

Supporting Election Officials

COVID-19 and Election Administration:

Approaches for Election Officials

May 21, 2020

Housekeeping

- Be gracious about **work-from-home setups**
- **Restart Zoom** if needed
- **Slides and captioned recordings** will be available on the registration page
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions

Today's objectives

- Put together a resiliency plan for you and your team
- Know who to reach out to (colleagues, state officials, and experts) when questions come up
- Engage your state association in an effort to support fellow local election officials

Today's agenda

- Introduction (5 mins.)
- Leading an election team through tough times (5 mins.)
- Supporting your election department colleagues (10 mins.)
- Creating a staff backup plan (5 mins.)
- Sources of support (15 mins.)
- Q&A (15 mins.)
- Wrapping up and course survey (5 mins.)

Hello, there!



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TECH AND
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Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

Harnessing the promise of technology
to modernize the American voting
experience

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Federal resources

- Set of 10 documents provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials
- Written by the Joint COVID-19 Working Group
 - Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
 - Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
 - Elections Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC)

<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/covid-19-election-resources>

Keep in mind

1. This is tough!
2. One size doesn't fit all
3. Things will change
4. Preparation and flexibility > certainty
5. A supportive team > a solo mission
6. Your work *matters*, and it's hugely appreciated

How to inspire stability

LEADING AN ELECTION TEAM THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

The Psychology Behind Effective Crisis Leadership

by Gianpiero Petriglieri

April 22, 2020

 Summary  Save  Share  Comment ¹²  Print **\$8.95** Buy Copies



Vision



- About inspiring and moving people
- Promises a future but demands a sacrifice in the present

Holding



- About reassuring and orienting people
- Helps contain and interpret what's happening presently

“Holding is a more obscure and seldom celebrated facet of leadership than vision, but no less important. And when crises hit, it becomes essential. In groups whose leaders can hold, mutual support abounds, work continues, and a new vision eventually emerges. When leaders cannot hold, and we can’t hold each other, anxiety, anger, and fragmentation ensue.”

How election leaders can provide holding:

- Tell staff what to expect regarding their job security, health insurance, and working conditions
- Promote dialogue and participation more than usual: decide on adaptations together
- Give clear direction on what needs to be done
- Acknowledge difficulty without suggesting powerlessness

Best practices for wellness and care

SUPPORTING YOUR ELECTION DEPARTMENT COLLEAGUES

Allow yourself to be vulnerable

Take the opportunity to do the opposite of repressing your emotions

Suspend your judgment

This isn't a contest to see who can be the most resilient

Remind yourself and colleagues that not everything is urgent

Distinguish what's a priority from what isn't

Err on the side of over-communicating

And make time to be friendly

Emotionally proofread your messages before you press send

~~“I don’t understand why this is taking so long.”~~

“I’d like to better understand the timeline.”

Reflect on your emotions, label them, and act accordingly

Deal with each feeling individually

EMOTION	FEELS LIKE	DIAGNOSIS	COPING PLAN
Anxiety	Body tightness, whirring mind	Normal	Move, breathe slow, limit media, focus on what you can control.
Hyperstress (too much stress)	Pressure, weight, overwhelm	Also normal	Re-prioritize, delegate, accept that you won't get it all done.
Eustress (positive stress)	Adrenaline rush, frenzied action	So normal	Use it! But also sleep, eat, take breaks, make slower decisions.
Grief	Loss, sadness, bitterness, anger	Just as normal	Talk it out, write about it, rest, look for a sense of meaning.
Guilt	Comparing suffering, self hate	Totally normal	Offer help, find gratitude, accept that your guilt won't serve others.
Fatigue	Tank on empty, weak body	Another normal one	Sleep, eat, take long breaks, prioritize, find small pleasures.
Loneliness	Feeling small, sad, trapped, alone	Utterly normal	Ritualize connection, join groups, reminisce, help others.
Loopiness	Getting silly, zany, quirky, dazed	Yep - normal	Let yourself laugh, play, take breaks, move, be weird.

Boost resilience in your office

CREATING A STAFF BACKUP PLAN

1. Set priorities

And acknowledge things won't be perfect

2. Document

Have staff create a trail of breadcrumbs for their backup to follow

3. Do a dry run

Test how well your team has documented

4. Be strategic when assigning backups

- Think beyond hierarchies and job titles
- Who *used to* do this work? Who did work like this in a *previous* job?
- Who may have extra capacity right now?
- Who's new here and might want to learn new tasks?
- Who *outside* of your department could help?

Election staff backup planner

Main area of work	Key responsibilities	Current owner	Back-up owner 1	Back-up owner 2
	<i>What are the major tasks and responsibilities?</i>			
TEAM: ADMINISTRATION				
Overall Election Department management	Oversee admin of voter files, warehouse, community outreach, tabulation, and all admin operations	Nick	Shannon	Darrell
Department finance	Manage expense sheets, run payroll, enforce credit card policy, supervise all audits	Yvette	Maya	Fernando

Back-up owner 2	Required materials, tools, credentials	Next steps and notes
	<i>What materials are needed to do the work? Where are they? How will back-up staff access what's needed?</i>	<i>What needs to be done to set up back-up staff for success?</i>
Darrell	2019-2020 Business Plan is posted on the website. Staff records are kept in cloud storage; Nick can provide temporary password.	Shannon has budget and process-to-goals document that she'll share with Admin team in June 5 meeting. Shannon needs to ask Darrell about exact division of labor if Nick is out of the office.
Fernando	Login to Intuit here [link], audit records are maintained by the contractors, with backups in cloud storage. Payroll schedule is here [link to spreadsheet]. Maya already has login credentials.	Yvette is meeting with Maya and Ferando via Zoom in last week of May. Together, they'll set a new temporary password. Primary owner should contact audit company in first week of June.

