**NJ Office of Innovation**

**Communications + Engagement Lab**

**Resident Talent Recruitment Process**

**BACKGROUND**

For marketing outreach campaigns to be effective, it needs to be easy for your audience to see themselves in your message. You have limited time to capture someone’s attention (just [1.3 seconds before you lose Gen Z’s interest](https://research.mountain.com/insights/audience-deep-dive-generation-z/)) and if your message doesn’t almost immediately appeal to someone they will most likely tune it out. That’s why the NJ Office of Innovation’s Communication + Engagement Lab features New Jersey residents in our advertising and marketing communication outreach assets (such as videos, banners, billboards, etc.). Casting people who have benefitted from your organization’s programs or services provides *authenticity*—they enhance the credibility of your messaging and make it easier for people to “see themselves” in it. In turn, this relatability helps drive uptake of your program or service.

This document was put together to help guide you through the process of recruiting and vetting residents to appear in your advertising and marketing outreach campaigns.

*This framework can be adapted by any public sector stakeholders - whether in another state, government organization, or other public service organization. This process is used internally by the Communications + Engagement Lab —which we are now making open source so your team can customize to suit your own purposes. It includes sample messaging you can use in your efforts. Feel free to use what is here or adapt to suit your specific needs.*

**RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

**STEP 1**

* **Identify contacts to help support outreach.**

If you don’t already have a list of possible participants, contacting community-based organizations or other partners that work with the people you are trying to reach is advised.

**STEP 2**

* **Develop recruiting outreach email messaging.**

The initial outreach message should share details about the shoot for your marketing campaign and create excitement about the opportunity. If working with a partner to better connect with possible talent, explain the purpose of the shoot, what your needs are, and any timeline information. Meeting with the partner in-person or virtually will also help facilitate the process, particularly if you have not worked with them prior and would like to fully explain background material and what you are hoping to achieve.

* Sample [partner outreach email](#jfq2rduyqs0q)

**STEP 3**

* **Set up a dedicated calendar to manage talent interviews.**

An online scheduling tool can integrate with your existing calendar and help manage and simplify the talent interview process. By using a free tool, like [Calendly](https://calendly.com/) or Google Calendar’s [scheduling feature](https://workspace.google.com/resources/appointment-scheduling/), you can indicate when you are available for interviews and their duration. Individuals interested in learning more can sign up for a timeslot that fits their schedule and receive an email reminder before the meeting. Typically 20-30 minutes is enough time to discuss the opportunity and learn about the talent candidate.

**STEP 4**

* **Provide partners with email messaging and an intended deployment date.**

This email will include details about your organization or agency, an explanation of the marketing campaign, information on the interview process, and next steps.

* Sample virtual [scheduling outreach email](#s5ubdgd4rd3)

**STEP 5**

* **Partners deploy outreach message.**

After the partner deploys the email, your team will manage the rest of the process. Be ready for interviews to start populating your calendar!

**STEP 6**

* **Determine payment for talent.**

It’s a general best practice to compensate people for their time. Before holding interviews with possible talent, consult with your internal teams to determine the feasibility to do so. Consider your overall budget for production and the funds that can be allocated for talent payment. (Note, if you are working with a production company, they may hire the talent and issue payment.)

**STEP 7**

* **Hold virtual screening interviews.**

Remember that casting people who have benefitted or *could* benefit from your program or service makes the campaign assets more authentic. If applicable, ask candidates if they work for the State, your organization, or are members of any other organization that might preclude them from working with you. This could have implications on whether they are able to participate or be paid for their involvement.

* Sample virtual candidate [discussion guide](#5dqmf9zf4aon)
* Evaluate interviewees for “camera-readiness”:
  + Do they seem comfortable at the thought of being filmed?
  + Does their personality come through or are they more reserved?
  + Does their face naturally show engagement?
  + Are they excited about the opportunity?

**STEP 8**

* **Select your top 5 talent candidates and 3 to 5 back-up individuals.**

The number of individuals you ultimately select will be dependent upon the creative concept , but we always suggest selecting back-up individuals. In the event that someone’s schedule changes, they do not pass the vetting process described below, or there is some other unforeseen circumstance, we recommend keeping a short roster of individuals that you can reach out to just in case.

