

National Rifle Association

Gun Violence Public Relations Campaign



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Executive Summary



With the National Rifle Association's impact spanning over 150 years, its commitment "to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States..., especially the right to keep and bear arms" still stands true today.

As one of the most influential lobbying groups in Washington, the NRA is faced with more complex issues than ever.

While gun control legislation becomes more evident in Congress, the NRA must communicate the proper measures that can be taken to decrease gun violence in the United States.

Addressing the socioeconomic and psychological factors surrounding this issue can help to put an end to mass shootings in the United States.

By implementing this communications campaign, our goal is to inform our target publics about gun violence and offer educational tools to help prevent future misuse of firearms.

Above all else, the NRA is committed to promoting the right to bear arms while ensuring that firearms are used safely.



Situational Analysis

Client History



Founded in 1871, in New York, NY, by Union veterans Col. William C. Church and Gen. George Wingate, the National Rifle Association (NRA) was created to "promote and encourage rifle shooting on a scientific basis," according to Church. Since its creation, the NRA has stood as the definitive organization dedicated to firearm training, education and marksmanship. The NRA has expanded practice grounds, offered ranges for government use during World War II and developed youth, hunter and Police Firearms Instructor certification programs.

Today, over 13,000 police and security firearms instructors are NRA-certified. Over 125,000 NRA-certified instructors train around a million gun owners a year. In 2023, the NRA lobbied almost 2.5 million dollars for gun rights. According to the association, "While widely recognized today as a major political force and as America's foremost defender of Second Amendment rights, the NRA has, since its inception, been the premier firearms education organization in the world."

Target Publics

The NRA's primary publics include firearm owners, hunters, Second Amendment supporters and politicians, among others. While the NRA covers a broad audience, from youth to adults, the organization's primary publics are middle-aged to older individuals. Men populate most of these publics, although the NRA is actively improving female engagement. NRA publics typically are middle to upper-middle class and have some form of higher education and/or technical training.

NRA members tend to hold conservative beliefs and values and practice outdoor activities – hunting, shooting sports, etc. – in their lifestyles. The NRA has strong support in midwestern hunting cultures and states where gun ownership is common: Texas, Florida, and Arizona. These primary publics receive and engage with media through traditional forums (cable news, print media), email communication and annual in-person meetings.

What the NRA Offers

The National Rifle Association (NRA) advocates for Second Amendment rights, focusing on gun ownership and use. It provides resources like firearm safety education, training programs, and support for recreational shooting and hunting. It also works to influence firearm legislation through lobbying.

Cause

The NRA's main goal is to defend the right to bear arms as stated in the Second Amendment. It emphasizes responsible gun ownership and promotes firearms as tools for self-defense and recreation.

Background

The National Rifle Association is a United States organization that advocates for gun rights. It was formed in 1871 by Union veterans Col. William C. Church and Gen. George Wingate.

Issue

Currently, the NRA operates in a challenging environment due to growing debates over gun control and increased media focus on gun violence.

“Promote and encourage rifle shooting on a scientific basis.”

Current State

Today, the NRA faces both internal and external challenges. The organization is experiencing declining revenue and membership, public pressure for stricter gun laws, and increased legal costs and deficits.



Previous COMM Materials

Fifty-two years after its founding, in 1923, the NRA shared its first publication: *The American Rifleman*. This kick-started the association's educational, training and advocacy efforts.

While ***The American Rifleman*** has served as a cornerstone of NRA communication initiatives, the publication's initial publication was delayed -- preventing readers from receiving necessary information. To combat this, the NRA formed a Legislative Affairs Division in 1934 to mail out legislative facts and analyses to members.

The NRA continued to produce and provide training materials for industrial security during World War II. After the war, ***The American Hunter*** publication debuted and targeted the hunting community in 1973. It was during this time that NRA bumper stickers featuring slogans, emerged.

A popularized NRA slogan made headlines in 1987 following the Hungerford massacre in England. The NRA stated that **"guns don't kill people, people kill people."**

Following this publicity, the NRA went on to create another publication, ***The American Guardian***, in 1997, which prioritized a more general focus on self-defense and the recreational use of firearms. The publication was renamed ***America's 1st Freedom*** in June 2000. Readers can now follow along with this publication, and the official NRA channel, on **Instagram, Facebook, X and YouTube**.

