



Recruitment and Outreach Toolkit



Home Care
Cooperative
Initiative



Cooperative Development Foundation

Table of Contents

RECRUITMENT GUIDE	2	LOCAL MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDE	9
Best Places to Recruit	2	Identifying News Hooks	9
Sample Elevator Speech	3	- News of the Day	9
Key Points	3	- Observances and Themes	10
- Why home care	3	- Helpful Resources for Observances	10
- Why a cooperative	3	Letters to the Editor	10
- How you would use this in conversation	3	Opinion Editorials	11
Sample Messages for Recruiting New Caregivers in your Community	4	- The Basics of Writing an Op-ed	11
Sample Letter to Clergy	4	- Questions to Ask Yourself When Writing	11
AD USE AND PLACEMENT GUIDE	5	- Structure of an Op-ed	11
Overview	5	- Writing to the outlet	12
- Print Ad	5	Sample Op-eds	13
- Banner Ads	6	Sample Caregiver Shortage Op-ed	14
- Facebook Graphic	6	Sample Pitch 1	15
Tips for Using the Advertisements	6	Sample Pitch 2	15
BEST PRACTICES FOR POSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA	7	APPENDIX: GENERAL MESSAGING	16
Facebook & LinkedIn	7	What does a home care worker do?	16
- Resources	7	What is a home care cooperative?	16
- Best Practices	7	Why are cooperatives a better alternative for workers? ..	16
- Sample Posts	8	What are the 7 Cooperative Principles?	17
Twitter	8		
- Resource	8		
- Best Practices	8		

Recruitment Guide

Home care is projected to be one of the fastest growing occupations in the next decade. Recruiting qualified caregivers to meet this demand is a challenge for everyone in the industry. As a worker-owned business, your cooperative has an advantage over your competitors. How you communicate the benefit of cooperative ownership when recruiting caregivers is crucial to differentiating your business from the competition. In this section you will find messaging resources to help you recruit new home caregivers including:

- A guide on best places to recruit
- A sample elevator speech
- Sample messaging to recruit caregivers in your community
- A template letter to local Clergy

BEST PLACES TO RECRUIT

A frequent challenge for home care cooperatives is **how and where** to recruit caregivers. The key messages and suggested descriptions in the toolkit can help develop an enticing job posting that is competitive with other job openings with a similar salary range in your community.

Listed below are some options for recruiting caregivers. You will need to experiment to see what yields results. What works in one community may not work in another; so, it is important to track your results from each recruiting method. Stick with what works in your community, and move on from what doesn't.

- **Word of Mouth** — Your members are often your most effective recruitment tool. Use your newsletter, membership meetings and other member communications to equip them to talk with family and acquaintances about working for your cooperative. Encourage them with cash and gift incentives.
 - [A sample “elevator speech”](#) containing the key advantages of working for a worker-owned home care cooperative is included in this toolkit on page 3.
- **Paid Online Job Postings** — Paid job postings on sites such as Indeed.com or SimplyHired.com have proven successful in generating resumes. Don't be discouraged if you don't have an advertising budget. A small amount can go a long way. It is recommended that you try a \$10-a-day posting for 15 days and then evaluate the quality and quantity of applications received compared to previous methods. Experiment with your message to determine which benefits, highlights and calls-to-action result in successful hires.
- **Colleges, Universities, and Tech Schools** — Local higher education institutions and trade schools offer the opportunity to reach potential workers who may be studying a related field to caregiving or who are looking to earn an income while earning a degree. Most institutions have job boards, and you can also reach out directly with your job posting to specific school departments that might align with caregiving (i.e. nursing, health services, social work, etc.). Take the time to meet with program administrators and look for opportunities to present to students on caregiving and the advantages of working in a cooperative.
- **Social Media** — Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are used as communication tools for a wide range of age groups. Using the social media recommendations and key messages, craft a short posting for both platforms advertising the open position and link it to the full job posting on your website. [See sample posts on page 8](#). Additionally, ask other employees and friends throughout your social media networks to share and promote the post to reach a greater number of potential workers. Track the responses to each message to determine efficacy.
- **Community Facilities** — Local gyms, community centers, YMCA's, recreation centers, parks and local shops typically have bulletin boards where people can post job descriptions. Some of these places, such as community centers, may even have a dedicated section of their website where they will post job offerings. Be sure to check the places you frequent most to find out how you may be able to utilize their offerings.

