

Working with the media

Communicating Trusted Election Information
June 16, 2022



Housekeeping

- We appreciate your patience if any technical difficulties come up during the presentation
- Optional tools for today: media shortlist template and your election calendar
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions

Our objectives

- Develop productive relationships with credible journalists
- Make the most of media coverage to educate voters
- Counter misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in the press

Our agenda

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Election officials and the media (10 minutes)
- Starting your list (15 minutes)
- Building working relationships (15 minutes)
- Key terms (10 minutes)
- Misinformation and the media (5 min)
- Case study: Adams County, CO (10 min)
- Resources, discussion and wrap up (20 minutes)

Hello, there!



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CENTER FOR
TECH AND
CIVIC LIFE

Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

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

TechAndCivicLife.org
ElectionExcellence.org
ModernizeOurElections.org

Communicating Trusted Election Information

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



Votebeat

Helping people understand our system of democracy so they can participate in strengthening it.

Votebeat.org/newsletters

A few basics to start off

ELECTION OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA



POLL: How do you feel about working with the media?

- I'm comfortable working with the media
- I'm still skeptical of reaching out to journalists
- I respond to media requests but don't proactively reach out
- I've experienced downsides of working with the media
- I try to avoid the media at all costs
- I'm new to working with the media
- Other (add to the chat)



Why work with the media?

Shared goals:

- Convey accurate election information to voters
- Address misinformation and disinformation
- Build trust in democratic practices
- Reach lots of people

Convey accurate election info

Early voting hours to change with August election

Bethesda **BEAT** 2022 | POLITICS

Close races likely won't be called on primary Election Day, county election official says

Gov. Hogan vetoed bill allowing for mail-in ballots to be counted prior to July 19 election

Address misinformation

NEWS

SOE addresses voters' frequent misconceptions

The Daytona Beach News-Journal

Published 10:03 a.m. ET Feb. 16, 2022

Build trust in democratic practices

Poll worker shares her experience working elections



Why work with the media?

Shared resources:

- Large audience
- Trained storytellers
- Identify and research new falsehoods -- early
- Often cost effective

Fact check No. 2: No one can vote more than once

McKenzie said the voter registration system is statewide, which allows them to catch duplicate registrations.

Additionally, he said Utah is one of about 30 states that participates in the Electronic Registration Information Center, a nonprofit which allows states to compare voter registration systems with the intent of identifying duplicate records.

Another safeguard against duplicate ballots is the unique barcode assigned to each envelope. If someone were to request a new ballot — maybe they lost or damaged their original one — they delete that person's barcode from their system and issue them a brand new number.

Another scenario: If someone were to photocopy their ballot and submit it 10 times, the barcode would ensure that their vote was only counted once.

'We're Rolling With It': Election Workers Scramble To Adjust To Changing Voting Rules

September 18, 2020 · 5:00 AM ET
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

PAM FESSLER



4-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



Hoax Image of Immigration Officers Arresting Voters Is Making Rounds on Social Media

Jessica Huseman, ProPublica and Rachel Glickhouse, Univision News, Oct. 29, 2016, 2 a.m. EDT

This post was co-published with Univision. [Lea en español.](#)

An image has begun circulating on Twitter that appears to show an immigration officer arresting someone in line to vote. The image is a hoax, as is the accompanying threatening language directed at Hispanic voters.

Earned vs paid media

Today's Local Paper

Election office announces new transparency measures, open houses



JOIN US FOR
**ELECTION OFFICE
OPEN HOUSE**

Identifying media contacts

STARTING YOUR LIST



Working with the media: Quantity vs quality

- Important to balance
- Depends on your preference
- When in doubt, focus on quality

Types of media to focus on

- Newspapers and news sites
- Radio
- TV
- Other, depending on your community

Newspapers

- **Perfect for:** deeper dives, more complex stories
- **Tip:** suggest a voting info page on their website, outside of their paywall, that stays up throughout election season



Radio

- **Perfect for:** shorter stories with lots of voices and interesting audio
- **Tip:** ask about free public service announcement segments (15-30 seconds) and work with the station to produce them



TV

- **Perfect for:** shorter stories with engaging images
- **Tip:** when your office isn't busy, invite reporters in to film "b-roll"



Find your contacts (5 min)

- Identify 2-3 media organizations each for newspapers, radio, and TV
- If you have time, gather contact information (contact name, email, and phone number)

TIP: Most news websites will have a “contact us” section you can find on the bottom of the site.

