HOW TO WRITE AN ELECTIONS PRESS RELEASE

The Elections Group

Elections press releases are short news stories designed to give the media and other readers details about the election and your office. You can use them to highlight important dates and deadlines, announce upcoming events or describe processes such as voting equipment testing.

Press releases should provide details, contextual information, quotes and other content that supports and helps tell your election office's story. Press releases are often posted and distributed across multiple platforms or form the basis of a more in-depth news story. They are a critical tool for communicating with the public every election.

Use letterhead with your jurisdiction's logo

This helps you communicate with authority and clearly illustrates the source of the press release.

List contact information

Include the contact information for your office's public information officer or the individual designated to speak with the media on the topic of the press release. Be sure this individual is aware of the press release's content, understands their role as staff contact and is prepared to answer questions. Consider having subject matter experts available to help answer questions and ensure accuracy.

Include an image to help tell your story

Images can help communicate the topic of your press release and highlight the work of your office. Including a downloadable image helps tell the full story and makes it easy for news outlets to quickly post your story on their website. Best practices include using a current election photo or a recent photo from your jurisdiction. This helps ensure that news outlets won't use a less impactful or generic election photo.

If you don't have a photo to use, consider starting an image library so you'll have photos for future press releases.

Write an attention grabbing headline

The headline should be concise and convey the importance of the topic. What is the main takeaway? Use your headline to communicate the newsworthiness and main point of your press release at a glance.

Don't overlook basic formatting and AP style

If your press release is for immediate distribution, add an all caps line: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Always include a dateline with your location and the release date, including the year, so all readers, now and in the future, will know where and when your press release was distributed. City names are typed in all caps and dates are enclosed in parentheses. Be sure to check AP style for your state's abbreviation; it's different from the post office's style.

Include quotes to boost newsworthiness

Consider quoting an elected official, your elections administrator or an expert election official to highlight the significance of the topic of your press release. Hearing from an official increases trust in leadership and in the election process, legitimizes your communication and makes it easy for news outlets to quickly write and publish stories based on your press release.

Conclude by following established practices

Make it easy for your readers to know they've reached the end of your press release by centering either ### or -30- on a line below your last sentence.

LOGO

Contact Information
[First Name] [Last Name]
[Title]
[Email] [Phone]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Voter Registration for the [2030 General Election] Closes on [Month Day, Year]

[CITY], [State] – (Month Day, Year) – [DayoftheWeek, Day, Year] is the last day for anyone who wishes to participate in the [2030 General Election] to register to vote. Our office recommends checking and updating your voter registration early to avoid delays.

[Jurisdiction] residents may check their voter registration and register to vote online by visiting [govoteyourstate.gov]. Voters may also print the downloadable pdf found at [govoteyourstate.gov], and return their completed forms to our office by utilizing one of the methods listed below:

1. Email – Voters may email their completed voter registration forms to our office at [yourjurisdictionsemail@elections.gov]
2. Fax – Voters may fax completed voter registration forms to our office at (555) 555-5555
3. Mail – Voters may also mail completed voter registration forms to our office

Additionally, voters can also register in person at our main office located at:

[Jurisdiction Name]
[Address]
[City], [State Abbreviation] [Zip + last 4]

The [2030 General Election] will be held on [November 2, 2030]. [Absentee/Mail] ballots will be mailed to voters via USPS starting on [October 18, 2030] as per [cite statute].

Please visit [yourjurisdictionswebsite.gov] for additional information.

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Add details in the body, but be concise

Include relevant facts and supporting details to tell the who, what, when, where and why of your story. Who is involved? What is your press release about? When? Where? And why is this important?

Encourage your media contacts to learn more by including website or multimedia URLs. If the URLs for these resources are lengthy, consider using short URLs that will save space in print publications. Your IT department can assist you by creating a shorter URL or you can create one for free on your own with bitly.com or tinyurl.com.

Less essential details should follow the essentials, followed by background information about your office and next steps for more information.

Best practices include keeping your press release to a single page. If you need to cut text, do it with your readers in mind: Is this important for readers to know?

Additional Resources

The Media Are Not Our Enemy from The Election Group's Telling Our Story: An Elections Communication Guide