

Instructors, please note:

- *Make a copy of this document for your own Google Drive, or copy and paste into your preferred assignment platform.*
- *Be sure to erase whichever of my notes you don't want your students to access.*
- *You will need to set up the parameters of the assignment at the end to make sure it's specific to what you want (story, package, social media post, etc. – some assignments have multiple options for completion).*
- *Thanks, and enjoy!*

Creative ways to connect with audiences

As audience engagement becomes more important to news organizations, burgeoning journalists need to be ready with unique outreach ideas

Summary: At a recent conference for nonprofit news organizations, panelists shared success stories about their efforts toward community and audience engagement, embracing the tenets of public/civic journalism that first took root in the 1990s. Those principles say that, “Journalists should not just report news, they should also encourage and facilitate public debate and participation in democratic processes.”

Get started: Read this Institute for Nonprofit News [story](#) about how news organizations are pioneering nontraditional ways to connect with audiences. Come up with one way that a local or campus publication might create a unique audience engagement project that would help a specific part of the community.

Background (projects to inspire you)

- [Profits and Losses | We helped Detroiters get millions in tax auction profits back from Wayne County](#) (Outlier Media)
- [Where To Find Resources About Affordable Housing and Homeownership](#) (City Bureau)
- [San Antonio Express-News Chowbot](#)
- [Protesting your property taxes in Harris County](#) (Houston Chronicle)
- [How-To Guide: Create Your Own Free Grocery Program](#) (Kansas City Defender)

Specifics: Use the background projects to inspire you, but come up with your own unique ideas to connect and engage with local audiences.

Assignment: Produce an executive summary of **(word count // length)** that specifies:

- Choose a community and issue/problem that you know

- Based on that, pick a specific news station, online news outlet, or local or campus newspaper that you propose would carry out the task. (For example, if you decide to address an issue in your hometown, consider which TV station or online news outlet might be best suited to carry out your idea, and identify it.)
- The community that's being served
- The need you're addressing
- How your journalistic tool would provide a service
- A creative way to address the problem
- What resources it would require
- How much money it would take
- A timeframe
- What you would publish as a result (if anything)