Amid the digital age of spreading information, the NRA has successfully adapted its content to easy-to-navigate interfaces. These digital channels tie together NRA news, activities and publications in one place -- creating a cohesive association identity and network of users.

With **home.nra.org** showcasing all in-house NRA content, additional coverage of the association can be found across national outlets: ***The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*** and ***Fox News*** among others. A mix of positive and negative press can be found among these publications. While columnists have covered their views on the NRA in NYT, The Washington Post published an article on **"How the NRA came to demonize the media."** A series of in-depth articles characterizing the NRA in conflicting contexts by fusing both opinion and analysis as a content basis.

Wayne LaPierre, NRA CEO from 1991-2024, coined the **"good guy with a gun"** phrase after announcing the NRA's **National School Shield Emergency Response Program** following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012. This phrase voiced the importance of having firearms for self-protection and has continued to be used in multiple media contexts.

"The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

Pro-Gun Competitors



Gun Owners Of America

Founded in 1976, Gun Owners of America (GOA) has established itself as the “no compromise” gun lobby. This stems from its members’ perception that the NRA has become too liberal.

- Compared to the NRA’s 5 million members, the GOA hosts around 2 million active members.
- GOA spent more than 3 million dollars in pro-gun lobbying in 2023, eclipsing the NRA’s spending.
- Quickly growing, revenue more than tripled between 2016 and 2021.
- Hasn’t become a household name like the NRA, however, while having a similar mission and branding as the NRA.



Second Amendment Foundation

Founded in 1974, the Second Amendment Foundation is a non-profit looking to battle for Second Amendment rights through publications, public education programs and legal action.

- This competitor is smaller, with a little over 700,000 active members.
- Focuses more on supporting pro-gun litigation and court cases than lobbying in Washington.
- Donor contributions are on the rise, increasing from around 6 million dollars in 2022 to almost 9 million dollars in 2023.
- Similarly to the NRA, this foundation places a focus on gun safety education.



Anti-Gun Competitors

Brady United

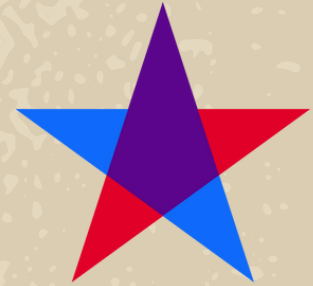
Brady United was founded in 1974 by a survivor of a gun violence. The non-profit utilizes research and survivor testimony to call for gun control and hold gun companies accountable.

- Brady focuses more on donations than memberships. It received over 10 million dollars in individual donations in 2023.
- Lobbys in Washington directly against the interests of the pro-gun lobby. It's successful in helping anti-gun litigation pass around the country and codify 73 bills into 48 laws in 2024.
- Directly stands against the NRA's mission while its main demographic is Gen-Z.

Everytown For Gun Safety

Largest gun violence prevention organization in America. Formed in 2013 by the joining of Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense.

- The website claims to have nearly 10 million members consisting of mayors, teachers, students, and everyday Americans.
- Researches gun violence in America, which they disseminate to their audience through their social channels.
- Lobbies local and federal governments for gun safety reform. Supports anti-gun political campaigns.
- Calls out the NRA, highlighting scandals and alleged corruption.



BRADY
UNITED AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE



EVERYTOWN
FOR GUN SAFETY

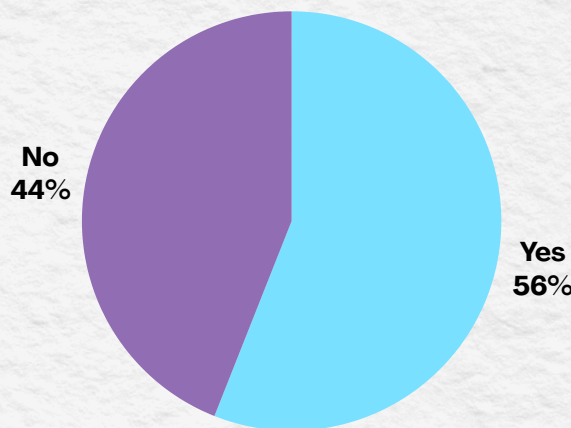
Primary Research

We conducted our own research to learn about the perceptions of the NRA, gun control, and gun violence in general.

