

State Farm Neighborhood Assist[®]

2020 Social Sharing & Media Guide



Welcome

Congratulations!

Your cause has been selected as a top 200 finalist. This guide is a resource with a few helpful tips that you and your cause can use to drive awareness, support and get a few votes closer to a \$25,000 grant. Now it's up to you to encourage your community to get online and vote!

Things to remember

You have received a unique URL that links directly to your cause page to make voting easier for your friends, family and followers.

Voters must be U.S. residents who are 18 years or older and have a valid email address.

Each person can vote up to 10 times per day

To help out during the voting phase, we have assigned a State Farm Community Specialist to you based on your geographic location. They will assist you with any specific questions that you may have about the voting process and media outreach; however, they are not to be relied upon to drive your cause's votes. They have knowledge of your cause as well as the program, so don't hesitate to contact them with any questions you have!

Your local contact can be found here:

[Newsroom.StateFarm.com/community-contacts](https://www.newsroom.statefarm.com/community-contacts)

Good luck, neighbor!



The dates to know

Voting begins

Sept 23

12:00:01 a.m. ET

Voting ends

Oct 2

11:59:59 p.m. ET

Winners Announced

Nov 4

9:00:01 a.m. ET

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Social media tips

Since the 40 winning causes will be selected by popular vote, you need to spread the word. In addition to campaigning for your cause via word-of-mouth, social media can be a valuable tool in generating attention for your submission and drumming up votes. The next few pages contain some considerations to keep in mind when promoting your entry through your social media channels. There are also sample posts that will help you get started.

And remember, any social channel is a good channel for sharing!





Facebook

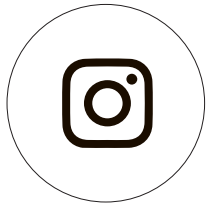
- Notify your friends through status updates**
that you need support for your entry.
- You can choose to make certain posts public,**
or single out individual friends or groups of friends, by changing the privacy settings beneath the status update box.
- Include the title of your cause and your unique URL**
to link directly to your cause so supporters can easily vote.
- Include key information in your posts**
such as the grant total amount, why people should vote for you, what the grant money will go toward, and that people can vote up to 10 times per day from September 23rd through October 2nd.
- Post regularly**
to stay top of mind and remember to interact with anyone who votes for you to thank them and keep them engaged.
- Include #SFNeighborhoodAssist and tag @statefarm**
to make it easier for people to find your post.
- Encourage your friends and family to share your cause**
information through their Facebook page.
- Share State Farm Neighborhood Assist® posts**
from State Farm's Facebook page (@statefarm) to your account.

Sample Post:

Help our neighborhood win a \$25k grant from State Farm Neighborhood Assist®. Vote for [Insert cause title] here: [Unique cause URL] #SFNeighborhoodAssist

The voting period for State Farm Neighborhood Assist® is half way over. We are so close to winning a \$25k grant, but we still need those votes! Vote for [Insert cause title] here: [Unique cause URL] #SFNeighborhoodAssist





