

BE A TATTLETALE

Yes, we said it, tell on elected bad actors by going straight to management – the voters. Whatever tactic you choose is up to you, but ensure you share the information swiftly, widely and often. Whether that’s through COVID-19 safe canvassing, social media, email blasts, robocalls, mail or any other method. This is where you and your team can get creative and have fun tattling.



Clog the Lines

An effective tactic is to clog the airways. Have your supporters use social media, email, snail mail or via telephone to show strength in numbers for or against a measure. **Believe us, they’ll pay attention.** Be sure to include folks in the district who will be directly affected in your efforts.



Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Texting

Texting is a quick and easy way to connect with constituents in your target area and there are a lot of apps and programs that can help you get information to them directly. Staff or volunteers can help you with your texting operation by loading a list of targets, sending a text and communicating via text! Whether you have some need-to-know information to share or a simple reminder, a text helps you share your information fast. It is always a good idea to use a phone number that is from the area and utilize language in your script that is authentic to the area that sounds relatable and real. This strategy is more effective in more rural areas whose residents are less likely to use a smartphone.

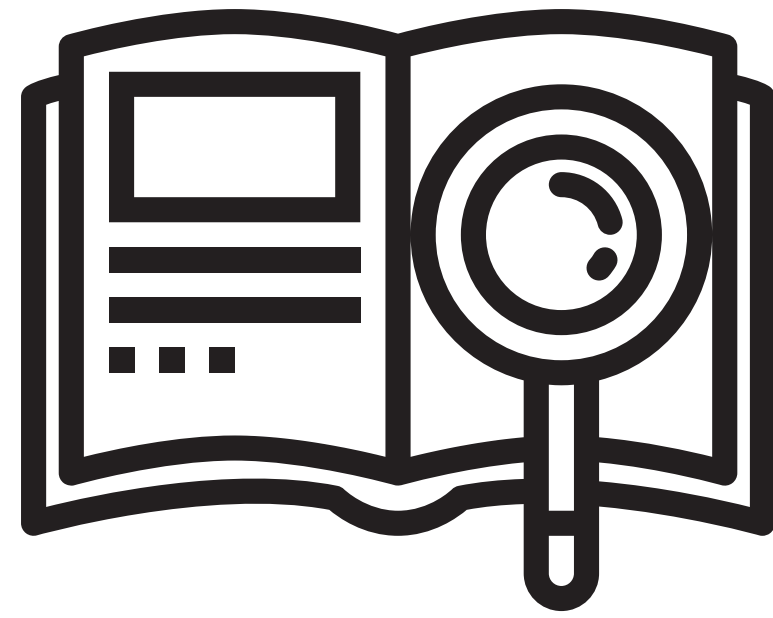


Make Phone Calls by Phone Banking

Phone calls are a more personal way to connect with your targeted population. Although texting is great, any opportunity to host a live conversation with a constituent is preferred. Phone banking is the means by which a team of staff or volunteers call through a list of targeted phone numbers and follow a prewritten script in hopes to gather data from the constituent. Although virtual phone banking already existed, since the COVID-19 public health crisis, the virtual platform has been made more popular and more reliable phone numbers are available. Traditionally, phone banking has a lower response rate since many Americans do not answer unknown phone numbers, which is why having a local phone number representative to the area is important. Organizations also use a predictive dialer system (which substantially reduces the time spent hand dialing) during phone banks, which connects callers to constituents once they answer the line.

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Research & Poll

Do your research on what people in a particular area think about an issue through administering a professional poll (through a polling firm) or conduct your own poll, deep canvassing or focus groups. Have the facts and opinions of real people to back up your argument and share with the appropriate elected leaders.

RECOMMENDATION IN ACTION

The Georgia Budget & Policy Institute (GBPI), Georgia's budget, tax and policy nonprofit think tank, partnered with 9to5, Faith in Public Life and Small Business Majority to administer a poll in October 2020 to Georgians to gauge their sentiments on public policies that put people first. The poll included increasing funding for critical programs and services like education and healthcare, as well as re-evaluating the billions of dollars in tax breaks Georgia gives out to corporations every year. The results of their poll showed Georgians want the state to invest in people and policies that help every community in the state thrive. Learn more about GBPI and their poll [here](#).



