

# America Amplified: Election 2020

## A Playbook For Community Engagement Journalism



A community listening session on teen vaping in Kokomo, Indiana.  
Side Effects Public Media

January 31, 2020  
v. 1.0

# Index

<b>MISSION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NOTES ON THIS PLAYBOOK</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>COLOR KEY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DISCOVER YOUR COMMUNITY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RESEARCH</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PREPARATION: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>7</b>
Determine the tools/platforms you'll use to ask these questions, a system for collecting responses and the way you'll deploy these tools	7
Events\Listening Sessions	8
Flyers	8
Online form	8
Print cards/postcards	9
Text service	9
Ads	10
Direct mailing	10
Social media	10
<b>2. UNDERSTAND AND REPORT</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3. ELEVATE: ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, FOLLOW THROUGH</b>	<b>16</b>

## MISSION

The *America Amplified: Election 2020* initiative will empower public media to create innovative journalism by listening to communities and elevating diverse voices. The effort will strengthen collaboration within public media, build trust in local journalism and deepen understanding of America's needs and aspirations.

**This will be accomplished through a community engagement approach where journalists cultivate relationships with communities to discover, understand, and elevate community needs and aspirations.**

## WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL

The role of the journalist, and the institutions they represent, is changing. Trust in media is eroding. Ideological fault lines are being reinforced by a fragmented media world that often magnifies differences.

That is especially true during an election year. More often than not, the media follow the horse race, instead of revealing the rich, diverse and complicated community narratives unfolding every day in schools, in city halls, in kitchens, in diners, in bowling alleys, at sporting events, at churches, mosques and synagogues. The 2016 election exposed how little media outlets, especially at the national level, understood about the perspectives and concerns of people who live in America.

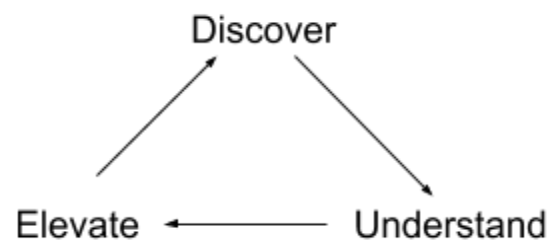
[It is more important than ever to listen to our communities](#) and embrace the complicated and sometimes contradictory narratives that emerge.

Rather than extracting stories from our communities, we will involve them in our journalism, understanding that:

- People are curious - about where they live, about the people who share spaces with them, about why things are the way they are and what the solutions could be.
- People care - about where they live, and about how to understand and address the problems in their communities.
- People want to engage.

Our goal is to understand and synthesize what we hear, then report based on the expressed community needs and aspirations.

How do you do that? We have some ideas.....



## NOTES ON THIS PLAYBOOK

This living playbook is designed to be a catalog for community engagement. It will be updated with the feedback you provide to the *America Amplified: Election 2020* team. It has *many* options and concepts to consider; it is up to you to determine which tools, methods and concepts you believe will work best for the community/-ies you're planning to engage and for your staff.

Questions/Feedback/Concerns/Conversations/Confessions:

[Ann Alquist](#) | O: 816-235-6936 | Mobile: 401-464-2112

[Matthew Long-Middleton](#) | O: 816-235-2852 | Mobile: 978-273-1261

---

## COLOR KEY

Throughout this process, the *America Amplified* team can offer you direct resources (like a reporter/producer, editors, workshops and trainings). There will also be a few moments when we ask that you share with us. They are color coded in this way:

**The America Amplified team has resources you can request**

**The America Amplified team needs you to report something**

---

### **America Amplified team needs you to report something**

To help us measure the impact of this work we ask that if you have any kind of audit of the diversity of the sources featured in your work, you can share the audit with [Matthew](#) at the America Amplified team.

We will also be asking you to keep track of the sources featured in any published *America Amplified* work. [Matthew](#) can help you build tool to track that.

## 1. DISCOVER YOUR COMMUNITY

What are your goals as a collaborative/station in reaching out to this community? To establish connections to under-served communities, to reach new audiences?

