Welcome to America Amplified Election 2024!

We’ll get started shortly. Meantime,

What’s a fun fact about your newsroom?
Share in the chat!

Please put in the chat: your first name, your station and your pronouns PLUS fun fact....
America Amplified 2024!
60 newsrooms including:
Today’s Agenda - 2 hours

- Welcome! ✓
- Program Orientation
  - AmAmp: 2024 + history
  - Program timeline
  - Training timeline
  - Trainers & coaching
- The Formula For Change
  - Breakouts!
- Public Media & Elections
- Why Engagement?
  - Breakouts!
- BREAK!
- America Amplified Case Studies
- Homework: Mission Statement & FAQ

Why did we ask you to be on the same computer?
The America Amplified initiative will empower public media journalists with skills and resources needed to put listening to their communities at the center of the reporting process.

We seek to inspire public media news organizations to better reflect America, build trust and uphold principles of democracy.
2022 Midterms
25 states
30 newsrooms
To ensure our communities have the information they need to confidently participate in the 2024 elections.
So, what have you signed up for?
America Amplified
2024 Election Timeline

You are here!

1. Sept-Dec 23 Training Series
2. Nov-Dec 23 Coaching & Cohort Support
3. Jan-June 24 Launch engagement
4. July-Nov 24 Iterate: engaging & informing community
5. Election: November 5, 2024
6. Nov-Jan 25 Reflection, impact evaluation
Work & Learn in Cohorts

- Engaging audiences
- Experienced engagers
- Spanish-speaking communities
- Rural communities
- New to engagement
Training Series

MISSION: The overarching goal of this training is to equip you with the skills, knowledge and tools you need to reach, build trust, and engage with current and new audiences.
Training Timeline: Sept-Dec 2023

1. The Why & The What
   Intro to Engaged Elections
2. The Who
   Network Mapping Part 1
3. The Who
   Network Mapping Part 2
4. The What
   Engagement Strategies
5. The How & The Where
   Community and Internal Partners
6. The Where & The Workflow
   Pulling It All Together & Defining Success

TODAY!
YOUR TEAM OF COACHES AND TRAINERS:

Your Support Team: We’re here to help!

Alisa Barba (uh-LEE-suh BAR-bah)

Chelsea Naughton (CHEL-see NAW-tuhn)

Paola Márizan (POW-la mar-ih-ZAN)

Abbie Mccafferty (AE-bee Muh-kAE-fer-tee)

jesikah maria ross (JHESS-ih-kah MAH-ria ROSS)

Jenn Brandel (JHehN bran-DELL)
Questions?
Hearken means “to listen”

- Former public radio reporter - WBEZ
- Started Curious City in 2012
- Started Hearken in 2015
  - EMS - Engagement Management System
  - Training / coaching
- Hundreds of newsrooms supported in better engaging the public
How many of you were totally satisfied with your last election coverage, and wouldn’t change a thing?
Here’s a free tool that may change your life ...
The Formula for Change

Change = Dissatisfaction x Vision x Plan
Reflection:

What frustrates you the most about elections coverage now?

(As someone who makes it or consumes it)

Click this arrow to go to the next prompt.

Voila! Add as many stickies as your group comes up with. Listeners are the scribes.
Chat Roulette

Discuss this question:

What frustrates you the most about elections coverage now? (As someone who makes it or consumes it)

We’re going to send you to a breakout room to talk about this / document it!

JAMBOARD LINK

But, public media is unique, right? Right?!?!
What is unique about public media?

How might it have an advantage in serving Americans’ election information needs?
THE MISSION OF PUBLIC MEDIA

Public Broadcasting Act of 1967

Led to the establishment of PBS and National Public Radio

it encourages public [broadcasting] services which will be responsive to the interests of people ...throughout the United States, and that it is in the public interest to encourage... programming... that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences...
We Can Do It!

IT TAKES FULL PARTICIPATION TO KEEP PUBLIC RADIO ALIVE!
“Engagement!”
Yes *but*, what does it mean?
AHHHHH SO MANY NAMES!!!

