



GUIDELINES & TIPS FOR HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

WHAT IS A PRESS RELEASE?

A press release is a document, usually delivered via email, which is designed to notify media outlets of a newsworthy event (this could be a rally, announcement, petition delivery, statement, or other instance of note) after that event has taken place. It is often preceded by a media advisory, especially when promoting events.

GETTING STARTED

Press releases have the following basic elements:

1. A masthead for the sponsoring organization(s) (likely your organization and *Standing on the Side of Love*)
2. The phrase “For Immediate Release” along with the date
3. A headline describing the event, announcement, development, proclamation, or other news
4. A byline with the location of the event or from where the announcement is emanating
5. A brief description of the event
6. Details which provide context and “color” (this will include quotes and facts where possible)
7. A quote or two from a leading figure(s) associated with the project that is succinct and “sound bite-like”
8. A boilerplate paragraph located at the end providing a description of the sponsoring organization(s) (in most cases this would be your organization and *Standing on the Side of Love*)
9. Relevant contact information (usually name, phone, and email) for further questions

SUBJECT

It is important to remember that a reporter’s first priority is engaging his or her audience. Any release must make a case for the subject’s topicality and importance. If it’s not newsworthy, don’t release it. See www.standingonthesideoflove.org/resources/media-101 for a sample press release.

DISTRIBUTION

Once you have a press release draft, you’ll need to craft a list of reporters, including their contact information, who you think might cover the story you are trying to promote. You should include traditional media such as local print, television, and radio reporters, as well as internet outlet reporters and bloggers. Be sure to include the general news inbox email address for traditional outlets as well as specific reporters you think might be interested. Send via email and BCC email addresses.

A release should be given to reporters when it is most newsworthy: if you are announcing an event, submit it as soon as possible after the completion of the event and without question on the day of the event.

TIPS

- ➔ You should try to provide releases to as many relevant media contacts as possible; however, a release should never be simply “blasted” to non-related outlets or contacts or sent too many times.
- ➔ Keep your release short, pithy, concise, and a page or less where at all possible.
- ➔ Be only slightly more opinionated in your press release than a reporter would be covering the story. Your release language should for the most part sound like a strongly-worded newspaper article.