



Protecting and serving  
all of America's voters  
on Election Day

## Preparing for Public Communications

### Traditional Media/Press Conferences

A press conference is an effective way to clearly articulate the norms and expectations about Election Day, and inform the community of your agency's plans for safeguarding voters and the election process. Additionally, apart from a formal press conference, agencies can conduct a series of interviews with media.

Prior to engaging the press, it is highly recommended that an agency completes as much of the pre-Election Day checklist as possible. Being able to talk about *completed* preparations and training will inspire more confidence than discussing future plans and giving estimates.

It is recommended that agency leadership complete the following steps prior to a press conference or interviews with the media about Election Day:

- Inform municipal officials about the agency's plans and intentions (e.g., mayor, city council, etc.)
- Understand federal, state, and local laws relevant to policing and the election
- Meet with board of elections officials
- Meet with community leaders and advocacy groups
- Request to meet with activist groups to establish mutual norms and expectations
- Brief agency leadership and supervisors on relevant laws and tentative plans
- Confer with judges and local prosecutors about relevant processes and procedures
- Request briefing from relevant agencies on intelligence about possible threats on Election Day

When conducting the press conference, be mindful of holding it in a police facility or selecting an otherwise neutral/nonpartisan location. You should also consider who else you may want to invite to speak—demonstrating the range of community partnerships involved in planning for Election Day will reflect the agency's commitment to a thorough, fair, and inclusive form of policing.

The community leaders who read or watch the coverage will be able to amplify your message by confirming that they've met with agency leadership and had a voice in the planning. They can attest to the fact that your agency has taken community's concerns seriously and engaged in thorough preparation.

Invite all known media outlets to press conferences, especially local media. Be cognizant of the possibility that smaller or partisan press outlets that do not receive an invitation to a press conference or for an interview may perceive this as an indication of bias. *(Continued)*



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## Social Media

Leveraging your agency social media platforms can assist in controlling your agency's narrative, help facilitate ongoing communication, expand the audience that receives your messages, and build your presence prior to Election Day. Additionally, it allows you to speak directly to your community, without the additional filter of other means of communication. Utilizing social media can help your agency:

- Reinforce your agency's commitment to a fair and free election process
- Host live-chats and Q&A sessions about agency Election Day policies and processes
- Livestream and post media briefings, interviews, and press conferences
- Clarify misperceptions or statements potentially taken out of context
- Solicit feedback from the community and proactively address their concerns
- Live tweet on Election Day to demonstrate following your plans and responses
- Monitor social media for potential crisis

Real-time communication is an important component of responding to mass demonstrations and assemblies. Using your social media platforms to build and enhance your presence prior to, and on, Election Day will provide community members a trusted source of information—particularly if there are demonstrations or critical incidents that require a larger police response and swift communications.