Your own collaborative/station mission and vision can help direct where you should be deploying these efforts. Remember, community engagement methods can also be deployed with your existing core audience.

Here are some basic guidelines as you develop your engagement:

### RESEARCH

#### A. Developing Cultural Literacy and Respecting Cultural Boundaries

As you prepare to enter into relationships with new communities, learn about their past narratives. Read books, articles, community papers, demographic data; talk to historians. Also consider non-traditional research: What are people selling on [Facebook Marketplace](#), and [Craigslist](#)? What are the top posts for that area on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)? What are people talking about on [Nextdoor.com](#)? Also, consider picking up a few magazines aimed at communities you want to engage with: *Guns and Ammo*, *Ebony*, *Teen Vogue*, community papers, etc. Contextual research will help you avoid misunderstandings and recognize when you're witnessing important stories.

- Cultural boundaries to consider:
  - **Gender:** For some communities, it may not be customary to have private conversations one-on-one with someone not of their gender. Alternatively, a public forum or listening session may be the realm of men, but maybe women hold a lot of power and perspective in the home.
  - **Generation:** Some cultures put a high value on generational deference. Be conscious that older people may not feel comfortable being asked questions by a younger person or vice-versa.
  - **Race:** Race is a powerful identity fault line. Be aware of systemic inequity and histories of oppression. Know the role media has played in perpetuating and exacerbating painful stereotypes, injustice and oppression, *especially* if there are specific examples in the community/-ies you'll be engaging with.
  - **Language:** Of course, it's easiest to communicate in a person's first language. Whenever possible deploy people who speak that language, even a little, and consider activating translators.
  - **Politics:** Polarization is significant, even [the way we talk about "discussion" is different](#). Trust that most people have their positions because they care about something, their family, their future, etc. Practice the same empathy you would for any other person/source.

#### B. Check Your Biases And Don't Even *Think* About Stories (yet)

So you now have some beginning of insight into this community. Get ready to *really* listen. Take time to [understand your own perspective](#) (from Poynter) and make an [honest inventory of your own privileges](#) (from Wellesley College) and [biases](#) (from Harvard). Know your blindspots and develop systems to help recognize and counter them.

## PREPARATION: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

### C. Find and develop a relationship with a community fixer/liason

It's beneficial to have someone help educate you about the community, be an advocate for your work and be the person who can bring people together. This fixer or liason may be one person or organization, but it can be more.

Here are ways to help you reach out to a fixer/liason and potential partnering organizations

- **Use station members (or lapsed members) to identify potential community brokers:** You may already have people who *love* your station who call this community home. Ask them about where they live and enlist them in your discovery work.
- **Do audience visioning:** What are some of the things you believe members of this community might be passionate about? Where do they spend their time? Having an idea of those answers may direct you toward potential partners or liaisons.
- **Sports:** If you are looking to engage Latino and African diasporas, follow soccer. Consider contacting local leagues who coordinate games to start informal conversations and develop new sources. High school sporting events cut across demographic lines and income lines; a lot of local pride is invested in high school sports.
- **Food:** Find festivals, harvests, community celebrations to partner with and engage with your target community. Some people may also meet regularly at McDonald's or a diner.
- **Community gathering spots:** libraries, museums, schools, salons, barbershops, places of worship, bars, cafes, mechanics, pharmacist, roller rinks, bowling alleys, VFW posts.

Make sure your liason can be:

- 1) An active partner to help guide you in what will be the most appropriate way to connect and listen to this community
- 2) Someone who is willing to facilitate connections with other people and institutions in their community

Be ready to explain this approach to your liason. What you give in return for their time and help isn't just exposure to your audience, but, through this work, the needs and aspirations of their community will be directly addressed. Stress that you're not here to *extract* stories, but to *discover* them through listening, and, if possible, you will commit to an ongoing relationship with this community. If there's [a history of journalists doing stories](#) in a negative light about this community, address that history upfront and make it clear that you're not here to do that story again.

