Educating and persuading public officials

Communicating Trusted Election Information
June 14, 2022
Housekeeping

- We appreciate your patience if any technical difficulties come up during the presentation
- Use the chat panel to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions
Our objectives

● Confidently inform policymakers about how you administer elections
● Establish and maintain trusted relationships with public officials
● Get involved in initiatives advancing practical and voter-centric policies
Our agenda

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Why your voice is important (5 minutes)
- Building relationships with public officials (10 minutes)
- Building relationships with allies (20 minutes)
  - Case study
- Working with the media (5 minutes)
- Breakout session (20 minutes)
- Election infrastructure initiative (10 minutes)
- Q&A and wrap up (15 minutes)
Hello, there!

Christian Franco
CTCL
christian@techandciviclife.org

Josh Simon Goldman
CTCL
josh@techandciviclife.org

Keara Fenzel
CTCL
keara@techandciviclife.org

Tabatha Clemons
Grant County, Kentucky
tabatha.clemons@ky.gov
Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

National, nonpartisan, nonprofit harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

@helloCTCL
www.techandciviclife.org
“Communicating Trusted Election Information” training series

- NEW: Educating and persuading public officials
- NEW: Working with the media
- Improving your election website
- Accessible communication for election offices
- Social media for voter engagement
- Combating election misinformation
Poll

How confident do you feel educating and persuading public officials?
Why has this become even more important now?

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR VOICE
Establishing your credibility

You are:

● An election official
● A community leader
● A source of truth
● Steward of democracy
● An expert
Spurred by election misinformation and skepticism, crowd urges N.H. lawmakers to outlaw ballot-counting machines

Source: “Spurred by election misinformation and skepticism, crowd urges N.H. lawmakers to outlaw ballot-counting machines,” NHPR 2022

Election workers faced new threats after 2020 election. Experts fear it will drive them away

Source: “Election workers faced new threats after 2020 election. Experts fear it will drive them away,” USA Today 2022
Colorado election workers could soon get new protections against threats, doxxing

House Bill 1273 would make it a crime to threaten an election worker in an attempt to prevent them from doing their job or in response to them performing official duties.

Source: “Colorado election workers could soon get new protections against threats, doxxing,” The Colorado Sun 2022
South Carolina governor signs election legislation, other bills
Maine passes law protecting poll workers facing increased threats since the 2020 election
Framingham City Clerk Requests To Move Polling Place From McCarthy Elementary School

Source: “Framingham City Clerk Request To Move Polling Place From McCarthy Elementary School,” Framingham Source 2022
Educating and persuading

**Educating**
Providing information to public officials that allows them to be better informed about election administration

**Persuading**
Motivating public officials to support your stance or move them towards neutrality
How can you build and maintain meaningful relationships?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS
Who should I contact?

- Start at home
- Consider the spectrum
  - Aligned with your goals, vs
  - Resistant to your goals
- “Who is the right person that will support my efforts?”
Initial contact

- Position yourself as an expert
- Invite a connection
- Solve a problem
Office tours

- Begin building a trusted relationship
- Help educate public officials about your work
- Interaction outside of the legislative process

Source: “Voter Reform is Underway in the Territory for 2022,” The St. John Source 2022
# A snapshot from Ohio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location and topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:15</td>
<td>Arrive, welcome, introduction of staff/board members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15-9:20</td>
<td><strong>Front desk/check in area</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Points of emphasis include bipartisan staffing of customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>service, and physical security of board offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Highlight recent investments in physical security, drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boxes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20-9:35</td>
<td><strong>Absentee voting department/ballot processing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Emphasize bipartisan nature of processing requests and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ballots, show software or other forms your teams use when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>validating requests and ballots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Discuss checks and balances associated with absentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>voting and share statistics from your county concerning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>absentee ballot utilization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Show and tell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What they’re interested in</th>
<th>What to show them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security and chain of custody</td>
<td>Chain of custody documentation, ballot boxes/bags and seals, process for checking seals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cybersecurity</td>
<td>Air-gapped machines not connected to the internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability of voting machines</td>
<td>Logic and accuracy testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in the results</td>
<td>Post-election audit documents and procedures (walk them through the process step by step)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other ways to connect

● Coffee or lunch
● Voter open houses
  ○ Logic and accuracy testing
● Candidate filing day
Maintain open communication

- Consider adding public officials to your press releases
- Be proactive about reaching out with good and bad news
- Solicit a commendation for a poll worker or staff member
Positive outcomes in Indiana

