

Press Release Tip Sheet

Prepared by the Foundation's Communications Department

An effective news release announces or reports a newsworthy event that is happening or about to happen. Your grant award and the activity, program or goal it accomplishes are certainly important news.

Your initial press announcement should answer the five classic media questions: Who, What, When, Where and Why. These are the building blocks of a good press release. They also help you to organize your information, so that no important facts are omitted, including the amount and purpose of your grant award.

Getting Started

Identify the most important element of your story and use it as your lead. For example, if the grant will allow you to hire a new staff person in order to advocate for more clients, then that is your lead. If your grant will allow your organization to expand your geographic outreach, that is your lead. Leads vary from story to story, so any of the 5Ws may actually serve as a strong lead element.

Please use the following *blurb* when referring to the Foundation.

Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization whose mission is to promote health in Connecticut and serve as a catalyst in shaping a health system that provides universal access to quality care for all the people of Connecticut.

Less is Usually More

Keep your release as short as possible. If it is more than one page, type the word MORE at the bottom of the first and put 2-2-2 at the top of the second page. Indicate the end of the release by typing ### on the final page.

Write direct factual sentences in short paragraphs. Use familiar, specific words. Avoid jargon and slang and redundant, superfluous language. Watch out for repetition. Too much verbiage is a sign of poor organization. Be careful using quotes. Wordiness has an uncanny way of slipping into releases in which multiple sources provide the same information through their quotes.

Pick Up the Phone

You need to send your release at least two weeks in advance if you're announcing your grant in conjunction with a planned event. Whenever possible, address the release to an individual. If you don't know the appropriate editor or reporter of your local paper, it pays to call in advance to learn his or her name. Calling ahead will help you direct your announcement to the proper person and might just win you a valuable ally in publicizing your organization's activities.