**STEP 9**

* **Email talent candidates and back-ups to confirm interest and availability. Provide as many details about the shoot as possible and inform them about any "vetting" processes.**

Vetting processes will vary according to your organization’s needs and processes; please consult your leadership or legal team to determine what information needs to be collected and what kind of services, like [LexisNexis](https://risk.lexisnexis.com/corporations-and-non-profits/fraud-and-identity-management/identity-verification), are available to verify it. Be transparent with talent candidates about the information that will be verified during this process and confirm that they are comfortable with proceeding. Additionally, share any details you have about where their images may be used (digital billboards, particular social platforms or streaming services, etc.) and make sure they are aware of the public exposure and heightened attention (both negative and positive) that could come with being part of a marketing campaign.

* Sample [video shoot availability email](#y67263ctxr8m)

**STEP 10**

* **Vet talent.**

At the end of the day, talent will become a “face” or “spokesperson” of your organization - even if only included in a small social media ad or billboard spot. It is important that they reflect your organization and the character of your campaign. Check with your HR team to determine which vetting steps align with your organization’s processes and policies. For example, sometimes LexisNexis is used to verify the identity of individuals, detect fraud, etc. and particular information is required to complete this process. Maintaining the privacy and security of the talent candidates’ information is of the utmost importance; check to make sure your transfer method complies with your organization’s guidelines.

**STEP 11**

* **Schedule vetted and approved candidates for shoot.**

At this time, you’ll want to discuss wardrobe needs and request that the talent email photos of possible wardrobe options that suit your needs. Typically, clothing with logos, patterns, or that are black or white are advised against as they do not photograph or appear on video well. If your shoot involves a green screen, talent should not wear green.

* Sample [scheduling email](#n2gnmm1751tj)

**STEP 12**

* **Provide candidates with a Talent Release Form and W9, if payment will be issued.**

If your organization has a legal team, consult with them on the appropriate language to use in a Talent Release Form, or consult with a lawyer. Request that talent sign and return the W9 and Talent Release Form prior to the shoot date.

* Sample [Talent Release form](#bdan72r9r09m)

**STEP 13**

* **A day or two before the shoot, send a reminder email including a recap of the shoot address, parking instructions, wardrobe, and other pertinent shoot details. You may also want to text this information to participants.**
* Sample logistics [follow-up and recap email](#oapedqyjb45p)

**STEP 14**

* **Shoot Day**

Take behind-the-scenes photos to potentially share with talent and possibly use at a later time for social media posts. Additionally, if you prefer that the talent doesn’t post about their participation until the campaign is live, inform them.

**STEP 15**

* **Send thank you emails to participants and issue payment for participation, if applicable.**

**STEP 16**

* **Once the final campaign assets are available, share links with participants.**

Inform talent if they are able to share the assets with their social networks to promote the campaign. Include any language that would be helpful to them in explaining the program or service being marketed.

**DISCUSSION GUIDES**

**EXAMPLE:** **Virtual Candidate Discussion Guide** - Adapt this discussion guide to meet your needs/with the specifics of your program’s target audience and scope of planned shoot.

| * **Introductions** * **Goal of Conversation**   + Share information about the shoot and how the recruitment process works with the interviewee   + Learn about the candidate’s journey * **What we are doing**   + *Example: Creating video ads for a paid media campaign going live in the end of summer*     - Feature real NJ residents   + The campaign will support a new State of NJ initiative to help residents with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   + Participation will involve a one-day shoot     - Shoot location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_     - Shoot details: *Example: Film staged shots of your everyday life*        * *Examples*         + *Walking across campus*         + *Studying in a library*         + *In class (in person or online learning)*         + *Spending time with family*         + *Working*     - We might spend some time interviewing you on camera, asking you to talk about your journey *as a student*     - You can just be you       * Want it to be as “real” / “authentic” as possible in a staged setting * **How the process will work**   + We are interviewing a number of people throughout the State   + Based on logistics including timing and location, up to 3-5 residents will be identified for potential participation   + Identified residents will need to go through a vetting process before being included in the shoot. This may involve:     - Deep dive of social media and internet history   + After the vetting process is complete, and based on logistics including location and availability, residents will be scheduled for participations * **Before we get started, is it okay if we record so we don’t have to take notes?** * **First, we wanted to ask you a few questions about you and your background:**   + Are you a resident of NJ?   + *Example: Are you currently enrolled as a student?*     - *[If enrolled] What is the name of the institution you are attending?*   + What is your employment status?     - Are you employed by the State of NJ? (Employment with the State may impact whether the candidate is able to participate or be paid for their time. Confirm how to proceed with your leadership.) * **Your journey**    + *Example: Tell us a bit about yourself and your journey as a student*     - *What was your initial experience with college?*     - *Why did you leave college?*     - *How did leaving college make you feel?*     - *What caused you to return?*     - *What are you studying now?*   + *What do you hope to accomplish?*   + *How will having a degree change your life?* * **We also wanted to ask questions regarding the video shoot:**   + Is this something you’re interested in?   + What is your availability like during the week?   + Where are you based in New Jersey?   + Are you going to be away in the coming weeks? * **Do you have any questions for us?** * **Next steps**   + We’ll be interviewing candidates for the next two weeks until \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   + We’ll reach out to you very shortly afterwards about next steps for participating in the shoot |
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**EMAILS**

