

reasons to be cheerful

Pitching Guidelines

So you want to write for Reasons to be Cheerful? If you're a skilled reporter with a great idea, we want you to write for us, too. But first, please read these guidelines to learn what we're looking for. We publish articles reported and written by professional journalists who share our passion for solutions-oriented journalism, and we are always looking to expand our writer base. Here are a few tips to help you pitch us successfully.

Our name? It's nuanced.

Don't let our name fool you: Reasons to be Cheerful publishes stories of real solutions — successful endeavors to create marked changes that are improving the world today.

Stories of good ideas that haven't been implemented or proven to work don't make the cut. Neither do "happy news" stories that feel good but aren't about solving problems. We're looking for surprising, unique and under-the-radar stories about real responses (projects, policies, programs, etc.) that are making a genuine dent in the problems we face.



Pitches should include:

- ① A clear description of the problem being solved, including an explanation of why it's a problem.
- ② A clear description of the response to that problem — the “solution” that your story will be about.
- ③ Evidence that the solution is effective. Don't mistake implementation for impact — just because a solution is being applied doesn't mean it's working.
- ④ The solution's limitations and challenges. Don't whitewash its shortcomings — our objective is to examine and analyze solutions, not promote them.
- ⑤ A sense of scalability to help us understand how this response might be replicated or inform similar responses elsewhere.
- ⑥ A sense of how the solution helps to fix the systemic nature of the problem, rather than simply applying a Band-Aid on the surface.

If your story is missing some of these elements, it might not be right for us. For a helpful list of the kinds of stories we avoid, check out the Solutions Journalism Network's list of solutions journalism [imposters](#). If you're unfamiliar with solutions journalism reporting, they also have a brilliant introductory [Basic Toolkit](#). Check it out.

Our audience? It's diverse.

Our audience is global. While we are based in the United States — where we have readers across all 50 states — 40 percent of our readership lives elsewhere in the world. Therefore, pitches should have broad appeal and should transcend location. That doesn't mean they can't be local, however. Often, the best solutions are happening in a particular place, but hold lessons for others.

Our audience is also politically diverse, so don't fall into the trap of assuming that because an effort aligns with your personal politics, that makes it an effective solution. Rather, give us irrefutable evidence that it's solving a real problem.

We love stories about underrepresented people, places and communities. Pitches for stories that take place outside of the U.S. or that affect BIPOC communities in particular are especially welcome.

Our stories? They come in several forms.

The vast majority of our stories are structured like typical magazine articles, and come in a variety of lengths: Many are concise and to the point (600 to 800 words) while others require more space to tell (anywhere from 1,000 to 2,500 words). We encourage you to pitch with an honest assessment of how long your story should be. Our editors may request that you lengthen or shorten it.

While we publish stories about the innovative work of particular organizations and people, we do not profile organizations or individuals. It's the work we care about.

We rarely publish Q&As, and we don't consider pitches for creative writing, event coverage, how-to guides, advice columns, multi-part series, product reviews, cultural critiques, or lifestyle. Occasionally, we'll publish an opinion or analysis piece, but they are few and far between. We don't entertain requests for advertorials or sponsored posts. We do not have advertising on our site.

Journalists must reveal any potential conflicts of interest in their pitch, and are expected to provide sources for all facts and contact information for interview subjects upon submission for fact-checking purposes.

We believe strongly in collaboration in media. Permission to share our content with other news outlets is part of our contributor agreements.

Sound good? Here's what to do:

Send us a pitch at pitches@reasonstobecheerful.world that includes all the elements we describe above. Tell us a bit about yourself, including where you're located and who you have written for, and include three links to your published work. While we try our best to respond to every pitch, we're a small team and may not always be able to do so.

If you're not a journalist, but have a hot tip on a great story for us, write us [here](#). We love hearing about stories from our readers, and frequently follow up on them or include them in our weekly roundup, The Fixer.

