



Campaign to Expand Low-Power FM Radio

City Council Resolution
Toolkit

2009

This toolkit is for community groups, civic organizations, and religious groups seeking to make low-power FM radio access a reality. Low-power FM radio is a vital tool for locally-produced media, providing a space for community voices on the airwaves.

Join the national campaign to
Expand LPFM

City Council Resolution Toolkit

Available online at: <http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

Pass City Council Resolutions in Support of Expanded LPFM

A resolution is grassroots activism at its best! Organizing to pass a resolution mobilizes people to make leaders accountable to their demands. While the national policies that are being hashed out in Washington D.C. might feel distant and hard to change, city council resolutions can be won by a small group of people with the right organizing. You can have an impact in your own community by encouraging your city council to take a stand on issues that are important to you. Local resolutions send a message to congressional representatives in your area that their constituents are concerned about this issue and are demanding a change! In other words, city councils are an accessible way to have a direct impact on big politics and policies.

Passing a resolution is also a great way to build a local coalition of communities, people, organizations and activists who are concerned about a similar issue. In the process you will educate yourself and others, build a critical mass of support, get some media attention and be one more step in the direction towards creating change.

This packet describes how community members in hundreds of communities around the country have planned and implemented successful resolution efforts. Each section provides links to documents and tools they have used; all documents are available at <http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit/>. We invite you to use these steps and documents and adapt them to your needs. Send any suggestions or tips to expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org.

Thanks to the Bill of Rights Defense Committee for providing inspiration and much of the content of this toolkit. <http://www.bordc.org/>

If you are working on a resolution in your community, please inform us about your efforts at expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org. Send us tools and links that you would like to share through this web site.

We want to provide you with as many resources as possible, but don't restrict your organizing to this toolkit! Use this as a base of ideas and don't be afraid to be creative! Remember, you know your city and what works there better than any outside group.

Contents

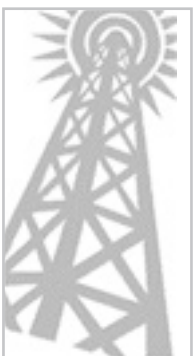
<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

Contents of this Packet

The chronology and tools are presented in five sections:

- 1 Educate Yourself About LPFM
- 2 Organize Supporters of LPFM
- 3 Organize a Community Event
- 4 Write and Pass a City/Community Resolution to Support LPFM
- 5 Become Active in the National Expand LPFM Network.

Contents



1. Educate Yourself About LPFM

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

About Low-Power FM Radio

Low-power FM (LPFM) radio runs off of 100 watts and has a broadcast range of 3-5 miles. LPFM station licenses can only be granted to non-commercial groups such as religious, educational, civic, and neighborhood organizations. There are over 800 LPFM stations in the U.S. that utilize unused parts of the spectrum to local community benefit. In 2003 an independent study by the MITRE public-research corporation concluded that relaxing restrictions and allowing LPFMs in the third adjacent channel (three 'clicks' away) would not cause interference. The Local Community Radio Act, reintroduced in 2009 in the House as H.R. 1147 and in the Senate as S. 592, would implement the results of this study and allow potentially thousands of new community radio stations to hit the airwaves.

Tools

*Low-Power FM FAQ from the Future of Music Coalition
'The Facts Are In' Sheet*



ABOUT LPFM

2. Organize Supporters of LPFM

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

1. Initial Meeting

Invite a group of people in your community that you think might be interested in expanding community radio for an initial meeting. This can be a small or large group of people; it can be formed as a subcommittee of a larger organization, as a new group, or as a coalition.

Tools

Sample Flier Announcing First Meeting

Next, create a strategy that will help you accomplish your goals of educating your community, building an activist base, passing a resolution, and ultimately working with other people in different cities and towns that have passed resolutions in support of the Local Community Radio Act. The most effective tactics we've seen to accomplish these goals consist of building a coalition of diverse groups and elected officials, circulating a petition, hosting a forum/educational event, writing press releases and lobbying elected officials. This is a good tool to organize people interested in starting a low-power radio station.

