Op-Ed Articles

An Op-Ed piece is a highly-focused opinion article printed opposite the editorial page. It is often accompanied by another op-ed expressing the alternative point of view. In an op-ed submission, you should focus on the policy and the supporting facts. Your aim is to stir the reader to support the proposed ordinance. Op-Ed pieces are boldly stated.

GUIDE FOR WRITING AND SUBMITTING AN OP-ED PIECE

1. Most newspapers accept op-ed work unsolicited, and then notify the author(s) only if they will print the submission. Some papers now have the ability to submit op-ed work on-line. You should check with your local newspapers for their guidelines.

2. An Op-Ed piece is generally between 500 and 700 words long. Check with your local newspaper for their writing guidelines and requirements.

3. The writing style in a newspaper is short sentences that are to the point. Even though you will edit your piece before submitting it, do not be surprised if the newspaper editors make additional changes.

4. Open your op-ed by making a bold statement that makes the reader want to read on. Spend time working on this statement, as it may be used in the headline for the Op-Ed piece and it determines the focus of your article.

5. Consider personalizing the piece with a story about the group or one of the members and how they were affected by the problem.

6. Use evidence to support your opening statement. Two or three supporting points are all you will have room for. Use facts and statistics, but do not use information that is not directly related to the opening statement. Quotes from experts are okay to include – just make sure you identify who said it.

7. Check and double-check the facts you include. Make sure that each number is correct, and that the sentence is correctly stated.

8. End the piece by proposing a solution to the problem (i.e., the proposed ordinance) or an action the reader should take (attending the community presentation). Link the piece back to your opening statement or anecdote.

9. When you submit your piece, include a short description of the EYPC program as a note about who the authors are. The newspaper may use this at the end of the article.