CAMPAIGNING DURING CORONAVIRUS

Thank you to our friends at The Management Institute, Arena, Critical Mention, Outreach Circle, PowerLabs, BCom Solutions, DNC, Tuesday Company, the M&R Lab, Power Labs, Progressphiles listserv, epolitics.com, other Democratic state parties and committees, and others for providing some of the content that we repurposed for this guide. Please let us know if we failed to thank you here.

In light of the coronavirus epidemic and the Democratic Party’s recommendations to cancel in-person gatherings, postpone all in-person campaigning, and adopt remote/virtual environments, we want to provide our candidate campaigns, local Democratic parties, and allied activist organizations and campaigns with recommendations on how to continue campaigning during the coronavirus.

A good reading primer is this Medium article from a group of activists, organizers, technologists, and communicators: How might a pandemic affect US society and politics in 2020? Also, Epolitics.com political organizing and campaigning in the time of coronavirus.

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TRAININGS ON HOW TO ORGANIZE DURING THIS TIME

- Social Fundraising is Easier Than You Think - Non-Profit Hub
- Webinar - Digital Organizing 101 - Fri March 20 - DNC
- Tips for Organizing While Social Distancing - March 20, 24, 25 - Outreach Circle
- Planning Remote Meetings, Summits, and Conferences - Fri, March 20 - The Digital Plan
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- Greater Good Strategy is starting twice-weekly virtual office hours on Facebook Live. The staff will be on hand to answer all digital marketing and fundraising questions.
- Nonprofit + Campaign Strategies for COVID-19 - 3/31 and 4/1

GUIDES FROM OTHERS ON HOW TO ORGANIZE DURING THIS TIME

- Coronavirus Tech Handbook
- Campaigning During Coronavirus - Tech For Campaigns
- DNC Tech Guide to Remote Work - DNC
- Working from Home: Cybersecurity Guidance - DNC
- Digital Distancing during COVID-19 - BCom Solutions
- Tech Yourself Online Trainings - Tech Yourself
- Facebook Live Best Practices - Facebook
- Facebook Live Closed Captioning Guide - Facebook
- 7 organizing strategies in the time of social distancing - Mobilize America
- Convert your in-person event to a remote action
- COVID - 19 Organizing Guide - Outreach Circle
- Resources for organizers, campaigners and digital strategists to respond to coronavirus - PowerLabs
- Digital Strategy for Political campaigns during the coronavirus - The Digital Plan
- Political Fundraising During the Coronavirus Pandemic - CallTime.AI
- [eBook]: Crisis Communications Primer - Critical Mention
- [Blog]: Tips for Conducting Virtual Interviews - Critical Mention
- [Blog]: The Importance of Monitoring Trending Topics - Critical Mention
- Arena Toolbox
- Calendar of distance-organizing trainings

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising Tactics

Fundraising experts in the nonprofit and political world are predicting fundraising is going to take a hit during the coronavirus, and will be especially hard on those that rely on events.
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During this time when we are recommending cancelling all in-person gatherings, there are still ways to fundraise during coronavirus. Try video conference fundraisers to replace in person fundraisers, and connect with your top funders and ensure their 2020 commitment.

Think through the whole process of cancelling and planning events. The Institute of Fundraising has good guidance on the full thought process.

- Virtual fundraisers utilizing video conferencing
- Old-fashioned mailing things out
- Increased call time
- Supplemental email and other tactics, such as text fundraising and digital appeals*
- 1:1 donor meetings or small group gatherings with video conferencing
- Engage your supporter base with online surveys that ask respondents what they want and need during this time and what kind of policies they’d like to see to combat coronavirus

*Don’t use email subject lines and other messaging in fundraising appeals that are alarmist

General Planning and Processes

- Think long-term and set up for late summer and fall
- Insist on having “act of God” contingency clauses in all your event related contracts to provide a safeguard against later cancellation
- Review all signed contracts to determine if you’re within the date range for full or partial refunds
- Familiarize yourself with the refund process for any currently scheduled events
- Communicate, communicate, communicate - especially when canceling an event, including talking points regarding factors considered in the decision to cancel

Democratic Digital Fundraising Resources

- ActBlue - support@actblue.com
- NGP VAN - support@ngpvan.com
Contingency Language for Future Fundraiser Invites Example

The safety of our guests, the event staff, and the speakers are our top concern. We don’t know what the future holds for public gatherings due to the coronavirus outbreak, but we will continue to monitor the situation and follow the advice of medical professionals to determine if we need to reschedule. In the meantime, we hope that you will save the date and help with our fundraising by purchasing tickets at [link].

