

# ABA Foundation Board of Governors Report – Communications

## Spring 2024

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A quick look at the Foundation's communications efforts.

### Website and Social Media

Most of the focus during the first quarter was on promoting the ABAF scholarships in social media, the Scholarship in a Box printed kit, and through the website.

In mid-March, we conducted a paid targeted social campaign on Facebook and Instagram, which netted an additional reach of 10,123 on FB, resulting in over 260 link clicks to the scholarship page. On Instagram, our reach was almost 6,200, with 70 link clicks to the scholarship page.

In March, we strategically decided to streamline the ABAF portion of the ABA website as part of our site refresh, turning the ABAF pages into more of a central hub for research and scholarship opportunities. This was suggested by the same consultant who reviewed our full website and social media communications.

Her recommendations included improving our Search Engine Optimization, page organization, and social media content.

For research communications, we promoted the *Updated Comparison of Energy Use and Emissions from Different Transportation Modes Using the Latest Available Datasets* from TTI, released in early January. The press release went to nearly 800 press contacts, with a 51% open rate and a 9% read-through rate. The report was picked up across most industry trades during the first week of release and again when we referenced it in our remarks regarding the EPA GHG Phase 3 final ruling.

An infographic and social media cards were commissioned for an evergreen campaign. These assets will be provided to all members to use and share, and motorcoaches will be promoted as the best eco-friendly transportation option for group travel.

With our new arrangement with Tourism Economics, we replaced the Itinerary newsletter with a blog article referenced through multiple channels. We will also do this with the quarterly motorcoach sales and census results.

### Marketplace Events

Regarding the ABAF in relation to Marketplace 2025, we will again—with the Board's approval—run the silent auction and the purse raffle during the event. This means we will begin approaching donors for donations to both programs. To better facilitate the ABA staff's time and efforts, we are

looking to hire an intern or part-time temporary employee to focus on donation outreach for these two events and coordinate with the committee.

## Scholarship Program

Regarding this year's scholarship application process, we quickly found that the issues with the revamped FAFSA created severe submission delays. According to our application contractor, this was a widespread problem across all scholarship programs and affected many university application processes.

This bore out with a prolonged start to the program. Within the first two months of the year, the application process was underperforming compared to previous years. Working with ISTS, we extended the deadline by 30 days. During April, we saw most submissions and completions for this year's cycle, which turned out to be one of the best submission years in the program's history.

For next year's cycle, the recommendation is to modify the "Scholarship in a Box" to a more budget-friendly package or look for more ad placement in prominent industry publications as an alternative. A paid social campaign should also be considered, as the one conducted this year on a small scale yielded promising results.