Reports & Scorecards

Grade and compare your elected officials on the issues most important to your organization and those you serve by drafting a report or scorecard. These types of guides give constituents the scoop on policy decisions from a trusted messenger – YOU! This will also support your organizations efforts when strategizing on how and what to engage certain officials on. These can be mailed or digital.

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Patch-Through Calling Programs

Advocates and activists alike are likely to have more difficulty getting to local, state and federal elected officials in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Patch-through calling programs are an effective advocacy tool because they connect constituents to an officials' office directly on a particular issue or concern. Patch-through calls work by sending the call to constituents with a live representative (often from your organization) describing the issue or concern and ask if the constituent would like to be connected, or "patched," through to the office to share their concern with someone from the legislator's staff directly. Patch-through calls can also be used to connect impacted constituents or those in need of a service to a service provider directly.

Safe, Socially Distant Canvassing

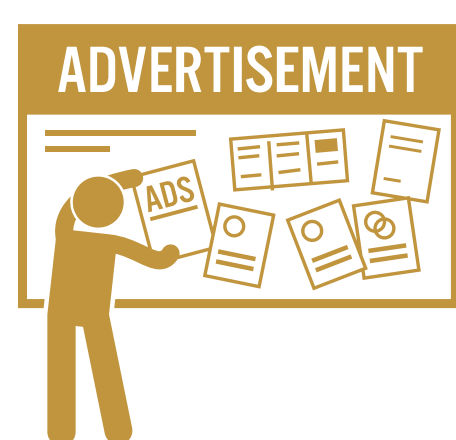
Face-to-face conversations will remain the #1 way to connect with constituents, which is often achieved through door-to-door canvassing. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, canvassing is more difficult to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and constituents. However, in some cases, canvassing is still the most effective way to connect with constituents around a pressing issue and you may decide to move forward with a safe, socially distant canvass program. Deciding to canvass in 2020 and beyond should be part of a thoughtful, comprehensive plan that incorporates public health information, modified hiring and human resources practices, and recommended safety protocols. Recognize that opportunities to canvass may be limited and state and local orders will change over time, which means that a given state or county could prohibit canvassing at any time. The pieces of your canvassing plan should be fluid, revisited often and nimble enough to pivot to other modes of program as developments change.

Public health data shows that people of color, particularly Black people, experience higher death rates than state and national averages and canvassers are often recruited from these same communities. To mitigate brand risk, organizations should consider the potential impacts of canvassing programs and the potential unintended disproportionate harm to communities of color and historically racially marginalized constituents. We ask that you seek legal counsel on any planned or potential canvass activity, and refer to your state and local COVID-19 recommended and mandated safety protocols.

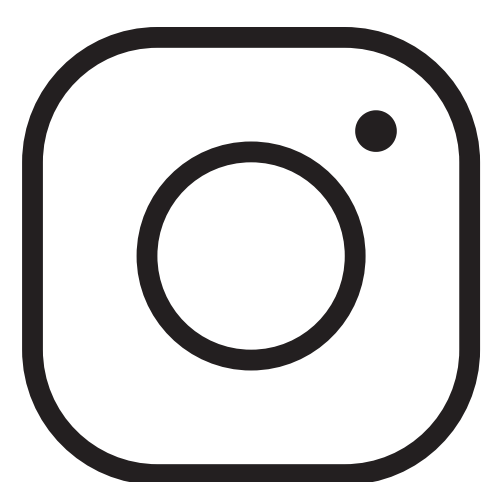
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Utilize Social Media

Now, more than ever, people are tuned into social media and use it as their primary source for news, updates, entertainment and to connect to their family, friends and colleagues since in-person connectivity is limited due to COVID-19. Right now, with such a captive audience, it is wise to utilize the power of social media to amplify your message and use it as an organizing tool to connect with your target population. Try creative ways to connect with lobby days online with elected officials, hosting a Twitter Town Hall meeting on a topic, or hosting a “live” event on other popular social media platforms like Instagram with an influencer or celebrity. Your engagement can increase if you utilize a few unique, low cost tricks of the trade as outlined below:



Sponsored Ads: Sponsored ads are low cost ways to engage with users who are outside of your network. This increases your reach to others and introduces them to your organization and mission.