2. Networking and Outreach With Other Organizations

After the first meeting, members of the group can agree to call other local organizations and people that might be interested in helping to organize locally. Members can split up contacts and let people in other organizations know about the next coalition meeting. Here are some suggestions to include in your outreach:

- Teachers, professors, students, and student groups
- Civic groups and neighborhood associations
- Religious leaders
- Activist groups
- Union locals
- Musicians
- Djs
- Journalists



Organize

2. Organize Supporters of LPFM

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

Be sure to seek out people who are interested in actually running a LPFM station. The Rec Networks website lists the community organizations, organized by state, that applied for LPFM licenses. The listing includes both groups running LPFMs station and those who had their application rejected. <http://www.recnet.com/cdbs/scoreboard.php>

Ask existing local organizations who express interest in working with you if they would be willing to share their mailing list or email list or to send an announcement about your coalition to their membership.

Emphasize that community-controlled media affects everyone and that everyone will benefit from a more democratically-controlled media. A resolution that represents the diversity within your community will be more effective and less vulnerable to opposition than one that reflects the views of only a few community members.

3. Community Outreach and Fundraising

Set dates for a forum and the next meeting to plan the forum, then send out an invitation letter to individuals, businesses, and non-profits in your community. The letter can ask people to endorse the forum and to make a donation to cover expenses such as copying, postage, childcare, and facility rental. Do not be afraid to be creative. Some communities have held events, such as benefit concerts and poetry readings, to help raise money and awareness.

Benefits of getting endorsements:

- Potential new members for your committee
- A network for promoting your event and for rallying support for your efforts
- Broadens appeal for your community
- Begins the first step in operating your own LPFM station



Tools

Invitation letter
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Template letter

Organize

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

If you haven't received an organizing packet with DVDs from the Prometheus Radio Project please contact expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org.

1. Committees

In preparation for the public forum, consider forming subcommittees.

1.1 Possible Subcommittees

-Coordinating Committee: Responsible for setting agendas for meetings of the whole committee and for overseeing the work of the other committees.

-Program and Facility Committee: Defines the program and contacted speakers. It also sets up and broke down the hall, including the tables for other organizations.

-PR Committee: Produced a poster, mailings, a press release, public service announcements, and spots to promote the public forum.

-Statement/Petition Committee: Writes a statement/petition to be presented to the Town Meeting summarizing the demands to be presented to politicians and the City Council.

-Sponsorship/Fundraising/Organizing Committee: Sends invitation letter packets to businesses, individuals, and nonprofit organizations to increase endorsements and, in the process, gain funds for the public forum.

Tools

Low-Power FM FAQ from the Future of Music Coalition
'The Facts Are In' Sheet
Fact Sheet from Free Press
LPFM Advocacy Packet

2. Emergency Responders

Reach out to local emergency responders and police. LPFM has been a crucial, life-saving communication tool during natural disasters.

Tools

Emergency Responders Sign on Letter
'LPFM is Vital for Emergency Response' Flier



Events

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

3. Connecting with Local Community Media

Find out if there are LPFM stations in your area. Click this link for a list of local community radio stations in your area. You can also find organizations that had their applications dismissed.

<http://www.recnet.com/cdbs/scoreboard.php>

Note: RecNet is a great internet resource that prospect LPFM stations should use. However, it's Channel Finder tool doesn't necessarily reflect the availability of channels in an area where potential LPFMs are located.

See if your city has a local Independent Media Center.

<http://www.indymedia.org>

Check for local public access television stations and local newspapers.

4. Spreading Effort to Nearby Towns

Contact people in surrounding towns about your effort and invite them to the forum. They might be inspired to organize in their towns.

5. Promoting the Forum

To promote the forum, send a press release to media, put up posters, hold a news conference, and use your local activist network to spread the word. Send the release and poster to endorsers. You can also create a website. The Prometheus Radio Project is willing to post a link on its site to one created by your community in order to further promote your efforts and to provide contact information for your group. Contact Prometheus at expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org.

Tools

[Sample Press Release](#)

[Sample Media Advisory](#)

How to Hold a News Conference

5.1.0. Getting Started

This section describes how community members can plan and hold news conferences in their area.

Try thinking like a television journalist as you plan your news conference. Make sure you have an interesting visual, good sound, and a compelling story. Consider these factors with

Events



3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

the following elements and how each component enhances your main message. Radio, newspaper and magazine reporters will also appreciate your attention to these details. When you make their work easier and more interesting, your reward is valuable news coverage!

