



Media Guidance & Tips

Every day, editors and producers receive hundreds of press releases/press kits. To distinguish your media materials from the rest of the pack, the materials must provide the information that editors and producers need the most – the facts with a few key supporting details or examples.

Writing for the press is different from writing for other audiences. Your audience for this style of writing is the reporter, editor, or the producer for broadcast (radio or television). They will in turn translate your information for the public – their audience. The most important point to remember is your writing should be concise and to the point.

A newsworthy story should meet most of the following criteria:

- Appeal to the media outlet’s audience
- Address issues that directly affect or are relevant to the audience
- Present a solid stance in a current debate, controversy or conflict
- Include fresh angles that will sustain public interest
- Provide the media outlet with information that their competitors may not have available
- Increase viewership or readership

Once you have determined that your information is newsworthy, it is time to create your media materials. A standard media kit includes:

- **Press Release:** The press release is the staple of the press kit. Typically, a one-page document, sometimes two, depending on the amount of news contained in the release. The press release should contain the “five W’s:”
 - *Who* is involved
 - *What* is happening
 - *When* is it happening
 - *Where* is it happening
 - *Why* is it happening

The lead paragraph of the release should answer these questions in one or two sentences. Most reporters decide whether to read the entire release based on the first paragraph, so it should be concise and attention-grabbing. Typically, press releases include at least one quote. The press release also should include the name, phone number, and e-mail address of the contact person.

- **Media Advisory:** A media advisory is a brief notice announcing an upcoming event. Like the press release, it explains the who, what, when, where and why, and provides the name, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person.
- **Backgrounder:** A media backgrounder is an effective way to focus media attention on a specific component of your program, activity, or event. A backgrounder may assume various formats, such as a fact sheet, organizational profile, biographies of key individuals or spokespeople, or a list of contacts or resources for additional information