Use Instagram Stories Stickers: A great way to interact with your audience when using Instagram is using Instagram stories stickers. Stickers include the “Question” sticker, the “Quiz” sticker, the “Countdown” sticker (perfect for launches), or the “Poll.” Have fun with your content and utilize stickers!



Go Live!: Allow your followers and audience to tap into the “now” of what your organization is up to by going live! Your audience will be notified once you go live and can engage with you through the chat function.



Test Your Content and Engagement: Great content you’ve seen online was likely developed through experimentation. Test your posting times, content and engagement activity with your audience and see what works. Top social media platforms have analytics that provides data for business accounts on your engagement. For example, if your audience is working mothers, you might find that they engage more in the evening after work.



Create Content People Want to Save:

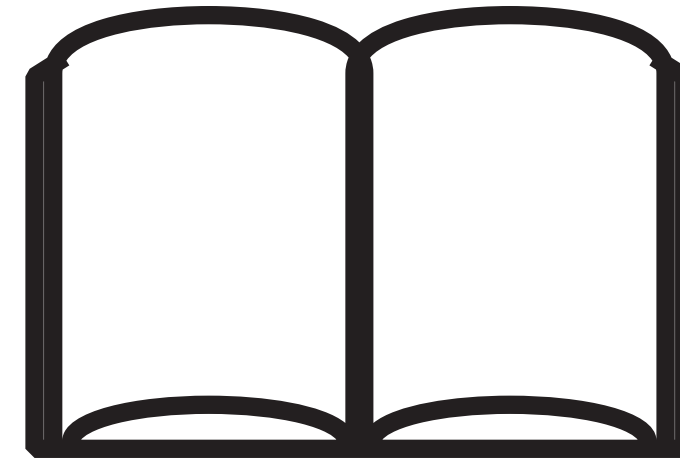
“Savable content” is content your audience will want to revisit at a later time. Posts with multiple pictures or photos that offer tips or a good story would be considered good “saveable content.” Think about what would be important to your audience and the value it will add to their everyday.



Have Fun!: Add an element of fun to your content. Memes or fun and funny content breaks up the regular content and adds an element of personality to your audience’s timeline.



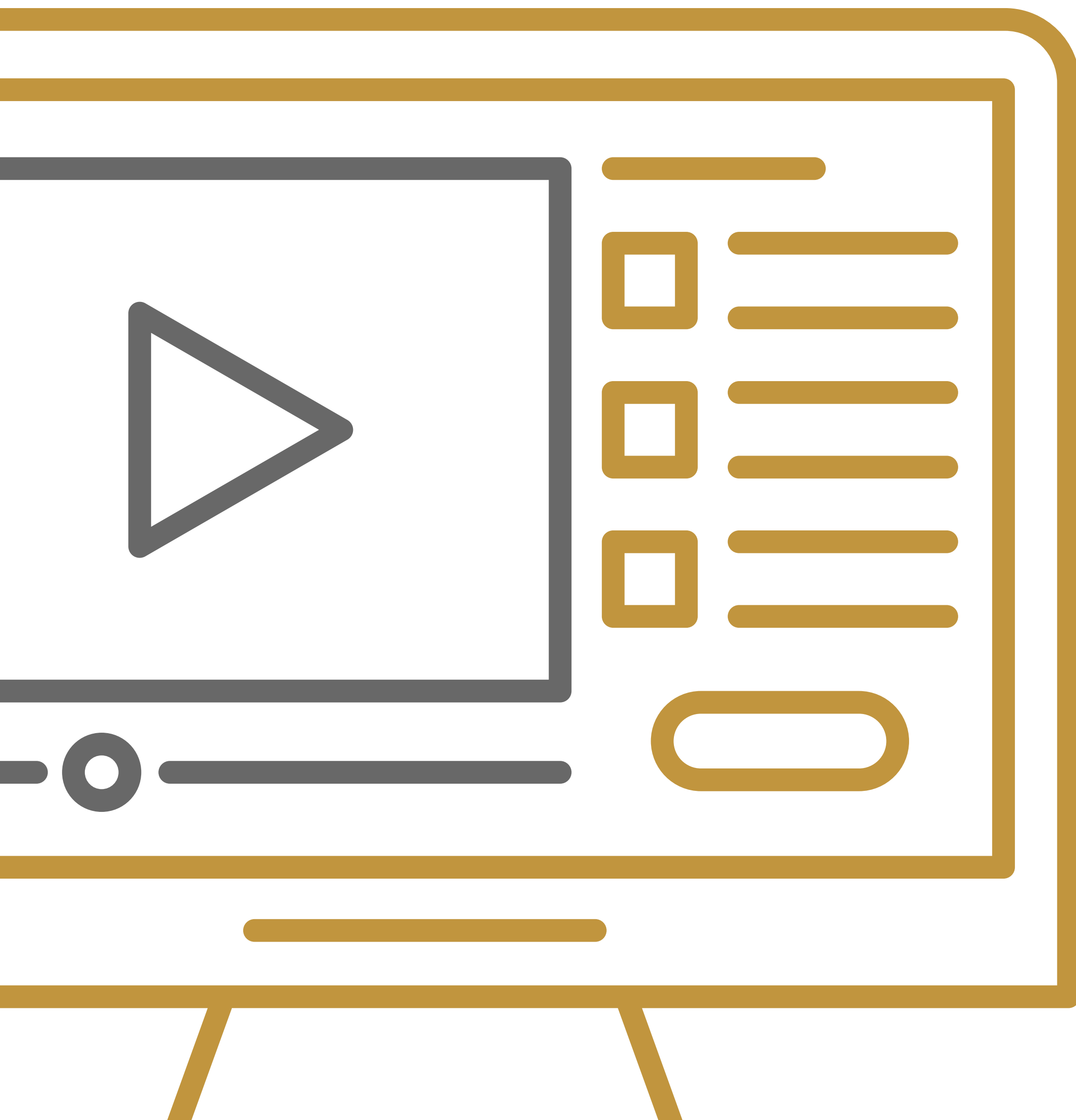
Be Authentic: Show real content about your team and your work. Celebrate wins and give your audience some behind the scenes footage around how your team pulls off some of your incredible work.



