

RESIST. REVOLT.

A FIELD GUIDE FOR ORGANIZERS & ADVOCATES

The Press Kit

The bosses have publicists. We have the truth, the numbers, and the people. Here's how to make the press carry it.



[Why the press](#) · [Kit checklist](#) · [Templates](#) · [Talking points](#) · [Spokesperson prep](#) · [Reminders](#)

01 Why We Use the Press

We don't organize for headlines. We use headlines to organize. Coverage is a tool for building power, never a substitute for it.

What earned media does for a campaign

- **Pressures the target.** Decision-makers read the local paper and watch the evening news. Public scrutiny raises the political cost of saying no.
- **Legitimizes the struggle.** Coverage tells the public, and our own members, that this fight is real and serious.
- **Reaches people we can't reach alone.** One story can put the campaign in front of thousands of unorganized workers, tenants, and voters.
- **Recruits.** People see neighbors standing up and want to join. Always give them a way in.
- **Sets the record.** Accurate coverage becomes the record that allies, lawmakers, and future reporters rely on.
- **Protects people.** Public attention can make retaliation against organizers more costly for those in power.

Read through a class lens

Most major media outlets are owned by corporations and billionaires, and their business depends on advertisers. That shapes what gets covered and how. But reporters are workers too, many of them unionized, underpaid, and stretched thin. A good press kit makes their job easier and makes our story hard to ignore. The press is a terrain of struggle: we contest it, we don't depend on it. Build your own media, too: newsletters, social channels, livestreams, and member-to-member networks.

Earned media follows organized power.

A RULE OF THUMB FOR CAMPAIGNERS

Reporters cover conflict, numbers, and real people. Bring a crowd, a clear demand, and a human story, and the cameras come. Bring only a statement, and they usually don't.

02 What Goes in a Press Kit

Keep a ready-to-send kit for the campaign: one shared folder or web page with everything a reporter needs to write the story on deadline, without calling you three times.



Press release

The news, written as a story, ready to publish. Template on page 3.



Media advisory

A short invitation to an event: who, what, when, where, why, and the visuals. Template on page 4.



Fact sheet

One page of key numbers, dates, and sources. Every figure checked and cited.



About us / backgrounder

Who you are, who you represent, your demand, and the campaign timeline so far.



Spokesperson bios

Short bios and photos of approved spokespeople, with languages spoken.



Stories & quotes

Pre-approved, consented stories and quotes from people directly affected.



Photos & video

High-resolution images and b-roll, with captions, credits, and permission to use.



FAQ

Short answers to the hard questions reporters (and opponents) will ask.



Media contacts

One press contact with phone and email who will actually answer, day and night during actions.



Digital kit link

A short link to the folder or page, ready to paste into every pitch and email signature.

03 Template: Press Release

Send it the morning of the news (or under embargo the day before). Paste it into the body of the email, not only as an attachment. Keep it to one page if you can, two at most.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [Month Day, Year]

Contact: [Name], [Phone], [Email]

[HEADLINE: ACTIVE VERB, WHO IS DOING WHAT, AND WHY IT MATTERS]

[Subheadline: the stakes or the key number, in one line]

[CITY, State] — [Lead paragraph: who, what, when, where, and why in 1 to 2 sentences. Put the most newsworthy fact first.] Example: *More than 200 tenants of [Building] began a rent strike today, demanding that [Landlord] make overdue repairs and halt a 30 percent rent increase.*

[Second paragraph: the context. Why now? What happened leading up to this? Include one key, sourced statistic.]

"[Quote from a directly affected member: personal, specific, emotional]," said **[Full name]**, **[who they are, e.g., a nurse and tenant of 12 years]. "[Second sentence that names what they want]."**

[Paragraph on the demand and the target: exactly what you want, from whom, and by when.]

"[Quote from an organizational leader: connects this fight to the bigger picture and names the target]," said **[Name, title, organization].**

[What happens next: the next action, hearing, or deadline, and how the public can get involved.]

About [Organization]: [2 to 3 sentences: who you are, who you represent, how many members, website.]

###

04 Templates: Advisory & Pitch

Send the advisory 3 to 5 days before an event, resend it the day before, and call key reporters the morning of.

MEDIA ADVISORY [Date] **Contact:** [Name, phone, email]

[HEADLINE: WHAT IS HAPPENING, AND THE CONFLICT IN ONE LINE]

WHAT: [One or two sentences describing the event and the demand.]

