesses, governments and non-profits can work together for the benefit of the entire community” Buffalo News.com February 11, 2014.*
   * *“Mayor Fred Cavanaugh said it’s impossible to put a price tag on Aiken’s All-America status, but the intangible rewards have been immense.” From “A decade as an All-America City,” Aiken Standard.com, June 18, 2007.*
   * *Worcester, Massachusetts came together to provide free medical services to more than 14,000 uninsured individuals. Over six years, the program contributed more than $450,000 of free services to people in need.*
   * *Independence, Missouri put together a collaborative effort to overcome distrust in the community, which led to more than $150 million in public improvements.*
   * *The Greater Racine, Wisconsin area came together to solve a sewer sanitation problem. Their new agreement will bring in $74 million in revenue from outlying communities over 30 years, which will fund improvements to the sanitation system.*
   * *The award pointed us in a real positive direction as far as public/private partnerships and public participation. We’ve moved from pointing fingers, saying it’s a government or city problem, to collaborating to solve the problems facing us,” Mayor Dan Speer, Pulaski, Tennessee.*

***Promoting Your Community***

Taking full advantage of your community’s selection as an All-America City/Town/

Region/County (or Finalist) requires planning. Start by determining your community’s goals. Why did you apply? What did you hope to accomplish? Are you looking for a way to bring the community even closer together? Were you looking primarily for feedback on your civic infrastructure? Do you hope to spark community pride and attract public and private investment?

Once your goals are clear, draft a marketing plan that notes your goal and the specific objectives, strategies, and tactics that will help you reach your goals. Make sure your objectives are meaningful and measurable. Keep the plan simple.

*Example*: Fayetteville, North Carolina created a marketing plan that integrated all mediums including print, digital, city stationary, promotional items, radio, television, outreach and signage. Santa Maria, California, created its own marketing manual; the local Chamber of Commerce published the manual and distributed it to the business community. In conjunction with the manual, the city also developed a five-year marketing plan to publicize the award.

Enlist the assistance of high school, community college and university marketing teachers/professors and their students. Ask a local public relations firm or advertising agency to help. They may be willing to give you some help on a pro bono basis.

***Community Celebrations***

A community celebration or series of events to commemorate receiving the All-America City Award presents a number of communications and marketing opportunities. Parades, potlucks, barbecues, concerts, a special section in the newspaper, and other events can help start the celebration.

*Example:* All-America City winners in Washington, North Carolina, hosted an All-America City Award celebration in the waterfront area for the entire community. The Beaufort County Arts Council arranged for entertainment throughout the day. The All-America City Spirit Parade conducted during the celebration was said to be the largest parade in the city’s history. Civic organizations placed booths along the waterfront to distribute information, raise money, and showcase the volunteer activities and civic spirit that won the community its All-America City status.

*Example:* Green Bay, Wisconsin held a block party that included fun, food, refreshments and rides. They also had large flags made for display at the event. As part of Brownsville, Texas’ celebration ceremony, Brownsville’s AAC delegation re-enacted their jury presentation for the entire community.

*Example*: Peoria, IL continues All-America City celebrations throughout the year. Their Civic Center hosted an All-America City themed night including the unveiling of banners for each year they won the award.

Suggestions for specific community events include:

* **Host community spirit-building events throughout the year**

Plan to have a local AAC committee booth at a state or local fair or festival. After receiving the All-America City award, the residents of Wray, Colorado celebrated the honor in the annual Wray Daze Parade. Local businesses sold t-shirts and mugs with the AAC logo and the city sold bumper stickers proclaiming “Wray, Colorado, My Home Town.”

* **Organize art, photo or essay contests in public schools and around the community**

Several communities have sponsored a school poster contest to coincide with Independence Day. Some communities sponsor a “Why I live in an All-America City” essay contest. Others have asked young people to photograph what is best about their city and write an essay about their photos. Peoria, Illinois facilitates a sticker campaign through their website to answer the question “Peoria is an All-America City because …” <http://www.allamericacitypeoria.com/>

* **Designate an All-America City Day (or Week or Month)**

Encourage governmental bodies, such as the city council or town boards, even the state to pass resolutions recognizing the award, and instituting an All-America City Award day, week, month or year. Ask for a proclamation from your governor, senators, or congressional representatives.

