

MEDIA OUTREACH GUIDELINES, HELPFUL TIPS & MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATES

One of the best ways to raise awareness of the potential cuts to SNAP and free school lunch is to get the attention of your local news outlets. That's why it's so important to contact the media before your office visit to an elected official!

One person should reach out to the media and serve as their main contact, and their contact details should be listed on your media materials. This guide tells you everything you need to know to alert the media to your work.

Here are the steps you should take:

- **Build Your Media List**
  - Search the internet for lists of media contacts in your area. Most local news stations have a generic email that events and pitches can be sent to which you can find on their website or by calling them. Additionally, there are a number of sites that maintain contact lists, but click here, here, and here for a few good places to start. You can also ask local organizations who may be familiar with the issue to share their media list.
  - Additionally, during your house party you should discuss local media. Go around the room and talk to folks about what local news sources they know -- this will be a good way to start your media list. (Local news stations, newspapers, radio stations that discuss community news, smaller community papers, etc.)
  - You can often find contact information for at least one person at a news outlet on their website, or call the main number and ask who is the best contact to send a media advisory to.

- **Alerting the Media**
  - The way to alert the media to an event is to send them a "Media Advisory."
  - We have included a template, below, which you can customize with the specific info for your event, and your contact info. There are two templates. The first is to be used if you are doing a drop off at a senate office, and the second is for a mayor or other local official.
  - Send out the advisory 2-3 days before the event
  - Send advisory again the day of event as a reminder.
  - After you send the advisory, call the main phone number the day of and ask to be connected to the assignment desk. Once connected simply say *"Hi, my name is [NAME]. I am calling with ParentsTogether to make sure that you received our media advisory for today's delivery to [YOUR TARGET'S NAME] to save free school lunch."* Many will ask you to re-send the advisory.

- **At the Delivery/Office Visit & Post Event Follow up**
    - **Look for reporters at your event**
        - If any come, be sure to greet them, introduce yourself, and answer any questions they have.
        - If they have cameras, help them get the shots they're looking for
        - If you have any good volunteers with powerful stories, introduce them to reporters
        - It is important that before you bring any reporters inside the building for your meeting that you gain permission from the elected official's office. Simply say "A reporter from XX is with us, is it ok if they come in?" TV camera crews may not be allowed inside the building.
    - **Follow up**
        - If the media was present at your event, it's a great idea to follow up with them and send them any photos or other information from your event, and ask them when they plan to publish their story. It's also helpful to ask them if they need any other information to write a great story.

Tips on talking with reporters at your event

- Always try to answer with one of your talking points (below) — no matter what question is asked. Phrases like, "what's really important here is XXX" or "I'm not sure about that, but what really matters today is XX." You're there to deliver a message, not answer questions.
- Remember that you're always "on the record;" That means they can and may print anything you say. Do not say anything you wouldn't want printed or on TV!
- If on television or radio (not live) — ask for do-overs if you make a mistake. Just stop in the middle of your quote and say, "I'm going to say that again".
- Please refer to our FAQ guide for some messaging around tough questions that could come up.

Talking Points for Media

- 3.1 million people are about to lose vital SNAP benefits (food stamps) because of a new rule proposed by President Trump and the USDA.
- If we don't stop this new proposal,, half a million kids will go hungry at school because when they lose SNAP benefits, they'll no longer get free school lunch.
- We stand with nearly 1.4 million parents around the country have spoken out against this new proposal.
- For many kids, school lunch is their only guaranteed meal during the day. This should not be a partisan issue. All kids deserve to eat. If a child is hungry at school, they will not be as successful.
- We are asking our elected officials to speak out on behalf of their constituents and tell President Trump and Department of Agriculture know that this new proposal will hurt our children.

Media Advisory Templates
FOR VISITS TO U.S. SENATORS:

****Fill in the highlighted sections below with information that is specific to your delivery/city. Once you've done that, remove the highlighting and delete this section from the document. Email the clean copy of your media lert to local media two days prior to delivery, and resend it the day before and day of your office visit.***

MEDIA ALERT FOR XX *(Include Date)*

***(YOUR CITY)* PARENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS *(if kids are present)* DELIVER 1.4 MILLION SIGNATURES TO *(ELECTED OFFICIAL)* DEMANDING THEY SPEAK OUT AGAINST PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PROPOSAL TO KICK MORE THAN 500K OFF FREE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

(INCLUDE LOCAL STATS IF YOU HAVE THEM. IF NOT, DELETE THIS AND LEAVE THIS SPOT BLANK)

WHAT: Parents in the [YOUR CITY] area are calling on [THE OFFICIAL YOU ARE VISITING] to speak out against President Trump's plan to take free school lunch from 500,000 kids–a result of restricted eligibility restrictions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, a.k.a. food stamps). More than 3 million Americans stand to lose their SNAP benefits, many of them students who automatically qualify for free lunch when their families are SNAP recipients. ParentsTogether, a non-profit organization focused on issues affecting kids and families, has collected nearly 1.4 million signatures urging U.S.Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to protect families by refusing the President's proposed changes to SNAP benefits and continue to fund school lunch programs.

WHERE & WHEN: *(Include address and time. Tell media to arrive 15 minutes ahead of expected delivery time)*

Media Contact: *(Include best person to contact day of action)*

FOR MAYORS/LOCAL OFFICIALS:

****Fill in the highlighted sections below with information that is specific to your delivery/city. Once you've done that, remove the highlighting and delete this section from the document. Email the clean copy of your media lert to local media two days prior to delivery, and resend it the day before and day of your office visit.***

MEDIA ALERT FOR XX *(Include Date)*

***(YOUR CITY)* PARENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS *(if kids are present)* DELIVER 1.4 MILLION SIGNATURES SPEAKING OUT AGAINST PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PROPOSAL TO KICK MORE THAN 500K KIDS OFF FREE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

XX [YOUR CITY] students to be impacted by new rule
(INCLUDE LOCAL STATS IF YOU HAVE THEM. IF NOT, DELETE THIS AND LEAVE THIS SPOT BLANK)

WHAT: Parents in the [YOUR CITY] area are speaking out today against the Trump Administration's plan to take free school lunch from 500,000 kids–a result of restricted eligibility restrictions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, a.k.a. food stamps). More than 3 million Americans stand to lose their SNAP benefits, many of them students who automatically qualify for free lunch when their families are SNAP recipients.

ParentsTogether, a non-profit organization focused on issues affecting kids and families, has collected nearly 1.4 million signatures urging U.S.Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to protect families by refusing the President's proposed changes to SNAP benefits. They are delivery the signatures to [INSERT ELECTED OFFICIAL] asking for their support.

Visuals: Parents [and students and teachers] holding print outs of XXX petitions from [HOMESTATE]

WHERE & WHEN: *(Include address and time. Tell media to arrive 15 minutes ahead of expected delivery time)*

Media Contact: *(Include best person to contact day of action)*