Recruitment Guide (continued)

- **Mom Groups**— Do you have local mom groups that meet up weekly? Do a quick internet search and see what groups exist in your community. From there, you can reach out to the group leaders and let them know you have an excellent job opportunity for someone who wants to bring in an extra income while raising children.
- **News Outlets**— Many broadcast stations (TV and radio) and newspapers have job listings available to their audience. Look at your local news outlets’ websites and then contact the advertising sales department to inquire about your posting options.
 - [Sample messaging for recruiting](#) new caregivers in your community is included in this toolkit on page 4.
- **Places of Worship**— Local clergy are often aware of community members in transition. Death, divorce, children starting school or leaving home, or financial concerns are triggering events that cause people with caregiving skills to reenter the workforce. Set up appointments with clergy in your community to tell them about your cooperative and why it is an ideal job for people reentering the workforce. Ask if you could include a brief job notice in the weekly church bulletin.
 - [A sample letter to send to clergy](#) is included in this toolkit on page 4.

SAMPLE ELEVATOR SPEECH

The cooperative’s worker-owners are the best recruiters for the organization. Equip them with the tools to talk persuasively about working as a caregiver in a cooperative. Develop an elevator speech for your cooperative. Train members on how to use the speech when talking to potential caregivers and clients. Reinforce the message in member communications, print the elevator speech on a card for caregivers to carry in their wallet and repeat it in every newsletter. The goal is to make every member an ambassador for the organization.

Key Points

Why home care?

- **Guaranteed work:** Department of Labor projects home caregiving to be the fastest growing profession in next 10 years.
- **Flexible schedule:** Offers full-time or part-time work options.
- **Builds on your experience:** For family caregivers returning to the workforce, you already have the caregiving experience the profession needs.
- **Satisfaction of a helping others:** Your job has meaning. Everyday a caregiver contributes to the well-being of their clients.

Why a cooperative?

Because the workers own the cooperative and:

- Have a say in how the business is operated;
- Elect the board of directors and have an opportunity to serve on the board;
- Have a voice in how care is delivered and how work is scheduled;
- Experience greater job satisfaction from better wages, benefits, and training; and
- Enjoy the support and camaraderie of fellow caregivers.

How you would use this in conversation

“Have you thought about joining a home caregiver cooperative? Home caregiving is one of the fastest growing professions and with your experience as a family caregiver, you have more experience than you realize. The organization I work for is a cooperative, which means the employees have a direct say in how the business operates and how our role with clients are managed. It’s a great opportunity for someone like you who is looking to get back into the work force, especially considering that there are both part-time and full-time opportunities available.”

Recruitment Guide (continued)

SAMPLE MESSAGES FOR RECRUITING NEW CAREGIVERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

When developing recruitment materials such as brochures, social media posts, advertisements or other collateral, consider highlighting the following benefits of your home caregiving cooperative:

- **A flexible schedule with full or part-time work options**
 - A flexible schedule is a great benefit, especially for those in school, with a family, or looking to re-enter the workforce.
- **Mileage reimbursement and competitive wages**
 - Often, the mileage reimbursement puts the hourly wage at or above average for other similar jobs in your community, making the wages very competitive.
- **Ability to be a member-owner and have a say in the business**
 - When compared to other jobs and business models, cooperatives give members a voice in how the business is run, by electing or serving on the board of directors and participating in membership meetings.

SAMPLE LETTER TO CLERGY ►

Meeting the demand for home caregivers requires outreach beyond the usual want ads. Consider talking to local clergy about your cooperative and its benefits for both clients and caregivers. Clergy frequently counsel women and men returning to the work force after caring for children or family members. Let them know that your home care cooperative is a friendly and supportive place for people reentering the work force.

[Cooperative Name] is a worker-owned home care cooperative serving the elderly and people with disabilities in [Your Town] and [Surrounding Counties/Areas]. As the population of our community ages, the demand for our home care services grow. Access to home care benefits us all by keeping our friends and neighbors in the community and relieves family members from the constant burden of balancing care and work obligations.

[Cooperative Name] is always looking for qualified and committed home care providers. As a faith leader, you are frequently called to counsel parishioners during times of life transitions. These transitions often include reentry into the workforce, which can seem daunting for someone whose primary work has been in the service of children, a spouse or aging family members. However, family caregivers have the experience we are looking for.

[Insert specific information about your cooperative i.e. years of service, number of clients, workers, areas of expertise, community involvement...]

As a cooperative, [Cooperative Name] is owned and controlled by the home care providers. Worker owners have a say in how their cooperative is operated, how care is delivered and work is scheduled. Workers are supported with ongoing training and mentoring. And wages and benefits exceed those offered by other home care agencies in the area. Consequently, [Cooperative Name] has lower turnover than the industry generally. This results in a virtuous circle of quality care for clients and quality jobs for workers.

