

Model News Releases

Here are three clearly-annotated news releases for you to learn from. You can use them as strict models, or as a rough guide.

Key Parts of a News Release:

1. A strong, brief headline.
2. A compelling opening sentence (a “lead”) telling the news in a nutshell (the *who* and the *what*).
3. A second paragraph explaining the grant’s context — major results expected, the big problem it’s trying solve.
4. A strong quote from a key player saying *why* this matters to average people (sometimes called “the so-what.”)
5. Additional details of grant activities and expected results.
6. Brief background on your organization, the funder, as well as other groups involved.
7. Key names, numbers or websites leading to further information.

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2009

○ Leon County Students To Get Expanded Civics Lessons

TALLAHASSEE— Leon County School students this year will benefit from a newly-developed civics curriculum designed to be replicated state-wide, thanks to support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

With Florida students lagging in civics and U.S. history, the pilot project will provide students with the skills they need to make decisions about and participate fully in their communities. Leon County, the seat of state government, will provide an ideal backdrop for the project.

“No matter what their profession, everyone needs to understand what it takes to be an effective citizen in a democratic system,” Jackie Pons, superintendent of Leon County Schools, said. “The strength and stability of our way of life depends on that.”

All 32,000 K-12 Leon County students will be enriched by the interactive program, which includes moot court exercises at the local courthouse, a mock election that coincides with this fall’s votes and participating in service learning projects. Also, seventh graders will take a year-long course in civics. Teachers who helped craft the program emphasized the importance of fostering reflective discussion and debate along with other skills needed to influence leaders at the local, state and federal levels.

About the Joint Center

The Florida Joint Center for Citizenship is a partnership between the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida and the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. Established in 2007, the Joint Center will develop a variety of initiatives intended to strengthen civic education and improve the condition of Florida’s civic health.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes journalism excellence worldwide and invests in the vitality of communities in the United States where the Knight brothers once owned newspapers. Knight Foundation invests in ideas and projects that can lead to transformational change.

Contacts:

Leon County Schools: Raine Smallridge, Leon County Schools, 850-487-7240
Knight Foundation: Mike Pate, program director for Tallahassee, 850-915-0258

Headline sketches out full story in 6-12 concrete words

“Lead” tells the news in a nutshell – the who (Leon County students) and the what (new civics classes)

Second paragraph explains larger issue to be dealt with – “Florida students lagging in civics.”

Next paragraph(s) gives more details about further activities and results.

Brief official background paragraph on your organization as well as on Knight.

Knight referenced clearly, near the beginning, using the foundation’s correct full name.

Strong quote from key player gives the “so what,” or why average people should care -- we need “effective citizens.”

Names and numbers leading to more information. Note: Web sites to contact should be listed as well!

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2008

Headline sketches out full story in a handful of words

Poynter Receives Boost to Transform Journalism Education Through E-Learning

"Lead" tells the news in a nutshell – the who (Poynter) and the what (transform journalism education).

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA -- The Poynter Institute announced today that it will use a \$1.4 million, five-year grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to help transform journalism education by expanding the world's most successful and innovative journalism e-learning site.

Knight referenced clearly, near the beginning, using the foundation's correct full name.

Gives more details about what will happen. Notice, in this example, how specific details of grant are listed as bullet points (•).

Launched in 2005 with a prior Knight Foundation grant, NewsU provides interactive, inexpensive courses to journalists at all levels of experience and in all types of media. The grant will help NewsU expand in four key areas:

- Enhance the skills and digital abilities of journalists;
- Find new ways to teach and inspire journalists as well as those without access to formal journalism training;
- Increase news literacy;
- Use the Internet to deliver training in innovative and effective ways.

Explains larger problem to be solved – "transition to a digital world."

Specifically, NewsU plans to offer new courses to help journalists and others make the transition to a digital world, shift its current content management system to a Web 2.0 platform, deliver course content in multiple languages, and create e-learning modules on news literacy for the general public.

Strong quote from key player gives the "so what" – explaining the bigger challenge in a way anyone could understand.

"New technology is transforming journalism," said Gary Kebbel, director of journalism programs at Knight Foundation. "Journalism education cannot meet the training needs of today's journalist without using that same technology. We hope this grant helps anyone learn to use new platforms to pursue the fair, accurate, contextual search for truth." He added, "Every community in this democracy has a core need for information that creates shared experiences that unite us."

Brief official background paragraph on your organization as well as on Knight.

About The Poynter Institute
Founded in 1975 in St. Petersburg, Fla., The Poynter Institute (www.poynter.org) is one of the nation's top schools for professional journalists and media leaders, future journalists and journalism educators. Poynter offers training throughout the year in online and multimedia; reporting, writing and editing; leadership and management; TV and radio; ethics and diversity; visual journalism; and journalism education. Poynter's News University (www.newsu.org) offers training to journalists, students and others through interactive e-learning modules and links to other journalism education and training opportunities.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes journalism excellence worldwide and invests in the vitality of the U.S. communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Since 1950 the foundation has granted more than \$300 million to advance journalism quality and freedom of expression. Knight Foundation focuses on ideas and projects that create transformational change. To learn more, visit www.knightfoundation.org.

Names, numbers, e-mail addresses leading to more information.

Contacts:
News University/The Poynter Institute: Howard Finberg, Director, Interactive Learning; phone: 727.553.4371; e-mail: hfinberg@poynter.org
Marc Fest, vice president of communications, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, phone: 305.908.2677, e-mail: fest@knightfoundation.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information, contact:

Date Contact Name, Phone Number

Month of the Young Adolescent Proclaimed

The Sunnyside City Council (date) proclaimed October to be the Month of the Young Adolescent.

Initiated by National Middle School Association (NMSA) and endorsed by more than 40 other national organizations focusing on youth, the event is designed to bring attention to the important needs of young adolescents.

"Youth between the ages of approximately 10 to 15 years undergo more extensive physical, mental, social, moral, and emotional changes, with the possible exception of infancy, than at any other time of life," the proclamation reads. "The attitudes and values young adolescents develop during these formative years largely determine their later behavior."

During the Month of the Young Adolescent, NMSA hopes to provide parents and other adults with information on how they can support the natural maturation process of 10- to 15-year-olds, including educational, health, and social development.

The Sunnyside City Council proclamation calls upon all citizens to support young adolescents.

"All of us have a responsibility to support young adolescents," said Name, Title. "These years can be tough for both young adolescents and those closest to them. However, they still need the support of parents and adults. We must understand that they are entering a natural maturation process, and we need to learn how to work with them."

For further information on the Month of the Young Adolescent and how to support 10- to 15-year-olds, contact National Middle School Association at 1-800-528-NMSA.