



# When A Reporter Calls: Media Interview Quick Prep Checklist

## **Clarify. Get a bit more information to help you prepare and confirm you're the right spokesperson for the story**

Here's a sample to use: I want to be sure you get the information you need. Can you tell me a bit more about the story you're working on? Who else have you interviewed?

You may discover that you're not the right person for the reporter to interview. And that's ok! Be honest with the reporter and suggest someone else to interview. They'll appreciate the honesty, and it helps them get the information they need. It also helps build a relationship with the reporter. (Don't forget to give that other person a heads-up that you sent a reporter their way!)

## **Ask. Ask to call back in a few minutes so you can gather your thoughts first**

"What's your deadline? Can I call you back in 15 minutes? What's your phone number?" It's okay to say you want to focus on the conversation and that you'll be better able to do so shortly. (Unless the reporter's deadline is the next day or later, I wouldn't ask them to wait longer than an hour.) And whatever time you commit to, keep it. Otherwise, you'll burn a possible relationship with the reporter.

## **Write down your talking points. Think about what the reporter might ask, jot down your main points.**

Think through the hard questions the reporter might ask but don't forget the easy ones. Questions that seem simple - like "Anything else you want to add" or "Tell me about this issue" - are your opportunity to clearly tell your story. Make sure you have any relevant facts about your issues (i.e., statistics, bill numbers, etc.) in front of you.

Keep your notes in front of you when you call the reporter back. When nerves kick in and your mind goes blank (it happens to everyone!), your notes are your safety net.

## **Remove distractions. Find a quiet place to speak to the reporter so you can focus on the conversation**

Even if you know your issue really well, you want to be sure the reporter - who probably doesn't know your issue as well as you do - can hear and understand everything you're saying. This isn't the time to chat with a reporter while walking down a busy city street.