MESSAGING

- Hold yourself and your team to a high standard by helping others putting out information and educating the public with accurate, verifiable information about the pandemic, and by fighting misinformation that you see about coronavirus
- Use messaging that moves away from a panic response and toward a caring, protective response and frame our goals as protecting others
- Use crisis communications tactics and develop a crisis communications checklist
- How Progressives Should Talk About COVID-19 from Nicole Carty and Anthony Torres
- Talking About COVID-19: A Call for Racial, Economic, and Health Equity from the Opportunity Agenda
- Talking About Coronavirus: Centering Language around Inclusion, Empowerment, and Justice from the Opportunity Agenda
- COVID-19 Messaging Document from Anat Shenker-Osorio

ORGANIZING
Ideas for Organizing During the Coronavirus

ONLINE CONFERENCES: Modify conferences to online gatherings where you can excite and train your supporters.

A national progressive advocacy organization changed their annual volunteer summit from a 3-day, politico-filled in-person event to an online-only convening with Zoom hosting speakers, training, and relationship building.
VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER MEETINGS & HOUSE PARTIES: Invite people to a virtual phone bank, text bank, letter-writing party, or general organizing meeting by using Google Hangouts, Zoom, or other webinar technology to run them. Give them a quick campaign update, and then do some useful volunteering. The best meetings will start with an emotional campaign update from an organizer, staffer, or the candidate. After introducing, train them with the skill they’ll be using and then have them do it right there on the call or webinar, bring everyone back together for a debrief, and then have them commit to the next step. Take a page out of the remote work playbook and gather everyone at the same day and time for a video conference to organize together. Platforms like Zoom allow for “breakout rooms” so that volunteers can meet each other, or use Facebook Live for the easiest low-lift solution.

- **Test meeting.** Not everyone will be familiar with your meeting software of choice. If possible, set up a test meeting that people can join in advance to download any drivers and try out cameras/microphones.
- **Cameras on.** Encourage everyone to join with their cameras on (put this in the invite). It’s more fun and helps to make it feel more real.
- **Introductions.** Start with introductions to build a sense of community. For groups that already know each other, try an icebreaker.
- **Follow up.** We have found texting to schedule calls is extremely efficient. Affinity texting is especially helpful here as well.

TALK TO YOUR PEOPLE: Ask organizers to build relationships and give guidance through online chat and texts. Personal outreach matters in a disconnected time so call and text your whole list and do it over and over again.

TELE TOWN HALLS: Use Facebook Live or a real-time AMA as the venue for your next town hall. Use your phone camera or your computer keyboard to respond to questions from the safety and comfort of your home.

ONLINE CONTENT: Lean into user-generated content! We know it does extremely well online, and folks can DIY from their living room. We’ve seen a statewide labor union create their own volunteer recruitment video by cutting together selfie videos made by members of the union talking about organizing online.

RELATIONAL ORGANIZING: Relational contact (a voter contact by someone they know rather than a stranger) has been shown to be one of the most effective
methods of increasing voter turnout and volunteer engagement. Look at using digital tools like Team by Tuesday, Hustle, ThruText (an Alaska Democratic Party Partner, please contact us for details on this platform), OutVote, Outreach Circle, and others to allow for digital-direct voter contact. We know that supporters talking to their friends are 20x more impactful than cold outreach. Whether your strategy calls for friend-to-friend, friend-to-peer, or even peer-to-peer outreach, it is now easier than ever to meet people where they are: online. Have organizers use peer-to-peer text and phone banking to activate your list in their area, and recruit relational organizing volunteers. Each volunteer is then responsible for reaching out to 10-20 of their friends/family members about your campaign every 1-2 months. Their ask to their friends could be to support your candidacy or cause, volunteer, donate, vote, or something else.