I would like to schedule a time to talk to you about our work. Brochures about our home care cooperative are enclosed. You can also learn more information about us via [insert web and Facebook address].

[Cooperative Name] is a friendly, supportive place to work. If you have parishioners interested in learning more about the home care profession, we would be delighted to talk to them.

Thank you for your consideration

*Sincerely,
[Name]*

Ad Use and Placement Guide

OVERVIEW

To help generate interest and demand in home caregiving jobs, ads have been created for placement in local print and online publications and sites, including social media sites such as Facebook. The ads feature research-informed messaging to entice potential job seekers, and speaks to the benefits of a job or career in cooperative based home caregiving. These ads can be customized to your cooperative. This should include a local contact and information (such as a name, phone number, or email address), a logo if your organization has one, or a prompt to learn more (such as a URL directed to area-specific employment information).

In order to customize the files, you will need some basic software, or access to a graphics professional who can edit them for you. Office services stores such as FedEx Office, or copy shops often have computer workstations with desktop publishing software available for rent by the hour or minute. Print files will require Adobe Acrobat Reader, a free download from [Adobe](https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/reader-main.html). Online files, including banner ads and Facebook images will require Adobe Photoshop in order to edit and save them as the correct file type.

Once you've secured access to the required software, editing the files themselves is relatively straightforward. The instructions for each ad type begin once you've opened the file in the required software.

Print (half-page ad)



**Do the best for yourself.
Be your best for them.**

Be a cooperative home caregiver. APPLY TODAY!

Click to place your logo
(Red won't show)

Contact [Insert name here] at [xxx-xxx-xxx] or [Insert email address]

Be more than just an employee. Make a difference in someone's life in a quality job where you have a say in the operation. Apply today to be a cooperative home caregiver.

The print ad file is sized for a half page (horizontal) ad in most publications. To customize, open in Adobe Acrobat Reader, and locate the white call-to-action box on the lower left of the ad. It contains place holders for a logo, a contact name, email, and phone number. Click the logo box and follow the prompts to locate your logo on the hard drive or portable media (such as a USB thumb drive), and place it into the provided space. NOTE: the red block will disappear after you place your logo. Then, click into the text box, and edit the contact information with your contact name, phone number, and email address. Delete the text prompts for contact information you aren't providing. You can then select "Save As" from the "File" drop-down menu, and save your edited file under a new name. Simply selecting "Save" will overwrite the template file permanently.

Ad Use and Placement Guide (continued)

300x250 Banner Ads



300x250 is a common digital banner ad size, used in most online outlets. To edit the file, open in Adobe Photoshop, and locate the contact information text at the bottom of the ad. Use the text editing tool, and click on the text layer. Highlight the text and edit the contact information with your contact name, phone number, and email address. To add your logo, first delete the text that says “Place logo here.” You can then either drag and drop your logo into the layout, or go to the File menu, select “Place Embedded” and find the logo file on your hard drive, then resize it to fit the space* .

*NOTE: When resizing your logo, be sure to keep the original proportions while reducing its size. Don’t stretch or squeeze the logo to fit the space.

If you don’t have access to Photoshop, we’ve also included a non-customizable banner ad that you can use to link to your website.

Facebook Graphic 1200x628



You can use this graphic along with the language included in one of the sample posts that can be found in the [Social Media section](#) on page 8.

TIPS FOR USING THE ADVERTISEMENTS

When selecting ad placements, it is preferable to be able place ads in publications or online outlets or sections of publications that specifically relate to the topic area, such as health, business, or employment. Research has also shown that readers will often need to see your ad multiple times before taking action, so selecting less expensive placements that allow the ad to run multiple times or for a longer duration may produce a better response.

Online outlets may offer “run of site” placements that are less expensive than specific, targeted placements. This means your ad will run anywhere on the site where there is unsold ad inventory. Google Display Network is

an option that allows you to run ads on multiple sites of your choice within a geographic area. When placing ads to run regularly in daily publications like newspapers, vary the edition (weekday, Saturday, Sunday) in order to gain exposure to readers who don’t read every day.

The best way to achieve a strong response to your ads is to carefully observe the response you receive to different placements, and the ad metrics provided by online outlets to understand which placements are working better than others, and familiarize yourself with basic advertising terminology. An online search for “online advertising terminology” will yield many helpful, free glossaries of terms that will help you be more effective.