WHO: [Number of people expected; named speakers, especially directly affected people; partners.]

WHEN: [Day, date, start time, and when speakers begin.]

WHERE: [Exact address, the spot to meet, and parking or transit notes for camera crews.]

WHY: [Two or three sentences on the stakes, with one key number.]

VISUALS: [What cameras will see: a crowd, signs, a giant banner, a march to the target's office, an art installation.]

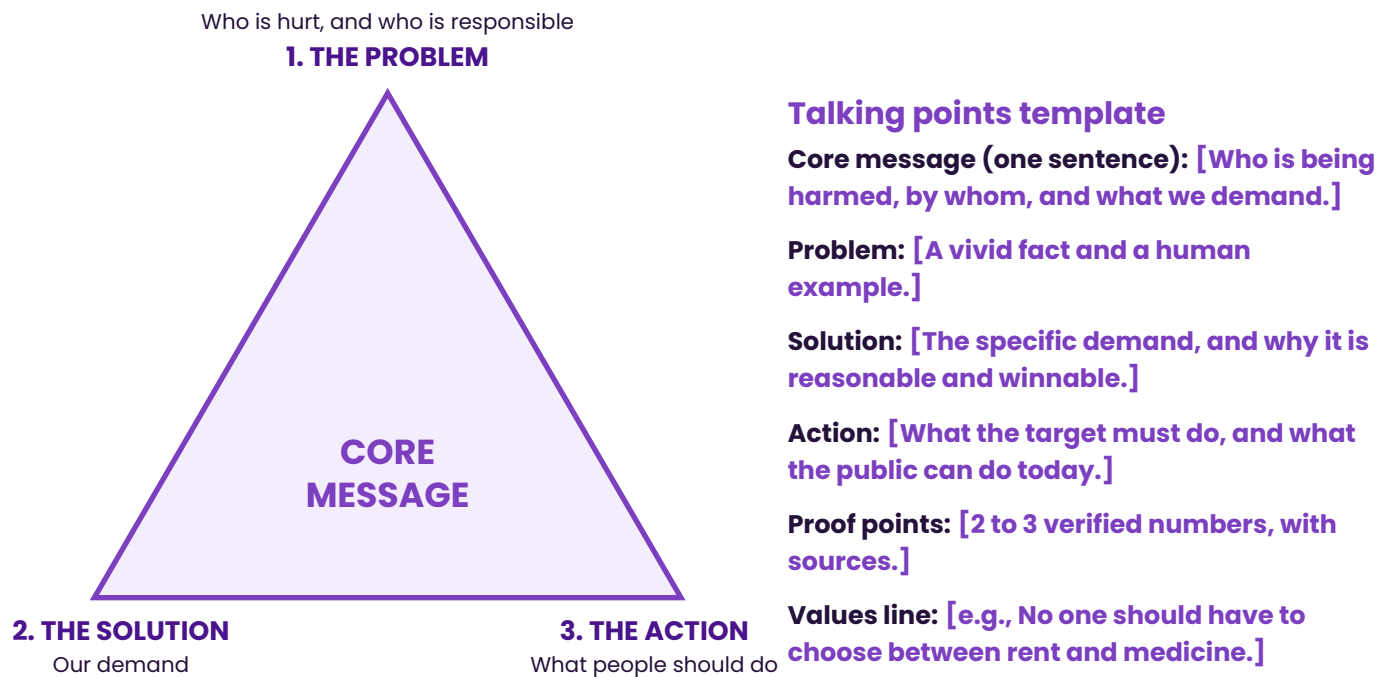
INTERVIEWS: [Who is available and in which languages.]

PITCH EMAIL Subject: [Short, specific, newsy: e.g., 200 tenants strike over repairs, Thursday 10am]

Hi [Reporter's first name], I saw your story on [a related piece they wrote]. [One sentence on the news and why it matters to their readers.] [One sentence offering access: a directly affected person, data, an exclusive, a visual.] Would you be interested? Full details and photos: [kit link]. I'm at [phone]. [Your name]

05 Talking Points & the Message Box

Every spokesperson should be able to say the core message in three sentences, in their own words, under pressure. Talking points are a map, not a script.



The Message Box Prepare for the whole conversation, including what the other side will say.

What we say about us

Our values, our people, our demand.

What we say about them

How the target is causing harm or failing to act.

What they say about us

Their attacks: “outside agitators,” “unrealistic.”
Prepare responses.

