



1924-2024: A CENTURY OF STRENGTHENING CITIES

2024

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TASKFORCE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Local Officials and the Presidential Election

For the past 100 years, the National League of Cities has worked in partnership with presidential administrations of both parties, advocating for the needs and priorities of communities large and small. As we approach another election year, it remains crucial that the president-elect is prepared from day one to tackle local challenges and consider local officials for key Cabinet positions.

This advocacy toolkit is designed to empower local leaders to engage effectively in the upcoming 2024 presidential election, ensuring that local priorities and values are communicated clearly to all candidates and the press. The toolkit includes talking points and templates for organizing local events and sample social media posts—all designed to help you advocate effectively for cities, towns and villages.

Local leaders' voices have a profound impact on national policy outcomes. Together, whether we are Republicans, Democrats, or independents, we can shape the narrative during the campaign months ahead and the national agenda for years to come. We can help to build a federal government that reflects core local values, like good governance and bipartisan collaboration to get things done. This toolkit is your gateway to making that influence felt.

Together, we can ensure that the needs of our cities, towns, and villages are at the forefront of the national conversation during this critical election cycle. Let us move forward with optimism and determination, ready to advocate for the well-being and prosperity of our communities.

As co-chairs of the National League of Cities' Presidential Election Task Force, we are proud to present this resource and urge you to engage with presidential candidates and their teams as they pass through your communities, regions, and states. Your active participation is key to ensuring that local voices are heard and considered in national policy discussions.



DAVID SANDER, Ph.D.

MAYOR
Rancho Cordova, CA



SHARON WESTON BROOME

MAYOR-PRESIDENT
Baton Rouge, LA

How to Use

Local elected officials and their communities have a critical role to play in the 2024 presidential cycle. NLC—through its bipartisan Presidential Election Task Force—will work with candidates, campaigns and the next administration to understand the needs and values of local communities. As a local leader, you can help support this effort by conducting your own on-the-ground outreach to the candidates and campaigns that visit your region.

Use this toolkit to choose the option that makes the most sense for you and customize these talking points for your community and your conversations with candidates.

Ways to get involved:

- ▶ Write a Media Advisory – see page 4 for a sample media advisory
- ▶ Invite candidates to a local event or meeting – see page 5 for an invitation template
- ▶ Promote your work with the Presidential Election Taskforce on social media – see pages 6-7 for sample social media language and downloadable graphics
- ▶ Use NLC Election Taskforce priority messaging and talking points – see pages 8-10 for messaging guidance

Keep in mind that a conversation or meeting with a candidate does not constitute an endorsement. Instead, take this opportunity to highlight the needs of your community and so many of America's cities, towns and villages and the value intergovernmental partnership will bring to the next president.

Tips for Effective Outreach:

- ▶ **Invite candidates and their surrogates to tour local facilities** – such as community centers, infrastructure projects, or neighborhoods - to highlight federal priorities in action and foster in-depth conversations with members of your community.
- ▶ If you are unable to host a public event, **consider inviting candidates for personal meetings** to discuss federal priorities.
- ▶ **Engaging with campaign surrogates and senior campaign staff** is also an effective form of advocacy. Seek opportunities to have personal conversations with policy decision-makers. In many cases, senior campaign staff later become White House advisors and agency appointees.
- ▶ If you are unable to meet personally with candidates or campaigns, use the provided talking points to **draft a letter to the editor or op-ed** timed to publish in coordination with candidates' visits to your community for debates, town halls, rallies and other campaign stops. If you are interested in authoring an op-ed, our team is available to provide guidance, resources and support. Please reach out to media@nlc.org for more information.
- ▶ **Tag NLC** (@leagueofcities/National League of Cities) **in any social posts** about your advocacy and share any information about actions you take with advocacy@nlc.org.

Sample Media Advisory:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Your Name] [Your Title] [City Name]

Phone: [Your Phone Number]

Email: [Your Email Address]

Website: [City Website URL]

Date: [Date]

MEDIA ADVISORY

Presidential Candidate [Candidate's Full Name] to Visit [City Name] Hosted by [Hosting Official's Title and Name]

[CITY, STATE] – Presidential candidate [Candidate's Full Name] will be visiting [Municipality Name] on [Date] to meet with local leaders and learn about the needs of [City Name] and other local governments throughout the nation. The visit is hosted by [Hosting Official's Name and Title], and it offers a unique opportunity for the public and media to hear from the candidate and learn about their policy priorities. [Additional sentence describing primary purpose/topic of site visit].

