

STEPS FOR SUCCESS: Writing and Submitting an Op-Ed

Submitting an opinion piece to your local or state press is a great way to bring attention to workforce funding issues, highlight the great work that your program is doing to help re-train workers in your community.

Here are a few helpful tips:

Writing Your Op-Ed

- **Get to the point.** The first sentence should be 12 words or less summarizing what's at stake. One of the biggest mistakes in op-ed writing is using the first paragraph (or the entire op-ed) to build to the point. Most editors read 2-3 sentences before making a decision to go on.
- **Who is often more important than what.** Op-eds can have more impact—and a greater chance of publication—if you have the right people listed as authors. In the current battle, the voices of employers are crucial. Consider having industry partners submit your op-ed. Having an op-ed co-signed by business and labor representatives packs a particularly good punch.
- **Mind your word count.** Check the op-ed guidelines for the paper you are targeting. If they give a word count, follow it. If they don't, 750 is generally considered the maximum length. Many papers will not consider op-eds over their word count. If the paper accepts your op-ed and edits it to meet their guidelines, you'll have no control over what they cut.
- **Make it relevant and accessible.** We've provided sample language but it's essential that you tailor your submission with local examples of impact. It's also essential to avoid workforce jargon and acronyms.
- **Learn from others.** A number of outstanding op-eds have been published over the last month in response to proposed elimination of workforce funding. Click [here](#) to read some examples.

Submitting Your Op-Ed

Many newspapers have specific format requirements, so please check the paper's web site before submitting. Always include full contact information for the author(s).

- **Road rules.** In general, if you have multiple papers in one media market, you cannot submit the same op-ed to more than one paper at a time. Submit to one and if it gets rejected, submit it to the other outlet. This applies to national outlets as well. If you are submitting to different markets throughout your state (but not within the same city), you can typically submit to all papers at once. That said, some papers will have it in their guidelines that you cannot submit anything that has been submitted to another paper.
- **Follow up.** Once you have submitted the op-ed, you can follow up with a call 24 hours later to pitch the piece and find out if it will be printed.