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT JOURNALISM

Engaged journalism

People-Powered Journalism

PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM

CITIZEN-CENTERED JOURNALISM

public-powered journalism

public journalism

SERVICE JOURNALISM

community-powered journalism
DEFINE YOUR OWN TERMS

There is no single way to define “engagement”

WBEZ

Engaged journalism is a journalistic process that starts by identifying and listening to specific communities before any reporting and production. That community input informs what we cover, what we make and how we make it. At WBEZ, our engaged journalism provides practical, actionable utility to the people we serve.

LAist

Engaged journalism is a practice that emphasizes closing the gap between communities and the journalists who aim to serve them; serving those who may not already consume your journalism; thinking differently about story selection, framing, and distribution; and shaping stories with community members.

https://medium.com/engagement-at-laist/defining-engagement-4f5b2912dcdf
How America Amplified Defines “Engagement”

Journalists cultivating relationships with communities to discover, understand and elevate community needs, aspirations and stories.
Defining Engagement

A Litmus Test for “Engagement”

If there’s no pathway for input from your audience to shape the decisions you’re making, then **it’s not authentic engagement.**

Readers commenting, no one in the newsroom reading them: **X (one-sided)**

A story going viral: **X (consumption)**
The Engagement Ring

NEWS ORG invites input from PUBLIC

NEWS ORG includes, acknowledges and thanks the participants

PUBLIC provides input

NEWS ORG listens to input and creates content with it

If you stop here, you risk being an “askhole”
**Audience Engagement**

- Focus on building habit, loyalty, and audience revenue
- Analyzing data of current audience, such as content performance, consumption habits, and incorporating into decision-making
- Focus groups of current audience members to better understand their needs and design for them

**Community Engagement**

- Focus on understanding voids in the local ecosystem and positioning the newsroom to help fill those
- Physically and digitally appearing where people are, listening to what they think and incorporating it into your decision making
- Centers the community a story is about
- Often generates community partnerships with orgs & groups

[Read the full piece here.](#)
YOUR AUDIENCE (PEOPLE WHO KNOW & TRUST YOU)  

Your website

Your newsletter

Your social media

Your partners

YOUR HOUSE

Your prompt / Invitation to engage

What questions do you have about or for candidates for governor?

YOUR COMMUNITY (PEOPLE WHO DO NOT KNOW OR TRUST YOU)

Their...

Their...

Their...

Their...

THEIR HOUSE
Audience engagement

Community engagement

JOURNALISTS
Audience engagement

Community engagement

Journalists
How might engaging better and more deeply be helpful for...

1. Audiences / communities?
2. Your newsroom?
Voila! Add as many stickies as your group comes up with. Listeners are the scribes.
Chat Roulette Part 2!

How might engaging better and more deeply with the public be helpful for...

1. The public?

2. Your newsroom?

If you’re the listener, take notes! Then switch roles!
Proof Engagement Is Worthwhile!
DON’T BELIEVE US, BELIEVE 5,000 PEOPLE

People WANT TO ENGAGE WITH YOU! AJP Report

We asked 5,000 people across the country what they want from local news. Here’s what we learned.

1. People do want more local news — emphasis on local.
2. People want a shared, trusted source of facts.
3. People want the full story of their communities to be told.
4. People want to know about decisions before they’re made, and they want decision makers to be accountable for outcomes.
5. People want to see themselves in the news, and in the newsroom.
6. People want journalists to ask their questions.
7. People want information they can act on.
8. People want the news to meet them where they are.
9. People want newsrooms to play a role in connecting and convening communities.
Engagement journalism is **good for business**
"We offer the first causal evidence that engaged journalism can impact newsrooms' bottom line and improve relationships with the communities they serve."