Write a Book: No, don't literally write a book, but you can write a longer caption or post. That's right. Don't be afraid to draft longer posts. Turns out, longer posts get more engagement and are considered in algorithms as "time dedicated to post." According to [Fohr](#), the average caption length has more than doubled since 2016, and posts with longer captions got the most engagement.



Give People the Numbers: People love data and data-driven information is the trend. People love knowing what data sets help inform their day-to-day. If you administered a poll or have a unique data set that is interesting to your issue and mission, share it!



Post More Videos!: When you incorporate video content into your strategy, you are almost guaranteed to increase engagement. Videos do not have to be professional quality and edited by top film editors, but it can be simple as point-and-shoot content. If you want to explore more creative options, consider cartoons and moving graphics that share information.

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CONTENT DERIVED FROM: [HTTPS://LATER.COM/BLOG/HOW-TO-INCREASE-INSTAGRAM-ENGAGEMENT/](https://later.com/blog/how-to-increase-instagram-engagement/)

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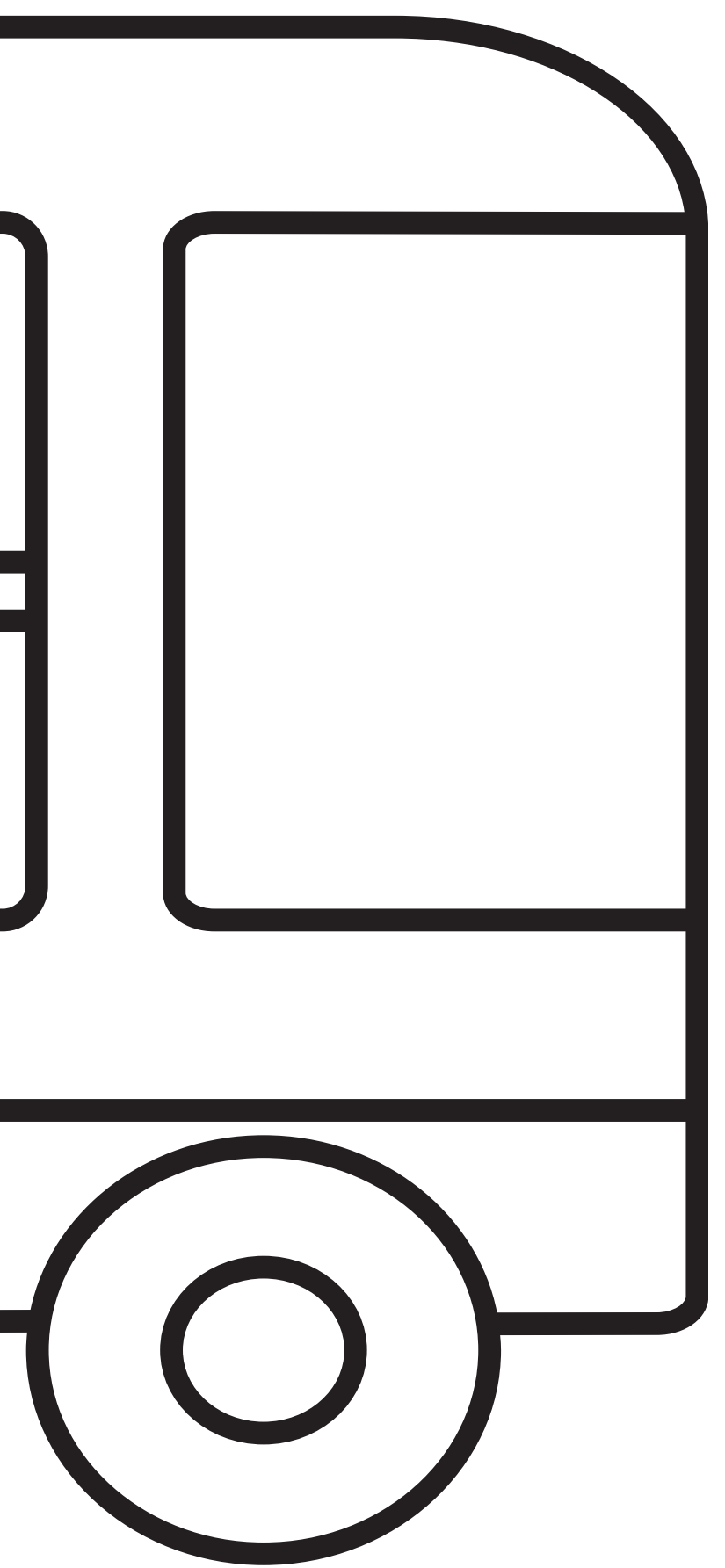
Experiential Marketing and the Power of Art and Music

Your marketing strategy should include creative ways of evoking emotions that empower your community base and motivate issue stakeholders to act. When individuals tap into experiences that serve as a form of education or mimic the experiences of those affected by the issues for which you are advocating, this increases the chance that they will take immediate action whether it be through donations or signing up to volunteer and remember your organization and brand. Amplify your organization's messaging through COVID-19 safe experiences such as:

