

How to Craft a Press Release and Press Advisory

Press releases and advisories can help you draw critical attention to events—such as rallies, protests, statements or program milestones—that can increase interest and create a larger audience for your messaging and narrative work via media coverage.

Many people use the terms “press release” and “press advisory” (or media advisory) interchangeably. However, there are key differences. A press release is a tool to help members of the media cover an event. As such, you want to provide a fuller picture of the thing you want them to cover, complete with enticing quotes, details, and language that makes clear where you and your organization stand. It should still be as concise as possible—350 words or less—while providing reporters with the foundation for a compelling story. You should generally send them within a day of the event, before or after.

A press advisory, by contrast, is more like an invitation that lets members of the media know about something that is going to happen. It contains a one- or two-line description of the event, the five “W’s” (who, what, when, where and why), and contact information in case recipients want to learn more. Press advisories should be about 100 words long, and you should send them ahead of the event, preferably three or four days.

To help you craft a compelling press release that generates coverage for your cause, Narrative Initiative and Hattaway Communications have annotated a recent press release from Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia with guidance for creating your own. Inquilinxs used this press release to draw attendance and attention to “The Corcoran is Not for Sale Block Party,” an event to denounce an anti-tenant court ruling and fight for broader tenants rights in Minneapolis. You’ll find the press release on the left, and the guidance for creating your own on the right.

To craft a press advisory, simply take the key ingredients from the longer press release. We’ve included a press advisory for the same event as an example below.

Annotated Press Release

Date: July 10, 2018

PRESS RELEASE: Corcoran Is Not For Sale Block Party

MINNEAPOLIS – Everyone deserves a safe, stable, affordable place to call home. In the Twin Cities, unfortunately, some greedy developers and slumlords continue to rip off hardworking Minnesotans to line their own pockets. Yesterday, a Minneapolis court gave an assist to predatory landlords by ruling that Stephen Frenz can regain control of and potentially evict hundreds of longtime tenants from four buildings in the Corcoran neighborhood.

Today, Tuesday July 10, please join tenants from the Corcoran neighborhood, Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia, Parks and Power, Socialist Alternative and the Twin Cities Democratic Socialists of America at the [Corcoran Is Not For Sale Block Party](#) to stand with residents of buildings owned by Steve Frenz as they continue to fight for safe, affordable and dignified housing and tell landlords across the Twin Cities that tenants won't be displaced from their neighborhoods.

The Block Party will feature tenants such as Octavia Marberry, a single mom living at 3116 22nd Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55407 whose baby was hospitalized for over a month due to the poor living conditions of her apartment, and Chloe Jackson, a tenant at 3112 22nd Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55407 whose landlord refuses to fix her broken heating, cockroach infestations, and extensive water damage.

Also in attendance will be [Representative Ilhan Omar](#) and Minneapolis City Council [Rep. Alondra Cano](#). The Block Party will run from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at 3116 22nd Avenue S, Minneapolis MN 55407—in front of

Include the date that you're sending the release at the very top. For a press release, this should be the same day as the event itself.

Make sure the title of your press release includes "PRESS RELEASE" and captures the key information you're trying to convey. If reporters don't understand the key point of your release within a few seconds of opening it, they will lose interest.

Begin with the location where your event will be held, and indicate why you are holding it—in this case, because of a court ruling against Minneapolis tenants. If possible, add hyperlinks to existing coverage that could provide context for your event. Include your values and core narrative in the first paragraph to let the media know unequivocally what your position is—which will inform how reporters shape their coverage.

Provide key information about the action, including the 5 W's: who, what, where, when and why. If there is a website for your action, such as a Facebook event page, link to it here so that reporters can gain further context. In general, hyperlinks are your friend. They enable people who want more information to get it without adding verbiage to your release.

Once reporters have a clear outline of what's taking place and why, put people in the picture to capture their interest. In this case, the press release uses the personal stories of two tenants who faced the kinds of injustices that Inquilinxs are fighting against. In addition to capturing reporters' interests, this lets them know that they will be able to obtain the kinds of interesting quotes and human stories that make for compelling content should they choose to cover your action.

Make sure to mention any big names or public figures who are involved with

buildings that tenants could soon be forced out of. Speakers will begin at 6:30, along with games and grilling.

While yesterday’s unjust court ruling is a setback, we know that preventing the displacement of communities and ensuring affordable housing for every family is a long-term fight. Tony Damiano, organizer with Twin Cities Democratic Socialists Of America, states: “Twin Cities DSA stands in solidarity with renters in Corcoran because we believe housing is a human right. When working people unite for change, we win.” Join us on Tuesday to hear from the people affected—and the people who can do something about it.

For more information, please contact Arianna Feldman with Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia, ###-###-####, abc@yourdomain.com.

Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia is committed to bringing Minneapolis tenants together in order to organize and create safe, affordable and dignified housing in Minneapolis.

your event. This offers an additional angle to reporters—they may choose to cover your event because of what someone of public interest has to say about it (or at it).

Include quotes attributable to your organization, leadership, or allies that reinforce and summarize why you are taking the position or holding the event. Make sure that you’re comfortable with reporters using these quotes as your “official position.” They should be one or two sentences—aim for direct and values-based language that is impossible to misconstrue.

Include a clear call to action for the recipients of the press release—in this case, “Join us on Tuesday...” Provide the contact information (phone and email) of the point person to handle press inquiries. This person should be prepared to provide additional event details or connect reporters with key people they may want to contact.

Finally, include one or two lines that describe your organization to people who may not be familiar with it. If applicable, add a hyperlink that allows them to learn more.

Sample Press Advisory

July 6, 2018

PRESS ADVISORY: Corcoran is Not for Sale Block Party

On July 9, a Minneapolis court will determine whether predatory landlord Stephen Frenz can evict hundreds of longtime tenants from four buildings in the Corcoran neighborhood. On Tuesday July 10, tenants from the Corcoran neighborhood, Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia, partner organizations, and elected officials including State Rep. [Ilhan Omar](#) will host the [Corcoran Is Not For Sale Block Party](#) to fight for tenant's rights. Join us on Tuesday to hear from the people affected—and the people who can do something about it.

The Block Party will run from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at 3116 22nd Avenue S, Minneapolis MN 55407. For more information, please contact Arianna Feldman with Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia at ###-###-####, abc@yourdomain.com.