Best Practices for Posting on Social Media

Social media can be an invaluable resource for recruiting new employees, sharing the benefits of the cooperative business model, and highlighting the satisfaction of being a home caregiver. In this section, you will find the following information to assist your social media efforts:

- LinkedIn and Facebook: Resources, Best Practices, Sample Content
- Twitter: Resources, Best Practices, Sample Content

FACEBOOK & LINKEDIN

Facebook is a social networking site that makes it easy for you to connect and share information such as photos, videos and news articles, with others online. LinkedIn is a professional networking site designed specifically for the business community. Both Facebook and LinkedIn require users to create a profile to use the free service, which includes creating a username and password, and use of an email account.

Resources

 [Creating a Company Page on LinkedIn](#)

 [Creating a Company Page on Facebook](#)

Best Practices

- While these platforms do not have a character limit, the posts that receive the most engagement are ones that are kept short. Be concise and direct. You don't have to say everything all at once; you can break up your information into multiple posts.
- Use links, images, video when possible and ask questions to start a dialogue – these posts receive double the engagement. Ex: What are you looking for out of a job? Are you looking to have a say in how the business is run?
- Share your content across platforms – i.e. share a link to your LinkedIn post on Facebook or vice versa.
- Encourage all your home care cooperative members who are on social media to share updates on their personal social media accounts to increase visibility of messages.
- Consider posting updates at a strategic time; for example, most people tend to view Facebook at lunch or the end of the day, which makes afternoons and early evenings prime for posting.
- Consider joining LinkedIn Groups from your company page. LinkedIn Groups provide a place for professionals to network, share content and ideas, recruit talent and look for work, and establish industry expertise. To find a group with interests that align with your business goals, use the search feature at the top of your LinkedIn homepage or check out LinkedIn's suggestions of Groups you may like.
- If other home care cooperative members are on LinkedIn or Facebook, ask them to draft and share a post about why they love their work and share it from the company's official page.

Best Practices for Posting on Social Media (continued)

Sample Posts

- *Be more than just an employee. Make a difference in someone's life as a cooperative home caregiver. You'll have a say in how the business operates, while working in a quality job you can be proud of. Apply today. [\[Insert link to job posting\]](#).*
- *Be more than just an employee. Make a difference in someone's life. Apply today to be a cooperative home caregiver. [\[Insert link to job posting\]](#).*
- *Be more than just an employee. Be an inspiration to someone. Be a business owner. Be a companion. Be a cooperative home caregiver. Review the job posting and apply today: [\[Insert link to job posting\]](#).*
- *Looking for a job with a competitive salary, flexible hours, mileage reimbursement and the opportunity to make a difference in your community? Apply today to be a cooperative home caregiver. [\[Insert link to job posting\]](#).*
- *Be more than just an employee. Make a difference in someone's life. As a cooperative home caregiver, you have a say in the business, and the satisfaction of rewarding work. Apply today! [\[Insert link to job posting\]](#).*

TWITTER

Twitter is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages, “tweets,” restricted to 140 characters. Registered users can post tweets, but those who are unregistered can only read them. Like Facebook and LinkedIn, you will need to register with an email address to create a username and password.

Resource



[Creating a Company Account on Twitter](#)

Best Practices

- Keep it short, concise and focused on one message per tweet. Aim to keep all tweets around 100 characters. While 140 characters is the limit for tweets, keeping it shorter increases the likelihood that you will get retweeted. It also saves room for hashtags and links, which are included in your character limit. Twitter will automatically shorten links to around 17 characters. Note that adding photos do not count against your available character limit.
- Engage with replies or by retweeting other individuals, and ensure your replies are timely.
- When possible, always try to add images, videos and links in your tweets when appropriate, as these will help boost engagement and visibility with your content.

Local Media Relations Guide

The media relations guide is a resource to help secure media coverage, which can in turn, help recruit additional home care workers by addressing local issues and highlighting the benefits of cooperative home caregiving. In this section, you will find:

- News hooks to pitch the media on covering your cooperative
- Tips on how to draft a Letter to the Editor
- Tips on how to draft an Opinion Editorial (op-ed)
- Sample opinion editorial
- Sample media pitches

IDENTIFYING NEWS HOOKS

Connecting your cooperative to the news of the day or an annual observance is an effective way to get media coverage.

News of the Day

Monitor your local, regional and national news outlets for topics that are receiving coverage. In many cases, you can take a topic that is receiving national attention and customize it to fit your local community. This gives you the opportunity to pitch a news story to a local journalist. If your local journalist has written an article already around a topic that is relevant to your co-op, you can use that as an opportunity to write a letter-to-the-editor or op-ed to the outlet.

