

Writing a press release:

- **Be brief.** Most reporters won't read a press release that is longer than one page.
- **Think like a reporter.** What is the most interesting aspect of your story? Lead with that. Don't get caught up with including every single scrap of information on the issue or your organization.
- **Stay professional.** For the most part, press releases should focus on reporting facts, except the quotations. While many issues may evoke passion in you, using sarcasm and negative language could prevent others from listening to your message.

Writing a letter to the editor:

- **Know the paper's requirements.** Some newspapers have very specific requirements in regards to length and content. Consult these before you begin drafting your letter.
- **Identify one or two main points.** Stick with these and keep your message focused and clear.
- **Include a call to action.** Once you've identified the problem, suggest how others may help.

Writing an op-ed:

- **Submit a completed piece, not just an idea.** The op-ed should be in its final form, free of grammatical and spelling errors.
- **Link your op-ed to a recent news event.** Op-eds do not have to be timely, but tying it to a recent news story greatly increases its probability of being published.
- **Be strategic when choosing who will submit an op-ed.** Oftentimes, newspapers prefer to print op-eds from experts, community leaders or other public figures. Make sure the person who is signing your op-ed is best suited for it.

Hosting a press conference:

- **Don't scoop yourself.** When sending out the announcement, don't include all of the information the reporter would get at the event. Let them know the general issue, but not specific details.
- **Respect the reporter's time.** Press conferences should include only a select few speakers who give short remarks. Leave the rest of the time for questions from reporters.
- **Provide resources.** Press packets filled with additional information will help enrich a reporter's story and educate them on this issue for future coverage.

Talking to a reporter:

- **Be honest.** If you don't know the answer to something, tell them you'd be happy to get back to them with the answer. Never make up information or guess. It also helps to have information on hand to back up your assertions.
- **Have an agenda.** You want to be in control of the interview. Before speaking with the reporter, brainstorm two or three main ideas you want to address and stick with them, even if the reporter tries to go off subject.
- **Keep it short.** Reporters can't use long, drawn-out statements. Limit yourself to only a few sentences per question. If the reporter wants more information, they will ask in a follow up.