



Veterans United.
Home Loans

Pitching for Earned Media



Pitching 101

- What is pitching?
Basically, selling an idea to a reporter to get a story.
- Email is preferred
- Relevance to a reporter's beat is key. Don't pitch a health-related story to a crime reporter.
- Be brief. Bullet points are good.
- Reporters love trending data specific to their audience.
- Hyperlocal is always best, unless you are pitching a national beat reporter.



How to land a pitch

- Start with a subject line that looks like a headline
- Lead with a short elevator pitch.
- Press releases are **NOT** dead!
- Offer additional resources or an expert for an interview.
- During COVID, reporters are struggling for pictures and B-roll. Offer up those assets through a Google Drive link just below your pitch.
- Direct link to photos and B-roll
- This pitch went out to 1,043 national reporters across the country.

Subject: **Nation's largest VA lender pledges \$1 million to COVID-19 relief**

Hi Louis,

We just announced that our foundation is pledging \$1 million to COVID-19 relief. Veterans United Home Loans is the nation's largest VA lender. I'm happy to connect you with Dr. Amanda Andrade, our chief people officer, for an interview. Please see the press release below. Thank you and stay safe!

For Immediate Release:

April 6, 2020

Contact:

Chris Cline

(573) 817-4523

Chris.cline@veteransunited.com

Veterans United Foundation Pledges \$1 Million To COVID-19 Relief

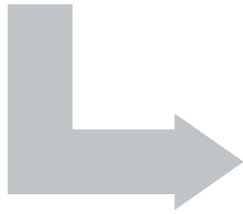
COLUMBIA, Mo. – The nation's largest VA lender's **Veterans United Foundation** is pledging \$1 million to assist with COVID-19 relief in communities across the country. Veterans United Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Veterans United Home Loans.

"The heart of our foundation's mission is enhancing lives," said **Dr. Amanda Andrade, chief people officer at Veterans United Home Loans**. "Our employees are dedicated to giving back."

Pitching Order

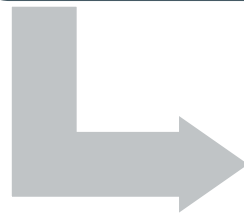
First Pitch

- Make sure the pitch is relevant to the reporter



Email Follow-up

- Keep it short
- Don't assume there is no interest



Phone Follow-up

- Leave a message then send a short email

COVID-19

- Prior to COVID, we had a rock solid plan to pitch a content asset in March.
- At the same time our communications director was deployed.
- We were sent home, and frankly turned our efforts internally for the next three weeks. Making sure we had our messaging our employees, regulators and state and government officials on point. We needed to keep our doors open.
- The mortgage business was in an influx during this time because of forbearances so it forces us to think outside of the box for how we could pitch our brand outside of talking about the day to day business.
- Luckily, I had Afifa who was an intern with us for three months leading up and Arzelia was back to join the team the first of April after graduating from Michigan State.
- On a Thursday, we were told our foundation was donating \$1million to COVID relief and were asked what could we do with that in terms of earned media.
- We first gave the exclusive to HousingWire and then we went whale fishing.

How to land a pitch

- I got one reply.



Interview Prep:
Fox & Friends/
Fox Network

Wednesday, April 8, 3:45 a.m.

Re: [EXT] RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: FOX & Friends First- FOX News Channel Request

CC Chris Cline
To: Dersarkissian, Kyra

Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 11:42 AM

From: "Dersarkissian, Kyra" <Kyra.Dersarkissian@FOXNEWS.COM>
Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 at 1:54 PM
To: Chris Cline <Chris.Cline@veteransunited.com>
Subject: [EXT] FOX & Friends First- FOX News Channel Request

Hi Chris,

I hope you are well. Would Dr. Amanda Antrade be available tomorrow morning at 4:45 AM EST to join us on FOX & Friends First?

Veterans United Foundation Pledges \$1 Million To COVID-19 Relief

COLUMBIA, Mo. – The nation's largest VA lender's [Veterans United Foundation](#) is pledging \$1 million to assist with COVID-19 relief in communities across the country. Veterans United Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Veterans United Home Loans.

"The heart of our foundation's mission is enhancing lives," said **Dr. Amanda Antrade, chief people officer at Veterans United Home Loans.** "Our employees are dedicated to giving back and providing relief efforts to the communities we call home during this difficult time."

The pledged money will be used to purchase critical supplies such as masks for healthcare workers and will also provide emergency relief to organizations and individuals impacted by the pandemic.