News of the Day Topics Relevant to Co-op Home Caregivers

- Healthcare legislation
- Baby boomer issues (i.e. retirement, declining health, etc.)
- Unemployment/Job market statistics
- Cost of Care (i.e. how chronic conditions and disease impact families; rehabilitation; etc.)
- Senior issues (i.e. declining health, in-home help, companionship, assist family with caregiving responsibilities)

Observances and Themes

Annual observances and themes present an opportunity for co-op home caregivers to connect their industry and business goals to a timely topic. There are many options for engagement as these topics can be used to pitch a news story to a local journalist or broadcast outlet, or to submit an op-ed or letter-to-the-editor. The various observances and themes allow you to adjust your message to fit who you are recruiting and to address the business model.

For example, National Stroke Awareness month offers a home caregiver the opportunity to highlight tips for caregivers of stroke survivors and address both how the co-op works with those patients regularly and the business model. This specific example is used in the [sample pitches](#) provided on page 15. For a business model pitch and/or op-ed, consider Single Working Women's Week as an opportunity to highlight the option for full or part-time work and employee training opportunities. If there is an observance that fits well with your co-op, plan to formulate your pitch or editorial content several weeks out from the date. A pitch to a journalist should be made two weeks out from the date while an op-ed can be submitted one week out from the date. For an op-ed, be sure to include the date you would like your piece published (to coincide with the observance).

Observances and Themes Relevant to Co-op Home Caregivers

- February:** American Heart Month
- March:** National Kidney Month
- March:** Women’s History Month
- March *12–18:** Patient Safety Awareness Week
- April *29–May 5:** National Small Business Week
- May:** National Stroke Awareness Month
- May 31:** National Senior Health & Fitness Day
- June:** Alzheimer’s & Brain Awareness Month
- June:** Dementia Care Professionals Month
- June *15–22:** National Nursing Assistants Week
- June *15:** World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- July *30–August 5:** Single Working Women’s Week
- August:** National Back to School Month
- August 21:** Senior Citizens Day
- September:** World Alzheimer’s Month
- September *18–22:** Malnutrition Week
- September 22:** Falls Prevention Awareness Day
- September *22:** American Business Women’s Day
- October:** National Cooperative Awareness Month
- November:** National Family Caregivers Month

**Denotes dates that change annually.*

Helpful Resources for Observances Include

- Healthfinder.gov
- Notjustbingo.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A great alternative to an op-ed is writing a letter to the editor (LTE) in your local or regional newspaper. LTEs appear on the editorial page of an outlet and allow you to reach a target audience with your message. LTEs are typically concise and provide the editor with varying reactions and perspectives to an article. Here are some tips for writing your LTE:

- **Respond to an Article in the Paper** — If you come across an article in the paper that is relevant to a topic or subject that you care about, your LTE should cite the story by title, date and author.
- **Follow the Paper’s Directions** — Do a quick search and adhere to the paper’s instructions because that will increase the chances it will be published. If you are unable to find the information online, call the main number of the paper and they can direct you to the right person in the editorial department.
- **Be Timely** — Your letter is more likely to be published if you respond to a story within the first 2–3 days after it appears.
- **Note Your Expertise** — Your letter should demonstrate why you are an authority on this subject area and why the paper’s readers should care about your perspective. Be sure to explain your credentials in the letter.
- **Speak Directly to the Individuals You are Trying to Influence** — Whether you are trying to influence a specific organization or individual, always address your letter directly to your target audience.
- **Keep your Letter Short, Focused, Interesting and Original** — It is important to read the guidelines so that you can adhere to the word count, which is typically no more than 200 words. Be sure to make your point quickly and include any interesting facts or data, personal narratives and local connections to the topic you are commenting on.
- **Refute, Advocate, and Make a Call-to-Action** — Start your letter by addressing the claim made in the original story the paper ran and follow up with any new information that reinforces your argument, always remaining positive and respectful. Then conclude your letter by explaining what you think needs to happen now, and make a call-to-action, like applying to be a cooperative home caregiver.
- **Include Your Contact Information** — Be sure to include your name, address, email and phone number so that the paper can contact you before printing your letter.

OPINION EDITORIALS (OP-ED)

An op-ed is an opinion piece written by an individual, expert, or organization to express a specific position on an issue. Op-eds are a great opportunity to add your perspective to the debate or conversation on a topic and make an impact on public opinion. Op-eds are written for various audiences and almost all publications curate a section where they host contributed content.