### D. Develop questions

Your goal is to *discover* what this community cares about and what problems they've identified. You don't need many questions, but *how they are framed is essential*. Gear your questions toward understanding the day-to-day. If it's a question you couldn't see yourself knowing how to answer, then rework it.

- **The America Amplified team needs you to do something**  
Please include these two through-line questions and quick demographic info whenever engaging your community. These, of course, could also be your only questions.
  - **What most concerns you about your community or the country in the coming year?**
  - **What do you want people to understand about your community or your life?**
    - **Please share this info with us so we can follow up with you and understand the people we're reaching**
      - **Name, Contact (phone/email), ZIP code where you live, race**

- **Optional (if space/time allows and is appropriate):** This is an excellent time to introduce people to the rest of your work and offer them an option to receive updates about from the Election 2020 team on similar work happening across the nation. **EXAMPLE** signup for newsletters, podcasts, etc.

- Who are the changemakers in your community?
- When have you felt conflicted or torn in your community?
- When was your community united?
- What would you like someone who disagrees with you to understand?

#### **E. Be patient. Be open. Be willing to record later.**

Building trust takes time. With that in mind, enter the space (physical or digital) with an open mind and a willingness to believe whatever the community members share with you. Even if their information is inaccurate, there's almost always a telling and important reason they came to this idea and developed this perspective.

- Consider beginning your time with this community/-ies without your microphone. It's a great way to build accountability and establish transparency right off the bat.
- Be a human with your questions — take a moment to consider, “how might I answer this? Would I take issue with this framing?”
- Let these sources have more time than your instincts allow to fully develop and share their thoughts—welcome and embrace the silence that might come in a moment when someone is figuring out how they really feel and what they really want to say.
- Give people space to define what “community” means to them/how they identify. Their answers will surprise you, and they'll appreciate the agency you're subtly, but meaningfully providing them.
- As you spend more time with people and build an understanding, you can be more specific with your questions. If you're doing this responsibly, this will come naturally.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **F. Determine the tools/platforms you'll use to ask these questions, a system for collecting responses and the way you'll deploy these tools**

Can you piggyback on an existing cultural or community event (see [“Food”](#) and [“Sports”](#))? Can you partner with an institution that has relationships with the community you're trying to reach? (see [Find and engage a community fixer/liaison](#)) Is digital engagement appropriate, using a texting service or social platforms? Depending on what methods you choose you may need to create a spreadsheet ([America Amplified will provide a template soon](#)) to keep track of all your responses, but **designate a point person.**

Click here to see how one station put a lot of thought into how to reach non-traditional public media people.

Consider implementing one or all of these tools, but use your [cultural literacy](#) to think about where/how the community will be most likely to respond. If you plan to use multiple tools, consider rolling them out in an organized way so you can measure success and fail fast.

#### **America Amplified team has resources you can request/deploy**

We have a producer/reporter and two editors who could augment your team's efforts. Dream big, we may be able to help.

Additionally, [Ann](#) and [Matthew](#) can provide workshops, training and guidance to which of these options might work best for you.