5.1.1 Decide the Goal

First decide what the purpose of your news conference will be. Here are some possible ideas:

- To announce an event you want others in the community to join
- To announce the start of a community-wide campaign to expand LPFM.
- To commemorate a community media-related anniversary

Invite a local well-known "name" to be a key speaker such as a local musician.

Tools

Future of Music Fact Sheet

You can also invite a local religious community leader.

Tools

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Support Letter
National Association of Evangelicals Support Letter
Catholic Rural Association Support Letter

A good way to make sure the media turns out for your news conference is to make sure the media recognizes the name of at least one of your presenters. Asking the mayor or a sympathetic public official to make a statement on behalf of your group can give your news conference a boost it might otherwise lack.

Try to think like the media. What's the hook? What's the local angle? Can you link your story to something that's already gained attention in the news?

5.1.2. Choose a Date and Time

The date and time of your news conference are extremely important. It is your job to pick a date and time that will allow the media time to cover your event and your supporters time to attend.

Is there a significant date in your community?

- Launching of internet radio station
- Important community event



News Conference

How to...

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

What is the best timing for a news conference?

- 10 a.m. - noon; Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday
- Schedule to fit news deadlines. You want to schedule the news conference so that a reporter or videographer has time to attend and time to edit their coverage before their deadline (i.e. 2 p.m. is the latest you hold your conference for a broadcast at 5 p.m., or 10 a.m. is the latest for a noon broadcast). See also combinations.
- Scheduling a morning news conference enables you to possibly get coverage on noon and afternoon radio or television news.
- Consider holding a news conference a day or two before your main event, so you can alert people about an upcoming picnic, parade, or commemoration.

5.1.3. Secure a location

News conferences can be held in a multitude of places. Try asking an ally group to use their office or meeting place, looking for a free or low-cost meeting room through the city, county, library, religious center, community college or university, or using an outside public space (city hall, county building, federal building) with relevance to community media.

When looking for a location keep in mind the audience that you are expecting as well as how the location can be beneficial to your conference, and even how the location could be harmful.

- Consider the site's visual and sound attributes. Do not hold a news conference in a noisy place, such as with a fountain, traffic, or a playground in the background, unless that noise emphasizes the points you will make at your news conference.
- Find a way to provide a visual background to enhance your message. Banners, artworks, and visuals in support of community radio and community media are good to emphasize the message.
- Provide directions for the media, especially if it's not a typical news conference location. The location should be easily accessible with convenient parking.
- If the location is not obvious, such as a hotel conference room or an office building, be sure to display signs directing people to the designated area.



News Conference

How to...

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

Some locations will not be as adaptable to a news conference as others. Make sure to arrange for the following as needed: a microphone, a podium, access to electricity, news conference table and chairs for presenters and for the media.

Always get permission to hold the news conference in your chosen location and arrange a fallback plan in case of inclement weather (if the news conference is held outdoors).

5.1.4. Inform the community and the media

Invite friends and family who may or may not be involved in your organization. Encourage them to bring others to your conference. If possible have an announcement made at other community organization meetings.

A week before your event you should send out a media advisory that tantalizes the media with just a few key pieces of the story. Then two or three days ahead, and again the day before the news conference send out a news release.

-Follow up each with a phone call. Ask if the assignment editor received the release, then ask if you can provide additional information. You may also ask if they will send a reporter to the news conference. Don't feel offended if you can't get a commitment, but ask anyway.

-Call the morning of your news conference to check again (priorities can change fast in the news biz).

-Email and fax news releases. Do not count on one or the other—use both.

You can also send out the news release to all media who didn't attend the news conference, in case this prompts them to run the story.

A combination of events, such as a rally or another highly visual event with your news conference, may attract a live news team to broadcast from your news conference. But do not count on this unless you've done a lot of work to draw a large enough crowd to compel news coverage.



5.1.5. Set-up

If you can, have a practice news conference ahead of time. This will give you the ability to assess where the strengths and weaknesses are in the presentation. Do not be afraid to switch things around to make it more interesting.

News Conference

How to...

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

Do a check of your room's setup.

- Backdrop (a banner, signs, or another visually stimulating feature)
- Long table with chairs for presenters
- Rows of chairs for media and supporters (all should be facing the presenters)
- Space behind rows for news cameras
- Table with refreshments (optional) in far corner of the room.

