

Local Media Guide

Whether local papers, radio, TV, podcasts, or blogs, local media is an important medium for getting out your message and growing your audience of potential supporters. While mainstream national media rarely gives positive coverage to independent political organizing, alternative and local media sources will often cover us, especially if the time is put in to develop relationships with journalists.

How to Build a Press List

The first step in effectively communicating with the press is building a press list. Building and properly utilizing a press list is important whether you are a campaign, local party, or state party. With an up-to-date press list, you can be sure that your message and notices are at least getting to the proper media, across platforms. There are a few different ways to build and maintain a list and selecting which method is best for you depends on your local resources, experience, and needs.

Buying a List

There are professional services which maintain an updated list of media contacts which you can pay a fee to access. Some of these services can also send your press releases for you, so you don't have to maintain your own email service.

This option allows you to know your list is up to date and spend more time cultivating relationships with journalists, rather than updating contacts.

CISION - <https://www.cision.com/>

Prowly - <https://database.prowly.com/>

Easy Media List - <https://www.easymedialist.com/>

Building Your Own

While more time and labor intensive, building a list can ensure that you have a very specifically curated press list. (Work which you will still have to do even if you buy a list.)

Start with Research.

- Think about who you want to reach. Who is your target audience?
- What outlets, journalists, or influencers can help you reach your target audience?
- What journalists are regularly covering issues similar to yours?
- Decide what platform(s) you will use to store your lists and send your releases.

- Search platforms like Google or social media like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to find relevant journalists to add to your list.
- Talk to people you know to find out where they get their news to see if you are missing any relevant outlets or journalists. This is especially relevant for smaller outlets and alternative media such as blogs and podcasts.
- Start your list by finding the contact information for the outlets, journalists, and influencers from your above research.
- Most media outlets have publicly available contacts. Find the relevant journalists at targeted outlets and add them to your list.
- **Never stop building.** As time goes on you will encounter new outlets and journalists who are relevant to your list, journalists will leave their positions and new ones will come in. Never stop adding new contacts as you discover them. Your list should be a living document that is maintained and updated regularly.

List building tips:

- Collect a diverse range of contact methods. Don't just send an email blast, call or tag journalists on social media to make sure that they see your content.
- Don't forget independent media, blogs, podcasts, and other non-traditional outlets. As Greens, we are often shut out of mainstream media, but we can still reach the public by including alternative media in our lists. They are often happy to get the tip or the story and play a large part in news and information culture.
- Often key local organizers and influencers can also be a potent way to get your message out. They can share your releases and statements that are posted to your website to their followers, regardless of whether or not the media picks it up and writes a story.

Curating and Keeping Your List Up to Date

Buying or building a Press List is just the beginning. You also need to make sure you are sending your releases to the right journalists and make sure that you are keeping your list up to date. After you buy or as you build your list, you should filter for those journalists who might be interested in covering your work. You should make notations in your contact list noting what topics and issues different journalists are interested in hearing about. (You don't need to email the local education reporter about a foreign policy issue, but they definitely need to get the release announcing a school board candidacy.) You should also keep track of whether they are covering you or not, so that in a rush, you can prioritize your outreach based on past habits.

Your list will also change over time. Journalism has turnover and shifting roles, just like any other field. As such, you need to make sure that you are regularly checking your list, both to make sure that current contacts have the correct information, but also to see if there are new contacts that need to be added. Keeping the list up to date will make sure that you are always putting your content into the right hands.

Utilizing Your List

Spreadsheet

You can use a simple spreadsheet, such as Excel or Google Sheets, to keep your curated press list. Google Sheets (or a similar cloud collaboration platform) allows the list to be accessed and maintained by multiple people.

Here is a [Press List Template](#) for Google Sheets that you can download and use to get started.

Email Marketing Platforms

Services such as [MailChimp](#) allow you to upload, sort, and outreach to email lists. MailChimp's free plan would work for most state and local parties, with up to 2,000 contacts. There are a number of other alternative services to choose from as well.

Your Existing CRM (Contact Database)

Your state or local party should have an existing contact/email management system that you use to track and outreach to supporters. Many of these systems can be used to house and send emails to your press list too. Just be sure that adding press contacts will not violate your services contact list rules and that you are properly filtering the contacts so they don't get every eblast you send.

If you do not have an existing CRM, [ActionNetwork](#) is one option that can fill the needs of most local parties or campaigns for no to minimal (\$10/mo+) cost. [NationBuilder](#) is also a commonly used CRM within the Green Party.

Working with the Press: Best Practices

So you have a press list. What's next?

- **Build relationships.** Develop a relationship with local journalists (mainstream and independent).
- Remember that journalists are human beings and are trying to do a job.
- When approaching journalists, make sure your contacts are personal – mention the publications they write for, or a previous article they've written on the same topic. Get noticed by noticing their work.
 - Here's a link to an [article](#) on tips for contacting the press.
- **Be newsworthy.** Make sure that you contact them with newsworthy content.
- Make sure you are only contacting journalists who cover relevant topics to your release. If you flood them with irrelevant releases, they are less likely to pay attention to the one that is in their area of coverage.
- Often, especially in smaller markets, outlets will not send a reporter, but a cameraperson or photographer to record your event and take statements.

- Set up Google Alerts on issues relevant to your work so that you can quickly respond to current events and contact the appropriate reporter.

If the Press Doesn't Show Up

- **Engage in self coverage.** Take your own photos and videos, livestream from your event.
- **Share your content via social media platforms.** Know your mediums. Make sure you create the right kind of content for the desired platform.
- **Send it to the press.** Send news releases with videos, photos, etc to press after the fact. Even if they don't cover it this time, it shows them that you create newsworthy content and may lead to them covering a future story.

Additional Resources

<https://prowly.com/magazine/media-list-building/>

<https://www.causevox.com/blog/10-tips-pitching-journalists/>

<https://www.semrush.com/blog/hook-the-media-with-7-easy-steps-to-writing-a-press-release-free-template/>

<https://prowly.com/magazine/press-release-templates/#event-press-release-template>

<https://prowly.com/magazine/press-release-templates/#statement-press-release-template>