

Tips for Working with the Media

In many ways, the rules that apply to educating your legislator also apply to members of the media. In each case, it is easy to become unnecessarily intimidated, and you must remember that these "experts" need us to provide the information required for their job. Develop your media relations plan by focusing on establishing relationships and crafting a consistent message and repeating it in all your communications.

- Press releases should be brief, concise and contain name and phone number of a contact person. They should be written in the third person, using quotes if applicable.
- Wait one day and then follow up on your Media Advisory with a phone call. Be persistent but friendly.
- When speaking with the journalist, ask if this is a good time to talk. If not, schedule a time to call back.
- Keep in mind that many reporters do not get in until 10:00 a.m. Also, do not call after 4:00 p.m. as most journalists are up against a deadline by this time.
- Be upbeat, energetic and excited about your event. State the reasons why you think the event is important **to their readers** and ask if the journalist has any questions.
- Be a good resource to reporters; develop personal rapport with members of the press.
- Include contact information on the Media Release of someone who is available after 5:00 p.m. and include a website address.
- If a reporter attends your event, provide him/her with the press release as well as any information that helps them tell the public library story: for example, the Return on Investment study.
- Greet the journalist when he or she arrives at the event.
- If you are expecting the television media to be present, remember to keep the event visual and think in terms of 7-8 second sound bites.
- Small dailies or weekly community newspapers are always looking for local news items. Be sure to send them your press releases. Get to know the editor of the local newspapers.