

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

HOW TO:

WRITE PRESS ADVISORIES & PRESS RELEASES

GOALS

- Gain media attention for your event or opinion
- Increase attendance at your event; win new support for your opinion
- Educate the public and decisionmakers

KEY TECHNIQUES

- Be brief, accurate and crystal clear
- Use everyday words, no jargon, no acronyms
- Limit to one main idea, then provide an example, a quote and relevant facts
- Always include a contact for more information

Press Advisory:

When to use:

A press advisory notifies the media for a press conference or media event. It is short and provides the details of who, what, when, where, and why you are holding the event.

Template:

A press advisory template follows on the next page.

- A press advisory is released at least a week in advance.
- Make sure you want to have media at your event and that you'll be able to control the message of the event before sending out the advisory.
- Advisories should be short and to the point, never more than one page. Reporters must be able to quickly get the information they need. Make sure to include what is newsworthy about your event.
- Be creative in writing a punchy headline.
- Provide contact information for one person who is reachable 24/7.
- When sending advisories by email, paste the text into the body of the email and also attach the file as a PDF.

Press Advisory

For Immediate Release: (Date)

Contact: (Local Organizer, Local Organization, Phone Number)

Punchy Headline

Who: Executive Director of Non-Profit Developer, Resident, Councilperson X

What: Press Conference

When: 10:00 am, Tuesday, March 1, 2009

Where: In front of City Hall (address)

Why: Include a statement of the problem and how what you are demanding will deal with this problem and improve people's lives.

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About your organization: Include a brief summary of your mission, and your Web address if applicable

Press Release

When to use:

A press release tells the media about a newsworthy event or occurrence, such as a key City Council meeting, important campaign actions, or the release of a new study.

Template:

A press release template follows on the next page.

- A press release is released the day before or day of an event.
- Press releases are your opportunity to frame the event in your messages and to present the issue from your perspective.
- Press releases should be written as news stories, making it easier for reporters to write their stories. Sentences should be short and words should be active. Define any technical or policy terms you use.
- Press releases should be kept to 1 page, 2 pages maximum.
- Write the first paragraph so that if nothing else is printed, people still get the point. It should include the who, what, when, where and why. Later paragraphs can give more details and facts. You should include 2-3 quotes from spokespeople.

Press Release

For Immediate Release: (Date)

Contact: (Local Organizer, Local Organization, Phone Number)

Punchy Headline

Date-City: Today, Executive Director A. Ford Housing from We Live Here joined a diverse coalition of community groups to call on the city council to do “xy and z”. “Xy and z” would benefit the community by _____. The City Council will discuss “xy and z” at their meeting on Thursday night.

“Xy and z would really help our community,” explained Mr. Housing. “Another quote about why xy and z would be so good.”

Mr. Housing was joined by environmentalists, business leaders and residents. “Our city needs xy and z to improve everyone’s lives,” said Juanita Casa, a lifelong resident. “Many other cities are already doing this; we need to get on board, too.”

The City will hold a series of community meetings to discuss xy and z. Residents are encouraged to attend.

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