**EXAMPLE:** **Partner outreach email**

| Hi [partner],    Hope you are doing well!    I am writing to you today from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (agency or department) in hopes that you can help us identify a few \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that might be willing to participate and be featured in some ads that we’re going to be producing for our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ campaign.    The State is in the process of developing a new multi-channel media campaign to reach out to this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and create awareness of the State resources now available. In support of this campaign, we will be producing video ads featuring \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (type of people) that are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (residents, etc.) in\_\_\_\_\_ (state/organization).  Specifically, we are looking to get your help to identify \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_from a variety of backgrounds, to convey the diversity and depth of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We’re hoping to identify 4-5 potential participants.  We can provide email copy for you to reach out to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Once potential participants have been identified, we will take it from there to determine their interest and vet their ability to participate. We are ideally looking to get this info by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so we can reach out to people by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  Please let us know if you are able to connect us with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are also happy to jump on a quick call to discuss this further.    Thank you!  … |
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**EXAMPLE:** **Virtual scheduling outreach email**

| Hi [partner name],    Thank you for your help! Below is more detail on what we are doing that you can share with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:  **BACKGROUND**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Agency, Organization name, etc.) is developing an advertising campaign to promote a new program that will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  The advertising campaign will feature video ads with footage of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The ads will be part of a paid media campaign and are planned to run on *streaming (like Hulu), TV, social media (YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn) and throughout the web (local news and community outlet websites).*  To produce the creative assets needed for the campaign (videos, banners, etc.) we will be conducting a “shoot” in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to gather video and still photography assets of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  This is a great opportunity to be featured in a state-wide advertising campaign.  **THE ASK**    We are looking to schedule a 30 minute call on [dates]. The purpose of the call is to get a better understanding of you and your journey. We will also give more information about what will be involved with the shoot including the process of how it will work.  **NEXT STEPS FOR INTERESTED RESIDENTS**  To make scheduling easy, we have set up a calendar where you can select the day/time that works best for you. Please click here to access the calendar and schedule your 30 minute minute slot.  [link to Calendly]  Please note we cannot guarantee you will be featured in the final campaign, as that will depend on the footage we get from the shoot and how it all works together.  Thank you for your help with this!  … |
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**EXAMPLE:** **Video shoot availability email [if in-person shoot]**

| Hello \_\_\_\_,    Thank you for your interest in participating in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ campaign.  As a next step, formal vetting of possible candidates will take place. During this process, verification of your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be confirmed. Please confirm that you are comfortable with proceeding.  We are also looking to confirm availability of all candidates. Below are details around what the shoot will involve, what we need from you to move forward, and what will happen next.  **WHAT THE SHOOT WILL INVOLVE**   * *Full-day video + photography shoot taking place w/o [date]* * A video production crew would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_for the day. * We will need you to be available between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_     **WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU**  Can you please provide the following information:   * Your full availability for [week start date] - [week end date] * Confirmation of your physical address (where they crew will go) * Confirmation of your hours available * Confirmation that we can proceed with the vetting process   We need participants to be fully committed to making their scheduled shoot date happen. We understand things come up, so if you think that there is any potential you might need to pull out at the last minute, we ask that you don’t move forward with scheduling. There will be no hard feelings and it’s possible we’ll be able to include you in a future production.  **WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT**  A formal vetting process will occur. If approved, [x number] of people will be scheduled to participate in the video shoot taking place w/o [date]. Which individuals get scheduled will depend on a combination of availability and scheduling logistics.  Instructions for wardrobe and hair/make-up will be shared at that time and photos of possible outfits will be requested for approval.  Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.  Thank you,  … |
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**Final video scheduling email**