Make packets of material for the media. These can be as simple as a copy of your main statement and news release or a few stapled pages including bios of speakers, news release and statements, or as complex as a folder with brochures, bios, statements, news release, business cards, and a copy of the Local Community Radio Acts. Include a phone number and email address where reporters can contact you later with follow up questions. The URL of your website should be included on all materials you hand out.

5.1.6. Basic Schedule

The basic schedule should be predetermined. Do not wait until the day of the news conference. This will include the order of speakers, the designation of a moderator and the key points that you will be addressing. When guests and presenters start to arrive there should be a greeter at the door that signs in the media and distributes packets to each reporter.

-Start on time - no more than 5 minutes late. It is unprofessional to keep the media waiting. Do not give individual interviews until after the news conference.

-The moderator should make opening remarks, and then briefly introduce each speaker. Each speaker should talk no more than 5 minutes.

-Stay on the message. If you have three or four main points, you can keep repeating those points in various ways throughout the entire news conference. Do not allow yourself to be drawn away from your key points.

-Radio and television probably will not quote you for more than 10-15 seconds - so practice 10-15 memorable seconds, or a "quotable quote" for each speaker.

-Speak clearly. Don't read. Don't sound as if you've rehearsed.

Each speaker should be able to speak with only a few references to notes. Best if you know your material and can speak passionately.

-Don't look into the cameras. Look directly at the audience.



News Conference

How to...

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

- Question and Answer session should not last longer than 15-20 minutes. Reporters will draw individuals off to the side for further questions if need be.
- Avoid hecklers by only taking questions from official members of the media.

5.7. Follow-up

After the news conference, fax news releases to the media that didn't attend. Follow up with them to see if they'd like an interview.

Watch and record television and radio coverage. Clip newspaper coverage.

Meet with your group to conduct a "post-mortem," to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the event. Make it a point to offer two positive remarks for each critical remark, this way the group is able to process in a way that builds on its strengths.

5.8. Other Ways to get Media Coverage

There are multiple ways to grab the media's attention.

- Write an opinion editorial. Ask the newspaper editor to run your op-ed, or coauthor an op-ed with one or more local allies who have clout with the editor.
- Ask the editor of your local weekly newspaper to reserve space for your story.
- Cultivate good relationships with local reporters, and interest them in doing a feature story on your group's campaign.
- Does your newspaper run announcements of upcoming events? Weekly calendar? Find out how far in advance they need the information.
- Radio & Television PSAs - no more than 30 seconds (or use local standard).
- Letter to the editor campaigns.
- Hold rallies, or portable demonstrations (3-8 people at key street corners throughout town with a unified message).
- Radio call-in program - even if your subject isn't on the air, if several supporters call in around the same time, you can influence a call-in program.
- Use your local cable access channel to broadcast programs.



6. Showing Community Support for a Resolution Through Petition Drive:

Write a petition, which you may introduce and circulate at the

News Conference

How to...

3. Organize a Community Event

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

forum.

7. Distributing Educational Materials:

At the forum, place fact sheets, literature and articles, petitions, buttons for sale (see our catalogue of merchandise), and collection cans at tables.

Tools

LPFM Advisory Packet

Facilitation Guide for Barnraising Videos

Recent National News Coverage of Local Community Radio Act

8. Postcard Campaign

As part of your lobbying effort, consider a postcard campaign. At your forum, you can have a table with preprinted postcards to legislators that attendees can write their return address on and sign. If you can, provide the stamps.

Contact expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org for a stack of lobby postcards.

9. Videotapping the Event

If you videotape the event and post it to YouTube it could be an important tool in support of the campaign. Link to Local Community Radio Act YouTube video.

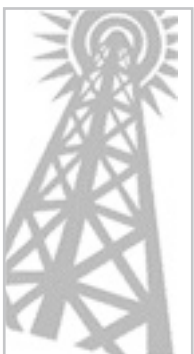
<http://tinyurl.com/community-radio-video>

10. Continue to Educate and Gather Support

After the forum, continue petitioning:

- Table (with literature),
- Write op-eds to your local newspaper,
- Put petitions in stores and offices (including those of your endorsers).
- Give committee members and forum attendees petitions to circulate.
- Place an online petition and printable petitions on our website.

The process is useful not only for gaining signatures to demonstrate support for the resolution, but for educating people about LPFM and community media.



