

**About the Quick Start Guides:** The EAC's Quick Start Guides are intended to familiarize local election officials with various topics they will likely encounter in election administration. The guides are a starting point to identify areas of concern and give officials a broad idea of factors they should consider in approaching a given topic.

## Why build community partnerships?

Election officials often reach out to community organizations to help augment their offices' limited resources. When seeking community assistance, local election officials may find many willing partners who are enthusiastic supporters of the election process but may not be sure of how they can be of assistance. Election Day is a community-wide event. State and local election officials have a lot of responsibility for making that day a success, but they do not have to do it alone. Throughout the country, election officials use their communities' human resources and civic commitment to make elections work better for everyone.



## Establishing Partnerships

Establishing partnerships with communities or local civic organizations begins well before Election Day. Especially when engaging communities for the first time, election officials should:

- Reach out early on to develop an understanding of the community's needs and challenges
- Engage the community to establish trust and facilitate buy-in
- Establish a physical presence at community events
- Develop necessary resources or programs, and continue the relationship with the community

### Recognize Partners

Create an award to recognize the important work of partner organizations. A small gesture shows the partner they are a valuable member of the elections team and can inspire future collaborations.



Potential partners will vary by jurisdiction; however, all election officials have the benefit of working in a highly collaborative field. Throughout the country, election officials are willing to share ideas, procedures, forms, and more with each other. Election officials may join formal organizations or connect with election officials in their neighboring jurisdictions. Such partnerships can lead to process innovations or formal relationships for shared vendor support, public education, etc.

The table below provides a few examples of partnerships that improve the administration of an election. Some partnerships may be informal—like speaking at civic organization meetings or asking an organization to include a call for poll workers in a newsletter. However, entering a contract for vendor services with another area elections office may require a formal agreement or contract.

Partnership Examples	Benefits
Engaging the local language minority community may encourage community members to become poll workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of poll worker staff that reflects the community</li> <li>• Ensures voters who are not English proficient are able to exercise their right to vote</li> </ul>
Partnering with the disability community to assess voting equipment when purchasing new equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures the voting system is accessible and familiarizes voters with disabilities with the accessible voting equipment</li> </ul>
Fostering relationships with local churches or civic organizations that are willing to host polling locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes consistent polling locations that both election officials and voters can rely on</li> </ul>
Connecting with other local election officials who use the same voting equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows officials to share best practices, procedures, forms, and possibly allows cost-sharing for vendor fees for training, maintenance, and support</li> </ul>
Coordinating with the local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to identify risks and develop contingency plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares election officials and the EMA to respond to emergencies or natural disasters impacting the election</li> <li>• Can identify backup polling locations and existing local government resources available to election officials</li> </ul>