The Basics of Writing an Op-ed

- **Know and Own Your Expertise** — Consider your level of knowledge on the subject matter and own it. What are you an expert in and why?
- **Stay Up-to-Date** — Before you begin writing your op-ed, do a quick search in the news to ensure that you have not missed any important developments about the topic. News about healthcare and caregiving can change regularly so be sure to read recent articles.
- **Be Quick** — The news also moves very quickly, so it's critical that you develop your written piece just as fast. Never sacrifice quality for speed, but keep in mind that a topic may not be relevant once it is covered by several outlets and pundits.
- **Consider the Opposing Argument** — Always remember to consider what other perspectives there might be on your topic so that you can address them and strengthen your argument.
- **Use Plain Language and Respect the Reader** — Avoid using too much jargon or complex language. Your goal is to make the argument clear, simple and compelling. It's important to strike the right balance and never overestimate the reader's level of information or underestimate their intelligence.

Questions to Ask Yourself When Writing

- **Why Should Readers Trust You?** — Consider why you are an expert on this issue and why your perspective matters. Make it clear to your reader why they should care what you think.
- **What Evidence Can You Provide?** — Gather and collect all research and materials that will help to support each part of your argument. Make sure that your argument is complete and provides substantive answers.
- **What's New?** — Stay current on the news about your topic and present an original reaction to the conversation. Why is your contribution different?
- **Consider the Difference Between “Right” and Being “Effective”** — To ensure that your piece does not dismiss the arguments of others, consider existing contributions and opinions on your topic. You can disagree but do it respectfully and in the pursuit of swaying the public's view.

Structure of an Op-ed

- **Lede (Around a News Hook)** — Essentially the introduction. It should grab the reader's attention and give a preview of why your perspective will be interesting and timely. Tips for making your lede interesting can include:
 - Referencing current events
 - Telling a story
 - Incorporating pop culture
 - Rejecting conventional wisdom or flagging contradictions
 - Using an anniversary, upcoming event, holidays or national observances
 - Citing a new peer-reviewed study or compelling data
 - Incorporating your personal narrative

Local Media Relations Guide (continued)

- **Thesis**— Statement of your argument
- **Argument**— Based on evidence (such as statistics, news, reports from credible organizations, expert quotes, scholarship, history, first-hand experience)
- **Main Point One**— Explain the first part of your argument and provide two points of evidence, as well as a conclusion.
- **Main Point Two**— Explain the second part of your argument and provide two points of evidence, as well as a conclusion.
- **Main Point Three**— Explain the third part of your argument and provide two points and evidence, as well as a conclusion.
- **“To Be Sure” Paragraph**— Acknowledge the flaws in your argument and recognize others’ contributions on the topic.
- **Conclusion**— Wrap up your argument. You may consider referencing the lede in your first paragraph.
- **Search for the Guidelines**— Each outlet or publication typically has their own specific guidelines for formatting. Do a quick Google search for the outlet and their opinion/contributed content instructions. This is also a good opportunity to review other content in the section and get familiar with formatting and structure.
- **Pitching Your Piece Via Email to Your Newspaper or Media Outlet**— This part of the process is critical because you want to capture the editor’s attention quickly. You must establish credibility and show the editor why they should publish your piece. Your pitch should:
 - Be timely and well written
 - Brief and clear
 - Include your idea in a few lines
 - Flag your credentials— only those that are relevant
 - Include the finished piece pasted below your pitch
 - Note your contact information
- **Follow Up**— If there is no response from your contact, you can send a brief follow-up email after two days to confirm they saw your email. If you don’t hear back a week or more later, assumed that they have passed on publishing. If they respond and say no, still say thank you for their consideration.

Writing to the outlet

When you have selected a newspaper or media outlet and confirmed that they do accept outside submissions, there are a few things to consider before you hit send on an email to the editor.

SAMPLE OP-EDS

NOTE: this op-ed is written from the perspective of a working mother. Please be sure to adjust text as needed to match the author.

This November: Celebrate and Support Caregivers

[Insert Date]

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to recognize the hard work of family caregivers and raise awareness of the issues affecting the caregiving community.