---

- **Events\Listening Sessions**
  - Hold “coffee” hours at in a community’s established watering holes (this could be the local McDonald’s.)
  - Listening sessions
    - Citizenship classes at public libraries
  - Partner with sporting events/clubs (soccer, cricket, rugby, baseball, basketball, etc.)
  - Be sure to publicize the event well ahead of time on social channels, your airwaves, and others if possible.
  - Things to remember:
    - If the event is being recorded also remember to take photos and/or videos
    - If the event is *not* being recorded make notes later that day about what was discussed
- **Flyers**
  - Go old school. Post beautiful simple, large flyers around town, at gathering spots (libraries, schools, bus stops, grocery stores, bathrooms etc.) Have one direct clear question and a way of answering it. “Call 555-555-5555 and leave us a message,” “Text 5555” (if using a [texting service](#)), “Email XYZ@WWKK.org”, include a small URL and/or [QR code](#) directing them to a [form](#).
    - Good for: non-traditional public media people, people with limited internet access, geo-targeted reach
    - Downsides: takes time to physically deploy the signs, limited to one focused short question, focused geographic reach
- **Online form**
  - While internet access may be a struggle for some, [81% of US adults have a smartphone](#) and people may feel most comfortable and familiar with filling out online questionnaires. Freeware, such as [Google Forms](#) or [Survey Monkey](#), are simple tools to get quick responses. You can deploy the same form multiple times in multiple ways ([listening sessions](#), [flyers](#), [postcards](#), etc.). Remember to make it short—we recommend a survey that takes 2 minutes or less to fill out. If possible, include the *option* for respondents to share, at minimum, some element of contact info (email, phone) to follow up with them, you may also want to ask for demographic information.
    - Good for: reaching web savvy users, standardizing and centralizing responses
    - Downsides: limited to people with internet access, overly formal, can be limiting in giving individuals an opportunity to really express themselves.
  - [Hearken](#): If you have an account with Hearken, use it to collect answers. It will need to be embedded into a story
    - Good for: collecting and sorting answers.
    - Downsides: It’s expensive.
- **Print cards/postcards**
  - Good for: listening events, direct mailing, communities with limited internet access, leaving at community meeting places (libraries, cafes, bars, high-school sporting events, bowling alleys, grocery stores, shopping centers, etc.)



- Downsides: Costs money; tracking the responses and potential sources must be done manually (can be time intensive)
  - Things to remember:
    - Offer a space for people to share their contact info (for future follow up during the [UNDERSTAND](#) phase).
    - PENS!

Click here to see how KPCC used snail mail and email to reach new audiences.

- **Text service**
  - Texting is quick and intuitive and [most US adults own a cellphone](#). Get people to answer questions by texting you. Then you can follow up directly or at minimum share a link to the work when it's produced.
    - Good for: getting contact info, it's easy to follow up, very user friendly and accessible
    - Downsides: Most texting services cost money and of course responses will likely be *very* brief
  - Texting services:
    - [Ground Source](#) (works well with [Hearken](#))
    - [Other examples](#)
- **Ads**
  - **Online:** [Google Surveys](#), [Google Ads](#), [YouTube Ads](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), etc.
    - Good for: targeting on a state or county level, pinpointing a particular demographic by age, gender, and type of mobile users etc.
    - Downsides: costs money (Google Surveys are roughly \$0.10 to \$1.50 *per-response*), assumes the community you're trying to engage has access to the internet and uses it in the ways you do
  - **Radio**
    - Buy or trade for ad time with another station. Country radio is one of the most listened to radio formats. Consider other formats like hip-hop, talk, easy listening, etc. Station sales teams should have demographic profiles of their audience. Find the station/s with the best fit for you.
      - Good for: reaching non-traditional public media audiences
      - Downsides: could cost money and require conversations with your underwriting department and senior management (if you're pursuing a trade agreement). It will take time to explain the project to these stations to see if you can get buy in. The reach is fairly broad rather than focused.
- **Direct mailing**
  - Bake into your partnership with your fixer/liaison(s) the ability to maximize your outreach through using your contacts and theirs by "renting" their contact/member list - you send your files directly to their mailhouse so neither of you see each others contacts directly. That should calm any fears they have about your station potentially "stealing" their donors or audience.
    - Good for: communities with limited internet access, reaching people who are already engaged in some way (with that partner organization)