-Example of op-ed: Jonathan Lawson

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/opinion/2008201060_lpfmop25.html

Tools

Sample Petition

Events

4. Write and Pass a Resolution

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

1. Draft Resolution:

Meet with your resolution sponsor to draft a resolution. The mayor and council members should review the draft in ongoing negotiations to create a document everyone can support.

Tools

[Sample Resolution](#)

2. Lobbying Efforts

Make sure each Councilor is contacted by a committee member.

Send postcards, emails, and press releases asking community members to call their Councilors. Urge them to also attend the Council meeting when the resolution will be voted on and to speak in favor of the resolution in the “public comment” period. (Don’t overlook high school and college students as speakers!) Make previous arrangements with potential speakers to offer the perspectives of diverse community members.

Be prepared for possible opposition. The most effective way to counter the opposition is to know your facts and to feel confident in your position. Check out the text of the bill below. The *Local Community Radio Act* received 100 cosponsors in the House in the 110th Congress (2007-2008). Focus on and familiarize yourself with the legislation that has the greatest impact on your community. Remember your audience when debating with the opposition.

Contact expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org to have campaign postcards mailed to you.

Read the text of last year’s *Local Community Radio Act* at OpenCongress:
<http://www.opencongress.org/bill/110-h2802/text>

See the list of cosponsors at OpenCongress:
<http://www.opencongress.org/bill/110-h2802/show>

Tools

[Sample Press Release](#)
[Sample Media Advisory](#)
[Fact Sheet from Free Press](#)

Resolution



4. Write and Pass a Resolution

3. Demonstration of Community Support

Gather all the completed petitions. Deliver the signed petitions at the Council meeting. It's effective if you have a significant number of signatures.

Tools

Sample Petition

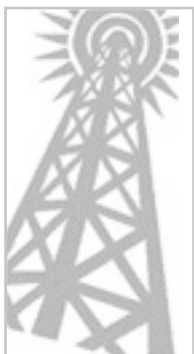
4. PR

After your council's vote, send out a press release to local and national media outlets to inform your community and other communities of your success. Name your group as a resource for those trying to pass a resolution.

Tools

*Low-Power FM FAQ from the Future of Music Coalition
'The Facts Are In' Sheet*

Resolution



5. Become Active in the National Expand LPFM Network

Expand LPFM City Council Resolution Toolkit

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

1. Follow up on resolution

We want these resolutions to be useful in passing the *Local Community Radio Act*. Follow up by participating in the Expand LPFM coalition. Contact Prometheus Radio at expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org. Make sure to send a copy of the resolution to Prometheus as well. Passing this legislation will allow thousands of organized supporters of community media to start their own LPFMs. Contact your Congressman and Senator and tell them to support the Local Community Radio Act.

Find your representative or Senator at:

<http://www.govtrack.us>.

View District maps and representatives at:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd>

Check the Prometheus Radio Project website for updates on our efforts in Congress and information on nationwide call-in days and lobby days.

2. Throw a party!

When you get a resolution passed, pat yourself on the back and celebrate! It's important to recognize our victories—this keeps us in high spirits for future efforts. When we organize, we CAN make our demands heard and produce tangible results. Celebrate our power!

3. Continue organizing efforts

It's great that you've organized a successful resolution campaign and that you're working on following up on the implementation of your effort.

Now it's important to continue your outreach and educational efforts.

-Contact your Congressman and ask them to sign on to the *Local Community Radio Act* and that a resolution has been passed in your city

-Inform the Prometheus Radio Project of a successful resolution campaign at:

expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org

-Join the Expand LPFM Action Alert email list by writing to:

expand-LPFM-action-subscribe@googlegroups.com

-Join the Expand LPFM Organizers email list by writing to:

expand-LPFM-organize-subscribe@googlegroups.com



Follow Up

5. Become Active in the National Expand LPFM Network

Expand LPFM City Council Resolution Toolkit

<http://prometheusradio.org/toolkit>

4. Stay active within your community

- If you have a website, continue to update it. Keep the Prometheus Radio Project informed. Contact us at expandlpfm@prometheusradio.org or at 215-727-9620 x515
- Assist surrounding communities in their fight for community media.
- Schedule an in-district meeting with your Congressman.

Follow Up