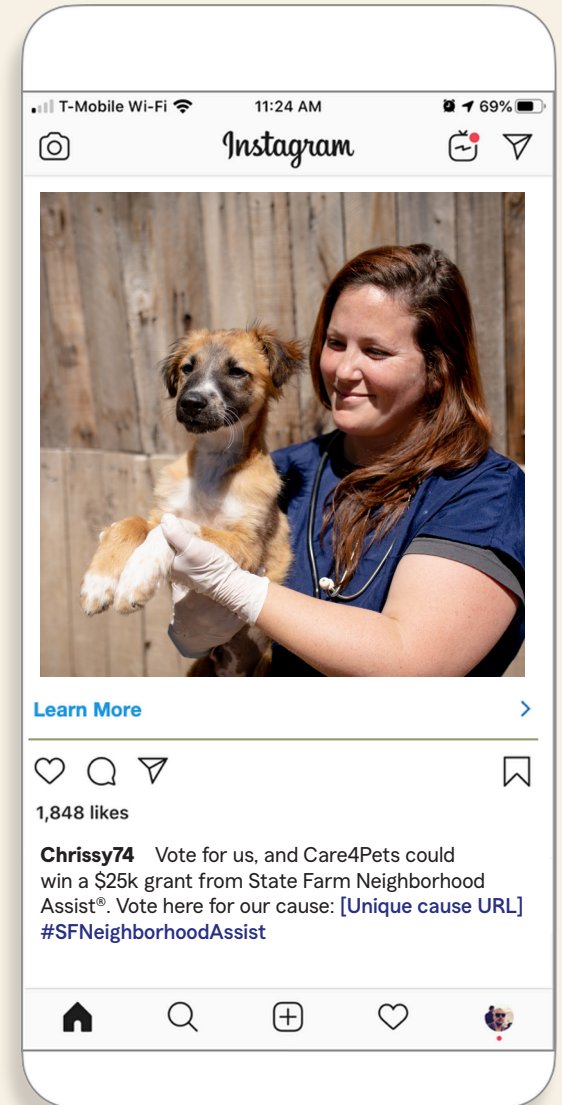
Instagram

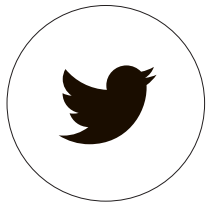
- Tag @statefarm in your photos**
so State Farm can engage with your Instagram account.
- Include the hashtag #SFNeighborhoodAssist**
to make it easier for people to find your Instagram.
- Update your bio to include the unique URL**
and a bit about your cause because URL links are not clickable in Instagram posts.
- Include the title of your cause**
so supporters can easily search for your cause.
- Use stories**
to create variety and more engaging content.
- Include key information in your posts**
such as the grant total amount, why people should vote for you, what the grant money will go toward and that people can vote up to 10 times per day from September 23rd through October 2nd.
- Encourage your friends and family to share your cause**
information through their Instagram accounts.
- Share State Farm Neighborhood Assist® posts**
from State Farm's Instagram page (@statefarm) to your account.

Sample Post: _____

Vote for us, and [Insert cause title] could win a \$25k grant from State Farm Neighborhood Assist®. Vote here for our cause: [Unique cause URL] #SFNeighborhoodAssist

Think of all the great work we could do if we won a \$25k grant from State Farm Neighborhood Assist®. It just takes one click to vote. Vote for [Insert cause title] at the link in my bio! #SFNeighborhoodAssist





Twitter

- Include @StateFarm and #SFNeighborhoodAssist**
so State Farm can engage with your Twitter account and make it easier for people to find your tweet.
- Include the title of your cause and your unique URL**
to link directly to your cause so supporters can easily vote.
- Include the title and a photo of your cause**
when you are directing people to vote.
- Include key information in your tweets**
such as the grant total amount, why people should vote for you, what the grant money will go toward and that people can vote up to 10 times per day from September 23rd through October 2nd.
- Change up what you tweet about**
as every detail won't fit in a single tweet.
- Tweet regularly**
to stay top of mind and interact with anyone who votes for you to thank them and keep them engaged.
- Tweet information on your cause to local media outlets**
to help garner additional awareness. Twitter handles (@cnn, @abc7, etc.)
- Encourage your friends and family to share your cause information**
through their Twitter accounts.
- Retweet State Farm Neighborhood Assist® posts**
from State Farm's Twitter page (@statefarm) to your account.

