

The Elements of a Press Release

Press releases follow a standard format. Use this model as a guide for sending out information about your own events and achievements.

Use this heading to show the document is a press release, not a letter or memo.

List the news agency where you're sending the release. Whenever you can, use a reporter's or editor's name. If you're doing a general press release to hand out at an event, skip this line.

Provide your organization's name, a contact name, and a phone number so they can get more information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: Geoff Cantrell, Asheville Citizen-Times
From: Center for Participatory Change
Contact: Craig White, 828-299-9437
Date: April 20, 2000

Include the date.

Provide a headline.

REGIONAL NON-PROFIT ANNOUNCES NEW GRANTS PROGRAM

Community groups in the mountains now have another source of support as they begin new projects or start new organizations.

The first sentence is the 'lead'--it should grab the reader's attention.

The Center for Participatory Change (CPC), a nonprofit that supports grassroots efforts throughout Western North Carolina, announced Thursday that it has started a new fund to provide start-up grants of up to \$5000 for community-based groups and or organizations.

The second sentence gives a factual summary of the article. Some people only read this far, so make your point right away.

The Self-Development Fund is part of CPC's effort to build a stronger democracy by helping residents of rural areas organize community groups and work on community development projects.

Be sure to provide a brief description of your organization for readers who may not know much about you.

"Every community has informal leaders," explains Thomas Watson, one of CPC's Co-Executive Directors. "These are the people who have ideas for improving their community and a commitment to hard work. But sometimes they need additional skills or resources to make those ideas happen. CPC's training programs can help teach the skills, and now the Self-Development Fund can help provide the resources."

Use quotes from members, leaders, or other supporters to strengthen your points or provide detailed information. Text carries facts; quotes carry feeling.

Recipients of Self-Development Fund grants receive services in addition to funding. CPC staff work with the group on choosing a project, writing the application, creating a budget, carrying out the work and evaluating their success.

"Our goal is to build strong organizations," says Paul Castelloe, CPC's other Co-Director. "By the time they get a grant, a group will have not just the money, but also the experience of writing a grant, a sample proposal that they can submit to other foundations, and a successful history of fundraising. All that helps them sustain their efforts when the start-up funds run out."

Write like a reporter--just the facts. Who, what, when, where and why. Don't praise yourself--just write objectively, and let your work speak for itself.

CPC has no restrictions about the type of projects that qualify for funds, as long as they're planned and implemented at the grassroots level. However, due to the intensive nature of CPC's involvement, groups must have prior experience working with CPC before they are invited to apply.

More information about the Self-Development Fund is available online at www.cpcwnc.org, or by calling Paul Castelloe at 828-299-9437.

Write like you're talking about someone else--she, they, the organization--not we, us, our organization.

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Four number signs together signal the end of the press release.

In the last paragraph, explain how people can contact you or get more information.

Keep it short: 400 words or less. Use short paragraphs of only one or two sentences.