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# Talking with journalists about migration

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BIMI Summer Institute

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# A few of my stories:

How immigration policy forced a California family apart and disrupted their education

Radio story  
Reunited

With DACA hopes dashed, California students look to Congress

How California schools can help undocumented middle and high schoolers receive legal aid

Challenges remain for undocumented students to tap financial aid

<https://theworld.org/people/zaidee-stavelly>

# How do I get story ideas?

Immigrants and families, students, etc.

Advocates

Researchers

Attorneys

People I already know

# What is a reporter looking for?

- Stories, not topics
- Lose the wonky words (jargon)
- Tell your mom (or pretend to)
- What's the big idea?
- Get personal
- Paint a picture

# Exercise

## Pitch your research

- Describe a big idea from your work in two to three sentences
- Your audience is the general public



**Let's hear it.**



1) List three questions that a reporter might ask about your research.

2) List two questions that connect your work to a current news story.



*A page from a reporter's notebook, with notes in Teeline shorthand*

# Group exercise

- Pair up: source/reporter
- “Reporter” reviews your five questions & considers the connected news story
- Set timer for six minutes
- Start interview
- Switch roles





**How'd it go?**

**Being prepared**

# Which outlets? Which journalists?

- Type of outlet: Newspaper/Online, Magazine, TV, Radio, Podcast
- Who is their audience
- Read, listen, watch their stories

# Build a relationship



# Before an interview

- Ask questions
- You can say no (to all or any part)
- But if you agree to talk, it's on the record...
- Unless you ask **before sharing information** if it can be off the record or on background, **and the reporter agrees**

# Clarify the terms:

- **Off the record** If a reporter agrees to an off-the-record request, “the ethical thing to do is not report or even repeat that information. Off-the-record comments are supposed to remain strictly between the source and the reporter.”
- **On background** If a reporter agrees to information being “on background” it means the reporter can share that information (use it in their story), but not attribute it to any specific person.

<https://www.poynter.org/commentary/2021/on-background-is-common-journalism-lingo-what-does-it-mean/>

# Some questions to ask:

- What's the focus?
- Who's your audience?
- Pre-recorded or live?
- How much time should you expect?
- How will your words and voice appear? Format?
- When will it air/run?

# After the interview

- Need to clarify/re-state? Do that.
- Don't assume reporters will send the story.
- If you like the story, share it!
- Send feedback



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# Thank you!

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