*Each year, a theme for the awareness month is chosen by the Caregiver Action Network (CAN). This year's theme is "Take Care to Give Care," emphasizing the importance of self-care as a prerequisite to caring for others. For caregivers, it is imperative to remember that managing stress, eating right, and resting will enhance their own experience, and the experience of those who need them. CAN encourages these techniques via the phrase, "Rest. Recharge. Respite." *[Insert Co-op Name]*, does just that — we help family caregivers so that they can continue to provide the best care possible for loved ones.*

*As a caregiver with *[Insert Co-op Name]*, I enjoy getting to know the patients and families who I serve. As a mother, this role of caregiver comes naturally to me. I strive to make my working relationship with families as comfortable and organized as I do with my own family. For me, helping improve their lives and giving the primary caregiver a break, is gratifying. I also know that this relationship is rewarding for the primary caregivers. Because I've been in this field for a while, I'm able to provide tips and make recommendations based on the needs of the patient that I know will not only work, but will be useful in helping the caregiver navigate their circumstance better.*

*One of the most useful benefits to my work is that because *[Insert Co-op Name]* is a cooperative home care organization, they can invest in my training. This has provided me with opportunities to grow and strengthen my skills and be confident in helping support primary caregivers as well as the patients. The co-op model has provided me with more opportunities than I could have imagined — the business model grants each caregiver equal ownership in the organization, a flexible schedule that accommodates my personal (family) obligations, and a more competitive salary than I could find with other places of business in *[Insert Town/City]*.*

Exceptional home care is based on companionship, a value fundamental among our staff and patients alike. I'm proud that my colleagues and I can tailor our services to the specific needs of our patients and their families — allowing the family to have time to "Rest. Recharge. Respite" and providing the additional physical and emotional support they need.

Caregiving is more than a profession; it's a commitment to helping others. As "Take Care to Give Care" reminds us, self-care is the first step in caring for others. This National Family Caregivers Month, we can help give family caregivers the resources they need to make the most of their experiences in caregiving.

[Insert Name, title, location]

SAMPLE CAREGIVER SHORTAGE OP-ED

PERSPECTIVE: Shortage of caregivers is a community concern

by Kippi Waters, administrator, Peninsula Healthcare Cooperative, Port Townsend, Washington

WILL THERE BE SOMEONE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU?

Let’s face it, we are all getting older. Just look at the sea of silver-haired people at our community gatherings. However, we are not alone.

There is a wave of humanity reaching old age and impacting the world in a way that is metaphorically referred to as the “silver tsunami.” The statistics are impressive. We are creating a historically new demographic by which the old outnumber the young.

This hits very close to home in the field of long-term care, where there is an increasing need for home care and a decreasing work force of caregivers.

My career as a caregiver began in my mid-40s. My only child was in her late teens, and caregiving allowed a move away from corporate America to more heart-centered work.

Most of my associates were baby boomers closing in on middle age. Caring for our parents’ generation felt like an honorable vocation. This ancestral structure balanced the needs of the elderly with caregivers able to care for them.

As baby boomers retired, we lost this balance and are currently experiencing a caregiver shortage crisis. All home and health care providers that engage caregivers feel this pinch.

LOW WAGES

Even though it is vital to entice younger generations into this

profession, caregivers are among the lowest paid domestic workers. Nationally, the median hourly wage is \$10.11. Adjusted for inflation, wages have remained virtually stagnant for the past 10 years.

Poor supervision, few benefits, strenuous travel schedules, demanding workloads, inconsistent scheduling, part-time work, isolation, lack of training and support, and few advancement opportunities characterize the home care industry.

One in two caregivers leaves the job within 12 months. In fact, more workers are leaving the profession than joining it. The typical home care agency has an annual turnover rate of more than 60 percent.

Providing empowering and sustainable careers is the motivating force behind Peninsula Homecare Cooperative — a state-certified home care agency in Port Townsend owned by the caregivers.

Without corporate overhead, we are able to pay our caregivers a living wage of \$15 an hour — raising the bar for our community. Members of the cooperative are caregivers and business owners with a voice and a vote in setting policy and sharing quarterly profits.

Even with this enticing cooperative model, the demand for care outpaces our available caregivers. The shortage of caregivers is a crisis that requires a community-wide solution.

TRAINING NEEDED

We need a comprehensive recruiting, training and mentorship program to bring young people into this profession. Just as the Port Townsend Maritime Discover program allows students to research information on maritime trade careers, we need a program to motivate students to consider careers in caregiving.

Recruiting caregivers is only half the solution. Training and mentorship programs are crucial for increasing the odds that young people will remain comfortable in a very personal and challenging profession. On-site mentorship with seasoned caregivers who model empathy, steadfast attentiveness, genuine concern and compassion is especially important in this impersonal age of social-media-based relationships.

The current shortage of skilled caregivers able to tend to our aging population is a problem that will only increase with time, because, let’s face it, we are all getting older. The question that requires a communal answer is this: Will there be somebody available to take care of us?

Kippi Waters, founding member and administrator of Peninsula Homecare Cooperative, has been involved in elder care for the past 15 years. She has been a resident of Port Townsend for nine years.

