



# Communications Strategy

## Interview Tips for Union Activists

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# Media Interview Prep

Things to confirm with reporter:

- What topics will be discussed – and what if anything is off-topic
- Is interview for print or broadcast? If for radio/TV, will it air live or later?
- Sourcing – ask to be attributed as a union leader/member

Your homework:

- Draft/review talking points
- Practice delivering your answers before the interview
- Be ready!



# Preparing for an Interview

Carefully review and practice talking points and common questions before interview.

- Know which 2-3 key points you definitely want to make going into the interview and say them out loud to yourself.

Press answers should always:

- Be concise and to the point, avoid run-on answers
- Repeat part of their question so it can make an easy “sound bite”
- Always explain the “why,” not just the “what” and “how” of your response. For example, when talking about federal pay, don’t just say we need a 3.6% pay raise. Talk about how recent pay/benefit cuts have forced millions of feds to delay buying a home, sending kids to college, and putting food on the table, and how this pay adjustment will help make up for lost ground.
- Address the reporter by name during intro and outro

# Nailing the Interview

**Assume you are always on the record and always being recorded (video and audio)**

- Never say you're speaking "off the record" – especially to large groups of reporters
- Some exceptions can be made for long-trusted reporters, but these are very few

**Avoid being overly-friendly with reporters in front of other reporters/official audiences:**

- They will write less-favorably about us to compensate for any perceived bias.

**If asked about an unfamiliar subject or piece of legislation:**

- Say "I don't have all the facts right now, but we're reviewing it closely and I will have someone follow up with you," then pivot back to your talking points on the issue you're there to discuss.

**When interviewing on camera:**

- Wear a solid-colored shirt and tie
- Push your glasses to the top of your nose so they do not block your eyes/reflect light
- Assume the microphone is always on and recording for broadcast
- Sit still with hands folded in front of you.



# Always Identify Yourself as a Union Member or Officer!

Always be very clear to identify yourself in your union role, be it an officer or member. Do not ever claim to be speaking as a federal employee or agency employee, or ever speak using your job title unless authorized to do so by your agency.

As long as you identify yourself as speaking only as a union activist/officer, the agency cannot prevent your ability to speak to the press over issues of labor relations.



# Do Your Homework!

## RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

- Press Releases: [www.afge.org/press-releases](http://www.afge.org/press-releases)
- News articles: [www.afge.org/articles](http://www.afge.org/articles)
- Issue Papers: [www.afge.org/issuepapers](http://www.afge.org/issuepapers)
- Talking Points: [www.afge.org/takeaction](http://www.afge.org/takeaction)
- Logos and other visuals: [www.afge.org/logos](http://www.afge.org/logos)
- Photos on [www.flickr.com/afge](http://www.flickr.com/afge)

Home > Media Center

### Media Center

f M t 131

#### AFGE PUSHES 3.6% PAY INCREASE FOR 2020

*At the urging of our union, a bill has been jointly introduced in the House and Senate to give salaried and hourly federal employees a 3.6% pay raise next year in recognition of their invaluable contributions to this country.*

**Press Releases**  
Here you will be able to find the latest official news from AFGE.  
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Find our newest publications such as the Leader and Government Standard.

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- Feds to Mobilize on Capitol Hill to Keep Government Open
- Fearing Politicization of Their Work, Researchers Seek to Join AFGE
- State of Our Government and Its Workforce



# Training Materials Online

## COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING

- Writing newsletters
- Telling stories
- Conducting interviews
- Building communications campaigns
- Digital and social media tools
- Photo and video tips
- Much, much more!

<https://www.afge.org/commstraining>

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### COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING

f M t 1

#### Simple Tools and Tips To Create Rich Communications for Your Local.

Communications is a vital function at every level of our union. How we communicate with one another – whether it's through face-to-face meetings, newsletters, flyers, or digital tools – shapes our connection with our members locally and across the nation.

As a union activist, it's important that you are able to communicate with your fellow members. Use the Communications guide to assist you in reaching and mobilizing members with the help of communications tools.

[Download the Communications Guide to Mobilize Members](#)

#### TRAINING LINKS

- Communications Training Home
- Getting Started
- Social Media Activism
- Media Tips
- Improving Member Outreach
- Courses
- Resources
- Communications Survey

#### Top News

- Congress Passes Two-Year Funding Bill, Re-opening Government After Brief Shutdown
- Public Servants, Working People Advocates, Neighbors



# Contact Us

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