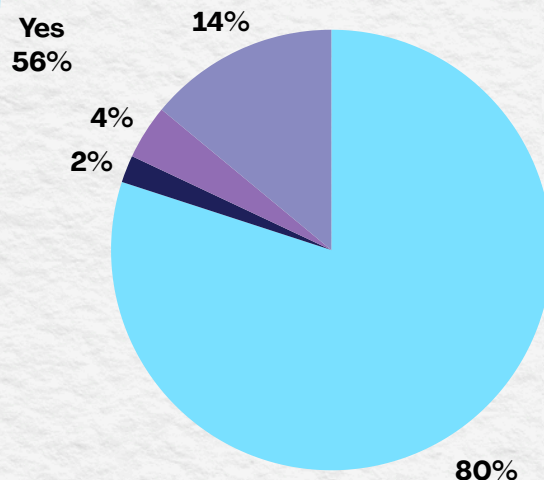
*Our survey of **50 people** gave us insight into some key demographics' opinions of the NRA and gun control in general.*

Questions included...

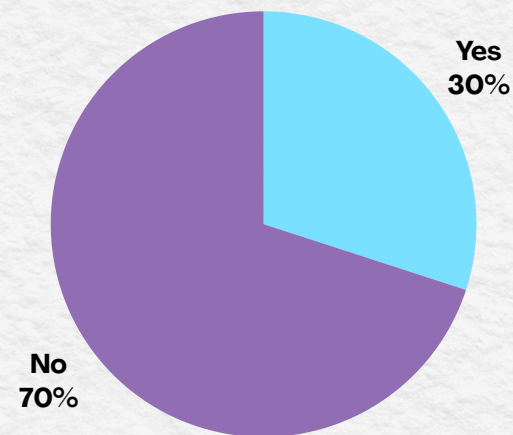
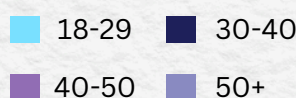
- Do you support the NRA's mission?
- How do you feel about gun control to decrease gun violence?
- What actions can the NRA take to help decrease gun violence?



Do you support the NRA's mission statement?



Age of respondent



Are you a gun owner?

Our Insights

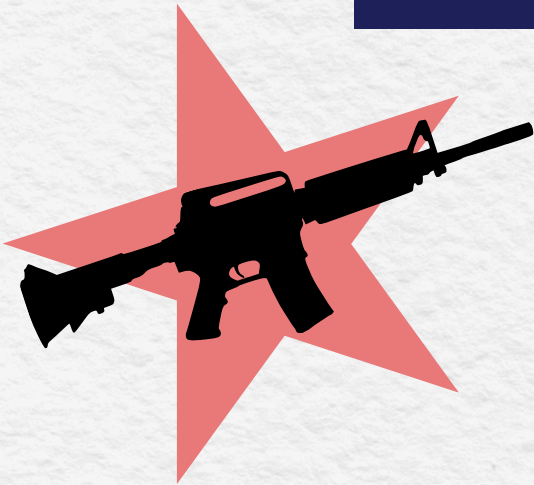
We heard various perspectives on gun accessibility, the NRA, and gun violence in general...

*"I think we need
more gun restrictions."*

*"We have the right to
bear arms."*

*"Those who want to ban firearms are afraid due
to misinformation and a lack of education."*

*"Saying guns teach freedom and that they are a core
of our American values sends the wrong message."*



*"The Second Amendment is there to help
preserve freedom and democracy."*

*"Traditions are outdated with
current technology and lifestyle."*

**The bottom line is that people are very split on the issue,
regardless of age or demographic.**

The NRA shouldn't focus on one particular demographic. They must consider all perspectives to effectively reach people, including those out of their traditional target audience.