“We argue that the connection between the audience and newsroom is equally social and economic.”
Engagement journalism is good for business

- **15x more readership** on average for Hearken-powered stories vs. staff-written stories
- Hearken-powered stories are **10x more popular** (clicks, likes, comments and shares) on Facebook than staff-written stories

- Average **time on page** is **4x higher** on Hearken story than staff-written stories
- Average **time on page for Hearken story** is **more than 1 minute longer** than average for all staff-written stories

- **54% of people opted in to a newsletter** when given the opportunity on Hearken tech
- On average, readers were more than **2x as likely to become a paying subscriber** after reading a Hearken-powered story than a staff-written story

- **56% emails of questions askers are new** - were not previously registered
- **50% of people** asking questions or voting are engaging with that newsroom for the **first time**
ENGAGED ELECTIONS APPROACH

2020 Research Results

Of the newsrooms who participated in our Engaged Elections training in the 2020 elections cycle,

- 84% said participating built trust between their newsroom and their community members
- 89% said participating helped them be more able to listen and respond to their communities
- 78% said participating increased the size of their audience
- 100% said they will use the engagement strategies they learned in the next election
LISTENING & ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Bottom Line

The more your audience feels **included, engaged** and **heard**

The more they **see and hear proof** that you’re serving them directly

The more likely they are to:

- **trust** your work
- **consume** your work
- **share** your work
- **attend** your events
- **& pay you** ©

(And the more likely you’ll receive investment or grants)
QUICK
STRETCH
BREAK
A Buffet of Engaged Elections Approaches!

America Amplified
Caveat: We’re going to focus on Q&A approaches
Powerful stories start with powerful questions. Why curiosity?

- It attracts engagement from people who are humble & starts stories from a more neutral position.
- Questions enable discovery, and opens people up to new ideas, widening the opportunity for dialogue.
- Reporting answers focuses a story on a quest, or an adventure, instead of conflict, & attracts people with news-fatigue.
- Questions are the atomic unit of journalism. Everyone has questions & can participate.
WHY QUESTIONS?

Questions are:

- Actionable - *IMMEDIATELY*
- Will provide a **direct service** to the people you’re trying to reach / support!
- Will improve the relationship with those groups!
- Will inspire more people to pay you!
Foundational Audience engagement

- Your website
- Your social media
- Your newsletter

Expanded

Add community engagement:

- Cross promote with partners on their sites, social, or newsletters
- Tabling
- Classroom visits

Full-scale

Expanded engagement plus

- Community partnerships
- In-person events
Posted the Hearken form on their website:
- Homepage
- Right-hand side and landing page for their politics stories
- Built a special landing page
Send out the call for questions, AND:

- Shared explainer videos and infographics that answered some of the most frequently asked questions
- Led to more question submissions and addressing more people’s information needs.
Expanded

Add community engagement:

- Cross promote with partners on their sites, social, or newsletters
- Tabling
- Classroom visits

Classroom meetings, mini listening sessions, and voxpop
- KUNC Answered questions in classrooms
- NHPR did a voxpop story with youth in a new community
WITF hosted an event with Braver Angels to talk to conservatives about the political division in our country. 75 people came representing all ideologies.

- Centered transparency in their political coverage.
- Collect and integrate feedback
- As a result, they got a high volume of really great questions during the midterms.

Full-scale Audience and community engagement using all the methods described, plus active collaborations with community partners and in-person engagement.
TRANSPARENCY

TJ News Project
The days of journalism’s one-way street of simply producing stories for the public have long been over. Now, it’s time to find better ways to interact with you and ensure we meet your high standards of what a credible media organization should be.
What questions do you have right now?
Collect questions to ask candidates

What do you want to ask candidates as they compete for votes?

This enables you to reverse power: from reporters sharing what candidates want voters to hear, to voters getting reporters to ask candidates what they want to hear. (aka The Citizens Agenda model)

Can result in:

- Candidate questionnaires
- Voter guides
- Interviews
- Etc.
LATE IN THE ELECTION CYCLE APPROACH

Answer All The Voting Questions

What questions do you have about voting?

This can result in:

- Deep dives
- Explainers
- FAQs
- Printed guides
- Events
- Etc!

Curious Louis: What you need to know about Missouri’s new voter ID law
AFTER THE ELECTION CYCLE APPROACH

Get aftermath questions!

What questions do you have about how the election went?

