A press release can be sent to both print (newspapers) and electronic (radio and TV stations) media to give them information about the Community Presentation. The primary objective in writing a press release is to provide news-worthy information to the media. Sometimes press releases are used as is, but frequently they are used as the basis for a story written by a reporter who may use some of the facts or quotes you provide. Occasionally, a release will be used as the starting point for an interview.

When writing a press release, consider that Editors receive hundreds of press releases every day, so your release needs to get the editor’s attention and yet present the facts in journalistic style. Journalistic style is different from writing an essay or paper for an English class. Newspaper editors prefer short sentences and short paragraphs.

**TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE:**

- Use an easy-to-read font (Times New Roman is excellent) in at least 12 point size, double-spaced.
- Put full contact information clearly at the top of the page.
- Create a dynamic, exciting headline which will make your release stand out and make the editor want to read more.
- The opening paragraph should summarize the rest of the release. It should explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the story. DO NOT leave any of the essentials out. Make it as easy as possible for the editor to use the release without having to contact you.
- Use the advocacy messages in the opening paragraph to create what journalists call ‘the hook’ – a statement or idea that gets the editor or reporter interested enough to read the rest of the release. The hook should be a factual statement and related to the topic.
- The paragraphs that follow the opening should provide the details, with the most important information and quotes first. News releases are often trimmed, and the paragraphs cut are the ones at the end.
- Make the release short and concise – usually no more than one page.
- Make the release interesting, but factual. Don’t use jargon.
- If possible, try to use real-life examples or quotes from a local person. When using quotes, be sure you have permission from the person you are quoting.
- Double check your grammar, punctuation and spelling.
TO SEND A PRESS RELEASE:

- Send your release to the City Editor of newspapers and to the News Editor of TV and radio stations.
- Press releases can be faxed, e-mailed, or submitted via web form. Visit websites of local media for submitting the release.
- Consider calling the media outlet to find out how they prefer to receive releases and follow their request.
- If sending an e-mail, use plain text in the body of the message; the simpler, the better.
  - Do not send a release as an e-mail statement.
  - In addition, use common sense in sending an e-mail news release: Use a meaningful subject header and include a signature with full contact information.
- Do not call to find out if an editor received your press release. If an editor is interested, he/she will contact you.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, [Date]

CONTACT: [Name] [Title] [Group] [Phone Number]

TITLE: [Name of Group] to host Community Presentation on [date]

Open with an introductory sentence that describes what will be happening, who will be putting on the Presentation, when and where the Presentation is going to be, who will be participating and why the Presentation is being held. Sometimes the newspaper will use only the first sentence of your release; be sure all essential information is there.

Next, provide a few sentences that discuss [policy] facts and why an ordinance is necessary in your city. Quotes from community leaders can be very helpful in getting the attention of the newspaper editor, so if possible, include a quote from a respected community leader.

A summary paragraph such as the one below could be included:

Similar [policy] ordinances already exist in [state, city, or local town names]. [Policy] ordinances have been shown to [desired outcome].

End with a list of the groups who are sponsoring the Community Presentation.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, [Date]

CONTACT: [Name] [Title] [Group] [Phone Number]

TITLE: Citizens Rally Around [Policy] Ordinance at Community Presentation

The introductory paragraph should describe what happened, when and where, who participated, and how many attended (if there was a larger-than-anticipated attendance). Include a few paragraphs that discuss in detail what happened, illustrating factors that made the Presentation a success, such as what key leaders were there. Include a quote from someone who attended the Presentation and especially from a respected community leader, if possible. Sometimes the newspaper will use only the first sentence of your release; be sure all essential information is there.

Write a few sentences that discuss why this issue is important and why an ordinance is needed.

Include a sentence about what the next step is [The city council will discuss a [policy] ordinance at a study session on______________.]

Announce Who Put On the Presentation: [Name of organization, including brief description]

Provide Contact Information: [For more information, the community may contact _______________________.]

Deliver the Message: Promote the Event

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