Details of the site visit are as follows:

Event: Presidential Candidate [Candidate's Full Name] Site Visit in [City Name]

Date: [Date]

Time: [Start Time]

Location: [Event Venue or Meeting Point]

Host: [City Official's Title and Name]

Agenda:

1. [List Key Event Activities or Speeches]
2. [Include Any Relevant Program Details]

Members of the media are invited to attend the event and cover the candidate's visit.

Please note the following important information for media representatives:

Media Arrival Time: [Specify Time for Media Arrival and Check-In]

Press Check-In Location: [Provide Check-In Location Details]

Media Credential Requirements: All members of the media must present valid press credentials or identification for access to the event.

Interview Availability: There will be opportunities for interviews with both presidential candidate [Candidate's Full Name] and [City Official's Title and Name]. Please indicate your interview requests in advance.

To confirm your attendance or request an interview, please RSVP by [RSVP Deadline] to [RSVP Contact Name] at [RSVP Contact Email] or [RSVP Contact Phone Number].

For logistical or event-related inquiries, please contact [Your Name] at [Your Phone Number] or [Your Email Address].

[City Footer]



Meeting or Event Invitation Template:

Date

Name

Address

City, State, ZIP Code

Dear [Title, Name]:

[Organization name] is pleased to invite you to [a meeting/our event/forum/facility tour]. It will be held at [location, date and time]. [One-sentence description of event or activity]. We would be honored to have you join us and [indicate what role you would like the candidate to play at the event].

As a candidate for our nation’s highest office, we think this would be an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about our community, the needs of our residents that call it home and share how your administration plans to collaborate with our [city/town] and other municipalities like ours. We hope to explore how you can work with our community and the National League of Cities to:

- Ensure local government has a seat at the federal decision-making table;
- Promote good governance and direct support for localities; and
- Celebrate civil discourse and strong engagement in the democratic process.

[Add any additional information about your event request or community as needed.]

Please contact [include contact information for event liaison] for more information and to discuss this invitation further. We look forward to your participation and engagement.

Sincerely,
[Name], [Title]
[Organization name]

Social Media Sample Post Sets:



SOCIAL MEDIA SAMPLE POST 1:

Cities, towns and villages should have a seat at the federal decision-making table. Our next president must ensure that local voices are represented and prioritized at the national level to create policies that work for everyone.



SOCIAL MEDIA SAMPLE POST 2:

Good governance starts at the local level. We urge the next president to ensure that the federal government works well for cities, towns and villages. Direct funding to our communities will always lead to more effective investments.



SOCIAL MEDIA SAMPLE POST 3:

Local leaders are committed to delivering reliable information that helps our communities make informed decisions. We celebrate vibrant civic participation within our communities, where residents and leaders work closely together to build trust and make a difference.

Additional Social Media Sample Posts:

Social Media Post 4: Local leaders exemplify bipartisan collaboration when solving challenges in our communities. We are committed to fostering constructive conversations and working together in service of community members from all walks of life.

Social Media Post 5: Local leaders practice bipartisan collaboration every day to solve local challenges. From potholes to public parks, the issues we tackle every day are not Democratic nor Republican and require nonpartisan, practical solutions.

Social Media Post 6: We are committed to raising the voice of local leaders and supporting legislation that strengthens the critical role of a local-federal partnership. Shaped by NLC members, our 2024 Federal Action Agenda outlines key priorities and actions that we hope the next president will address. Learn more at www.nlc.org/advocacy

Social Media Post 7: Communities across the country are ready to partner with the next president's administration to address pressing issues that impact the daily lives of people who live in them.

Social Media Post 8: Local leaders are committed to delivering reliable information that helps our communities make informed decisions. We celebrate vibrant civic participation within our communities, where residents and leaders work closely together to build trust and make a difference.

Additional Social Media Graphics:





2024 Presidential Election Local Official Advocacy Talking Points

Local elected officials and their communities have a critical role to play in the 2024 presidential cycle. We engage in the national dialogue and support the democratic process by connecting candidates to our communities and building strong intergovernmental partnerships at the local, state and federal level.

Communities across the country are ready to partner with the next president's administration to address pressing issues that impact the daily lives of people who reside in them.

