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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Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

Harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

@helloCTCL
www.techandciviclife.org
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

https://hbr.org/2020/04/the-psychology-behind-effective-crisis-leadership
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTION</th>
<th>FEELS LIKE</th>
<th>DIAGNOSIS</th>
<th>COPING PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Body tightness, whirring mind</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Move, breathe slow, limit media, focus on what you can control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperstress (too much stress)</td>
<td>Pressure, weight, overwhelm</td>
<td>Also normal</td>
<td>Re-prioritize, delegate, accept that you won't get it all done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eustress (positive stress)</td>
<td>Adrenaline rush, frenzied action</td>
<td>So normal</td>
<td>Use it! But also sleep, eat, take breaks, make slower decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>Loss, sadness, bitterness, anger</td>
<td>Just as normal</td>
<td>Talk it out, write about it, rest, look for a sense of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Comparing suffering, self hate</td>
<td>Totally normal</td>
<td>Offer help, find gratitude, accept that your guilt won't serve others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Tank on empty, weak body</td>
<td>Another normal one</td>
<td>Sleep, eat, take long breaks, prioritize, find small pleasures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>Feeling small, sad, trapped, alone</td>
<td>Utterly normal</td>
<td>Ritualize connection, join groups, reminisce, help others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loopiness</td>
<td>Getting silly, zany, quirky, dazed</td>
<td>Yep - normal</td>
<td>Let yourself laugh, play, take breaks, move, be weird.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CREATING A STAFF BACKUP PLAN

Boost resilience in your office
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main area of work</th>
<th>Key responsibilities</th>
<th>Current owner</th>
<th>Back-up owner 1</th>
<th>Back-up owner 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the major tasks and responsibilities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEAM: ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Election Department management</td>
<td>Oversee admin of voter files, warehouse, community outreach, tabulation, and all admin operations</td>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>Darrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department finance</td>
<td>Manage expense sheets, run payroll, enforce credit card policy, supervise all audits</td>
<td>Yvette</td>
<td>Maya</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back-up owner</td>
<td>Required materials, tools, credentials</td>
<td>Next steps and notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner 2</td>
<td>What materials are needed to do the work? Where are they? How will back-up staff access what's needed?</td>
<td>What needs to be done to set up back-up staff for success?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrell</td>
<td>2019-2020 Business Plan is posted on the website. Staff records are kept in cloud storage; Nick can provide temporary password.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Download template from: https://www.techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/
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?

Support for Crisis Response

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.

Tell us the challenges you’re facing. We’ll get back to you within hours.

usdigitalresponse.org
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?

electionline.org/states
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

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.

Contact: Lynn Bartels
303-748-4502 / againlynn@gmail.com
Push for policy changes or protect proven programs
Let’s talk

DISCUSSION
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

hello@techandciviclife.org
We’ve covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>URL/Contact Information</th>
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<td>Petriglieri’s “Crisis Leadership” article</td>
<td>hbr.org/2020/04/the-psychology-behind-effective-crisis-leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelabs: Emotion Audit</td>
<td>twitter.com/LifeLabsLearn/status/1250156466960564225/photo/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTCL: staff backup planner template</td>
<td><a href="https://www.techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/">https://www.techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Elections Group</td>
<td><a href="mailto:superheroes@electionsgroup.com">superheroes@electionsgroup.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Digital Response</td>
<td><a href="mailto:governments@usdigitalresponse.org">governments@usdigitalresponse.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electionLine state association directory</td>
<td>electionline.org/states</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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)

[techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/]
Thanks!

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