***Coordinate Your Marketing Efforts with the Local Media***

Local media should be an integral part of your community’s All-America City marketing efforts. Hopefully, members of the media will have already played a key role in your community’s All-America City efforts, working with your committee throughout the application and jury hearing process. If the media is not involved, invite them now to join in your marketing activities. Meet with promotions directors at newspapers, and TV and radio stations to plan yearlong promotions, including the use of your community’s AAC logo. They can easily add your Finalist logo or AAC logo to their publications and broadcasts.

Your media campaign can include the following:

* **Urge your local newspaper to prepare a special supplement**

Your newspaper could sell advertising to local businesses that sponsor the supplement, to be published on the day of your celebration. Article suggestions include:

* In-depth stories of your community’s application
* The strengths of your community
* Use of the Award in marketing your community
* Stories of personal triumph from individuals who benefited from the community projects described in your AAC application
* Personality profiles of those who spearheaded your application process.

Have the supplement available during the year as a marketing tool for economic development and promotional purposes for the local chambers of commerce, other community organizations and government leaders.

* **Encourage local television and radio stations to prepare a special program or to broadcast live from the event**

Using many of the themes suggested above, urge similar promotion by television and radio stations. If the stations covered the All-America City Award presentation, they will have footage and/or audiotape that can be used for this purpose. Invite your radio station to broadcast the presentation to the jury live from the event.

* **Encourage your community to create and post All-America City videos on a video Web site.** Run a contest that encourages people to go out into their neighborhoods to capture what makes the community worthy of All-America City status.
* **Write a regular “All-America City” column or blog**

Meet with your local newspaper promotion departments and see if they will run an “All-America City Award” column each week/month highlighting different aspects of your community's application and projects. The Mayor of Anderson County, South Carolina currently writes periodic letters to the community with the AAC logo prominently displayed in the newspaper column’s heading. Create your own blog to chronicle the journey!

* **Propose editorials, columns, commentaries, op-ed pieces, guest editorials and letters to the editor to local newspaper editors and radio-television**

An op-ed or guest editorial with the by-line of the committee chairperson would is appropriate. It should discuss the significance of the Award and how you intend to use it to strengthen your community.

* **Produce radio, television and print public service announcements**

In cooperation with a local advertising agency or local station, contact the promotions department of local newspapers and electronic media to enlist their help during the All-America City Award year. Television newscasts in Wichita, Kansas, incorporated the city’s All-America City status in their taglines and public service announcements.

* **Take Advantage of Opportunities for Paid Advertising**

You can ask for free billboards located at the entry point to the community, place ads in community newspapers, and run spot announcements on local radio and television stations. If you can’t get them free, ask local businesses for donations to make these ads possible. You also can encourage businesses to places such ads on their own, where they salute/congratulate the community for its achievement.

***Use the All-America City Logo As Widely As Possible***

Use your community’s AAC logo to publicize your community’s designation and to help build civic pride.

###### *All-America City Logo Copyright Requirements*

* Your community’s name and year must be included in all uses of the AAC logo.
* The logo cannot be used for profit commercial ventures, such as affinity cards (Visa/MasterCard). Such commercial ventures violate the trademark and can result in the decision to seriously curtail the finalist or winning community’s further use of the logo.
* The logo cannot be used for political campaigns.
* All merchandise bearing the All-America City logo must be approved by the National Civic League and the local AAC Committee. It must display the name of the community and the year per NCL guidelines. Profits can be used to defray delegation expenses or to benefit local non-profit projects.
* Remember, the logo, with the year of designation and the trademark symbol, is registered with the federal government and may only be used by communities designated by the National Civic League. The law prohibits any other use of the logo without permission.
* Please provide the printers with the correct PMS colors of the logo. PMS Colors: ***PMS 200 (Red) and PMS 280 (Blue)***. All text (including the year) and stars are blue. The bars on the logo are red.
* **Use the logo on your local government's and chamber of commerce’s printed materials and websites**

Use it on letterhead and business cards, pocket folders, local business and industry printed materials, Christmas cards and local organizations’ promotional materials.