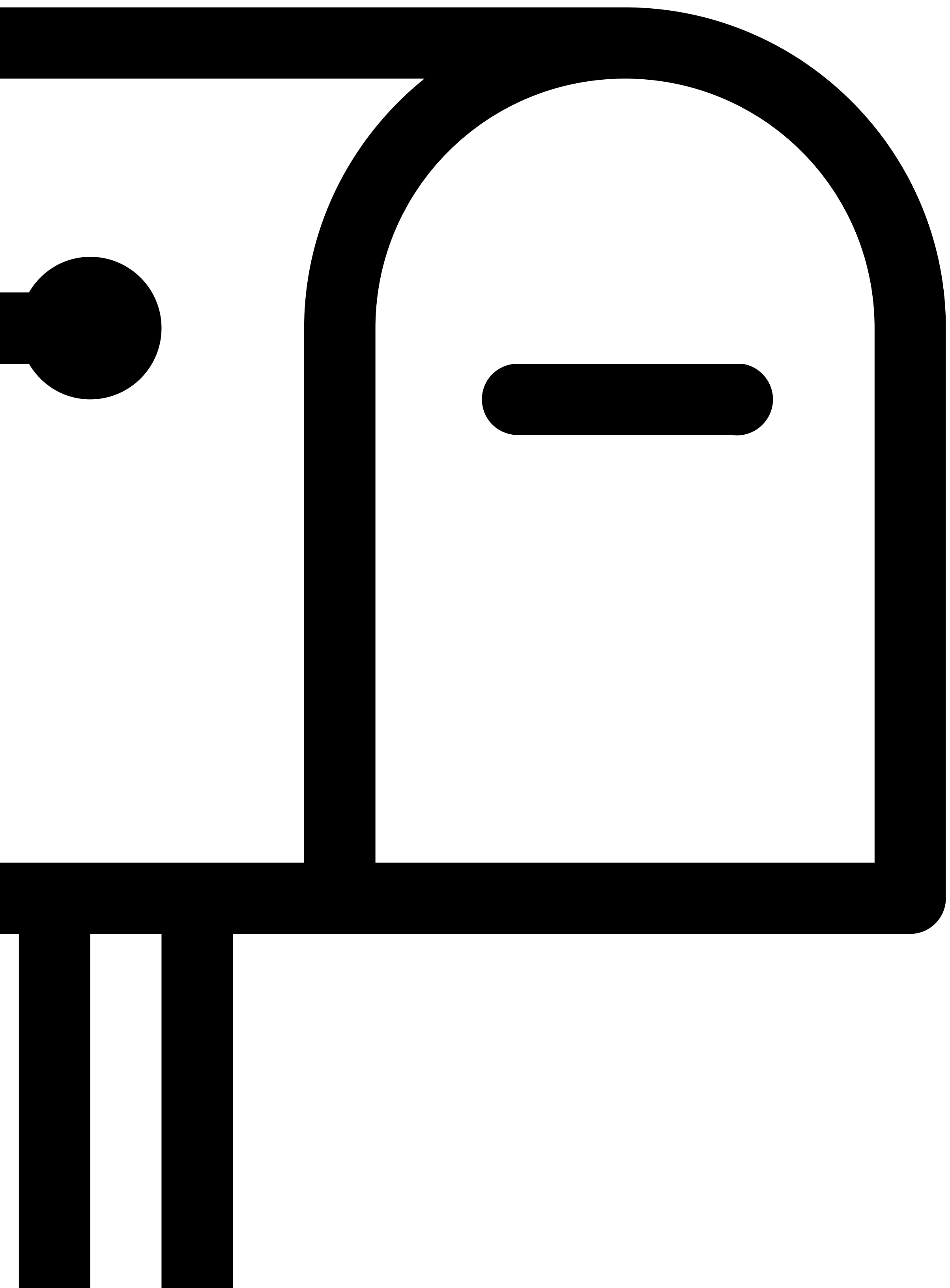
Neighborhood tours: With proper notice to community members, walkable tours to showcase where the communities you represent and serve are great ways for potential donors and volunteers to feel even more connected to your work and an added visual element for them to understand why it is important.

- **Bus tours:** Whether you want to or not, it's kind of hard to ignore a van or bus with vivid artwork and messaging wrapped around it. Bus tours bring attention to your message whether you're on the road to a destination or parked and passing out physical materials.
- **Take a Selfie:** People love to show their support for causes with a photo. At your next event be sure to have an area that clearly displays your organizations name or current cause you're advocating for, and direct people to post with the appropriate mentions and tags to amplify your message.
- **Partner with local artists:** As a visually stimulated society, artwork such as murals and installations have become common forms of activism and advocacy. Local artists and musicians are always looking for ways to get their names out there and what better way than your cause! You can even partner with various local artists to hold fundraising auctions for pieces that are centered around your organization's overall mission.

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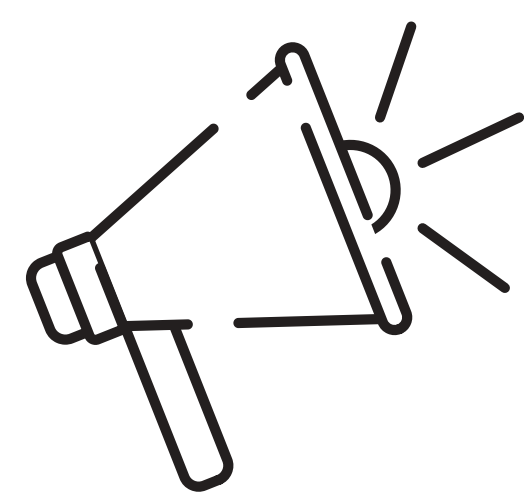
Direct Mail