- Downsides: costs money for the mailing, takes a time investment with the potential partner/s to build trust
- **Social media**
  - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whats App, Discord, YouTube, etc.
  - Facebook idea: Host regular Facebook Live office hours sessions to interact with community members who have questions
    - Good for: engaging your existing audience who already loves you, getting contact info for potential sources instantly
    - Downsides: Community members might not have an account for your chosen platform/s (Joe uses Facebook, but not Twitter. Jill uses Twitter but not Facebook). Be particularly mindful of [trends in demographics of social media platform use](#).
  - Promote your effort on social media channels. Be conversational. Some messaging examples:
    - **Facebook:** “We want to hear from you! As part of our partnership with the [America Amplified](#) [TAG [OUR FB](#)] initiative, we want to hear from our communities about the following question: **What most concerns you about your community or the country in the coming year?** We are gathering the answers for a possible story. Please leave your answers as a comment or email them to XXX. Thank you for helping to make this effort a success!”
      - Do the same for the other through-line question on another day. Or say that it’s a 2-part question and the other will be posted the next day.
      - If you’re scheduling the post, don’t post on the hour. Try 8:02 or 12:33 for instance.
      - For visuals, use the America Amplified logo if you don’t have something else.
    - **Twitter:** “Are you frustrated by what media gets wrong about your community? We want to hear about it as part of [@Amplified2020](#). What do you want others to understand about your community or your life? Reply to this tweet or email XXX with your thoughts. #AmericaAmplified
      - Feel free to schedule these tweets for different times of the day over a week.
    - **Instagram:** Same idea as FB, but use the America Amplified logo as visual if you don’t have something already. Tag [@AmericaAmplified](#). Hashtags to use, in addition to ones for your community: #americaamplified, #communityengagement, #journalism, #election2020, #publicmedia
    - If you’ve posted a story about the call out, link back to it.
  - **Social media tip:** Be interactive. If you’re going to put out a call-out, be responsive. Thank people for responding.

---

### **America Amplified team needs you to report something**

Before moving to the next phase and deploying your reporters/producers please let us know your plan [here](#). Your America Amplified point person will follow up with you to confirm that everything is up to date.

Consult with the America Amplified team on your idea before deploying. We can help craft the messaging, share past success stories, etc. We also will help decide on how best to track the responses.

---



A community event on addiction stories.  
Side Effects Public Media

## 2. UNDERSTAND AND REPORT

Now you and your team *do* the listening, analyzing and reporting.

---

***The America Amplified team has resources you can request/deploy.*** We have a producer/reporter and two editors who could augment your team's efforts in this listening and reporting. We also have someone to lead conversations, workshops and training session for how *your* team can do this work.

---

You've listened, you've collected notes, you've gotten responses to your guiding questions. Here are a few typical challenges you could encounter and guiding principles for next steps.

First, always focus on your community you're trying to understand and what this community/-ies has identified as most important to *them*. What are they looking to have solved, explained or celebrated?

### A. Go through all the responses

Have a spreadsheet, use sticky notes and a big wall/board, find a method that works for you, to review and begin to make sense of all the responses. Remember to include you/your teams own observations from conversations they may have had off mic. Identify common themes.

### B. Trust and follow the responses where they lead

You may get responses that surprise you or maybe even feel pedestrian. Remember you've asked an honest question and the community is telling you what is concerning them right now. You have an incredible opportunity to respond to that *directly*.

Maybe they don't know how to register to vote, or they just want a single little section of road fixed. Respond *directly* to that. Don't overthink it. You hate it when sources don't answer questions; this is your chance to answer theirs.

### C. Editorial challenges you may encounter

Sometimes the story/ies will be very clear and direct. But, often people's responses aren't that clear. Here are some typical challenges and how to tackle them

- You have lots of responses, but no common thread is standing out or the responses are too vague and general
  - One person is concerned about "schools," another about "safety," another about "the environment," but there's little focus. You're going to have to dig in more. Pick 2 or 3 responses that seem like they *might* work best and follow up directly with that person/those people and ask follow up questions. Don't be shy about leaning into topics/areas that might be a beat you've covered in the past. Play to your own strengths. Your goal is to get them into storytelling mode and learn more.
    - Another option is to take the top two or three responses and ask that community and your audience to rank which is most important to them. This kind of follow up was utilized by [The Tyee](#) in British Columbia or the [Curious City](#) model.
- Not a lot of responses/engagement/participation
  - Consider engaging through a different tool or method (see: [IMPLEMENTATION](#)). Maybe your initial idea didn't resonate or reach this community.
    - Try a different method for connecting to this audience. For instance, if a listening session didn't work, try flyers, direct mail, or something else.
  - Loop back with your community fixer/liaison and any partner organizations. Do they have insights into why participation was low? What would they recommend?
  - Reach out to the participants and ask them about other people they'd recommend connecting with and talk with those folks.
  - Partner with another media outlet and/or additional partners
- Too many good stories, each with a lot of interest
  - Turn on your editorial skills and resource awareness; what, of these suggestions, will have the *most impact for this community*? What resources do I, or the station/collaborative, have to address these needs? Again, especially on the first engagement, consider leaning into your strengths (beats/previous reporting experiences) so you know you have the greatest chance to deliver impact.