* **Encourage the local newspaper to use the All-America City logo**

Beginning with the week of the celebration, and through the entire year of the award, ask the newspaper to use the logo in its stories and on its masthead.

* **Urge TV stations to use the logo on their station identification graphics**

Or ask them to use it as “filler” graphic.

* **Request that local government agencies and private businesses use the All-America City logo as indicia on their postage meters**

Work with postage meter suppliers to prepare and affix the logo plate.

* **Distribute logo bumper stickers**

Insert as envelope stuffers with property-tax bills, utility bills, or local bank statements, and in waiting rooms of physicians, dentists, hospitals and the like.

* **Encourage the display of All-America City** **decals**

Place the decals on buses, subways, taxis, and municipal vehicles, including police cars, government service vehicles, trash-removal trucks, snowplows, and other vehicles.

* **Produce commemorative license plates for government and private vehicles**

*Additional Examples:*

* Peoria, Illinois partnered with their local transportation to create a custom bus wrap featuring their All-America City designation.
* Kansas City, Missouri, a five-time winner, placed the logo in its airport, on its city cabs, on key billboards, and in city-related mail to residents.
* In Shreveport, Louisiana, a local distributor was asked to place the AAC logo on all Pepsi cans – at no cost.
* When they realized that Highway 65 in California connected three All-America Cities – Bakersfield, Porterville and Lindsay – community members put forth an effort that ultimately resulted in the highway being named, “the All-America City Highway.”
* Rocky Mount, North Carolina sent its logo to all area printers and encouraged businesses to use it on their company printing.
* Ocean City, Maryland, as a resort community hosting 8 million people a year, printed and distributed over 400,000 copies of their visitors guide with the All-America City logo on the front cover.
* Add the logo to address return labels.

***Posters, Signs and Banners***

Banners, signs, posters and decals can help publicize your community’s status as an All-America City. Chelsea, Massachusetts, created two large All-America City banners that hung on City Hall. Chelsea also worked with a banner company to make at least 50 banners to hang on poles throughout the city.

DeKalb County, Georgia, erected 300 All-America City road signs throughout the county. In Fort Wayne, Indiana, several schools and businesses displayed signs with the logo. Fort Wayne also painted the logo on the intersections of major streets.

Riverside, California placed All-America City decals on its garbage trucks and city vehicles. Rochester, New York also placed All-America City decals on all city vehicles and on 600 public trash receptacles. Even the zamboni machines used at local hockey games in Rochester display the All-America City logo.

Some ways that communities can use posters, signs, banners and decals to publicize their All-America City status include:

* **Post Signs at airports, city limits, exit ramps from the interstate highways, city parks, water towers, and other public locations**

The airport is one of the most effective venues because of the influx of out-of-town visitors. Talk with your local airport manager to determine the possibility and the best location.

* **Display Posters or Banners**

Display these across a main street, at shopping malls, or at the local airport; display All-America City Award pennants or flags from lampposts and other appropriate locations.

After Oakland, California received the All-America City Award, the certificate was duplicated and given to over 200 businesses for display. In addition, 60 AAC billboards were placed throughout the city.

* **Stencil a large All-America City logo in the middle of Main Street.**

This makes an impressive display and serves as a constant reminder to citizens and visitors. Ocala, Florida covered a blank wall of a downtown building (and some graffiti) with a fresh coat of paint and the All-America City logo.

***Marketing Your AAC Designation Online***

Many communities have publicized their AAC designation on their city Web sites. For example, Sierra Madre, California dedicated a special section on their city Web site to the AAC Award, which included links to:

* Completed applications
* News articles and quotes,
* List of sponsors
* The AAC committee
* Photo gallery

Other suggestions for Web content include:

* **News Releases**

Include all community press releases on the web site including the announcement of your community winning the All-America City designation

* **Scripts from AAC Jury Presentation**

Since everyone in your community was not able to attend the All-America City competition, provide a transcript of your community’s jury presentation. This will increase the knowledge of the award as well as increase the civic pride within your community.

