

Talking to Journalists: What You Need to Know

Reporters help to share information and stories with the world. **You can decide whether or not to talk with a reporter.** You can ask the reporter why they want to talk to you and how the information will be used before you agree to speak for their story.

When a reporter asks for an interview, the reporter should:

- ✔ **Tell you what news outlet they work for**
- ✔ **Answer any questions you may have**
- ✔ **Tell you about the story they're working on**
- ✔ **Ask you if you want to talk with them**

Think it through carefully. If you decide to speak with the reporter, **you get to decide how much of your name and other identifying information appears in their piece.**



You will do this with the reporter by telling them— before your interview—whether you are:

- **“On the record,”** meaning you will be named and quoted in the story.
- Or **“anonymous,”** meaning you can be quoted but not named or identified.
- Or **“on background,”** meaning the information can be in a story, but not quoted, and you won’t be named.
- Or **“off the record,”** meaning the information can’t be in a story, and you won’t be named.

The reporter must respect your decision and write it down or record it.

You can also decide whether the reporter can record the conversation, on audio or video, and whether you will be photographed or on video. You are also entitled to record the conversation for yourself, so that you can confirm what you said. Get the reporter’s phone number and email so you can reach out with any questions, concerns or reservations, and to share any changes in your situation.



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