Secondary Research



Pew Research Center

Among gun owners, NRA members have a unique set of views and experiences | Case Study

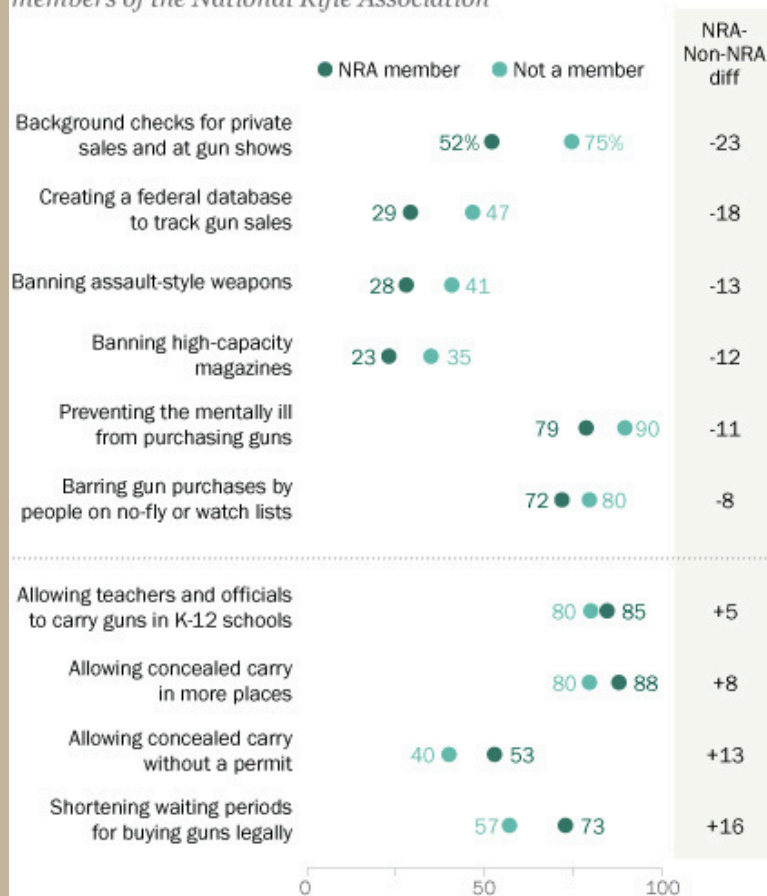
A 2017 study by the Pew Research Center evaluated the demographic profile of NRA members by collecting their political values and views on gun policy compared to people who are not associated with the organization.

The study stated that “While the demographic profile of NRA members is similar to that of other gun owners, their political views, the way they use their firearms, and **their attitudes about gun policy differ significantly** from gun owners who are not members of the organization.”

Regarding firearms education and training, **NRA members more often complete gun safety courses** (84%) compared to gun owners who don’t belong to the NRA (67%).

Among Republican gun owners, NRA members have a distinct set of policy views

% saying they favor each proposal about gun policy, among Republican/Republican-leaning gun owners who are/are not members of the National Rifle Association



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 13-27 and April 4-18, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

This shows that the NRA could focus on **expanding and marketing its education programs** and efforts to more external audiences that aren’t already associated with the organization. A lack of promotion and external engagement could be causing this significant difference in the completion of gun safety courses among gun owners.

When it comes to background checks, among Republican gun owners, 52% of NRA members support the policy of background checks for private gun sales, while 75% of nonmembers support the policy. The NRA could consider these percentages when determining how they can **adapt their current approach toward background checks**. Perhaps even more nonmember gun owners would join the NRA if background check policies saw changes.

This study provides demographic insight into both the NRA and **external audiences** that share similar values related to gun ownership and firearm usage. Although this information dates back a few years from the present, it helps evaluate the foundation the NRA has continued to develop, as well as how members, specifically, feel about certain topics.

S.W.O.T Analysis



Strengths

- Long history and strong reputation in gun rights advocacy.
- Large, loyal membership base
- Extensive firearm training programs for civilians and law enforcement.
- Significant financial resources for campaigns and lobbying.

Weaknesses

- Every year, mass shootings continue to occur in the US.
- Public perception is declining.
- Heavy reliance on existing members and political allies.
- Decrease in membership.

Opportunities

- Inform audiences about gun violence in the US.
- Provide educational tools to prevent firearm misuse.
- Focus on reaching new, untraditional target audiences.
- Partner with other pro-gun organizations for greater impact.

Threats

- Rising support for gun control legislation
- Negative media coverage affecting public perception
- Increasing attention to gun violence while questioning the NRA's view on firearm safety

Strategic Communications Recommendations

Public Relations Strategy

The NRA must rethink how their organization communicates to their target audiences. Currently, its proving ineffective at both **retaining** members and **attracting** new members.

Based on our research, the issue is not with the NRA's mission as a whole. It's an issue of how the NRA chooses to present itself to the public. As of now, the NRA comes off as very **partisan**. This turns off younger, moderate gun owners.