| Dear X,  We are excited for your participation in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ shoot tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! Below are the final details for the shoot. Please let us know if you have any questions.  **CALL TIME**  Your call time is \_\_\_\_\_. Please arrive at this time, as we will be following a shoot schedule as closely as we can. See the bottom of this email for contact information, if you need to reach one of our team members.  **LOCATION**  The shoot will be held at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  *Address*  **PARKING**  *Instructions here.*  **HAIR + MAKEUP**  We want you to look your best, natural self! We will have a hair and makeup artist on set. Please feel free to come in the hair/makeup that makes you feel your best, but the makeup artist will also be there for assistance, if you like.  **WARDROBE**  Please bring the approved outfits with you to campus. You may want to get dressed into them while at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (coffee spills and wrinkles happen)!  **WHAT TO EXPECT**  Participating residents will be filmed (video and photography) in a workplace environment, interacting with coworkers or patients. You will be asked to behave as you normally would in a work situation, but you will not be required to read lines or "act/perform." Please be your most natural self and have fun with it!  **CONTACT INFORMATION**  If you have any questions on the day of the shoot or need to call/text a team member from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, you can contact:   * X - Number * X - Number * X - Number   **NEXT STEPS**   * Pack up clothing, props and any makeup/hair tools for the shoot. (As mentioned, there will be a hair/makeup artist on set. This is just for you to bring any favorite items or things that make you feel most comfortable and natural.) * Review the attached *campus map instructions* * Review \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ materials   Participants are expected to be fully committed to making their scheduled shoot date happen. We understand it’s a lot to be a student and things come up, so if there is a chance something might come up that would cause you to have to pull out at the last minute, we ask that you don’t move forward with scheduling. There will be no hard feelings and it’s possible we’ll be able to include you in a future production.  **Please let us know if you have any questions on the above or if you’d like to schedule a call to discuss anything.**  We are very excited to work with you on this initiative!  Thank you  … |
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**Reminder email and recap of instructions**

| Hi \_\_\_\_,  We’re looking forward to filming with you at [time] on [date].  To recap, the shoot will involve \_\_\_\_.  **SHOOT DAY NOTES:**   * …   **GENERAL NOTES:**   * …   **LOGISTICS:**   * …     Participants are expected to be fully committed to making their scheduled shoot date happen. We understand it’s a lot to be a student and things come up, so if there is a chance something might come up that would cause you to have to pull out at the last minute, we ask that you don’t move forward with scheduling. There will be no hard feelings and it’s possible we’ll be able to include you in a future production.  **Please let us know if you have any questions on the above or if you’d like to schedule a call to discuss anything.**  We are very excited to work with you on this initiative!  Thank you  … |
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**FORMS**

**Sample** **Talent Release form**

| **TALENT RELEASE** I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have agreed to be recorded and photographed for video and marketing asset production for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Marketing Campaign.  To that end, I hereby grant the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (collectively referred to as the “Producers”) the rights to my image, in video, still or other form, and of the likeness and sound of my voice as recorded on audio or video medium in all media (the “Recordings”) for this Project and any and all future projects on related topics. I understand and agree that any Recordings using my likeness will become property of the Producers and will not be returned.  I acknowledge I will receive a one-time payment of $\_\_\_ for my participation in the shoot scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to be paid by check within \_\_\_\_\_ weeks after completion of the shoot.  I hereby irrevocably grant the Producers an exclusive, royalty free, assignable and perpetual license to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute any Recordings for purposes of publicizing the State of New Jersey’s programs or for any other related, lawful purpose (the “Recordings Use”), for an indefinite period of time. Recordings may be broadcast on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ website, apps or social media accounts; by webcast on other websites or apps as authorized by Producers; by broadcast on a public-access cable channel and or network; and by broadcast on other cable channels, networks, radio and broadcast media as authorized by Producers.  In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness or voice appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising out of, or related to, the use of the Recordings.  I hereby release and forever discharge the Producers from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other person acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization.   | **If signatory is an adult (over 18), please sign below:**  I am at least 18 years of age and am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signature  Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Name (please print):  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Street Address:    \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  City, State, Zip:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Email:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Phone:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | **If signatory is under 18, parent or legal guardian must also sign below:**  I represent and warrant that I am the parent or legal guardian of the below named minor child. I hereby consent to the foregoing on his/her behalf.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signature of parent, or legal guardian signature if parent is under 18 years  Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Minor Name (please print):  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Parent/Guardian Name (please print):  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Street Address:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  City, State, Zip:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Email:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | --- | --- | |
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