- This should also be an indication to you that this is a community need and could be a way to effect change.

#### D. Doing the reporting and content making

- Audio features - We want stories that emerge from this process to have a distinctive sound. Please experiment and consider the following:
  - Use tape in the lead. If possible/appropriate, put a montage of tape in the lead using voices of people you spoke with, ideally featuring multiple/contrasting perspectives
  - Transparency: Make it clear in your story that this is a different kind of journalism.
  - Prioritize sound bites that complicate existing narratives — reveal nuance in the perspective of your sources
  - The story should be sound rich (duh) with as little narration as your reporter can get away with. We are listening to and hearing from America
  - Have reporters do stand-ups, i.e. recording some narration out in the field, recording ambi in and out
  - Record yourself!
  - Consider allowing your story to be told in first person, a story of discovery
  - Seek solutions

Click here to see how WBEZ's Curious City embeds community members into their reporting, increasing trust and making fun features.

- Web stories
  - Make sure you get [good visuals](#) for the story. Portraits of people or event photos. You can use this on social too.
  - **Remember to include the America Amplified Behind the Story box (embed code forthcoming) in all your web posts. Also have the reporter and/or editor answer a few questions about how the story came about to include in that box. One Q&A will appear with the box, with a link to the rest of the answers, which will be posted as a separate story. Questions such as:**
    - Why did you want to reach this particular community?
    - Why did you decide to HOLD A TOWN HALL OR POTLUCK DINNER OR TEXT CAMPAIGN?
    - What surprised you about the process?
    - What did you hear from the community about the process?
    - What lessons do you have for others who want to do the same?
- Info-graphics
  - **Remember to include the America Amplified BACKGROUND BOX (embed code forthcoming) in all your web posts**
- Two-ways - Especially in the early days when you are focused on *listening* rather than extracting sound-bites, it would be good to introduce the concept/practice to your audience by debriefing the reporter or producer on what they are doing and what they are learning.
  - Community member + reporter
  - Reporter + Reporter
- Talk show segments - The New England News Collaborative will be developing a detailed playbook for talk shows specifically around community engagement. In the meantime, here is some guidance:
  - Have talk show producers join listening sessions and be involved in the process early on.

- Debrief reporters who are doing the engagement about what they've learned and what they will be covering.
- Use online surveys, social media posts, every tool in your toolbox to elevate issues that producers may not have considered as topics.
- How do you expand your issues? How do you expand your audiences?
- As the election season progresses, America Amplified is considering producing a segment for talk shows across the country that will feature voices from a given region or voices on a difficult issue. Consider having a dedicated segment weekly for America Amplified to spur local conversations.
- Examples
  - When KCUR did listening sessions in traditionally underserved communities a few people mentioned two women who regularly cleaned up litter in their neighborhood. This comment became [a beautiful and loved segment](#). ([Separate web post related to the listening session](#))
  - Sometimes the typical "experts" are indeed the best people to talk to. After a community listening session focused around the impact of a highway development everybody said, you really have to talk to Mamie Hughes. She was a known person around Kansas City, but KCUR took the opportunity to talk with her again. [It turned out great](#) because she shared new and telling details about her life, work and community that previously hadn't had the right setting to come out. ([Feature reporting related to the same profile](#))

---

### **America Amplified team needs you to report something**

Once the produced pieces/segments are broadcast/published, remember to report that to your America Amplified point person. Remember to also track the diversity of the sources.