		Newsroom or station	Contact name	Email	Phone	Notes and plan to reach out
Newspaper	1					
	2					
Radio	1					
	2					
TV	1					
	2					

Find your contacts (5 min)

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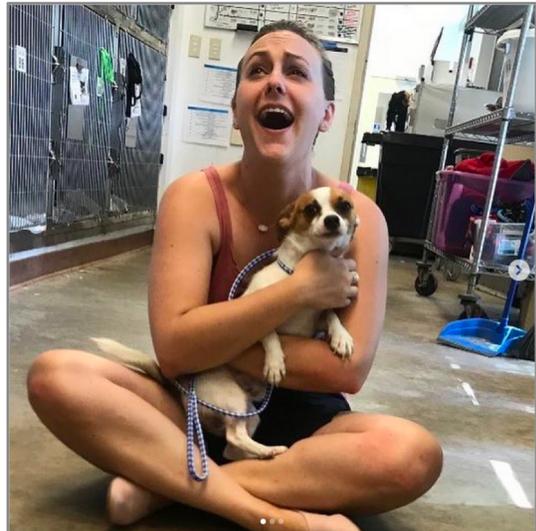
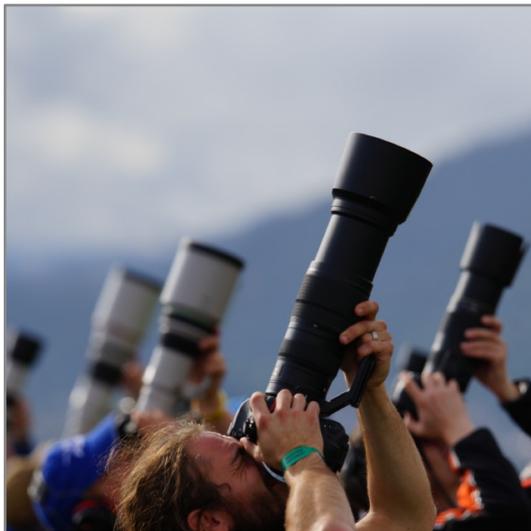
TIP: Most news websites will have a “contact us” section you can find on the bottom of the site.

Debrief: Find your contacts

- Was it easy or challenging?
- Were there types of media organizations that were easier or harder to identify?
- Did you include media that your voters can read in their preferred language?

Proactively connect with your media contacts

BUILDING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS



The first phone call (or email)

- Give the basics
- Offer some help
 - “What do you want to know?”
 - “Is there anything you saw last year that you didn’t understand?”
 - “What kinds of stories are you looking for?”

Office visits

- Based on the questions you receive, invite the journalist to come in and see for themselves.
- Give them a tour, let them try out machines, and field their questions.

Consistency

- Establish a regular flow of information
- Use tools to keep you on track
- Remind them you exist!
 - “The first mail ballots are going out on Monday. Are you covering this? Here if you have questions.”

Mark your calendars!

Event	Date
Poll worker training begins	Monday, September 19, 2022
Pre-election machine testing (open to the public)	Tuesday, October 4, 2022
Last day to register to vote for general election	Tuesday, October 11, 2022
Advance ballots for the general election begin mailing	Wednesday, October 14, 2022
In-person, early voting begins	Monday, October 19, 2022
Election Day	Tuesday, November 3, 2022 Polls open 7 am – 7 pm
Voter registration re-opens	Wednesday, November 4, 2022
Post-election audit (open to the public)	Monday, November 8, 2022
Canvass of general election (tentative date)	Wednesday, November 16, 2022

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Common stories

- Audits (pre-election and post-election)
- Celebrating a community partnership (schools, organizations, businesses)
- Events (open houses, speakers)
- “Here’s what happens...” (“to your ballot once you cast it,” “at the post office”)
- Implementing something new/staying on top of new challenges
- Interviews with the election official
- Preparing ballots to go out
- Poll worker training
- Spotighting staff and poll workers

Update your election calendar (3 min)

- Pick a handful of events (or more!) on your election calendar, or that you know are coming up
- Then, decide when and how to invite your media list to cover it