People resonate with the NRA's mission, but it's presentation is too partisan.

By marketing their lobbying in Washington, the NRA has tied itself directly to the political debate around guns. In today's media landscape, this is unsustainable when trying to grow your audience, especially to younger Americans.

Despite the NRA upholding traditionally conservative values, current and potential members find that the NRA is increasingly "**liberal**" in its policy. This alienates the other section of the NRA's audience.

The NRA needs to refocus its communications strategy entirely. Although they can represent the values of the second amendment and pro-gun lobby, they need to shift away from this being the **focus** in their marketing communications.

The NRA's greatest strength is its **network of resources**. They are recognized as the largest network of firearm owners in America. For the NRA to find success in today's media landscape, they need to put a stronger emphasis on their **firearm education initiatives**.

Firearm education must be the focus of the NRA.

The NRA needs to highlight how knowledge of firearm safety influences the rates of gun violence in the United States. The NRA needs to utilize its resources to get instructors talking with young people early and frequently about how to interact with guns safely.

By introducing firearm safety to more people through **seminars, infographics, social campaigns, and paid-media**, uneducated people will be more aware of the benefits of owning and knowing how to use a firearm.

By adjusting communication strategies and implementing the following communications tactics, the NRA will be able to **drive up membership** and help **address gun violence** in the United States in a way that still respects the second amendment rights of citizens.

The NRA must adjust its presentation and communications to focus specifically on firearm education; target young moderates who are uneducated on firearms.

Goals



- Inform the general public on the proper usage and storage of firearms
 - Illustrate how ignorance of firearm usage leads people to be more inclined to support gun control
 - Demonstrate how gun safety knowledge decreases gun violence using statistics
 - Provide educational resources through NRA communication channels
- Research and showcase measures to address gun violence in the United States other than gun control
 - Produce high-quality, infographics around pro-gun measures to address gun violence
 - Highlight reasons why widespread gun control would affect US citizens negatively
- Educate Americans, particularly politically moderate citizens, about firearms.
 - Demonstrate that guns do not have to cause people fear
 - Provide understandable and accessible gun safety resources both in-person and online

Objectives

- Inform at least 30,000 firearm owners, hunters, Second Amendment supporters and politicians on pro-gun efforts to address gun violence through a digital media campaign and community outreach projects.
 - Track these metrics to determine the overall reach of our campaigns.
- Adjust target audiences to include not just traditional NRA members and conservative gun owners, but moderate gun owners and young people uneducated on firearms.
- Distribute 5 million firearm safety toolkits (which include video guides and resources on proper firearm handling/storage) across the country.
 - Develop a digital version of this toolkit which will be accessible on a campaign website.
- Publish 3 reports on alternative strategies to address gun violence, containing statistics and examples of programs that have already worked well in particular cities like Atlanta.
 - Utilize this report to inform our digital/social campaigns, and host the report on our website.
 - Adapt the data from these reports into distributable infographics.

Public Relations Tactics

1. Produce and distribute high-quality infographics on gun violence in the United States.

- Utilize statistics pulled from our reports that showcase how safe storage and firearm education can decrease gun violence.
- Showcase the pitfalls of gun control through data.
 - Visualize data clearly to readers through the use of graphs, numbers and photography.

2. Hold monthly seminars in major cities that address systemic causes of gun violence.

- Focus on educating people about the root causes of gun violence, showcasing why firearm access is not the sole reason behind gun violence in America.
- Record these seminars, upload them to the NRA's website and distribute them to members in a monthly newsletter.

3. Have speakers come into middle school classrooms to speak about gun safety.

- Target rural areas and apply NRA messaging to popular pastimes like hunting.
- Target urban areas with talks about knowing firearm safety and how guns can help protect you and your family.
- Emphasize the value of informing people about firearm safety as early into their lives as possible.

4. Create an online database of gun safety tips and pro-gun safety policy initiatives.

- Host this database on the NRA website.
- Utilize this database in all future social media and online messaging. Link back to the database as much as possible
 - Highlight produced infographics, social media videos and firearm safety kit contents on the webpage.

Public Relations Tactics Cont.



