

TIPS FOR WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

A city often issues a press release from the Mayor's office or specific city department to announce publicly a new program or policy that will benefit the community, its businesses, and residents.

The goal of a press release is to raise awareness of an issue (ideally in a positive light), communicate progress and leadership, and, in the case of many policies and programs, drive increased engagement and garner recognition for industry leaders. These releases are often posted on city channels such as websites, blogs, and social media accounts, and are sent to local media outlets, community groups, and trade associations. When appropriate, the news might also be sent to targeted national media such as business-to-business publications for specific audiences.

In addition to sharing information broadly in one swoop, a press release is also a vehicle that can generate support and statements from public officials, including the Mayor. Press releases also can recognize and showcase supporting partners, such as representatives from commercial real estate companies, service contracting firms, or other community organizations.

CITY EXAMPLES

- [City of Atlanta Launches First Phase of Energy Savings Performance Contract Initiative](#)
- [City of Boston Achieves Energy Efficiency Gains with Capital Improvements to its Iconic Buildings](#)
- [Mayor Emanuel Releases the 2017 Chicago Energy Benchmarking Report](#)
- [City Council Passes Multifamily and Commercial Building Efficiency Ordinance](#)

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PRESS RELEASES

Amplify your message more broadly by encouraging partners and other program or policy advocates and allies to both help disseminate a city's news, as well as issue complementary releases of their own.

Gather voices in the community to provide positive, supportive testimony for your policy or program.

Create connections within city government and attract spokespeople to represent your cause.

Build ongoing partnerships with local and national organizations, private sector stakeholders, and media that can be activated beyond the initial press release to drive ongoing coverage of and interest in a city's efforts.

6 TIPS FOR WRITING A PRESS RELEASE TO PUBLICLY LAUNCH OR ANNOUNCE PROGRESS AND RESULTS

1. CONTACT INFORMATION AND DATELINE

It is critical that press releases display contact information for follow-up inquiries at the top of the release. This should be one designated person's phone number and email address. In joint press releases, there may be one point of contact listed for each organization. Press releases should also start with a dateline containing the date of issue and the location (often the city and state) in which it is being issued.

2. HEADLINE AND SUBHEAD

The press release should start with a headline and corresponding subhead (a secondary headline that appears below the first headline and that is also referred to as a dek in the journalism community). These should quickly and concisely emphasize the biggest takeaways of the release.

3. OPENING

A press release will typically include in the opening paragraph a clear definition of the effort, key goals, and key participants. If progress can be announced, clear stats on energy and cost savings, or number of participants achieving specific savings, are very compelling.

4. SUPPORTING QUOTE

Typically a quote will follow the opening paragraph of a press announcement, with the first quote in a release being the most prominent. Quotes should not restate facts but recognize and provide thought leadership on the issue at hand. Quotes also offer an opportunity for a Mayor to congratulate the city on its progress and recognize leaders for their achievements in bettering the community.

5. DETAILS ON THE EFFORT

This is where you will really talk about why an effort has been started, how long it will last, what sort of impacts it will have, and specific opportunities to engage. If possible feature an upgrade opportunity or project that has been completed so you can dig deep on actual real-world stories in your community. You can link to project fact sheets and case studies posted to your website. Do not use jargon or go deep into technicalities. This information should be easy to understand and clear to people without deep subject matter expertise. It should focus on the essential information that must be conveyed to the reader. When in doubt, make sure you address the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your announcement. Additional supporting quotes can be interspersed with this information as needed, but be mindful of length. A press release is, ideally, one page or less in length.

6. BOILERPLATE

This wraps a press release and provides a general description of the city or city department issuing the release, as well as 1-3 sentences to describe the specific program. A boilerplate should be used consistently across all press releases or announcements.

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FACT SHEETS AND CASE STUDIES?

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