What they say about them

Their best case for themselves. Know it, and don't repeat it.

06 Preparing Spokespeople

The best spokesperson is usually not the staffer. It's the worker, the tenant, the parent who lives the problem. Train them, prepare them, and stand beside them.

Before the interview

- Ask the reporter what the story is about, who else they're talking to, and their deadline.
- Practice the core message out loud, then do a mock interview with the toughest questions from your message box.
- Prepare one or two short, vivid lines (sound bites) of about 10 to 20 seconds each.
- Make sure storytellers have given informed consent for how their name and image will be used.

Do

- Lead with your core message, then repeat it.
- Speak in plain words and short sentences.
- Use real stories and one strong number.
- Use **ABC**: **A**cknowledge the question, **B**ridge ("What matters here is..."), **C**ommunicate your message.
- Say "I don't know, but I'll find out" when you don't know.
- Name the target and the demand every time.
- Thank the reporter, and send any promised facts quickly.

Don't

- Say "no comment." It sounds like guilt. Bridge to your message instead.
- Repeat the other side's loaded words, even to deny them.
- Guess, exaggerate, or speculate.
- Assume anything is "off the record" unless you both agreed first. Assume it isn't.
- Attack the reporter, even when the question is hostile.
- Speak for people or groups you don't represent.
- Share private details about members.

For TV and video

Look at the reporter, not the camera. Wear solid colors (avoid tiny patterns and white). Stand in front of the action or the target's building, not a blank wall. Keep answers short: TV may use only 8 seconds.

07 Pitching & Running a Press Event

Build your media list

- List local reporters by beat: labor, housing, health, education, politics, and the neighborhood or community desk.
- Include TV assignment desks, radio, ethnic and language media, community papers, student papers, podcasts, and independent outlets.
- Track name, outlet, beat, email, phone, what they last wrote, and how they covered you. Keep it updated.

What makes it news

Reporters look for **conflict, timeliness, local impact, real people, new numbers, firsts and escalations**, and **strong visuals**. Frame every pitch around at least two.

Press event timeline

5 days

Send media advisory; pitch top reporters personally.

1 day

Resend advisory; confirm speakers; finalize kit and visuals.

Morning

Call assignment desks; set up the podium, banner, and sign-in table.

Event

Start on time; 3 to 4 speakers, 2 minutes each; affected people first.

After

Hold for interviews; send release, photos, and video within 1 hour.

Next day

Thank reporters; share coverage with members; correct errors politely.

At the event

- Sign-in table for press with the kit link, fact sheet, and spokesperson list.
- A banner with the demand placed behind the speakers, readable in a tight camera shot.
- One press wrangler who greets reporters and connects them to spokespeople.
- Your own photographer and livestream, so the story gets out even if no one comes.

08 Helpful Reminders

01

Accuracy is armor

Check every number, name, and date. One error lets opponents dismiss the whole story.

02

Center affected people

Members tell their own stories, with consent. Staff and leaders frame the bigger picture.

03

One voice, one contact

One press contact and approved spokespeople, so the message stays consistent.

04

Respect embargoes

If you offer news under embargo, agree on the time in writing, and honor it.

05

Be quick

Reporters work on deadline. Return calls within the hour during a campaign.

06

Build relationships

Treat reporters as professionals and as workers. Send good tips even when they aren't about you.

07

Prepare for crisis

Have a plan for arrests, attacks, or mistakes: who speaks, what you say, how fast.

08

Protect the vulnerable

Never expose members to retaliation. Offer first-name-only, voice-only, or no-face options.

09

Own your channels

Post everything on your own media too. Coverage fades; your list and members stay.

10

Always recruit

Every story should point people to a way to join, sign, or show up.

09 Media Contact Tracker

NAME	OUTLET	BEAT	PHONE / EMAIL	LAST CONTACT	STATUS / NOTES

Our core message, in one sentence

They own the presses. We make the news.

Organize the people, tell the truth plainly, and make the story impossible to ignore. Then bring every new reader into the fight.

RESIST. REVOLT.

Further reading

Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988).

Commons Social Change Library, guides on media and communications for campaigns. commonslibrary.org

Beautiful Trouble, a toolbox of creative tactics for activists. beautifultrouble.org

Companion guides: *Power Mapping*, *Story Capture*, *Civil Disobedience*, and *Guerrilla Art* (Resist. Revolt.)