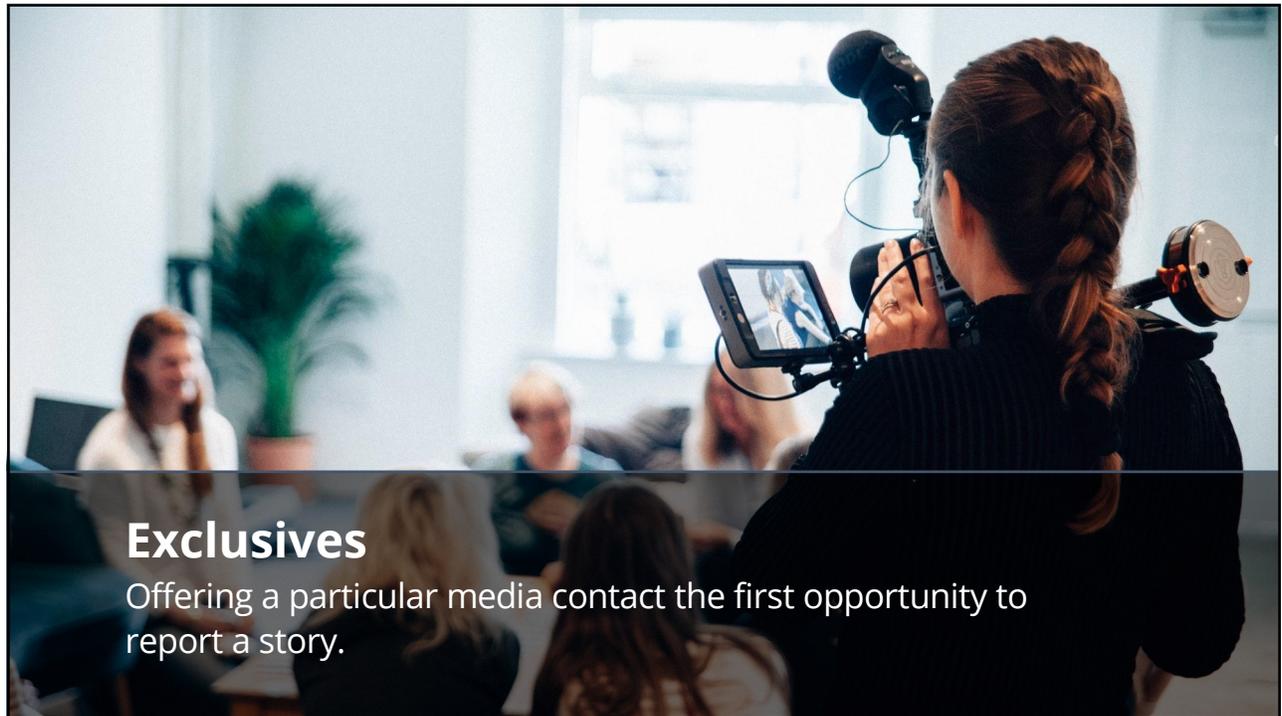
Event	Date
Reach out to press list about poll worker training	Monday, September 12, 2022
Poll worker training begins	Monday, September 19, 2022