Sample Tweet:

Let's make an impact in our neighborhood. Help us make it happen w/ a \$25k grant from #SFNeighborhoodAssist. Vote for [Insert cause title] here: [Unique cause URL]

We are trying to earn a \$25k #SFNeighborhoodAssist grant for our area! Help us by voting for [Insert cause title] here: [Unique cause URL]



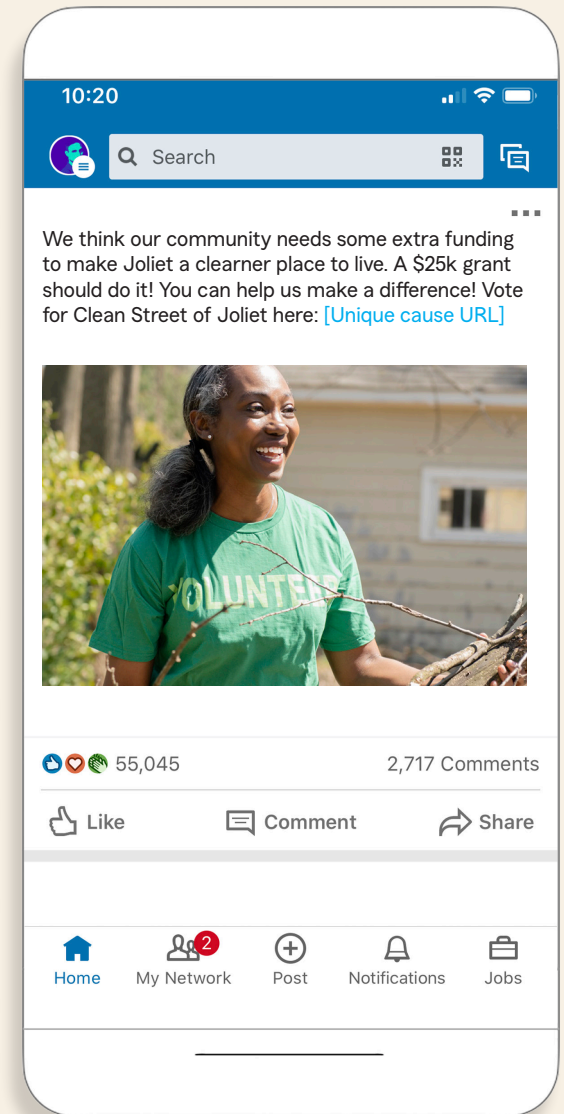


LinkedIn

- Notify your friends and co-workers through status updates**
that you need support for your entry.
- Include the title of your cause and your unique URL**
to link directly to your cause so supporters can easily vote.
- Include the title and a photo of your cause**
when you are directing people to vote.
- Include key information in your posts**
such as the grant total amount, why people should vote for you, what the grant money will go toward, and that people can vote up to 10 times per day from September 23rd through October 2nd.
- Post regularly**
to stay top of mind and remember to interact with anyone who votes for you to thank them and keep them engaged.
- Encourage your coworkers and professional network to share**
your cause information through their LinkedIn page.
- Share State Farm Neighborhood Assist® posts**
from State Farm's LinkedIn page to your account.

Sample Post: _____

We think our community needs some extra funding to make [Fill in cause detail] happen. A \$25k grant should do it! You can help us make a difference! Vote for [Insert cause title] here: [Unique cause URL]





Email/E-Newsletter

The following can be used as an email, or copy and pasted into an e-newsletter to inform friends, family, employees, volunteers, organizations and community members about your cause. Customize the copy with information about your cause and your unique cause URL to encourage them to vote.

Tip: Bold key dates and times to make sure they stand out.

Template:

TO: Target Internal and External Audiences

FROM: First, Last Name, [Organization/Affiliation if applicable]

SUBJECT: Please Help [Cause Name] Bring \$25k to Our Community!

[Enter cause name] is one of the Top 200 finalists in the State Farm Neighborhood Assist® grant program. We need you to rally behind our cause, cast your vote and help us win one of 40 \$25k grants!

Here's how: click here [Enter cause URL] and vote for [Enter cause name].

The voting phase is open from **12:00:01 a.m. ET on September 23rd until October 2nd at 11:59:59 p.m. ET**, and you can vote up to 10 times per day every day for our cause. Winners will be announced November 4th. Please forward this to your colleagues, friends and family to vote and help spread the word.

Thanks in advance for your support,

[Personal Signature]

Engaging the media

From TV, radio, and print to social media, blogs, and podcasts, all are incredibly important to effectively share your story.

