



CASE STUDY

MEDIA RELATIONS & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP: **FREE ADMISSION**

THE CHALLENGE

The Free Admission Campaign is a privately financed public policy effort that strives to ensure the enforcement of the incorporated and amended laws of a mid-19th-century public-private partnership as well as publicly codify the facts about New Yorkers' right to free admission to 17 of the city's most historic and iconic cultural park institutions. In 2010, campaign founder Pat Nicholson uncovered New York State laws, statutes and leases that required The Metropolitan Museum of Art to be free and open to New Yorkers at least five days a week — a requirement the museum was ignoring. She sued the museum in 2012 and had her case dismissed due to lack of standing but was encouraged by the judge to continue her fight.

In the years that followed, she uncovered 17 total institutions that all had some form of state laws and/or leases that required free admission for all or some New Yorkers in exchange for free rent of City-owned parkland and buildings and additional subsidies, totaling over \$1 billion per year. None of these institutions were in compliance. She approached The TASC Group to help her craft the campaign, introduce it to New Yorkers and local legislative leaders and ultimately uncover the truth of New Yorkers' right to free admission.

THE STRATEGY

The TASC Group worked closely with the Free Admission campaign to uncover and shape the story of New Yorkers' historic right to free admission at these 17 institutions. This included reviewing and researching documentation spanning from the 1800s through to today, supporting FOIA requests and reviews of documentation, creating one-pagers and crafting website copy. TASC also wrote, placed and promoted petitions and calls to action that galvanized New Yorkers' support of the campaign.

Once the team understood the story, the legal implications and the need for government intervention at both the state and city levels, TASC identified and encouraged the campaign to hire a lobbying firm. TASC then oversaw the campaign's grassroots and legislative outreach efforts, thus far resulting in the introduction of legislation to study free admission laws and determine needs around their enforcement. TASC also identified a nonprofit-focused law firm to independently investigate and create reports on two of the institutions to push legislators into action.

TASC rolled out a strategic communications media outreach plan, including introducing arts and culture reporters to the issue, promoting the campaign's various calls to action and crafting op-eds on behalf of the campaign.

THE RESULTS

The Free Admission campaign, through the work of its lobbying firm, has now secured the support of various members of State and City government, including across key committees.

The TASC Group also secured feature stories in national and local outlets, including [Forbes](#), [New York Amsterdam News](#), [Patch.com](#), [Hyperallergic](#), [Bronx Times](#) and [SILive.com](#), as well as a livestreamed podcast interview with [Untapped New York](#). TASC also wrote and placed op-eds in [City & State](#), [New York Daily News](#) and [Next City](#), which led to pushback from the 17 institutions and galvanized additional support from political and community leaders.

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