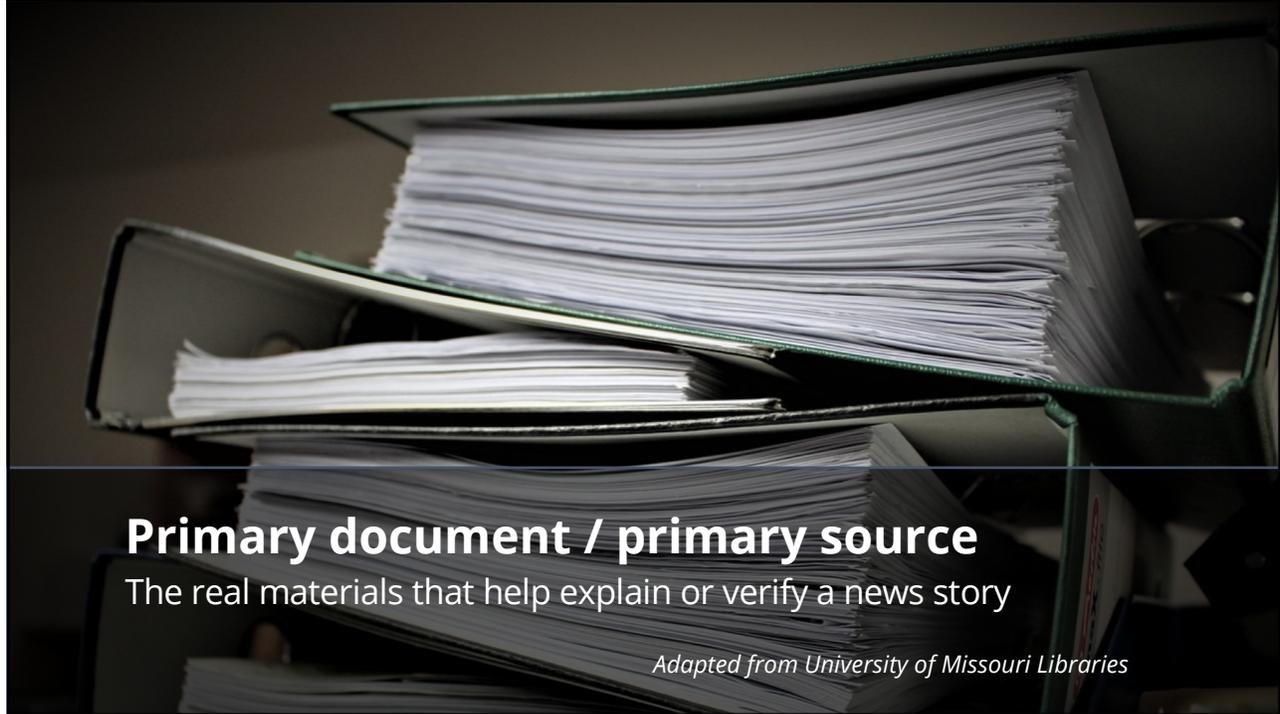
Debrief: Update your election calendar

- How did it go?
- What questions came up for you as you planned out your calendar?

What are we talking about?

