

Six Suggestions to Improve Coverage of Appellate Courts by the Press and Social Media

Get to Know the Press

Develop relationships with reporters, editors and/or top executives of the papers and broadcasters who cover your court. It is helpful to get to know the press before a controversy arises.

Build Training Programs with Journalism Schools and/or Law Schools

Work with journalism schools and/or law schools in your state on programs to educate reporters/bloggers on appellate courts. The schools could potentially create short courses to train journalists in the judicial process. In addition, you or they could find foundation funding for such projects.

Improve Transparency and Create Informational Materials

Develop materials that help to explain the role of the appellate courts to the general public, and show people how they can learn about the judicial system.

Urge Judges to be Involved in the Community

Make more public appearances and/or become more engaged in community service outside of the courtroom. This will help destigmatize judges as remote figures in robes.

Use Social Media Presence to Humanize Judges

Use social media to demystify and humanize judges. By maintaining an open but professional online presence, judges can make themselves appear more accessible and less removed from society. Social media could be used to share updates about the judicial system at large, suggestions for people to get involved in their communities, and items about how a judge is involved in the local community.

Urge the Creation of a Third-Party Institution to Evaluate and Comment on Inaccurate Statements about the Courts

Develop a third-party and independent institution that can investigate claims about the courts, issue rebuttals to false stories, and critique the courts when warranted. Perhaps based at a university, this institution could fact-check statements in the press and on social media.

