



HOW TO GET A REPORTER TO COVER YOUR LOCAL EVENT

Reporters are always looking for interesting events going on in the community. Weekly newspapers and community radio stations are particularly responsive to local events.

TIPS: Newspapers like events that produce good photographs. Radio reporters need good sound—a choir singing, for example. Television reporters need compelling visuals.

Step 1: Select your targets.

Read your local newspapers to find which reporters cover these kinds of events. Call the major radio stations in your area and ask them if they have a local news program and when they broadcast it. Ask for the name of the News Director, and ask how it's spelled. Ask how he/she prefers to receive information—by email, fax or snail mail.

Step 2: Put together written information.

Create a flyer or very short press release with the five W's:

- What is the event?
- Where is the event?
- When is the event?
- Who is putting on the event, and who will be there?
- Why are you doing the event, and why is it important?

Additionally, be sure to collect background information on the legislative and policy issues relating to the event. If you are concerned about the child care subsidy issue, you can use the Child Care Subsidy Program Fact Sheet or other material from the Kids Are Priority One Coalition's web site. You will need this information if a reporter asks for more information or seems interested in your story. Remember that it's important to get the reporter not only to cover your event, but also to write about specific legislation and why you're supporting it.

Step 3: Plan and practice your pitch.

Be prepared to follow up by phone with all the reporters who received your flyer or press release. Rehearse saying the five W's as concisely as you can and do a role-play. (See "[How to make a pitch call to journalists](#)".)

Step 4: Make the call.

Explain the event, invite them to cover it and ask whether they received the information you sent. Ask the reporter if he/she would like to report about the event before it happens. This is generally better for you because you get advance publicity for your event. Many reporters also prefer to give advance coverage for events because it provides a service to their readers.



Step 5: Confirm with the reporter.

Any reporters who agree to go to your event should receive a confirmation call the day before. Ask them if they need any more information. If they're not in, leave a reminder message. If a reporter is doing an advance story on your event, be in touch with him/her a few days before the story is slated to run and ask if he/she needs any more information.

Step 6: Follow up.

After the story appears, call the reporter or send a note or email letting him/her know that you appreciated their story. Continue to be in touch with the reporter to keep him/her updated on the issues and your activities to develop an ongoing relationship.

If a story doesn't appear when you expected, find out if the reporter intends to write a story. Try to find new angles or news "hooks" to give them an excuse to write a story. It may take several attempts to get the reporter to write a story about your activities. Don't give up—persistence pays off!

Step 7: Send us the clip.

If an article appears in your local newspaper, please send an original newsprint copy, along the newspaper's masthead, to the Coalition's Communications Coordinator:

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