KEY TERMS

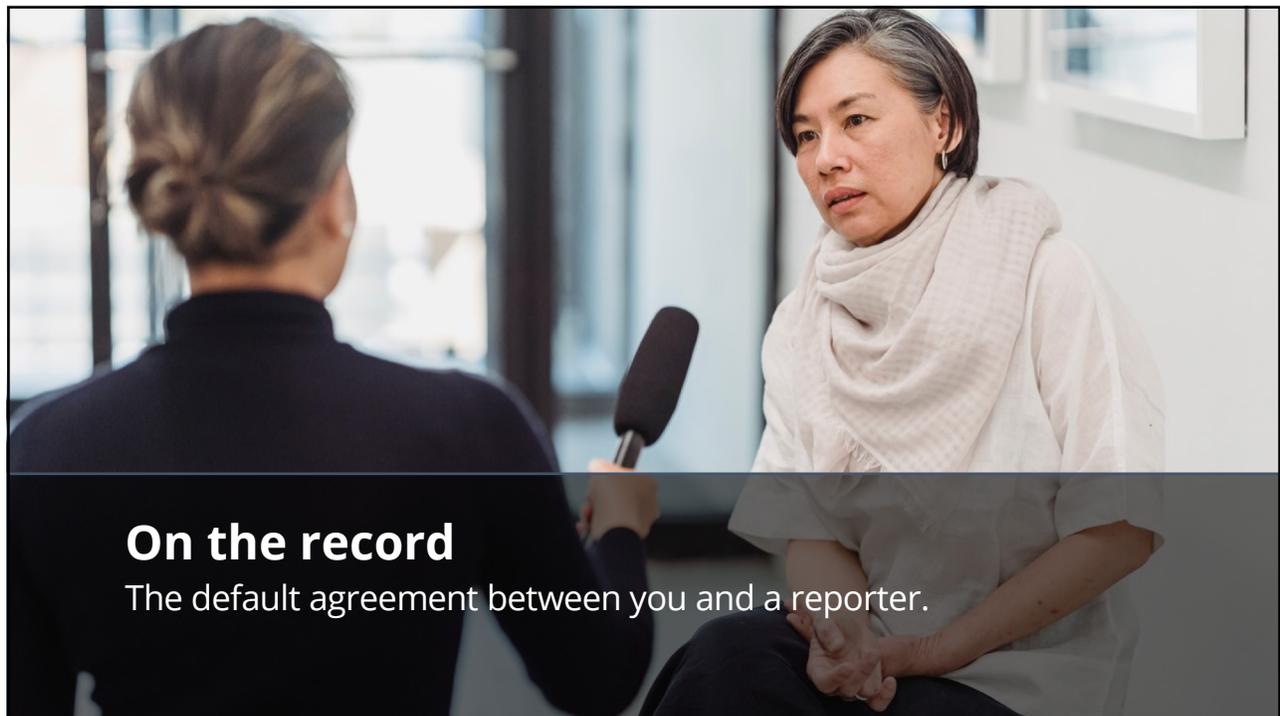




Primary document / primary source

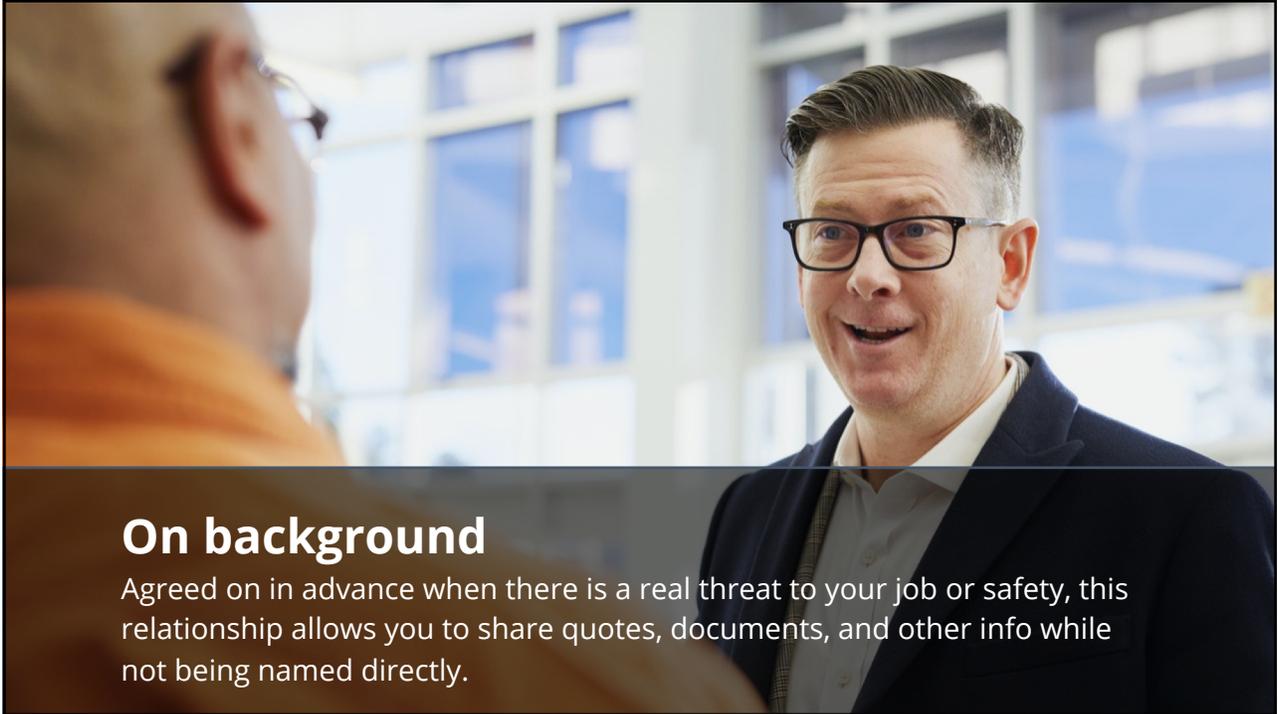
The real materials that help explain or verify a news story

