

Media Releases

Tips on Writing a Media Release

Reporters and editors are flooded with media releases daily because they are the most common way to get news to them.

Tips to remember for writing an effective media release:

- Type on letterhead with the date of issue citing “For Immediate Release” or “For Release [Date]” in the upper left-hand corner.
- Include the name and phone number of the chapter adviser or chapter media spokesperson in the upper right-hand corner. To make it easier for reporters to contact them, include the home as well as the school phone number. You may also include a mobile telephone number and email contact address.
- Remember the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.
- Use a dateline to begin the first paragraph (i.e. Jefferson, Va.).
- A good headline will grab a reporter’s attention. Write the release like a news story, complete with a headline, compelling lead (introductory sentence), and quotes (if appropriate).
- Structure the information in the body in order of importance, so the editor can cut where needed without losing the most important facts. Focus on the lead paragraph, which is the most important element of the release.
- Use the closing paragraph to provide information about FCCLA. This will be helpful to the reporter in writing the story and give credibility to your chapter and organization. The closing paragraph should be consistent on all releases.

Media Release Dos and Don’ts

DO:

- Address your release to the news editor or the news desk. Send it one or two weeks in advance, then phone the news desk a few days before.
- Make sure that all information is accurate—get personal information approved by the person you are writing about.
- Include photos if available.
- Make sure that you are not labeling or misrepresenting any company or individual.
- Send a copy of the program/relevant handouts/flyers/info sheet with the release to help the journalist understand what your event is all about.
- Keep your stories slanted toward local interest. That is why your media is there to report, because their audience is local.
- Watch for opportunities to tie your chapter’s news with widespread, national news. “News pegging” is not hard for FCCLA chapters, since the issues chapters tackle have national significance, such as family and community violence prevention, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, child safety, teen suicide prevention, nutrition, and money management.

DON’T:

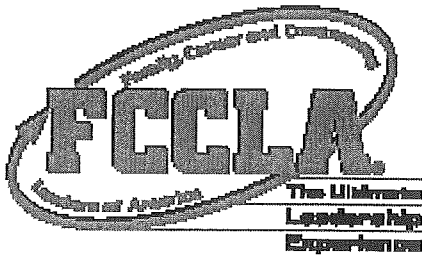
- Exaggerate. Instead, stick to the facts.
- Write more than 650 words.
- Use jargon, clichés, slang, trendy phrases, sports terms, or colloquial terms. Go for originality and freshness. Editors love clever writing and an interesting angle.
- Add a list of names, such as: “Members present were . . .” That’s not news. Instead, list members’ names along with their accomplishments, i.e., STAR Events winners, National Cluster Meeting participants, etc.
- Be surprised if a journalist is unable to attend your event.

Media

Tips on Writing a Media Release Cont'd.

- Include “###” at the bottom center, which indicates the end of the media release. If it does go longer than one page, write “—more—” at the bottom of the first page.
- Proofread! Double-check names, dates, places, numbers, quotes, spelling, and grammar for accuracy.
- If possible, include an action-shot photo of FCCLA members taking part at the event.
- Make sure your media release is not an advertisement. To stand out like a pro, your media release has to contain news that includes more than one of the newsworthy characteristics (listed on page 10). It should be written as a story, not a flyer.
- Think like a producer. They are going to want to tell the story in a different way than their peers at other news outlets.
- When a reporter is at your event, map out a few details that they wouldn't get in a media release.

Sample Media Release



Chapter Name
Address, City, State, Zip
Phone, Cell, Fax

For Immediate Release

[Date]
[FCCLA Adviser]
[State Name] FCCLA

Contact:
[Name]
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]

(STATE) MAKES A DIFFERENCE DURING NATIONAL FCCLA WEEK

(CITY, STATE) members of the (STATE) association of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) will join more than 220,000 members in celebrating National FCCLA Week February 7-13, 2009. This year's theme is "Grasp Greatness." During National FCCLA Week, members plan and carry out activities to address teen and societal concerns and show how Family and Consumer Sciences education can help them achieve the ultimate leadership experience.

(TELL IN A PARAGRAPH OTHER ACTIVITIES YOUR STATE HAS COMPLETED AND WHAT YOU PLAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR)

FCCLA: The Ultimate Leadership Experience is a dynamic and effective national student organization that helps young men and women become leaders and address important personal, family, work, and societal issues through Family and Consumer Sciences education. FCCLA has more than 220,000 members and nearly 7,000 chapters from 50 state associations and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The organization has involved more than ten million youth since its founding in 1945.

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America is unique among youth organizations because its programs are planned and run by student members. It is the only Career and Technical Student Organization with the family as its central focus. Participation in national programs and chapter activities helps members become strong leaders in their families, careers, and communities.

FCCLA: The Ultimate Leadership Experience

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Include a photo of chapter representative(s) participating at the event.