**GROW YOUR TEAM’S SOCIAL FOLLOWING:** Train organizers to focus on growing their own social media audiences on social channels with people living in key areas. Start with follow/followback blitzes, posting tons of content (5-10x per day), commenting on dozens of relevant posts, and DMing new followers with your petition or voter registration form. Have organizers identify 10-20 key influencers originally from target areas, and encourage them to speak out for your campaign or issue. Then, organizers can grow their partnerships with local chapters of key allied organizations via social media interaction and planned joint activities such as Twitter chats. Organizations can sometimes be uncomfortable with this ceding of control, but it’s worked out better than most organizations’ local social media channels every time we’ve done it. Also consider pitching social media share squads among your supporters.

**CURATE A DIGITAL SPEAKER SERIES:** Organize an exclusive (or not exclusive!) speaker series where, however often you want, volunteers can call in/join a webinar. Consider pairing experts with speakers from impacted communities. Give super-volunteers a role introducing or asking questions. Invite reporters who might be interested in doing a profile, or do it publicly as a series of Facebook Live events or even pre-recorded videos, released once a day for a week or two.

**BUILD ONLINE COMMUNITY:** Start a Slack instance for your campaign. Give organizers, volunteers, and supporters a place to socialize online as offices remain shuttered and hangout spots empty out. Encourage non-work-related interaction in these spaces, and model it yourself. It will help connect folks, provide meaningful experiences beyond the transactional ask, and build long-term affinity for your campaign.
DO A LOCAL MEDIA PUSH: Timed with a news moment on your issue, encourage volunteers to submit letters to the editor or op-eds to their local paper. Provide a toolkit. Support on social media by encouraging people to tweet at their local media outlet to cover your issue. Call local reporters and set up virtual briefings on your issue with a local organizer and a local expert or influential voice. Pitch an editorial board.

PUSH FOR ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION: In-person voter registration events are going to be affected, but we can’t lose time getting voters registered for 2020. Promote online voter registration heavily via the Alaska Democratic Party website and Division of Elections website.

PROMOTE ONLINE CENSUS: It has never been easier to fill out your Census form, whether online, over the phone, or by mail - all without having to meet a census taker. Go to my2020census.gov and you can complete yours right now!

MISCELLANEOUS:

In the current environment, going door-to-door can put both the canvasser and the canvsee at risk. Fortunately, there is a lot you can do to convert in-person (both paid and volunteer) programs to digital outreach programs. The key is to convert cold outreach to warm outreach. Below is an example:

**Community mapping.** Create a thorough list of all organizations, community leaders (make sure to include school leaders such as PTA presidents and after-school coordinators and coaches, see here for more details), current and former elected officials

**Training.** Train volunteers in deep canvassing and building relationships. The goal should be ongoing engagement and not a transaction.

**Reach out.** Update your call scripts for VIPs and community leaders. At the end of each call ask for introductions to others in the community.

**Digital ambassador.** Ask local leaders if they are willing to be digital ambassadors for your program.

[Above ideas are from Outreach Circle]
Specific Opportunities & Volunteer Help

Webinar & Conference Call Technologies to Use

- GoToWebinar
- WebEx
- FreeConferenceCall.com
- Zoom
- Google Hangouts (video & voice meetings)
- MaestroConference
- Skype/Microsoft Office Teams (6 months free)

Texting & Relational Organizing Tools

Utilize #TechYourself to read about all the various technologies

Texting:
- Hustle*
- ThruText*
- Relay

Relational Organizing:
- Outreach Circle
- The Tuesday Company
- OutVote

*ADP has pricing partnerships with these companies to provide discounts to campaigns. Please contact lindsay@alaskademocrats.org and erin@alaskademocrats.org for pricing.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Premium Google video chat is free right now

Train the Trainer T3 Webinar Program
The Alaska Democratic Party, together with the DNC and ASDC Best Practices Institute, are excited to announce the launch of our 2020 Train the Trainer (T3) Webinar Training Program!