Adapted from University of Missouri Libraries



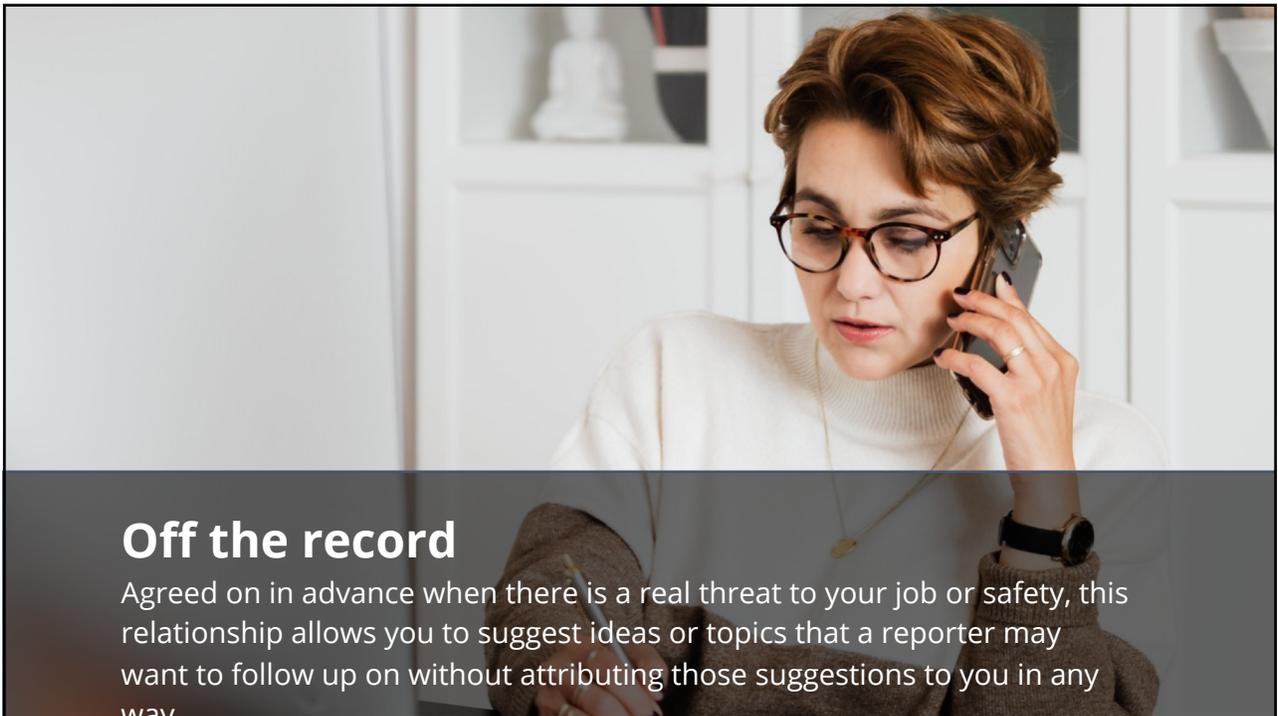
On the record

The default agreement between you and a reporter.



On background

Agreed on in advance when there is a real threat to your job or safety, this relationship allows you to share quotes, documents, and other info while not being named directly.



Off the record

Agreed on in advance when there is a real threat to your job or safety, this relationship allows you to suggest ideas or topics that a reporter may want to follow up on without attributing those suggestions to you in any way.

Conversation	What it means	Common?	When?
On the record	You can use my information and my name <i>"Local election official Ben Franklin said..."</i>	Common and default	Any typical conversation with a journalist
On background	You can use my information but not my name <i>"A local election said..."</i>	Less common	Actual threat to your job or safety
Off the record	You cannot use my name or my information [Not included in article, but helps a reporter understand a situation.]	Rare	Actual threat to your job or safety that is especially severe



Assessing bad actors

- Ask questions
 - Where do you work and who funds your work?
 - Who are your readers?
- Google them
 - Can you find them in a credible publication?
 - Do they or their colleagues publish articles with election lies?
- Take a moment
 - If you need a second opinion, take their information and check with a colleague

Communicate trusted election information

MISINFORMATION AND THE MEDIA



Prepping the media

- Common misinformation that comes up every election
- Clear information about your election process and what to expect throughout the election season

Media guide

- Make it available in print and on your website
- Include key facts about your election process:
 - Election calendar
 - Election equipment
 - Contact information
 - Where election data returns can be found
 - Guidelines for visiting polling locations
 - FAQs

Custom support for writing your media guide

- No cost
- Provided by current and retired election administrators
- Led by The Elections Group

[Airtable.com/shr9hTBFgARXldrW0](https://airtable.com/shr9hTBFgARXldrW0)



Communications Support Intake

We are seeking jurisdictions to which to provide communications assistance ahead of the 2022 General Election. Your request will be reviewed within 72 hours, and a member of our team will contact you to notify you what level of support we will be able to provide.