Sources of support

RAPID RESPONSE FROM THE ELECTIONS GROUP

The Elections Group



Jennifer Morrell



Noah Praetz

What's the Election Superhero Project?

Veteran experts providing coaching and material support

How can you get help from the Superheroes? How can you lend your superpower?



superheroes@electionsgroup.com

Sources of support

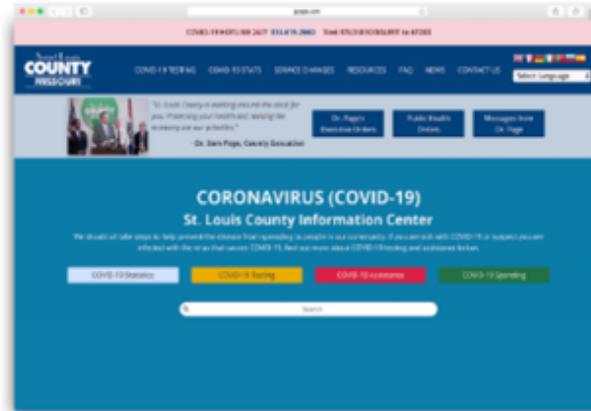
TECH HELP FROM THE U.S. DIGITAL RESPONSE

What is the U.S. Digital Response?



The image shows a screenshot of the U.S. Digital Response website. The top navigation bar is black with white text. On the left is the logo, which consists of the letters 'US' in a white box above three horizontal white lines, followed by the words 'DIGITAL RESPONSE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the logo are three navigation links: 'Projects', 'Governments', and 'Volunteers', all in white text. Below the navigation bar is a large black section with white text. The main heading is 'Support for Crisis Response' in a large, white, serif font. Below this is a paragraph of text in a smaller, white, sans-serif font: 'U.S. Digital Response puts experienced, pro bono technology teams to work in support of public servants responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Our volunteers help government get the tools they need to deliver critical services to the people who need them. We're a non-partisan effort; if we can help, we will.' Below this paragraph is another line of text: 'Tell us the challenges you're facing. We'll get back to you within hours.'

What does USDR do?



Helping County Websites Handle Increased Traffic

St. Louis County, MO

Volunteers used our [best practices](#) for government design to offer content strategy support for [St. Louis County](#) to handle increased traffic, receive frequent updates, and reduce the burdens on call centers, all while being extremely easy for users to navigate.

How can election departments get help from USDR?



governments@usdigitalresponse.org

Sources of support

HOW YOUR STATE ASSOCIATION CAN HELP

How do I find my state association?



Filter By: State Category Search

ILLINOIS

Illinois Association of County Clerks and Recorders
County [Visit Website](#)

Illinois State Board of Elections
State [Visit Website](#)

CCCA's approach to COVID-19



- COVID issue tracking
- Surveys to rapidly assess members' needs
- PIO services available on call

Connecting and lifting up locals



Secure or leverage resources



COLORADO COUNTY CLERKS ASSOCIATION

Money for county clerks aimed at helping staffers work at home

Contact: Lynn Bartels
303-748-4502 / againlynn@gmail.com

DENVER, March 23, 2020 -- An organization that awards money to Colorado's county clerks to help them update recording equipment allocated \$200,000 to assist their offices during the coronavirus catastrophe.

The money will be used to help clerks purchase up to three laptop computers so staffers can record documents as they work from home.

Push for policy changes or protect proven programs

Counties Seek Election Law Changes

Posted on Monday, May 4, 2020 by Gant Team in National News



 Bipartisan Policy Center

This Year, States Should Process Absentee Ballots Before Election Day

[Home](#) / [State](#) / [Article](#)

Making changes to keep voting safe during the coronavirus



Let's talk

DISCUSSION



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Share your thoughts

- What resonated with you from today's webinar? (Any “ah-ha” moments?)
- What are your next steps?
- What questions do you have about what we covered today?
- What questions do you have about what we didn't cover today?

As questions come up for you...

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

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We've covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP



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Today's resources

Petriglieri's "Crisis Leadership" article hbr.org/2020/04/the-psychology-behind-effective-crisis-leadership

Lifelabs: Emotion Audit twitter.com/LifeLabsLearn/status/1250156466960564225/photo/1

CTCL: staff backup planner template <https://www.techandciviclelife.org/covid-19-webinars/>

The Elections Group superheroes@electionsgroup.com

U.S. Digital Response governments@usdigitalresponse.org

electionLine state association directory electionline.org/states

What was your experience with today's webinar?

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

Up next

- ~~Supporting election officials (Thursday, May 21)~~
- Planning 2020 workload and resource allocation (Tuesday, May 26)
- Ensuring access, equity, and inclusion (Thursday, May 28)
- Educating voters about their options (Thursday, June 4)
- Maintaining voter lists (Tuesday, June 9)
- Managing mail ballot request forms (Thursday, June 11)
- Organizing ballot dropoff locations (Tuesday, June 16)
- Streamlining the inbound ballot process (Thursday, June 18)
- Verifying and curing signatures (Tuesday, June 23)
- Recruiting and training election workers (Thursday, June 25)
- Implementing public health guidelines for voting locations (Tuesday, June 30)

techandcivicliflife.org/covid-19-webinars/

Thanks!

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