* **Community Celebrations**

This section can include event information, photos, and special note of thank you to the community for its support.

* **Photos**

On the front page of your community’s web site, post photos of your AAC logo, city landscapes, and the projects that have made an impact in your city.

* **Blogs, Social Media, and New Media**

New media and social media—blogs, Twitter and Facebook—are changing the way we think of media outreach and marketing. Local governments, nonprofits and everyday citizens are finding new ways to get out information and stimulate dialogues on what communities are doing. People are using video cameras, cell phones, and laptops to communicate in a variety of ways without the high costs associated with old forms of media and PR outreach.

It is cheap and easy to start a [blog](http://www.allamericacityaward.com/), a [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/) page, [Twitter](http://twitter.com/) account for networking and communicating, or to use [You Tube](http://www.youtube.com) and [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/) to display video and photos of your community and its exemplary projects. But these media will be of limited value if you don’t think strategically about how to maintain and maximize the use of them.

* **Facebook**

Facebook is a great place to promote your city’s AAC events, merchandise and highlight your application’s projects as it provides more space for narrative and photos. There is also the ability to create event pages to invite your fans (people who have liked your page) to all AAC themed events. Facebook is a great platform to share stories published online by your local media to ensure a larger audience is reached. Some communities have integrated their AAC designation with pre-existing pages like Garner, while others like Peoria have created separate pages specifically for AAC.

Examples: [Garner, NC](https://www.facebook.com/TownofGarner); [Peoria, IL](https://www.facebook.com/PeoriaAAC?fref=ts)

* **Twitter**

Twitter is used to share information quickly and succinctly with only 140 characters. Connectivity is important to remember when publishing tweets; tag the appropriate people or organizations in your post, for example you can use @AllAmericaCity to include us in your post. To help reach a wider audience and attract more followers your posts can include hashtags related to the subject of your post. For example, if you are tweeting about one of your application programs that featured healthy communities you can add #healthycommunities to your post to ensure all twitter users interested in this topic can learn about your program. You can search hashtags in the twitter search bar or using a free platform, such as tweetdeck.com. Personalizing your twitter page to reflect your All-America City status is easy to do with your background and profile picture.

* **Blogs**

A blog can be a standalone website or integrated into your city’s preexisting website. Blogs are written with a continuous theme in mind. This can begin by promoting your community’s All-America City story highlighting the process, the application, and the experience in Denver. Continuing after your finalist or winner designation the blog could focus solely on the three projects submitted or expand to other civic engagement projects and community solutions that will continue to come from your community.

***Create Promotional Materials***

Developing promotional materials and distributing those materials as widely as possible will help market your status as an All-America City. Merchandising can serve as both a means of generating publicity and raising funds for the marketing effort. Stockton, California held a block party and sold AAC merchandise including polo shirts, baseball jerseys, caps, denim shirts, lapel pins and stickers.

As stated in the NCL logo guidelines (See “Utilizing the AAC logo” section of the marketing CD), all merchandise bearing the All-America City logo must be approved by the National Civic League and the local All-America City Committee, and display the name of the community and the year per NCL guidelines. Profits must be used to defray delegation expenses or for local non-profit projects. Some suggestions for merchandise and promotional materials include:

* **Publicize the All-America City** **Award in all community economic development promotional materials**

A videotape or brochure about the All-America City Award, perhaps produced without charge by a local television station, cable company or advertising agency, can be used effectively in community economic development presentations to potential employers, before civic and community organizations, and local high schools and colleges. The video could be used in a planned schedule of presentations by the All-America City Award Committee to local service clubs, religious and charitable organizations and schools.

* **Ask local hotels, motels and convention centers to help with distribution**

Ask them to distribute literature that includes the All-America City Award designation.

* **Create and Announce the availability of All-America City** **merchandise**

Work with local businesses to donate and/or develop merchandise with the All-America City logo. Items for purchase could include coffee cups, bumper stickers, lapel pins, baseball caps, banners, store window posters, sweatshirts and T-shirts and a variety of other promotional materials. (Please see “Utilizing the AAC logo” section of this marketing CD to determine regulations of AAC logo in relation to merchandise).