Statewide listening tour
Indiana Secretary of State Holli Sullivan visits Monticello
By MICHAEL JOHNSON editor@thehj.com  Mar 9, 2022

Secretary of State Visits Randolph County Clerk’s Office
BY SCOTT SHAFFER, News-Gazette Features Editor  Mar 3, 2022
Who can help support your efforts?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALLIES
Collaborating with interested organizations

- Local community and interest groups
- State-focused organizations
- National initiatives
Partnerships with state associations

- Offer training and strategy
- Serve as a focal point
- Maintain ongoing committees
Lobbyists

- Typically part-time
- Experienced working with elected officials in your state or region
- Track proposed statutory changes to give you a heads up about what legislators are thinking about
- Coordinate education and persuasion campaigns for associations that connect decision makers with election officials
County clerk modernization bills

CASE STUDY: KENTUCKY COUNTY CLERK’S ASSOCIATION
The problem

- Goals of the County Clerk Modernization bill
- Played defense during the legislative process
- Surprise bills showed up on the deadline
- No access to key players within the legislature
The process

- Interim task force for County Clerk Modernization
- Developing a game plan
- Building foundational understanding
- Local voices matter
- Finding ways to work with legislators
The outcomes

County clerk modernization bill passes Senate

SB 135, sponsored by Sen. Jason Howell, seeks to accelerate the online availability of recorded instruments such as titles, deeds and mortgages. The legislation would amend state statute to designate 90 percent of funds held for the local records grant program be set aside and distributed as grants for county clerks, and that the $10 storage fee collected by county clerks shall be held for the exclusive purpose of providing funding for the permanent storage of recorded instruments.

The bill would appropriate $25 million from the state general fund to the Department of Local Government to provide grants to county clerks to establish and maintain portals for the electronic filing and searching of recorded instruments. It would also create an addition to state statute to allow for county clerks in counties with a population of less than 70,000 to receive an advancement to defray necessary official expenses.

Source: “Week 8 of the legislative session concludes,” Kentucky Association of Counties 2022
Recommendations for you

- Start today
- Preparation work is crucial
- Have allyship with legislators who will champion bills
- Advocacy committee
- Engage legislators outside of the capitol
Persuasive letters to state legislators

- Examples of topics
  - Election worker protection
  - Infrastructure funding
  - Early voting policies
  - Post-election audits
Letter from Michigan clerks

Source: “Michigan clerks ask lawmakers for early voting, other changes ahead of 2022 elections,” Detroit Free Press 2022
Written testimony

- Basic structure
  - Intro: Provide context
  - Paragraph 1: State your position clearly
  - Paragraph 2: Diagnose the problem
  - Paragraph 3: Offer a solution
  - Paragraph 4: Provide a recap
Verbal testimony

● Steps to prepare
  ○ Practice, practice, practice
  ○ Research public hearing days and guidelines
  ○ Arrive early
  ○ Be prepared to answer questions accurately
  ○ Be confident – you are the expert!
Making the case publicly

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA
Reach public officials where they read

- Coverage of elections
  - raises awareness of key issues
  - highlights expert opinions (like yours)
  - points toward solutions
How it works

- A reporter calls you about an issue making headlines in your area, state, or across the country
  - Ex. Long lines in primaries in other states
How it works

● You offer a few, short thoughts to help the journalist understand the context of the issue
  ○ Ex. This type of issue occurs due to a lack of resources for more polling locations, poll workers, and equipment
How it works

- Let voters know how you’re approaching the issue locally and point toward a solution
  - Ex. “We’ve hired more poll workers, and our voters can help out by applying to fill those roles. However, more funding from the state would help us open more polling locations and decrease lines on Election Day.”
Blending professional experience with personal stories

People tend to gravitate towards the personal, lived experiences of others. Find a way to combine your expertise as an election official, and your personal stories.
Drafting an Op-Ed

Op-Ed: State, local leaders a firewall against attacks on democracy

By Debbie Cox Bultan and Ken Lawrence
Published 4:34 p.m. ET May 28, 2022

Source: “State, local leaders a firewall against attacks on democracy,” Courier Times 2022
Practice drafting an op-ed

BREAKOUT SESSION
We run elections in Arizona. An all-mail option for 2020 wouldn't ruin the process

Opinion: We represent elections officials in all 15 Arizona counties. And we'd like to set the record straight on the impact of all-mail elections.