You can connect with your local State Farm Community Specialist to discuss media outreach at the link below:

[Newsroom.StateFarm.com/community-contacts](https://newsroom.StateFarm.com/community-contacts)

Establishing a good media relations program involves more than just sending an occasional news release. Media success begins with:

- A commitment to reading and consuming media regularly.**
- A dedicated effort to establish relationships with the media.**
- An understanding of what's considered newsworthy.**
- A willingness to meet reporters'/bloggers' needs.**
- An awareness of what's being said about your organization through tools like Google News Alerts and Twitter search.**

Engaging the media continued

The Basics

- Be a media consumer.** When watching TV, reading newspapers, listening to the radio or podcasts, and browsing through news apps or website, actively look and listen for “news holes.” These are segments, sections, columns, etc. where your story might be a good fit. Keep track of these articles and the reporters’ names so you can find their contact information.
- Consider your audience.** Whom are you trying to reach? What does this audience read/watch/listen to?
- Consider your story.** What are its strengths? Is it visual enough for TV? Do you have a spokesperson or someone who could advocate for your cause and is willing to be interviewed?
- Consider how the two match up.** What are the best communication vehicles to reach your target audience?
- Research.** Figure out who’s going to listen to your pitch. Look into media directories, publications and websites, receptionists/assistants, and assignment desks.

Step 1: Creating Media Lists

Putting together a media list is all about finding the right contacts to hear your story idea.

- Don’t rely solely on directories.**
- Check out a media outlet’s website.** Newspaper sites are particularly helpful. If you’re pitching a human interest story, acquaint yourself with writers and figure out which one would likely be most receptive to your pitch. TV stations’ websites often contain information about specific newscasts, like whether the show has a guest segment.
- Relationship-building will get you everywhere with a producer or reporter.** If you’ve read their work or watched their newscasts, share genuine positive feedback. Start your pitch with something like, “I was listening to your radio show the other morning and noticed you covered such-and-such topic. I think I might have a story idea that relates to that.”

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Engaging the media continued

Step 2: The Pitch Email

The media will respond favorably to a customized, compelling and very concise email. A strong pitch email contains a subject line written like a headline that will be interesting to the outlets' viewers, readers or listeners. The email itself should be no more than two paragraphs outlining the story opportunity. Consider using bullets to showcase interesting visuals and resources available to the reporter.

If you are pitching local media to rally support for your cause, include the local angle in your headline, subject line or first sentence to grab their attention. Emphasize the human interest angle of your cause and organization. Identify any person who will benefit from your cause potentially winning. A real person directly impacted by your cause can be an authentic spokesperson to generate support.

You can also work with your State Farm Community Specialist to create a custom news release to help support your cause. Your press release can be pasted into your pitch email following your brief introduction. Keep in mind you should only attach documents upon request.

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Engaging the media continued

Step 3: The News Release - announcing your news

A news release outlines the story for a reporter and allows small news organizations to repurpose content as needed. Reporters could write an entire story based on some news releases. All news releases answer the five “W” questions: who, what, where, when and why; and the one “H” question: how. For more information about a news release to use to assist in the promotion of your cause, please reach out to your local Community Specialist here:

[Newsroom.StateFarm.com/community-contacts](https://www.statefarm.com/newsroom/community-contacts)

Step 4: The Follow-Up Call

After you send your pitch or news release, make a follow-up call to everyone who received it. Here are some tips for making successful follow-up calls with media contacts:

- Make your calls in the morning,**
but avoid calling TV newsrooms around 9am, which is when their morning meetings typically occur. Remember that everyone in the newsroom is working on deadlines so the later in the day, the busier they will be.
- Be patient,**
as you are competing with all the other people who are calling the media with their own story ideas.
- Think twice about calling on breaking news days.**
If another major news event is taking place that day, postpone your follow-up until the news cycle has ended.
- Prepare or write a short script of what you want to say.**
Your call may be answered by someone under pressure to meet a deadline, so you want to capture their interest quickly.