* **Make sure local drug stores, newsstands, novelty shops and department stores have promotional merchandise available for sale**
* **Post card campaign**

Marketing your award to those outside the city is an important avenue to encourage new residents and raise the profile of your city to surrounding areas. Dubuque, Iowa wanted to engage former residents and let them know about the great things happening in their hometown. They created an All-America City themed post card which was distributed to residents and encouraged to send to friends and family who had previously lived in Dubuque.

##### Funding Your Marketing Plan

Determine a realistic goal and a realistic budget. Appoint a fund-raising committee of three or four people who are knowledgeable with business and industry in your community. Also, evaluate potential funding sources in your community and set a goal for each:

* + *All-America City Finalist merchandise*
  + *Local businesses and business associations*
  + *Major employers such as industrial corporations*
  + *Local foundations*
  + *Service clubs and fraternal organizations*
  + *Philanthropic individuals*
  + *Fundraising receptions, dinners and other community events.*

###### *Getting Media Coverage: What is News?*

News can be defined as having the following characteristics:

1. **Consequence.** Educates and informs; is important to life-style or ability to cope; has a moral or social importance; is “should know” material
2. **Interest.** Is unusual, entertaining, has human interest, arouses emotions or would cause people to talk about it
3. **Timeliness.** Is current. Is a new angle on events or a new trend
4. **Proximity.** Pertains to local issues, trends or events
5. **Prominence.** Concerns famous people, famous events; has received other media coverage

Generally, news falls into one of two categories: hard news and soft news. Hard news is something that just happened and is what you usually read on the front page of a newspaper or hear as the first report in a newscast. Becoming an All-America City Finalist is hard news on the day that it is announced.

Soft news tends to be more about trends than events. The story of the months of hard work that went into earning that designation, or a story of the process of how a city eventually becomes one of the All-America City Finalists is a feature or soft-news story.

Clearly, you want to get both kinds of stories if possible. The key to getting hard news is simple: alert the media in advance of announcements, and call them as you hear news yourself.

The two ideas mentioned above are good for pitching feature stories on the All-America City Award. Another perennial winner is a story, or series of stories, on each of the three community projects that earned your community the All-America City Finalist nomination. With that in mind, here are some general tips on making your story as newsworthy as possible.

* **Focus on the community projects**

Focus on the projects that have earned you the All-America City Finalist nomination.

* **Give examples of what the award has meant to other cities**
* **Emphasize that your community is being nationally recognized as a model**

Your community is being singled out for its creative ability to solve problems, and that makes your hometown special and noteworthy far beyond the city limits.

* **Get local celebrities involved**

Have the mayor, well-known business and community leaders, state and local elected officials, and as many other luminaries participate as possible.

Example: Garner, North Carolina had local celebrity Scotty McCreery from American Idol promote their AAC designation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79EE9I0Palk&app=desktop>

* **Put a human face on your story**

Journalism is all about people, so it is in your interest to play up the human stories. For example, spotlight people who have better jobs, health, and housing or enjoy more racial

justice and democratic participation because of the projects spotlighted for the All-America City Finalist designation.

###### *Directing Your Story to the Right Medium and the Right Person*

One of the biggest mistakes made in pitching ideas to the media is talking to the wrong medium or the wrong person at the right medium. A simple test is to ask yourself if the readers or viewers of a certain medium, or reporter, would typically care about your story. Can you see your story in this medium? Every time the answer is yes, add that person to your media list and pitch as many mediums as possible to improve your chances of coverage. Another trick is to contact the medium you want to cover it the most and offer them an exclusive opportunity to break the news.

###### *Newspapers*

Whether published daily or weekly, newspapers are divided into various sections: news (national/international), business, entertainment, sports, technology, home living and other sections. Knowing who makes the decisions for each section, and the requirements and schedule for that section are fundamentals to deciding where you should attempt to place stories. It is possible that one story might have several angles and could be of interest to a number of sections. For example, a business editor might be interested in the financial impact of being nominated as an All-America City Finalist whereas a lifestyle editor might be interested in the revitalized community pride.

