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Election Communications Back to the Basics: Building Partnerships

Building partnerships can help election officials communicate important information to voters and can be mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

As election officials begin thinking about starting outreach to potential partner organizations, they should refer to the general principles of building partnerships:

1. Leverage existing contacts
2. Emphasize shared goals
3. Establish reciprocity

Make sure that it's a 360 degree relationship when you're starting to form these partnerships.

Alton Dillard, Communications Advisor

Establishing reciprocity can help election officials leverage, create, and maintain successful and long-lasting partnerships. Alton Dillard, a communications advisor for The Elections Group advises, "make sure that it's a 360 degree relationship when you're starting to form these partnerships." Dillard suggests that election officials be prepared to give tours and informational presentations to partner organizations to achieve this. Before engaging with a new partner, it's important to make sure that the partnership fits within the legal and operational procedures of the office.

Types of Partnerships

Intra-governmental partnerships are relationships that you build with other government offices in your jurisdiction. They can help election officials with communicating to the media, sharing information, raising budgetary considerations, and even carrying out emergency operations. Several election offices exist as departments or divisions of larger offices within a city, state, county, town etc., These agencies can *and should* work together to ensure that information is not only being properly disseminated to the public, but also internally. Election officials should be maintaining relationships with internal stakeholders, elected officials, emergency management

offices, and more in preparation for the election.

Institutional partnerships are likely what come to mind when thinking about partnerships. These will likely be partnerships with the media and civic and community based organizations, and the experts discuss the pros and cons associated with both. Institutional partnerships can be the eyes and ears on the ground for the election officials and can help report issues, questions that the community has, and more to help improve election communication plans, strategy, and outreach. Partnering with community organizations can help to extend the reach of election offices, especially if those groups serve hard-to-reach populations. Additionally, forming an election advisory group composed of members from intra-governmental and institutional partnerships can be an effective tool for election officials who are looking to fine-tune their outreach efforts and identify gaps.

A complete list of featured resources is listed below.

- [Center for Tech and Civic Life's Communicating Trusted Election Information Series](#)
- [Communications Resource Desk](#)
- [U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence](#)
 - [??Outreach letter to community organizations](#)
- [VoterCast](#)

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