*America Amplified* has a form you can use to help you keep track of the pieces AND a diversity tracking tool you can share with your team.

---



### 3. ELEVATE: ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, FOLLOW THROUGH



Panel discussion on maternal/infant mortality among African-Americans.  
Side Effects Public Media

#### A. Hold people accountable, including the community itself

The work you do is at the service of the community and your audience. The produced work (features, web posts, social media posts, events, etc.) should be laser focused on addressing the targeted community/-ies expressed questions, needs, aspirations. To that end, hold people and the systems they operate accountable:

- Misinformation
  - As journalists we're expertly positioned to set the record straight, without bias. In doing this work people might express views that are inaccurate, first listen and try to understand *how* they came to this idea and developed this perspective. Then do work that tells the story of how this misinformation came to be, of course, being exceptionally clear *why* it's misinformation (show your work).
- People in power/decision makers
  - Maybe there's a very specific problem that that the community has identified. Address that very specific concern. Take that concern to the people in power. Ask what's taken so long? What's standing in the way? Maybe there's a [community-based solution to overcoming this specific problem](#)? If there is, be the catalyst that brings those people together to address that goal.

#### B. Make These Micro-Stories Relevant To Your Wider Audience

- Use the same issue as in the template to finding analogous examples in your typical core audience. You must provide context and connect the dots. Consider also using this model to both signal and collect suggestions from your traditional/core audience. You must develop that system and be committed to it, but it's something to work toward.

Click here to see how KPCC made voting easier for their audience.

- Consider involving one of the participants as a [co-producer, a tagalong/citizen journalist/reporter](#). They also act as your community guide or fixer
  - They can be a sounding board and consider using them as a source and/or a source to reach other sources

### C. Social Media sharing

The more people who see your story the better. Use social media for this amplification. Here are some tips.

- Post the story on your **Facebook** page with a link. Be conversational. If the story comes from comments you've gathered, say that. Go back to the original Facebook post calling for comments and share the story link in the comment section there so those people get notifications about it.
- On **Twitter**, tag the people who should see the story, like politicians or cities. Tag @Amplified2020 so we may retweet. Use #AmericaAmplified and #communityengagement hashtags. Pin the post to the top of your profile. Go back to your original call-out tweet and post a link to the story in the thread.
- On **Instagram**: Be sure you have [good visuals](#). You can have a longer story telling what you discovered. Explain this is part of @AmericaAmplified effort. Use at least these hashtags: #americaamplified, #communityengagement, #journalism, #election2020, #publicmedia
- Monitor the comments and responses. You may find other story ideas. You also want to gauge reaction and respond to questions

### D. Be transparent

We can't stress how important this is. Being transparent about how you produced the content will build trust with people. Send the story directly to each source and *everyone* who shared their contact info with you during your engagement. Consider hosting another listening session where you present the work and solicit honest feedback (both in that moment, but also provide ways for them to provide feedback anonymously afterward). Ask what you missed, what could have been better and be intentional about going through that feedback. Just because you broadcast a feature doesn't mean the community feels heard, recognized or served.

### E. Build virtual communities

Perhaps around a topic. Most news outlets have beats: health, immigration, politics. You may discover a topic of high interest not on a beat (see [Seattle Times' Orcas in Peril series](#)). You can gather the contact info of community members you've contacted and create a community around this topic with an email group, text club or social media (Facebook group). Point out that this story, or series of stories, was made possible by ... them! If you're using engagement specific platforms, like Hearken or Groundsource, gather the respondents contact information and send them a follow up.

### F. Keep the connection going

If you're really committed to this community *show* it. Make arrangements to do this work again. Or if you don't have those resources, check in with your closest sources at least twice a year, if not more often (put the appointment on your calendar *now*). Keep the web version of your question form active and make sure you check it.



Make the time to assess what worked well, what was learned, over and over again. **Share with this continually with your *America Amplified* point person** so we may continue to update and refine this playbook.

Congratulations! You're now ready to embark on your community engagement adventure!