In the wake of the COVID-19 public health crisis, for the safety and overall wellness of our communities, more people are spending time at home, which means they are more tuned into what is being sent to their homes. You have a captive audience here, so use that to your advantage. Direct mail refers to the physical mail that is delivered into your constituents' mailboxes in a particular area. Mail can be targeted (to specific demographics) or saturated (sent to all households within a targeted radius). Direct mail is a great way to share pertinent information with constituents. You can even have a little fun with your targeting by selecting birthdays, pet owners or holidays (like sending mail to mothers on Mother's Day). You can even target based on age, family size, other socio-economic identifiers or ZIP code. Depending on the firm you use and universe size, mail could be a cost effective way to send good information to a particular area or community in a short amount of time. Legislative session (both state and federal) as well as local official meeting calendars provide the perfect opportunity to keep the community informed. When it's time to keep constituents informed on policy issues that most directly affects them, try using direct mail as an option.

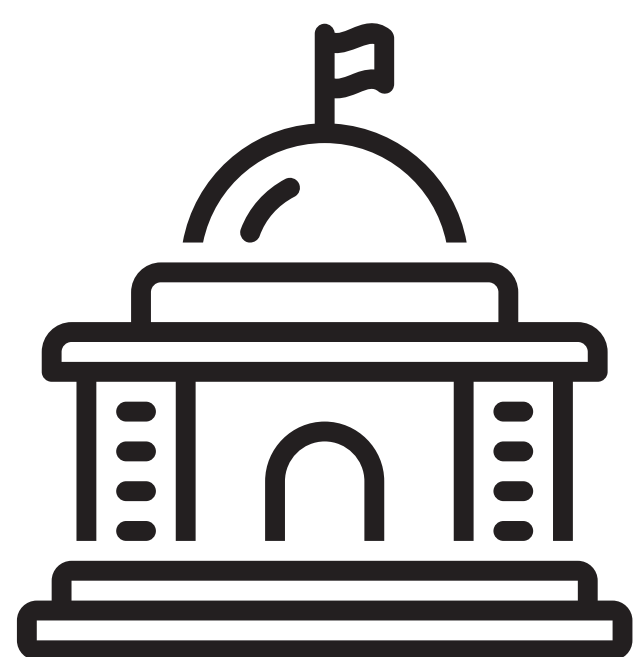
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TACTICS TO CONSIDER:

Brief your elected officials on your issues (Educate and Relate)



As the expert on your issue(s), you hold unique power that an elected official doesn't. Elected officials do not enter into their elected positions because they are experts, but for their individual experience and ability to build strong coalitions. Introduce your organization to the newly-elected (or re-elected) public officials serving your community—including Members of Congress, state legislators, and county commissioners. It would be wise to schedule these meetings as soon as possible post-election. Lean into your work and host a virtual meeting with elected officials to brief them on what your issues are, why you advocate for them and how they impact the community. Most importantly, outline how their decisions as lawmakers affect the people within your constituency.



Designate staff

Since there are a variety of legislative offices at all levels of government, specific staff members should be assigned to maintaining communication with local, state and federal officials and their staff. Their staff are usually tasked with tracking legislation that affects your community base, and communicating these efforts to your base. Maintaining an open line of communication will allow for clear communication and relationship building between your organization, those you serve and your elected officeholders.

“Get someone to carry your water“ (Lobbying)



Many companies and organizations lobby elected officials during legislative convenings and have dedicated staff hired to do so. Nurture, develop, and enlist the support of elected officials at all levels of government that represent the communities you serve. Ask officials to champion a policy issue. Remember, you and your team are the experts and you can play an active role in the development of key legislation alongside the sponsoring legislator(s) to move your issue from idea to law. In some states, regular citizens can register to be a lobbyist at a nominal fee. You can even host a “Lobby Day” at the local level or at your State Capitol. Given current COVID-19 precautions and local and state mandates, these practices may be prohibited until further notice or moved to a virtual space.



There's Power in Numbers

There is strength and power in numbers. Show yours when bad practices or policies are gaining momentum or to advocate on an issue by recruiting your supporters and others in the general public who care. Be sure to practice safe and socially distant practices (whether you are planning a protest or other event).

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