For more information on general NLC resources and updates on federal advocacy, you can peruse [this printable handout](#).

Priority #1: Ensure Local Government Has a Seat at the Federal Decision-Making Table

- ▶ Local government plays a vital and irreplaceable role in our nation's governance, and it is crucial that the voices and needs of cities, towns, and villages across America are represented at the federal level.
- ▶ Our nation's president must always prioritize consistent, ongoing intergovernmental engagement and strong partnerships to ensure local input in federal policy decisions.
- ▶ Appointing leaders and officials with local government experience to key Administration roles can provide valuable perspectives.
- ▶ The participation of local officials in advisory committees, roundtables, and other opportunities will help ensure agency actions incorporate a local perspective.
- ▶ A strong and direct line of communication between the National League of Cities and its members, and the White House will continue to bring value to effective local-federal collaboration.

Priority #2: Promote Good Governance and Direct Federal Support to Localities

- ▶ About 76% of the approximately 19,500 incorporated places have fewer than 50,000 people, and about 63% of America's 328.2 million residents live inside these small communities. Regardless of population size, all cities must continue to be eligible for federal grant assistance at scale so that the benefits of federal programs and policies reach all of our country's communities.
- ▶ Municipal governments ensure that residents are kept safe, critical utilities are kept running, infrastructure is maintained, and that our communities are healthy, economically vibrant places to live.
- ▶ Local leaders exercise good stewardship of federal resources and are the decision-makers best positioned to ensure funding is spent effectively in each unique community. This means trusting local officials to make good decisions for our residents, removing unnecessary barriers or intermediaries to accessing funding, eliminating federal preemptions of local authorities, or preventing unfunded federal mandates.
- ▶ We must also make the federal government easier for communities of all sizes to use by simplifying program requirements and making it easier for our communities to get answers, information and technical assistance from federal agencies.

Priority #3: Celebrate Civil Discourse and Engagement in the Democratic Process

- ▶ Most local governments are elected on a nonpartisan basis. We know that the issues we tackle every day, from potholes to public parks, are not Democratic or Republican and require nonpartisan, practical solutions. Local leaders are known for exemplifying bipartisan and nonpartisan collaboration to solve local challenges.
- ▶ Civil discourse is at the heart of our democracy and local officials lead by example in fostering constructive conversations. We celebrate the vibrant civic participation within our communities, where residents and leaders work closely together to make a difference.
- ▶ Local leaders are committed to ensuring residents have access to reliable information to help them make decisions, maintain confidence in their government, and be active participants in the democratic process.
- ▶ Our commitment to civil discourse and strong engagement reflects our dedication to work with the next president to build an inclusive and responsive federal government that works for all Americans, regardless of where they live.

2024 Federal Action Agenda

In addition to the above principles, we encourage the next president to focus on the issues outlined in the National League of Cities 2024 Federal Action Agenda:



Make government work for all communities

Regardless of population size, all municipalities must continue to be eligible for federal grant assistance, at scale, so that the benefits of federal programs and policies reach all of America's communities. We support efforts to provide access and build capacity of small, mid-sized, rural, and disadvantaged communities.



Support a local workforce pipeline

The next president should support an at-scale investment in workforce development, training and apprenticeship programs to ensure America's communities have the skilled labor to address infrastructure, clean energy and advanced manufacturing priorities.



Build safe and healthy communities

As local leaders continue to serve on the front lines addressing our nation's public health and safety, having a strong federal partner in this work is essential. From mental health and substance use services to community violence, the health and safety of our cities, towns and villages requires direct and flexible funding to ensure effective strategies are implemented.



Prevent federal overreach of communities

Federal preemption of core local authorities and unfunded mandates threaten the ability of local leaders to balance budgets, maintain key services, manage growth and ensure the safety and usability of public spaces. NLC will continue to protect local authority and avoid undue costs and burden on municipalities.



Increase housing supply and stability

NLC urges the next president to help localities do more with their housing dollars and maintain long-term efforts through direct funding, grants, and tax-credits that accelerate development and improvements and stability programs that support residents in distress.



Support local economic growth and opportunity

Economic development is achieved by investment in the human and physical infrastructure in a region. The next president should improve the capacity of local governments to grow and improve their economies. NLC will continue to advocate for federal investments that catalyze local economic growth.

For more details on NLC's 2024 Federal Action Agenda, visit <https://www.nlc.org/advocacy>