5. Arrange media interviews for firearm instructors and NRA members.

- Arrange media appearances for gun safety experts on major news networks and gun-centric media publications.
- Highlight NRA safety initiatives or benefits of NRA membership through editorials written by media directory contacts.

6. Distribute “firearm safety toolkits” to NRA members throughout the campaign.

- These kits will utilize video guides to teach recipients about how to properly handle and store firearms.
- Written materials will also be a part of the toolkits detailing the importance of background checks, in-person safety courses, and in-home storage efforts.

7. Establish partnerships with a variety of social media firearm influencers.

- Form paid partnerships with popular online gun writers and bloggers. Break into more than just gun specific publications to expand the NRA’s reach (Garden and Gun, Outdoor Life).
- Target popular gun YouTube channels, TikTok creators, etc.
 - Demolition Ranch, Garand Thumb, Hickok45

8. Implement an attention-grabbing social media campaign to support firearm safety education.

- Use a variety of platforms to target all different age groups and demographics.
- Educate the target audience about an aspect of firearm safety in 10 seconds or less.

Social Media Expanded



Testimonial Campaigns

Target an older, more traditional audience through a testimonial series of interviews.

- Choose a variety of NRA perspectives to hear from
 - New members, old members, celebrity members, everyman stories, etc.
- Film 30-second testimonials of members talking about what the NRA means to them.
- Highlight these testimonials on social outlets like Facebook and LinkedIn.



Firearm Fast Facts Campaign

Target a younger generation of gun owners and hunters through a series of short-form video content.

- Showcase simple gun safety tips.
 - How to identify if a gun's safety is on, how to check if a gun is loaded, etc.
- Package tips in short, sub-10-second reels and clips.
- Post these clips on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, targeting the 15-25 age demographic.





Press Contacts

Outlet	Scope	Media	Name	Role	Email	City	Twitter	LinkedIn
The Trace	National	Digital	Sunny Sone	Senior Editor	ssone@hetrace.org	Philadelphia	https://x.com/sunny_sone	https://www.linkedin.com/in/sunny-sone/
The New York Times	National	Print	Maggie Astor	Politics Reporter	maggie.astor@nytimes.com	New York	https://x.com/MaggieAstor	https://www.linkedin.com/in/maggie-astor-a25a55262/
ABC News	National	Digital	Ivan Pereira	Digital Reporter	ivan.pereira@abc.com	New York	https://x.com/IvanPer4	https://www.linkedin.com/in/ivanpereira-reporter/
Associated Press	International, National	Digital	Denise Lavoie	Legal Affairs Writer	dlavoie@ap.org	Richmond	https://x.com/deniselavoie_ap	https://www.linkedin.com/in/denise-lavoie-7839176/
CNN	National	Digital	Emma Tucker	News Desk Reporter	emma.tucker@cnn.com	Los Angeles	https://x.com/emmatucker31	https://www.linkedin.com/in/emma-tucker-55866818a/



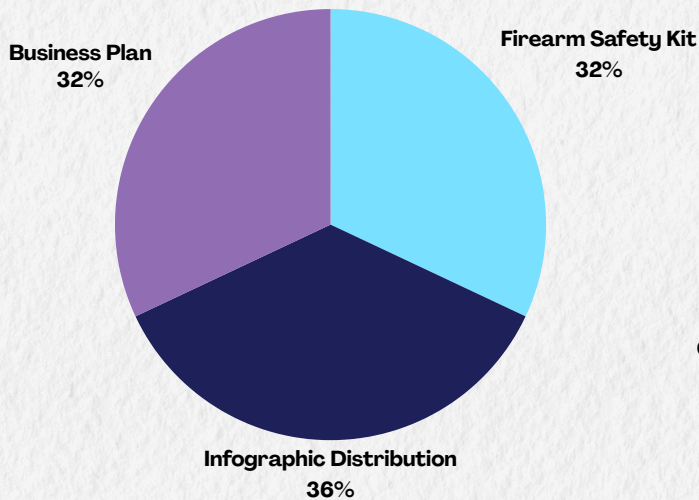
Press Contacts Cont.