T3 is a free six-week, twelve-part webinar course, covering several aspects of grassroots campaigning. This program seeks to expand the skills of progressive activists and volunteers, by ensuring that comprehensive training is free and accessible for Democrats all over the country. Register for T3 today, and help us take our country back in 2020!

Participants must complete all twelve sessions in order to receive certification. All training sessions will include a skills test to track retention and participation. Trainings will be recorded and made available following each session via a weekly wrap-up email, delivered on Fridays.

CLICK HERE to submit your registration for the 2020 T3 Training Program!
Registration will close at 11:59 p.m. ET, on Sunday, April 5.

CONFIDENTIALITY & SECURE COMMUNICATIONS

Because of the lack of in-person confidential meetings that may occur and the increased email and online traffic we’ll see, we highly suggest that now is the time to complete the security checklist and use encrypted communication.

Switch to using Signal, Wickr, or WhatsApp for sensitive messaging.

HR: WORK FROM HOME & MANAGING REMOTE EMPLOYEES

Shout out to our friends at The Management Center for these resources

5 Tips for Managing Remotely During COVID-19

On preparing your workplace:
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- [Coronavirus Could Force Teams to Work Remotely](#) (we particularly like the section on normalizing new work environments)
- [Going Remote Overnight: Preparing for the Coronavirus](#)
- [6 Tips For Managing Remote Employees: How To Maintain Productivity And Engagement](#)
- [These 5 Tech Companies Are Providing Free Remote Working Tools During The Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

For coping with stress:

- [Coronavirus: How Emotional Contagion Exacts a Toll](#)
- [7 Science-Based Strategies to Cope with Coronavirus Anxiety](#)
- [13 Of the Best Apps to Manage Your Stress](#)

On how people with disabilities are being impacted:

- [5 Things To Know About Coronavirus And People With Disabilities](#)
- [‘The Cripples Will Save You’: A Critical Coronavirus Message from a Disability Activist](#)

And, a reminder that infection is only one thing that’s scary about this outbreak: [When Xenophobia Spreads Like a Virus](#)

Bonus (because who doesn’t need a bit of levity during tough times?): [How to Work From Home Most Chaotically](#)

**CONNECT WITH OTHER ORGANIZERS**

*Thanks to PowerLab for below list!*

**COVID-19 Response Community Slack**
Join a Slack team where organizers, healers, community leaders and practitioners can respond around a national response to COVID-19. This is a space for both strategic brainstorming and planning, as well as community building via sharing resources, personal stories and opportunities to digitally connect.

**f4c-response listserv**
This group is a place for those who facilitate online (or need to) can learn, share and make offers to the world as the Covid19 virus plays out. We welcome (online) facilitators, organizers, technology stewards (people who can straddle between
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communities and technologies and help people make and implement tech choices and other interested people. We welcome offers, asks, experiments and sharing.

People's Coronavirus Response Facebook group
This group is intended to serve as a venue for discussing three major issues: the magnitude of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, the medical steps indicated to deal with it, and practical responses to the new social challenges it poses in everyday life and in the political work of left activists.

PUBLIC OPINION ON CORONAVIRUS

Tracking polling on the coronavirus with daily updates:

- How concerned are you about a coronavirus outbreak in your local area?
- How satisfied are you with the U.S. Government’s current response to the coronavirus outbreak?
- Additional survey with questions about the outbreak

HEALTH RESOURCES

- CDC Fact Sheet (printable, updated March 5, 2020)
- CDC Interactive Web Site (ongoing updates)
- World Health Organization Coronavirus Overview Video
- CDC Guidance on Handwashing (video)
- CDC Travel Guidance (interactive web page, ongoing updates)
- The National Governors Association’s Coronavirus – What You Need to Know page includes links to specific official state actions and activities.
- National Institutes of Health Coronavirus News & Resources
- The Lancet COVID-19 Resource Centre (original research & medical editorials)
- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services