SAMPLE PITCH 1

Pitch: **National Stroke Awareness Month (May)**

Subject: **Tackling Stroke Recovery During National Stroke Awareness Month**

Dear XxX,

Next week kicks off National Stroke Awareness Month — a time to learn about causes and symptoms of stroke and consider how this devastating condition impacts our community.

Each year, strokes kill more than 133,000 Americans and is the nation's leading cause of serious, long-term disability.

Strokes put victims and families into difficult circumstances for which they are unprepared, and it quickly becomes an overwhelming situation.

[Insert Co-op Name] is a cooperative home caregiving organization and stroke is a leading reason that families need our help caring for their loved ones. Every stroke is different, therefore every recovery plan for a patient is unique. As a co-op with flexible scheduling, we can cater to each patient's specific needs. Not only do we provide in-home care, we also provide support to the family members who are trying to navigate the complexities of stroke recovery, often helping a family to adjust their home to accommodate the needs of the patient.

If you are considering writing a story on stroke awareness in May, I would love to offer our staff as a resource to you — we can provide tips and tailored recommendations that address the many questions and needs that stroke survivors and their families have. Often, people tend to focus on symptoms and prevention of stroke, but we feel understanding what happens during the recovery phase is crucial for many in our community.

If you have questions, or would like to speak with a *[Insert Co-op Name]* representative, I would be happy to set up a time to chat via phone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

XxX

SAMPLE PITCH 2

Pitch: **National Small Business Week April 29–May 5, 2018**

Subject: **Interview Request — National Small Business Week in *[Insert Town/City Name]***

Dear XxX,

More than half of Americans own or work for a small business, and according to the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#), they create about two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. each year. Next week is National Small Business Week — a time to celebrate and recognize local businesses that enhance their communities — especially the businesses in *[insert Town/City]*.

All small businesses are different, with different business models, different goals, and different values. *[Insert Co-op Name]* employs the cooperative business model, which grants each caregiver equal ownership in the organization and encourages democratic engagement.

Cooperative caregiving institutions have unique financial, personal, and industry-wide benefits for caregivers and patients. *[Insert Co-op Name]* offers specialized *[Insert a few benefits you offer]*.

If you are considering writing a story on National Small Business Week, I would love to offer our staff as a resource to you — we can offer more information about the benefits of the cooperative business model as well as information specific to the home care industry here in *[Insert Town/City]*.

If you have questions, or would like to speak with a *[Insert Co-op Name]* representative, I would be happy to set up a time to chat via phone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

XxX

Appendix: General Messaging

The following is background information on the home care profession, home care cooperatives and cooperative business generally.

WHAT DOES A HOME CARE WORKER DO?

There are more than 2 million home care workers in the U.S. who provide services that allow seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their homes and active in their communities. Some examples of this work include:

- **Personal care** — feeding, bathing, grooming, dressing, general hygiene
- **Companion care** — games, exercise, activities and conversation
- **Home care** — simple chores around the house to grocery shopping or meal preparations
- **Respite care** — offers a break for family members who currently offer care

For statistical information about home caregivers, go to: [PHI National Policy Resource Center](#)

WHAT IS A HOME CARE COOPERATIVE?

A home care cooperative is a business owned and controlled by the caregivers on a democratic basis of one person, one vote. Profits or losses from the business are allocated to the worker-owners according to either hours worked or gross pay.

Home care cooperatives are often formed by a group of independent caregivers working with a cooperative developer. Caregivers form cooperatives because they benefit from the administrative support a group provides

including scheduling, back-up, marketing, billing, training, camaraderie and support.

Once established, the cooperative hires caregivers and pays them a competitive wage. After a probationary period, caregivers are given the opportunity to become member owners of the cooperative. Memberships often requires the purchase of a membership share which can be paid over time through a payroll deduction. Members elect the cooperative's board of directors, can serve on committees, and have input on major decisions of the cooperative. In years when the cooperative has net earnings, members may share in the distribution of those earnings.

WHY ARE COOPERATIVES A BETTER ALTERNATIVE FOR WORKERS?

Cooperatives offer quality jobs, wages and care. Worker-owned cooperative businesses:

- Create alternative paths to ownership and wealth creation for workers-owners
- Provide members a voice in how the business is run
- Are more efficient and productive making them able to weather business variabilities
- Are more focused on the whole person and are culturally competent
- Provide quality full-time employment
- Provide a safe haven for older women seeking re-entry into the work force
- Have lower turnover providing consistent staff to support high quality person-centered care for vulnerable older adults

General Messaging (continued)

WHAT ARE THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES?

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits member owners in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.