



# Media Tips for Frontline Organizations

Developing rapport with members of the media is a helpful strategy to further organizations' missions and goals, but sometimes reporters misrepresent impacted communities, or make broad, sweeping statements about an issue that leave important voices out of the story.

This is a common experience for frontline and grassroots organizations. Coverage of environmental justice is [still very low](#) in newsrooms. As we work together to move these narratives forward, there will be times that reporters miss the mark— when this happens, it provides an opportunity to reframe and influence future positioning.

## Building relationships with journalists

Establishing relationships with reporters is your best arm against misinformation. Reporters appreciate a mutually beneficial relationship.

- **Identify** reporters you feel have been doing coverage that reflects your community.
- **Follow them** on social media (Twitter). Get to know their tone, their beats.
- **Reach out:** Introduce yourself via email, listing the resources, experts and stories you can offer.
- **React to their stories** (via email/Twitter) and when applicable offer story ideas as follow ups that include your narrative, the impacts on your community.
- **During Interviews:**
  - Be upfront about your lived experiences before an interview. Don't assume the reporter knows anything. This is a chance for you to educate them.
  - If you are not comfortable doing interviews yet, it is ok to move at the speed of trust - offering information off the record or on background could be a good start.
- **Establishing agreements with reporters:** *Off the record* means the information you give to the reporter cannot be used for publication. This is an opportunity to establish trust with the reporter by giving them a taste of valuable information. *On background* means the information can be published under your conditions. Those rules must be established before giving reporters any information. It is also helpful to repeat the rules throughout the conversation.

## Requesting story corrections

- Identify the reporter who did the story and/or the assignment desk email. A simple google search like “KPNX- TV assignment desk” can help you find names and email addresses.
- Write an email listing a link to the story or at least the title and date it ran.
- State clearly and politely how the story misinforms or mischaracterizes the community.
- Offer helpful background with links that support your arguments (lack of background is often the reason reporters make mistakes).
- Add “requesting a correction” to the subject line to get immediate attention.

## Letters to the editor (LTEs)

- LTEs are a good way to react to a story and insert your narrative.
- They are a direct response to an article published in a newspaper, and typically need to be submitted within 3-5 days of the original.
- They are very short, usually about 200 words in length.