This can result in:

- Deep dives
- Explainers
- FAQs
- Etc!
Homework
Mission Statement & F.A.Q.s
From big picture to tactical:

↓ What is your newsroom’s role in democracy?
↓ **What is your newsroom’s mission?**
↓ **What is your vision / mission for politics coverage?**
↓ What activities will you do to support that mission?
↓ What will you *stop* doing to support that mission?
↓ How will you measure success?
Earn trust by telling the story of your journalism
Why this matters

- Not all journalism is good. It’s rational and wise for people to be skeptical of “the media.”

- Our job is to differentiate our own work and show what makes it trustworthy.
Why this matters

Academic study found Americans of all political persuasions agree that the news media is fundamentally untrustworthy, even as they tend to tune into the same channels and spend similar amounts of time engaging with the news. Distrusting the news, in a sense, is presented as a badge of honor:

- “I'm always skeptical”
- “I take it all with a grain of salt”
- “I would just like to rely on instinct”
- “Is it from a news source that I trust? Reading it, I feel like I have a pretty good sense. I get an intuition”

Source: Seth Lewis, Jacob Nelson, 2021
If readers don’t know something about you, they won’t give you the benefit of the doubt. Their assumptions won’t necessarily be flattering ones.
Tell your own story.

Why should people invest in you?
Feel a connection to you?
Trust your team?

Who else (if not you) will describe what sets you apart and makes you special?
Mission statements can take several forms.
POLITICS

Mary Plummer, covering politics:

Democracy can be messy. In Southern California, the political system is changing in front of us, from how we vote to who is running for office. Many voices are shouting to be heard. I examine who gets listened to, and why, and provide a guide to anyone who wants to more fully participate in civic life.

Twitter: @maryplummer | Email: mplummer@scpr.org
I'm Nick, and I believe in democracy

Nothing matters more to me than helping people understand the world they live in and making sure the government is accountable to the people it serves. Help me continue to work for you by signing up today for a digital subscription to the Coloradoan.
A good mission statement should include:

**Why:** The reason you do what you do.

**How:** The way you conduct your work.

**What:** The actual thing you do.

“Start with why” conference presentation by Mariah Craddick and Brian Boyer, February 2020
Mission statements

- Hold your newsroom accountable (internally and externally) by getting on the record
- Show you have values, ethics, goals
- Help newsroom respond to comments from community (confidence in responding)
- Keep your coverage consistent and tied to goals
Beyond the mission statement

- What can you tell users about your priorities?
- Are there stories, situations you won't cover?
- What sources will you rely on for information?
- How will you cover candidates?
- How will you report on results?
- Expand on goals by providing examples of stories
- How do you work to be fair?
How CPR News Plans To Cover The 2020 Election

Here's some good news: Most Americans believe the news media is really important to a democracy. The portion of people who say it’s “critical” has even gone up in recent years.

But at the same time, when then asked about specific national news outlets, surveys show Americans have become more polarized in how much they trust — and use — them.

At CPR News, our mission is to serve all Coloradans, not a partisan sliver. As the election approaches, we wanted to explain more thoroughly what we’re doing to earn your trust every day.

What’s our coverage mission for the 2020 Election?

How are we planning to cover the entire state? How do you choose which regions to focus on?

How do we select sources for stories? What about anonymous sources?

How do we make editorial decisions around candidate coverage and interviews?

How do we make editorial decisions about what stories to write, or what to cover?

When covering different parties, how do you make sure coverage is equal? What about minor parties?

How do you fact check stories or things politicians say?

Take our survey.

Do you have a question we haven’t answered? Let us know.

See more from CPR
Get on the record

1. Draft a mission statement for your coverage of democracy, politics and government.
2. Make a list of questions you want to explain about the goals of your coverage & how you make decisions.

Be both big-picture and specific. Explain your values, then explain how those values guide your decisions. Give examples. Write for your community, not other journalists or politicians.

We suggest you finish your Mission statement & list of questions before Session 2 (10/25/23)
We will send follow-up emails with deck, resources & homework.

Questions?
Thank You!