Outlet	Scope	Media	Name	Role	Email	City	Twitter	LinkedIn
Firearms News (Outdoor Sports Group)	National	Digital & Print	Vincent L. DeNiro	Editor in Chief	Vince.DeNiro@OutdoorSG.com	Columbiana Ohio	https://x.com/FirearmsNewsMag	https://www.linkedin.com/in/vincent-l-deniro/
Gun Digest	National	Digital & Print	Luke Hartle	Editor in Chief	luke@gundigest.com	Chaska Minnesota	https://x.com/GunDigest	https://www.linkedin.com/in/luke-hartle-8405aa7b/
Recoil Magazine	National	Digital & Print	Dave Merrill	Features Editor	dmerrill@recoilweb.com	Columbus Ohio	https://x.com/RecoilMag	https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-merrill-454731137/
Garden & Gun	Regional (Southern USA)	Digital & Print	CJ Lotz	Senior Editor	cjlotz@gardenandgun.com	Charleston South Carolina	https://x.com/gardenandgun	https://www.linkedin.com/in/cj-lotz-952712167/
Outdoor Life	National	Digital & Print	John B. Snow	Shooting Editor	cathy.hebert@recurrent.io	Bozeman, Montana	https://x.com/outdoorlife	https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-snow-7317423/

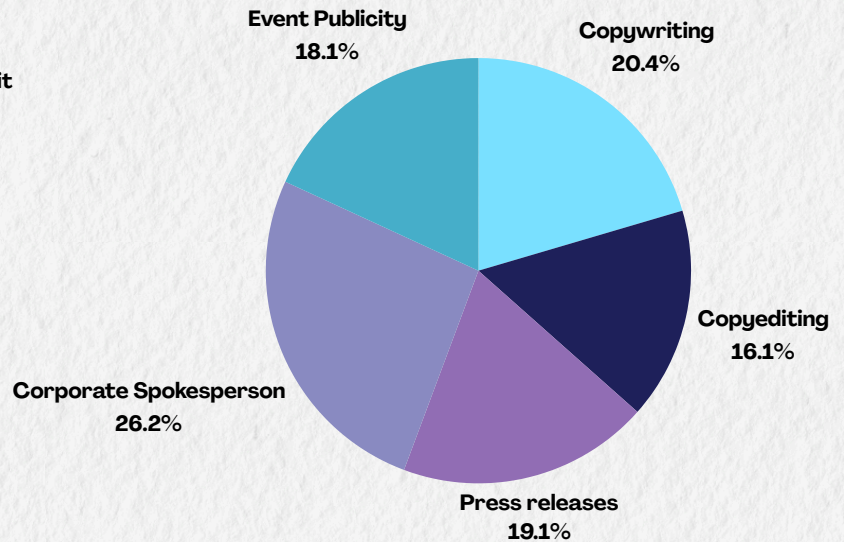
Budgets

We recommend the NRA allocate an effective budget of around \$1,000,000 to implement the tactics recommended through this campaign. The budget has been divided evenly across AD/PR, Business Functions, Online Outreach, and Photography and Design.

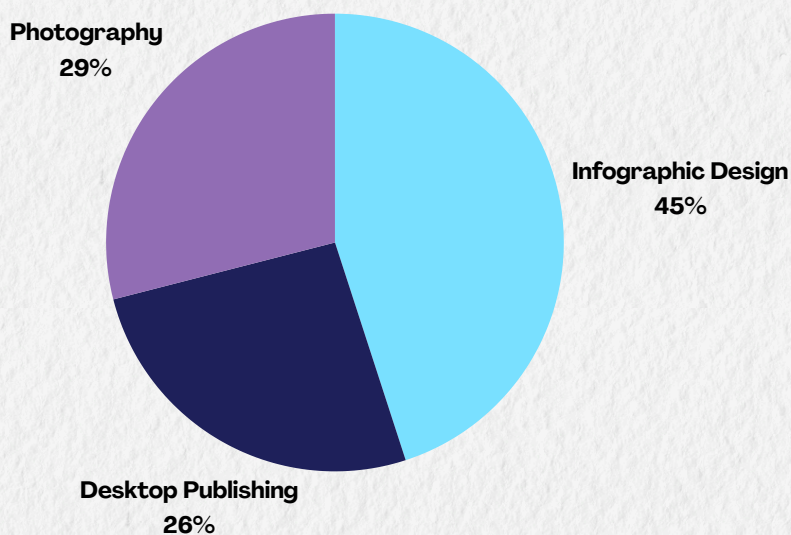
A specific breakdown of each section's \$250,000 is visualized below.