Office

Level of government

- State
- Local
- Other

Communication goes both ways

- Reach out to reporters to prep them about upcoming elections and ask them to look into emerging misinformation
- Reporters may reach out for help with stories about misinformation, especially when new misinformation is emerging

Yangmee Lor, Community Outreach Coordinator

CASE STUDY: ADAMS COUNTY, CO



Yangmee Lor

- Adams County C&R, Community Outreach Coordinator
- Co-founder - PABNEEG www.pabneeg.org
- Board member of:
 - National Lao-Hmong Memorial Foundation www.nlhmf.org
 - Colorado Dragon Boat www.cdbf.org
 - Asian Corporate Entrepreneur and Leaders (ACEL-Denver) www.aceleaders.org
 - Asian Chamber Foundation of Commerce (ACFC) www.aapifoundation.org

Contact information:
ylor@adcogov.org



Connecting with in-language media

- The process begins with the community -- not necessarily the publication itself
- Identify key organizations and community leaders and begin outreach there
- Expect a longer term process of getting to know these leaders by staying in contact and showing up to community events
- Strong advocates in the language community can help connect you to media contacts

Connecting with in-language media

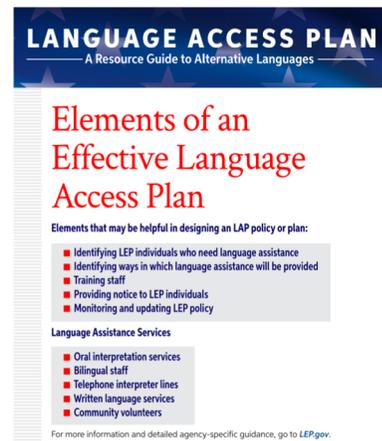
- Trusted “media” may be word of mouth from community leaders
- Remember that different groups make up a language community, and they may have different interests and concerns

Connecting with in-language media

- Overlooking in-language media, community leaders, and in some cases “word of mouth” outreach, leaves communities of foreign language prone to disinformation
- It also misses tremendous opportunities to build inclusive and empowering connections in your community

Language Access Plan

- Builds a solid foundation with getting to know who your language groups are.
- Gets your team on the same page!
- Allows you to reflect on where your organization is in regards to diversity and inclusivity.



Results

- 19 Community Partnerships in over 13 different communities and languages
- Partnerships with in-language media
- Upcoming project will help us build low English proficiency friendly voter and elections education for over 25 languages.

Asian Pacific Development Center
Thank you for advocating for the communities we serve, and all that you do! - Alex, Coordinator

Filipino American Community of CO
It's a change of pace to see a C&R office come out and support our community. Thank you! - Chona, Past Vice President

Deaf/Blind/ASL
I'm so happy the office is actively building meaningful relationships with our community to increase accessibility and participation. Thank you! - Niki, Teacher for the Blind and Deaf

Masjid Ikhlas - Muslim
I am impressed with the new outreach vision. I feel like my community has a voice in accessing services from your office! Keep up the good work. - Ihsan, Outreach Director

Oromo Community of CO
Adams County C&R has been very helpful. Thank you to Josh for creating a role and having Yangmee in it. She has helped our community with a VRD and many other things our community needed. We appreciate your office! - Mohamad, Past Board Member

MAI - Hmong Community of CO
Having someone like Josh who is invested in our community is integral in making elections fair. Thank you! - Maigaopang, Board Member

TESTIMONIALS

Resources

- Xoark, LLC: diversity outreach/cultural broker xoark.com
- King County, WA's Education and Outreach guide kingcounty.gov/depts/elections/education-and-outreach.aspx
- Center for Civic Design: New citizens and voting <https://civicdesign.org/experiences-of-new-citizens>
- EAC: Elections terminology in some languages www.eac.gov/election-officials/glossaries-election-terminology

Planning language access guide

- Developed by the Center for Civic Design based on research with local election offices
- Used by jurisdictions like Adams County, CO
- Broader than media relations, but helps you plan to build relationships with community groups