Virginia Ross and Lisa Marra opinion contributors
Published 6:00 a.m. MT April 8, 2020 | Updated 9:28 a.m. MT April 8, 2020

Source: “We run elections in Arizona. An all-mail option for 2020 wouldn’t ruin the process,” azcentral 2020
Engaging first sentence – Catch the reader’s attention

Opening paragraph – Express a clear, singular topic that is the primary focus of your op-ed

Body Paragraphs – Short paragraphs (2-5 sentences)
- Have one point per paragraph
- Develop your story
- Back your main thesis
- Identify and refute counterarguments
- Build support for your conclusion

Closing paragraph – Reiterate your main point and offer a final epiphany, solution, or call to action

Memorable final sentence – Stick in your readers’ minds

CommKit, Op-Ed Source: Broad Institute of MIT
### First ingredients of a great op-ed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your main point</th>
<th>Our state should authorize election officials to start processing ballots 3 days before Election Day -- a standard approach called pre-canvassing -- so that results can be reported in a more timely manner.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are you advocating for?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell your story</td>
<td>In our county, rates of voting by mail have increased quickly, but state law hasn’t kept up. During the 2020 General Election, our county’s election results were delayed because state law didn’t allow your public servants to count your vote efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s happening in your community? Why should the reader -- especially a public official -- care?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your credibility</td>
<td>I’ve served as an election official for our county since 2006 in various roles. I hold a Certified Elections Registration Administrator designation from the Election Center, take ongoing professional development courses to keep my skills fresh, and serve as an officer for our state election association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes you an expert?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Try it yourself (10 mins.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your main point</th>
<th>1-2 sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>
Report back (5 mins.)

How did it go?
● What was the hardest part of that?
● What topic did you write about?
● How did you anticipate the reader’s perspective?
● How did you make the ideas understandable?
An example at the federal level

ELECTION INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE
2020: A heroic year for US election officials
GOAL: $20 billion in additional, predictable federal funding for US election administration over 10 years
77% percent of voters nationally support investing in election infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly support</th>
<th>Somewhat support</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Somewhat oppose</th>
<th>Strongly oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All likely voters</strong></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oppose</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>+58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Strongly support</th>
<th>Somewhat support</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Somewhat oppose</th>
<th>Strongly oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oppose</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>+74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent / Third party</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oppose</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>+55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oppose</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>+45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

March 4-8, 2022 survey of 2,972 likely voters. Source: Data for Progress and the Election Infrastructure Initiative.
A bipartisan majority of voters support federal investments in election infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Election Infrastructure</th>
<th>Support-Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Registered Voters</td>
<td>80%-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Voters</td>
<td>76%-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Voters</td>
<td>82%-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Voters</td>
<td>80%-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Suburban Women</td>
<td>87%-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Women</td>
<td>78%-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino Voters</td>
<td>73%-10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A bipartisan majority of voters support federal investments in election infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Election Infrastructure</th>
<th>Support-Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All GOP Primary Voters</td>
<td>74%-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Republicans</td>
<td>69%-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Conservative Republicans</td>
<td>64%-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Trump Supporters</td>
<td>71%-16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of likely voters see an array of election resources as essential

March 4-8, 2022 survey of 2,972 likely voters. Source: Data for Progress and the Election Infrastructure Initiative.
Persuading public officials with 50 op-eds from local election officials

- Tailored support for writing your letter and getting it published
Let’s talk

DISCUSSION
Next steps

- Identify key public officials and find their contact information
- Start building relationships with public officials through an informal call or email
- Highlight times in our election calendar when we could include public officials
- Use the template agenda to host an office tour
- Reach out to my state association’s legislative committee to see how I can help
- Finish drafting op-ed components
Share your thoughts

- What resonated with you from today’s course? (Any “ah-ha” moments?)
- What are your next steps?
- What questions do you have about what we covered today?
As questions come up for you ...

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We’ll help out, or
  - We’ll find someone for you who can

Hello@TechAndCivicLife.org
We've covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP
New Trainings: Communicating Trusted Election Information

Educating and persuading public officials
Tuesday, June 14th at 1:00pm CT

Working with the media
Thursday, June 16th at 1:00pm CT

TechAndCivicLife.org/course/trusted-info
What was your experience with today’s course?

- A brief survey is linked in the chat box
- Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the course for future participants
Thanks!

Email: Hello@TechAndCiviclife.org
Twitter: @HelloCTCL
Website: www.techandciviclife.org