

Tips for Being Interviewed

Right Person: Are you the right person to answer the questions. If you are part of a larger organization are you authorized to speak to the media?

Prepare: Have relevant facts at your fingertips. Resist the temptation — or pressure — to reply at once. Once you fully understand the story, ask yourself: “Do I know the issues well enough to make an informed comment?” If you want to check your facts, have a word with someone or just think about the issues; do not feel you have to answer immediately.

Call back quickly: Media are generally under tight deadlines, and the earlier you respond, the more likely it will be that you will be included in the story.

Handling a tough situation: If you know you are being asked about a very controversial issue. Try to find out all the facts and decide the best strategy for answering questions. If a reporter asks something particularly inflammatory, don't react.

Be ready to explain the issue carefully and patiently. While reporters, have a good knowledge of the background, do not assume this. Respect the fact that they know a good story and are interested in what you do.

Stay on message: Always know what you're going to say before talking to a reporter. This means knowing your campaign's messages and practicing them until you can say them easily and naturally. You should be comfortable with repeating the campaign's main messages.

Listen. Make sure you know what question you are answering. Sometimes the question itself can suggest appropriate ways to focus or phrase an answer.

Get to the point. Capture the essence of what you want to say in the first one or two sentences of your response, and add details later.

Keep it simple. Most reporters are looking for clear, simple quotes that can be understood by a wide audience.

Always tell the truth, never fake it: If you give false information to a reporter, you and your cause will have a hard time regaining your credibility. It is perfectly okay to say I do not know about that and either offer to get the information or suggest who they could talk to that might have the information.

Be careful of everything you say: You should assume that anything you say to a reporter could end up in print or on the air. Reporters will try to get you talking and take you to areas that can end up with you saying something you will regret. Do not speak negatively of other people or organizations.

Further information: If you can and feel the need to, offer to send more information to them. If you do offer to do send them more information make sure you do.