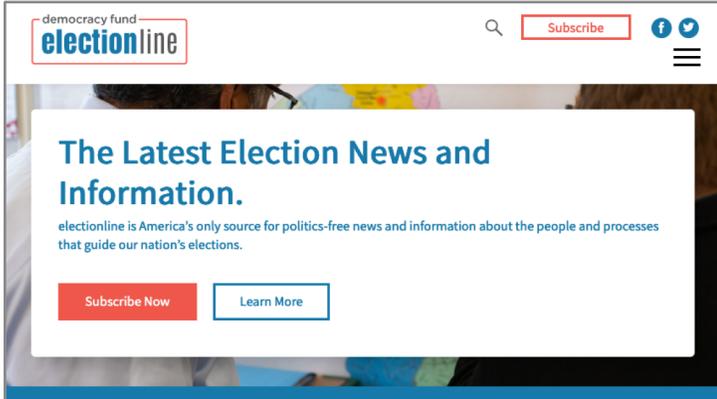
Free materials to help you work with the media

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



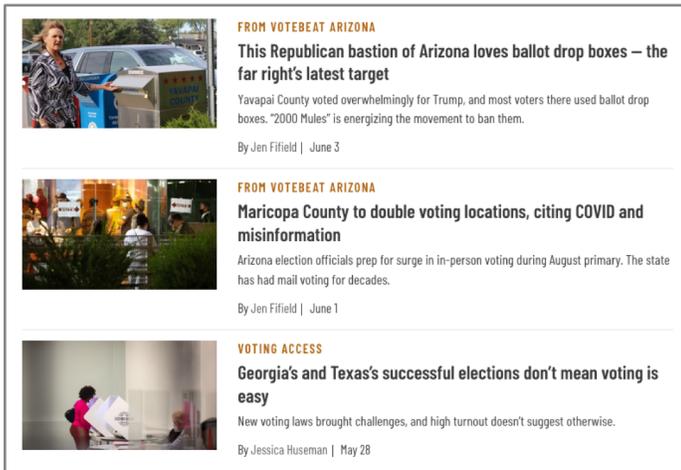
Electionline

Electionline.org



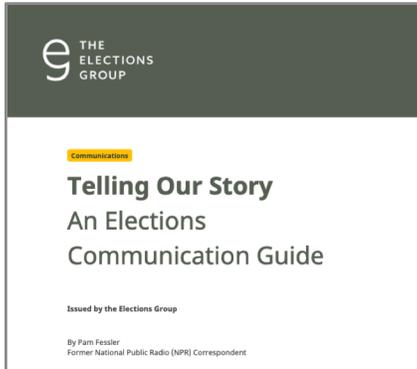
Votebeat

Votebeat.org



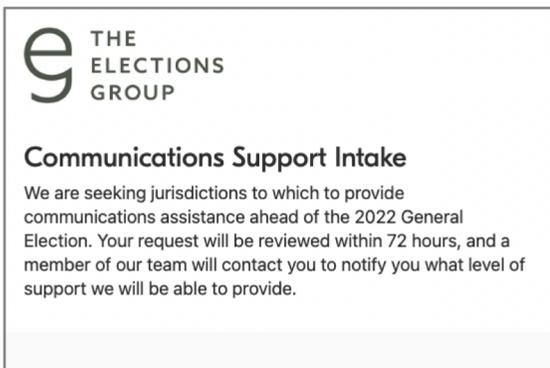
Telling Our Story: An Elections Communication Guide

ElectionsGroup.com/telling-our-story-guide



Custom support for writing your media guide

Airtable.com/shr9hTBFgARXldrW0



Communicating Trusted Election Information

TechAndCivicLife.org/course/trusted-info/



Next steps

- Build a media list by finding contact info for 2 or 3 journalists
- Reach out to our media list with informal calls
- Invite a journalist for coffee or a short office tour
- Highlight times in our election calendar when we could include media
- Write a short media guide about how elections are run in our area
- Offer an “exclusive” to a local journalist
- Coordinate with neighboring offices to get more media attention
- Other (add to the chat)

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@techandcivicliflife.org

We've covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP



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@TechAndCivicle.org

Twitter: [@HelloCTCL](https://twitter.com>HelloCTCL)

Website: www.TechAndCivicLife.org

