

STEP 1

- Assemble a media / press committee in the working group for the action. Make sure that the media committee has an email and phone number where the press can follow up.

STEP 2 (3-7 DAYS BEFORE YOUR ACTION):

- Send out your press release. Use the press list your union has assembled to individually reach out to reporters by email. Link to the press release, and go into more detail about your specific action, giving them a clear time, place, and reason to show up.
- Notify the press to show up at least 30 minutes AFTER you're telling your members / the public to arrive at the action. You don't want the press standing around while you collect yourselves.
- Make sure you have a couple designated photographers to document your action and send photos to your media committee afterwards.
- Meanwhile, put out a call to your union membership asking for a handful of folks that will be at your action and can prepare to speak with the press on behalf of your union. Ideally, these folks are a mix of anglophones and speakers of other languages as your specific area may require (for some areas, that may likely be more than two). Press spokespeople should have clear talking points prepared ahead of any interviews you give during your action. Promote your event on social media! (in some cases, if you have existing relationships with journalists who've covered your union's work, tagging them on Twitter can be effective.)

STEP 3 (DAY OF YOUR ACTION):

- Check your emails. Members of the press will often email a media committee with regards to specific actions. When that happens, the committee should be able to connect journalists to tenant leaders and organizers on the ground for interviews.
- Designate people in your union to call the press the day of the action to remind them to come out and cover your action. Use a press list to call reporters first thing in the morning (in the case of TV news, this will mean calling the tip line phone number). Remember to give the press an arrival time 30 minutes after everyone else.
- As the action unfolds, collect business cards (or phone numbers/social media handles) from the reporters who show up. This is especially important to cultivate relationships with sympathetic reporters who understand what your union is doing.
- Take lots of photographs and video of your actions. It is still preferred to shoot video in horizontal (landscape) format rather than vertical (portrait) for video that may be circulated by the press.

STEP 4 (AFTER YOUR ACTION):

- Add all the new press contacts to your press contact list.
- Upload any photos or video from the action to a password-protected, shared folder.
- Upload any printed press, television, social media, or radio coverage. Analyze the coverage for what worked to amplify the union's work and what didn't work.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- When talking to the press, give the union's analysis about the causes of mass displacement, real estate speculation, the failures of local housing officials, the corruption of politicians controlled by real estate interests, violent laws that disempower tenants, racist housing policies and development schemes, and a profit-based housing system.
- Do not let the media attach their own analysis to THE UNION'S experiences. Make sure everyone is prepared to tell the story of the situation within the frame of your analysis and your demands. Make it difficult for their editors to separate your stories from the demand and analysis of the union.
- The media already has assumptions about the nature of the problem and solutions to the problem. They are looking to present individual stories rather than systemic analysis. You members are not just victims, they are organizers, and too often press coverage only highlights the former.
- Be declarative: The crisis is NOT caused by a housing shortage. So-called "affordable housing" is not the solution. We must stop all evictions, now! The human right to housing cannot be sacrificed for the rights of landlords to profit! Permanent, secure, and safe housing for everyone!
- Speak THROUGH the media, not TO the media! Do not take the bait of their questions. Respond to their questions as an invitation to tell your message. You don't need to answer their questions.
- For example, a reporter will likely pull out the line: "Experts say that..." to present some counter argument to your union's work. Who are the experts of tenants' struggles? Tenants! Reframe their question to be from your union's more knowledgeable position.
- For example, if reporters ask about the police at an action or eviction blockade, do not just talk about the actions of the police without talking about the larger issues, the analysis, and the demands of your union and what the police presence represents.