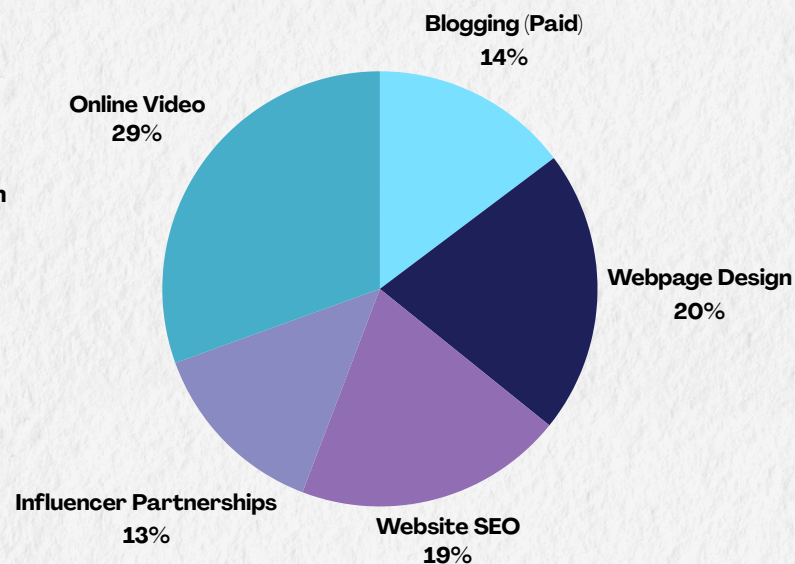
BUSINESS FUNCTIONS



AD/PR



PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN



ONLINE OUTREACH

Budgets Cont.

Table1						Table2		
Category	Item Description	Quantity (hour/project)	Per Hour cost	Per Project Cost	Total Cost	Final Summary Table		
1. Ad & PR	Advertising copywriting		\$83	\$2,752		Category		
	Advertising editing		\$64	n/a		1. Ad & PR		
	Press/news releases		\$78	\$700		2. Business		
	Corporate spokesperson role		\$107	n/a		3. Computer/Technical		
	Event promotions/publicity		\$75	n/a		4. Editorial/Design		
Subtotal (1)					...	Total		
2. Business	Annual reports		\$92	\$5,708		\$1,000,000		
	Brochures		\$81	\$4,215				
	Business plan		\$82	\$4,100				
Subtotal (2)					...			
3. Computer/Technical	Bloggng (paid)		\$100	\$1,240				
	Webpage design		\$80	\$1,278				
	Website SEO		\$76	\$12,000				
	Social media postings		\$62	\$500				
	Online videos for clients		\$76	n/a				
Subtotal (3)					...			
4. Editorial/Design	Photo brochures		\$87	n/a				
	Desktop publishing		\$67	n/a				
	Photography		\$71	\$2,100				
Subtotal (4)					...			

Gantt Chart

TASK	START	END
1. Produce high-quality infographics on gun violence in the US	Jan. 10th	Nov. 10th
2. Hold monthly seminars in major cities that address systemic causes of gun violence	Feb. 10th	May 10th
3. Have speakers come into middle school classrooms to speak about gun safety	Sept. 10th	Nov. 10th
4. Create an online database of gun safety tips and pro-gun safety policy initiatives	Jan. 10th	Nov. 10th
5. Arrange media interviews for firearm instructors and NRA members	June 10th	Aug. 10th
6. Distribute “firearm safety toolkits” to NRA members throughout the campaign	March 10th	Sept. 10th
7. Establish partnerships with a variety of social media firearms influencers	April 10th	Aug. 10th
8. Implement an attention-grabbing social media campaign to support firearm safety education	April 10th	Aug. 10th

Gantt Chart Cont.

TACTICS	QUARTER 1				QUARTER 2				QUARTER 3			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Produce high-quality infographics on gun violence in the US												
Hold monthly seminars in major cities that address systemic causes of gun violence												
Have speakers come into middle school classrooms to speak about gun safety												
Create an online database of gun safety tips and pro-gun safety policy initiatives												
Arrange media interviews for firearms instructors and NRA members												
Distribute “firearm safety toolkits” to NRA members throughout the campaign.												
Establish partnerships with a variety of social media firearms influencers												
Implement an attention-grabbing social media campaign to support firearm safety education												

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