The nation's largest VA lender, Veterans United is headquartered in Columbia, Missouri, and has corporate offices in Irving, Texas, Lenexa, Kansas, and St. Louis, along with 25 branch locations across the country. Funding will be available in all 29 of those communities.

Veterans United's 3,300 employees focus on helping Veterans and their families secure homeownership. The company's success is tied directly to living out its employee-created values: Be Passionate and Have Fun, Deliver Results with Integrity and Enhance Lives Every Day.

Veterans United Foundation is funded solely by the employees of Veterans United Home Loans and its affiliated companies. More than 90 percent of Veterans United employees donate at least one percent of their salaries to fund the foundation. Since its creation in 2011, Veterans United employees have donated more than \$51 million to the foundation.

For more information, visit <https://www.veteransunited.com/about/foundation/> and click on the <http://enhancelives.com> tab.

About Veterans United Home Loans

Based in Columbia, Missouri, the full-service national lender financed more than \$16.4 billion in loans in 2019 and is the country's largest VA lender. The company's mission is to help Veterans and service members take advantage of the home loan benefits earned by their service. The company's employee-driven charitable arm, Veterans United Foundation, is committed to enhancing the lives of Veterans and military families nationwide by focusing on supporting military families and nonprofit organizations that strengthen local communities. Veterans United Home Loans and its employees have donated more than \$51 million to the Foundation since its founding in November 2011. Learn more at EnhanceLives.com.

The money interview at 4 a.m.



How to land a pitch with HARO

- Monitor the query lists daily and see if it would be a good fit
- Send it over to your subject matter experts for insight
- Clean up the quotes and have SEO link the content
- Get it out the door and follow up with the reporter in Muck Rack using the same pitch to cut through the clutter and track opens
- If time has passed and there are no replies (and the article hasn't posted), follow up with a second email offering additional information that is relevant to the piece and offer to share it on your social media platforms

[EXT] [HARO] Thursday Morning Edition



HARO <haro@helpareporter.com>

To: Arzelia Williams

⚠ To protect your privacy, some pictures in this message were not downloaded.

Queries!

***** INDEX *****

Biotech and Healthcare

- 1) [Natural remedies for constipation \(Singlecare.com\)](#).

Business and Finance

- 2) [Looking for unique company/leadership responses to the protests—real-life examples \(BUSINESS INSIDER\)](#).
- 3) [Black vegan business owners and black vegan businesses for nationwide directory \(Anonymous\)](#).
- 4) [Is now the right time to refinance your mortgage? \(NBC News Channel\)](#).
- 5) [Small business owners on reopening and collaborating with other businesses \(Fundbox\)](#).
- 6) [Entrepreneurship Tips: How to Start a Successful Business \(Work and Money\)](#).
- 7) [CEOs or ITs \(from SMEs\) who are experts in engaging with customers in SMS and messaging apps \(8x8\)](#).

SEO

- Build relevant data driven content assets for your website
- Try to localize data as much as possible because reporters want data that is applicable to their viewers and readers.
- If a reporter doesn't provide a link to your data in the initial story, don't be afraid to go back and ask for a link to the data in case their readers or viewers want additional information.

Amid a Pandemic, VA Loans Are Quietly Having a Record Year

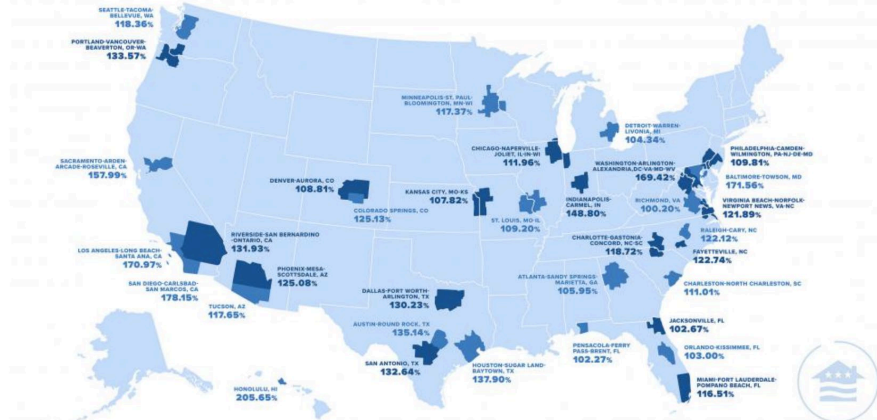


By [Chris Birk](#)

Published on August 13, 2020

No Comments Yet

TOP 35 MSAS FOR VA LOAN GROWTH



Questions