

August 2024

2024 ELECTION TRAINING SERIES

Media & Rapid Response Messaging



LWVUS Communications Department

Introductions



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Community Norms

1. **Be respectful:** Assume positive intent but understand impact
2. Understand privilege and position
3. **Be present:** Practice **active listening**, **bring your full self**, and limit distractions
4. **Courage over comfort:** embrace hard conversations and conflict
5. **Step up, step back:** Allow space for conversation and flexibility
6. We are here to learn!

Logistical Reminders

- We're discussing all election work with a **nonpartisan lens** and a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens**
- **This session is being recorded:** content will be shared post-training on lwv.org/2024electionwebinars
- We are using **Zoom's transcription service**. This is automated, and we can't guarantee 100% accuracy.

Training Goals

- Leagues feel prepared to speak to press about 2024 elections in their community
- Leagues understand their rights and responsibilities when speaking to press



Agenda

- Press relations best practices
 - Being available
 - Responding to press inquiries
 - Answering questions
- Before the election
 - Election narratives
- Election Day
 - Rapid response
 - What to raise up the flagpole
- After the election
 - Dealing with unfavorable press
 - Questions

IDEA: watch for our extra suggestions to implement if you have the capacity/comfort/ability!

Press Relations Best Practices

DON'T PANIC!

Reporters are people with a job to do just like you.

Be responsive to media requests yet measured in how fast to respond.

Review the request a few times before determining how to respond.

If the request isn't clear, ask the reporter to clarify or restate their story needs or questions.

CREATE WIN-WIN SITUATIONS

We have goals, and reporters have goals. In working with press, find ways to meet LWV's goals while helping reporters meet some of their own.

Identifying what would be a win for the LWV and for the reporter is an effective decision-making process for identifying if, when, or how to respond to media requests.

Press Relations Best Practices

Being Available

- Designate a spokesperson
 - Someone with a title in your League
- Be reachable, be available
 - Email address on your website
- Prep with key messages
 - Talking points on LMS

IDEA: Also designate someone to “play publicist”

IDEA: Practice! Watch White House press briefings

IDEA: Prep a general member to be available for interviews as a “regular League member”

Press Relations Best Practices

Answering Questions

KEY POINT:

We're not there to answer a reporter's questions

We're there to deliver our message to the reporter's audience

Press Relations Best Practices

Answering Questions

Get from their question to your message:

- “That’s a really interesting question. It makes me think of...”
- “What voters really need to know is...”
- “Yes, I think that’s true, and here’s why...”

IDEA: Share a story. People remember stories more than stats. Use the story as representative of the issue.

IDEA: Statistics/data can support your message, but only share one data point. People don’t remember more than one.

Press Relations Best Practices

Answering Questions: Basics

- Keep it nonpartisan
 - Respond to the issue, not the person or party
- Don't make things personal
 - Address the problem without addressing individual feelings
- Focus on solutions
 - Don't focus on how we got here, focus on how we get where we need to go
- Bake the question into your answer
- Have talking points & pivots ready
 - Talking points on LMS

Press Relations Best Practices

Answering Questions: On the Record

- Act as if everything you say is on the record
 - Talking with reporters
 - Anything public, including social media
 - We recommend: during election season, refrain from politics on social media

- If a reporter reaches out on social media
 - Don't respond on social media — give them your contact info in a private message

IDEA: Audio record interviews on your phone

Before the Election

NOTE: this training is specific for election season.

The focus for this period is: combatting mis- and disinformation that would keep voters from voting.

Prioritize media opportunities related to GOTV and elections.

It's ok to pass on media opportunities not related to the election.



Before the Election Messaging



- Getting out the vote
 - Make your voting plan!
- Election info for voters
 - VOTE411 has all the info you need to make your voice heard!
- Candidate stances/voter guides
- Responding to early voting issues
- Inoculation messaging to combat misinformation

Election Narratives

- Attacks on VOTE411
- Project 2025
- Kamala Harris
- Donald Trump
- Engagement with younger voters
- Attacks on our nonpartisanship



Election Day Messaging



Rapid Response

- Establish a network
 - Spokesperson can tap for information before responding
 - Election rapid response guidance on LMS
- Plan the day
 - Where will the spokesperson be located throughout the day?

Election Day Messaging

What to Raise Up the Flagpole

- Any violence
 - Law enforcement involved
 - Emergency service required
- Things preventing people from voting
 - Technical failures
 - Voter suppression



- Get to safety, call 911
- Contact state League
- Direct reporter questions to LWVUS



- Call Election Protection Hotline (866-OUR-VOTE)
- Raise to state League
- Could be a trend, so we must coordinate a response

After the Election Messaging

- Post-election message template on League Management Site

IDEA: Issue a statement from your League to local press

- What we saw: turnout, participation, data, energy of the day
 - Generally positive, but mention issues if they were significant — offer solutions and a way forward; share observations rather than speculation
- Thank election workers
- Results will take time!

IF THERE IS VIOLENCE AT YOUR POLLS: Work with LWVUS on a post-election statement

Dealing with Unfavorable Press



- We don't want to breathe more life into inaccuracies or attacks.
- Sometimes we should ask for corrections. Sometimes there is not a benefit to doing so.
- Evaluate your communications channels. It's not always best to go through the media — we can do corrections without elevating unfavorable press.
- Contact media@lww.org for guidance in responding.

Questions?

Upcoming Trainings

- Thursday, Sept. 5, 1pm: Social Media & Branding
- Thursday, Sept. 12, 1pm: Issues with Debates & Candidate Forums
- Thursday, Sept. 19, 5pm: Direct Voter Contact
- Thursday, Oct. 3, 1pm: Preparing for Post-Election
- Thursday, Oct. 10, 5pm: Bystander Training & Voter Intimidation

LWV.org/2024ElectionWebinars

Reminder: Track Your Impact!

- **As you do election activities, use tools to track your impact numbers!**
- **Annual League Survey** | Learn more about gathering data during election season, find data collection tools, and more on the 2024 Annual League Survey page on the League Management Site
- The Annual League Survey will be open in **January**

Share Your Feedback!

Please scan the QR code
and **take two minutes to
complete our training
session feedback form!**
Responses are anonymous.