Newspapers also have city/metro editors who decide which stories will be covered and what staff will cover them. They are usually the most open to fresh story ideas. When in doubt about whom to approach at a newspaper, always send a story idea to or call the metro or city editor. If you can’t get through to a city editor, an Assistant City Editor presents an alternative. Particularly on larger papers, this person usually plays a key role in determining the day’s news lineup.

###### *Television*

The local news shows should be the prime target for your All-America City releases. Assignment editors at the television station determine which stories will be covered for the early and late-evening news. These are the most important contacts in television because they handle the day-to-day decisions about broadcast coverage and which reporters cover which stories.

Different assignment managers exist for the morning and noon broadcasts and for the evening broadcasts (typically 6 to 11 p.m.). Similarly, often-different assignment managers exist for weekday and weekend newscasts.

Local talk shows also provide an excellent medium for your All-America City spokesperson to talk about the All-America City Award. The show’s producer can give you more detailed information about the requirements for the show, time needed for booking guests, and capability for live interviews/demonstrations.

### *Radio*

Radio is perhaps the least complex of the media and, very possibly, the most overlooked. Radio stations follow the trend of print by specializing and appealing to distinct audiences. Determine the focus of each station to help you decide which stations to cater to. There are all-news stations, all-classical stations, all-country stations and all-listening stations. The majority of stations are a mix of talk, music, commentary, and news. Most radio stations depend primarily on material that comes over the wire services, is delivered to the station, or is called in to the news director. Talk with radio news directors and program directors to get detailed information on a station’s opportunities and preferences.

Clearly, determining what news is and where is should be directed involves more than just writing a release and sending it to every medium in your area. Careful analysis of the information itself and the media to which it should be directed will help you achieve your media goals.

*Getting Your Message Through*

There are various methods to choose from when contacting the media. No one method is best – it depends on the situation, the newsworthiness of your material, and, most important of all, the preferences of the journalists you’re working with.

With today’s explosion of information technology, you have quite a few choices of distribution methods. For example, materials can be:

* emailed
* faxed
* mailed or
* called in

The best technique is usually to email or fax a news release (all faxed materials should be sent by invitation only) no more than two pages long and follow up with a phone call to make sure the release was received. Special note, make sure to paste the body of the news release in your email, as many news agencies are cautious of emails with attachments due to viruses.

Finally, if possible, enlist the help of a seasoned public relations or media veteran. Someone who’s worked for a newspaper, TV station, public relations firm, or as a public information officer in an organization will be invaluable in your efforts.

***News Conferences:*** *Why Have One?*

The biggest risk in scheduling a news conference is the embarrassment of having no one show up. Since journalists don’t like to waste time, they want to know in advance whether a news conference is worth attending. Therefore, you should always have a strong, newsworthy reason for scheduling one. Otherwise, most journalists would far rather take the appropriate information over the phone.

At very least, you can hold a news conference regarding All-America City news such as:

* *To announce your community as an All-America City Winner*
* *To announce your community missed being one of 10 All-America City winners this year and will try again next year.*

Of course, the size of your community and local media often determines how much – if any – coverage you get at a conference. Nonetheless, here are some insider tips on getting as much attention as possible:

* *Give the media as much advance notice as possible.*
* *Fax and call newsrooms to advise editors of the conference time, place, and subject.*
* *Schedule the news conference for a morning time before 11a.m., when other news begins to divert reporters’ and editors’ attention.*
* *Provide news releases at the conference, summarizing your announcement in no more than two pages, double-spaced*
* *Keep it short – no more than 45 minutes, preferably 30 minutes. Reporters want facts and appreciate brevity.*
* *Allow at least 15 minutes at the end of the conference for questions from reporters.*
* *Most importantly, provide the media with photographs. With the exception of radio, all media depend heavily on good video and photographs. The best photos are of the community action upon which your All-America City Award application is based, i.e., a new neighborhood health center, an innovative home ownership project, a revitalized industrial park, rather than people rigidly posing behind a podium or the infamous “grip and grin” poses of shaking hands.*

