



# A Quick Look at Media Basics

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From Families USA

## Dear Media Leader/Organizer/Strategizer:

If you are reading this, it's likely that the burden of your organization's media outreach has somehow fallen on you.

**The bad news:** There are an awful lot of potholes, roadblocks, sidetracks, missteps, and missed opportunities that await the novice in any media campaign.

**The good news:** With personal outreach, you can make it happen.

Any media campaign requires one simple ingredient: Follow-up!

Let's assume you have created the best media list for your community and your organization . . . you still need to personally follow up to make sure the people on your list received your materials!

You may have written the most colorful, incisive, succinct, and attractive news release . . . but you'd better make sure that the people who need to see it have read it!

Continuing to emphasize "follow-up," let's talk media basics.

## Media Basics for News Events

- There is nothing passive about a media campaign. It's not just a matter of determining the who, what, when, where, and why of an event—although those are essential. You need to make sure that the radio, TV, and print reporters you want at your event (and the news editors and assignment editors who dispatch those reporters) have been personally advised about the event.
- Get your first advisory out at least a week ahead of time. Re-advise two days ahead of time, and again on the morning of the event.
- Offer ample background material in advance of the event or announcement.
- Promise exclusives (and make sure they are really "exclusive," and rotate that privilege.)
- Set up interviews for your "quotable notables" before and after an event.
- Make clear what the reporter can get from attending an event. Reporters need to have a sense that they, somehow, are failing you and the public if they don't actually attend and have a chance to ask questions and really round out their story.

## Media Basics for a News Release

If you are doing a news release only, rather than a news event, most of what was said above applies:

- Advise, as appropriate, with personal follow-up.
- Offer background materials and supporting documents.
- Set up interviews before and after.
- Promise exclusives.
- Consider setting up a teleconference timed to your release. (This, of course, will require a series of advisories, just like a news conference.)

### In summary:

There are a thousand places to learn the tools and techniques of writing news releases and advisories, creating and maintaining media lists, and packaging your event. We offer some supporting material in this Tool Kit.

But we believe you already possess key skills. We think the folks in your organization have given you the media job because you are outgoing, good with words, work well with people, and understand the goals of your group.

So, whatever else you do, put those skills to their best use—get on the phone and follow up!

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