**EARNING MEDIA COVERAGE**

*A Step-by-step Guide to Getting the Press to Come to Your Events*

***FIRST:*** *Confirm with your state coordinator/lead that your event should be pitched to the press.*

A pitch call is an opportunity to talk directly to a news outlet to tell them about your event, why they should cover it, and get a concrete commitment from them to cover the event. It is important to note that television stations have morning meetings, around 9am local time, to determine which stories they will cover for that day – as you continue to call these TV outlets you will learn their meeting schedule. In the days leading up to your event, calling and emailing press advisories to news outlets is the best way to put your event on the radar of news outlets. Some local TV stations and newspapers will have an event calendar where they will let the public add their events so other visitors to their websites can see the upcoming events. This is a good way to get additional attention for your event.

**Timeline**

**4 Days Prior to Event:**

* Receive Press Advisories from State Coordinator/Lead
* Receive specific message guidance on the Day of Action event
* Confirm speakers for your event (speakers should be locked as early as possible)
* Send message guidance and sample remarks to your speakers
* Recruit volunteer(s) who can take pictures and/or video and post to social networks and submit to TV stations and newspapers (for those websites that allow)

**72 hours Prior to Event:**

* Press Advisories emailed to press outlets in AM
* Host a prep call/ meet with your speakers to ensure they are clear on the message for the event

**48 hours Prior to Event:**

* Press Advisories emailed to press outlets in AM
* Follow up via phone to ensure outlets received these advisories (most outlets will not make a commitment to attend your event at this point)
* Prepare signs for your event that fit with the message frame

**24 hours Prior to Event:**

* Press Advisories emailed to press outlets in AM
* Follow up via phone with a pitch call to the press outlets (now you should make the ask to attend your event)
* Confirm any last minute details with speakers
* Confirm volunteer(s) who will take pictures and/or video of the event

**Day of the Event:**

* Pitch calls and/or confirmation calls to the press in AM
* Report out to State Coordinators/Leads any press that showed to your event ASAP
* Have a volunteer designated just to take photos and/or video of the event
* Post pictures and status to Facebook and Twitter during your event
* Upload photo/video to news outlet’s websites who did not attend your event
* Email pictures during your event to your state coordinator/lead
* Look for and send up any press clips from your event
* Report out to State Coordinators/Leads event details including total attendees

**Day after the Event:**

* Continue looking for any press clips from your event and send up
* Send any additional pictures and/or video to your State Coordinator/Lead
* Post wrap up of event to your Facebook and Twitter accounts

**Best Practices for Pitching to Press**

* Begin generating interest in your event by emailing press advisories to news outlets 72 to 48 hours in advance of your event
* After emailing the initial advisory, follow up with a call to ensure they received the information and do not have any questions.
* Mornings are the best time to call a newsroom. By afternoon most reporters are under a hard deadline and will be less willing to be on the phone for very long.
* Be prepared for a brush-off! Unless your event is the same day you are calling/emailing the newsroom, they will most likely not commit to attending your event but make sure to ask when they will make the decision so you can follow up
* Think of your press pitch call as a volunteer call – you always have an “ask” to make, but you also need to give the reporter a reason to say yes.
* Wear your passion on your sleeve! Your excitement will make reporters excited to attend.
* Make your call personal – local reporters want to cover issues that affect their communities specifically. Why is your Congressman’s office important? Why is this issue so important to your community?
* Have strong follow up! Even if you’ve already spoken to a reporter and gotten a commitment to attend, follow up the morning of your event with another call to confirm their attendance

**Sample Press Pitch**

**Introduce yourself, OFA and the event**

Hi, is this the newsroom (political/community reporter, etc)? Great! My name is Allie Ebner, and I’m a volunteer with Organizing for Action. We’re a grassroots community group that’s working to support the enactment of (specific policy) of President Obama’s agenda. Tomorrow we are holding a phone bank, at the corner of 1st and Main Street, at 1pm. Community members will be coming together to call their neighbors and encourage them to urge their Congressman to support background checks for gun purchases. We sent you a press advisory yesterday – did you receive it?

**Explain why the event is worthy of media coverage (message, talkers, and make it local)**

(**Have a clear message**)-- Background checks for gun purchases are an issue that our community cares very deeply about right now – we actually expect about 40 people to attend. (**Connect the national story to the local community**)--Congressman Smith will be a key deciding vote on this issue, so it’s important that our community makes its voice heard.

(**Highlight talkers who are already a media draw**)--Mayor Brown and Assemblywoman Garcia will be speaking to everyone about this important issue.

**Make an ask**

Can I count on ABC 30 Action News to cover the rally?

**Wrap-Up**

Great! Let me confirm the details with you – it’s at 1pm, in front of Congressman Smith’s office, at the corner of 1st and Main Street (**location, location, location**). What’s the best email address for me to send you the press advisory?

**Keep track of who you call and their responses**

Just like volunteers calls, capturing the information of who you spoke with, their phone number, and email address are invaluable pieces of information to use again in the future.

**Draft Your Own Press Pitch**

**Introduce yourself, OFA and the event**

Hi, is this the newsroom? Great! My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I’m a

volunteer with Organizing for Action. We’re a grassroots community group that’s working to

support the enactment of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of President Obama’s agenda.

specific policy issue

Tomorrow we are holding a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

briefly explain the who, what, where, when and why

We sent you a press advisory yesterday – did you receive it?

**Explain why the event is worthy of media coverage (message, talkers, and local flavor)**

Message: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Talkers (highlight those who will draw press): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Local connection to national issue: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Make an ask**

Can I count on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to cover the event?

news outlet name

**Wrap-Up**

Great! Let me confirm the details with you: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Repeat the who, what, where, when and why

What’s the best email address for me to send you the press advisory?

**Keep track of who you call and their responses**

Who did you talk to? Did they give you a direct email address?