###### *Making Headlines: How to Sell a News Release*

Will your release wind up on the front page or filed away? It’s a question you can help answer. Listed below are some ideas to help your news release become a meaningful story:

* ***Highlight why readers/viewers care or need to know about the information***
* ***Highlight people involved in designing and implementing the programs***

*Provide contact names. Do not look exclusively to elected officials.*

* ***Provide specifics***

*Why will the programs last? What makes them different?*

* ***Personalize***

*Get the names and numbers of the key people who decide on the fate of your release. Whether you convey information by phone or mail, it always helps to be on a first name basis.*

* ***Quote more than one source***

*Quote as many people as you can.*

* ***Be accessible***

*Let people know you will help them. Let them know they do not have to work alone.*

* ***Provide phone and fax numbers and email addresses***

*Your release should put everything at the reader’s fingertips.*

# Letter to the Editor

Date: xxxxxxxxx

Contact: Mike McGrath

Phone: 303-571-4343

Fax: 888-314-6053

Email: mikem@ncl.org

Congratulations, (Your community, State)!

To the Residents of (Community):

Congratulations on being named an All-America City (Town/County/Region)! You just took part in a rigorous national competition and succeeded in garnering a highly esteemed designation. Your innovative thinking and contagious enthusiasm contributed to the success of your efforts. The All-America City Award (now in its 65th year) recognizes communities across the country for civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness, innovation and impact.

(Your Community) is now a model for communities across the country. Because you successfully addressed your challenges with all three sectors working together, communities across the country will now look to you as they struggle to find solutions to their most pressing concerns. The National Civic League encourages you to continue in this spirit of collaborative problem solving.

Thank you for contributing to the betterment of communities all across our nation by tackling this process. You've made a worthwhile and long-term investment, not only in your own community, but in our country as well.

Sincerely,

Gloria Rubio-Cortés

President, National Civic League

**All-America City Award**

Fact Sheet

**BACKGROUND**

The All-America City Award is the oldest and most respected community recognition program in the nation. This year marks the 65thanniversary of the award that recognizes communities whose citizens work together to identify and tackle community-wide challenges and achieve uncommon results.

Each year, only ten cities are selected as All-America Cities. These communities exemplify the true American spirit at work. Their citizens are actively committed to ensuring that their community is a safe nurturing place to live. Since the program’s inception, more than 4,000 communities (neighborhoods/cities/towns/counties/regions) have competed and nearly 600 have been named “All-America Cities.”

**APPLICATIONS**

Each year, the All-America City Award program receives applications from communities across the country. A Screening Committee of public and civic affairs experts reviews the applications and, following a careful and thorough examination, the Finalists are announced.

At hearings before the All-America City jury in June, each Finalist community will present its application and answer questions posed by the jury. Once the jury has carefully considered all Finalists’ presentations and applications, the ten All-America Cities will be announced at a special awards ceremony.

**CRITERIA**

For a community to be named an All-America City, it must be able to demonstrate successful resolution of community issues through collaborative effort. Award winning criteria include the following:

* Civic Engagement and Collaboration - participation of people from all sectors: the public, private, nonprofit sectors, neighborhoods, associations, and key constituencies to the maximum extent possible and cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries;
* Inclusiveness - recognition and involvement of diverse segments and perspectives (ethnic, racial, socio-economic, age, ability/disability, gender identification, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) in community decision-making;
* Innovation - creative use and leveraging of community resources;
* Impact - significant and specific community achievements, projects that address the community’s most important needs, and clear demonstration of project results and impacts (dollars raised or lives impacted)

**NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE**

The All-America City Award is a program of the National Civic League, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1894 to strengthen citizen democracy by transforming democratic institutions. NCL accomplishes its mission through technical assistance, training, publishing, research, and the All-America City Award, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious community recognition program. The National Civic League is headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| |  | | --- | |  | |

**Marketing Photo Examples**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  | |
|  | |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |