



WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

ADVOCACY & MEDIA TOOLKIT

September 2020

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INTRODUCTION

YWCA

YWCA is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities. We are one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, serving over 2 million women, girls, and their families.

At YWCA, we are eliminating racism and empowering women. We will get up and do the work until injustice is rooted out, until institutions are transformed, until the world sees women, girls, and people of color the way we do: Equal. Powerful. Unstoppable.

YWCA has been at the forefront of the most pressing social movements for more than 160 years — from voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity, from violence prevention to health care reform. Today, we combine programming and advocacy in order to generate institutional change in three key areas:

- Racial Justice and Civil Rights
Increasing equal protection and equal opportunity for people of color
- Empowerment and Economic Advancement of Women and Girls
Increasing economic opportunities for women and girls of color
- Health and Safety of Women and Girls
Improving the health and safety of women and girls of color

**Eliminating racism.
Empowering women.
Our mission lives in the soul of
everyone at YWCA, because we
demand a world of equity and
human decency.**

WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE



For more than 20 years, YWCA has set aside one week in October as a Week Without Violence—one week when YWCAs across the country join with YWCAs around the world as part of a global movement to end gender-based violence. This year, Week Without Violence will take place from October 18-24, 2020.

Through our work as the largest network of domestic and sexual violence services providers in the U.S., we know that not all violence is acknowledged or responded to equally, and that some victims go unrecognized altogether. Our focus on gender-based violence — which recognizes a spectrum of violence, including but not limited to, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and harassment — allows us to address, educate, and take action around myriad issues that impact our communities.

THIS TOOLKIT – AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Week Without Violence is an ideal time to raise awareness and advocate for ending gender-based violence in your community and across the country. Your voice is critically important, and YWCA can help amplify it. Your experiences, stories, interest, and action can increase government funding and resources, strengthen protections, and enhance awareness. This toolkit was created to educate, engage, and empower you to make your voice heard with elected officials and decision makers. It provides a broad range of advocacy, social media, and technical assistance resources to enable your participation in this year's Week Without Violence. You'll find tools and strategies to engage on social media, to educate others about gender-based violence, and to advocate to your elected officials to support policies that will end gender-based violence and support survivors.

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE

We believe that everyone deserves to be safe and free from violence, abuse, and threats. However, violence against women continues to impact the lives of countless women and their families across the United States. Women and girls of all ages, income levels, racial and ethnic communities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and religious affiliations experience violence in the form of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and trafficking.



Even if your organization does not offer programming specifically designed to support survivors, you likely know and come into contact with survivors of gender-based violence:

- 1 in 5 women has been raped in her lifetime; every two minutes another American is sexually assaulted
- 1 in 3 young girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the United States
- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence within her lifetime—and more than 4 women are murdered by their partners each day
- Intimate partner violence is the immediate cause of homelessness for almost half of homeless women, and over 90% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse

At YWCA, we imagine a world without violence. We know that together, we can end gender-based violence. And we invite you to join us for Week Without Violence 2020. Please use this guide to inform your WWV 2020 efforts—and don't forget to register your events on your [Week Without Violence](#) dashboard.

We understand that the novel coronavirus crisis has introduced new challenges for local YWCAs, which may limit your capacity to transition from in-person to virtual events. You can request guidance and support by emailing weekwithoutviolence@ywca.org.

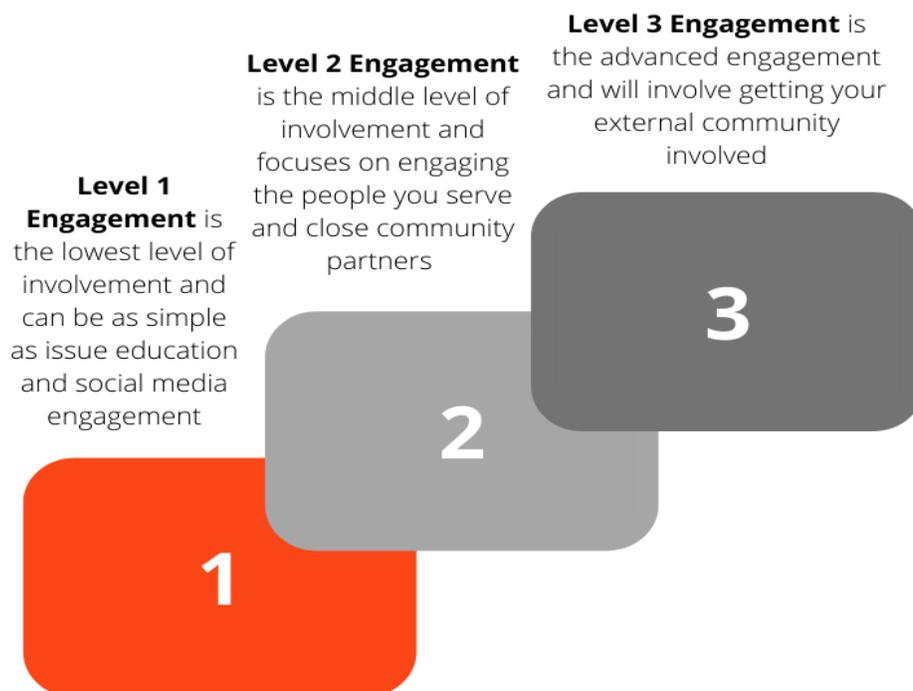
Our collective efforts can root out injustice, transform institutions, and create a world that sees women, girls, and people of color the way we see them: Equal. Powerful. Unstoppable.
Join Us for Week Without Violence 2020!

HOW CAN MY YWCA GET INVOLVED?

Given YWCA's mission and our network's historical commitment to women's health & safety, every YWCA can and should participate in the 2020 Week Without Violence. However, you may be wondering how your YWCA can meaningfully participate in Week Without Violence this year, given limited capacity and novel challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The good news is that there are still many opportunities to engage your community in the effort to eliminate gender-based violence and support survivors. Because all YWCAs serve unique communities, each YWCA will need to engage in a way that fits their individual needs, capitalizes on their current capacity, and reflects their community. Not every YWCA will host a townhall, or lead a candidate forum, but each YWCA can find a way to engage that works for them. The following are suggestions for YWCAs to get involved in Week Without Violence 2020, listed from the easiest level of engagement to the hardest level engagement.

As you plan your Week Without Violence Activities, remember to always consider who in your community is being served by them and who is being left out. Although it might be easiest to engage in only digital advocacy this WWV, doing so would likely neglect those with unreliable internet access in your community.



Tier 1

ISSUE EDUCATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

- ❑ Join the open [YWCA DV/SA Community](#) and [YWCA WWV Community](#) on the YWCA Intranet to get updates and find out about WWV engagement opportunities.
- ❑ [Register](#) for Week Without Violence beginning **September 22, 2020** to gain access to a digital toolbox and receive additional details concerning programming and merchandise!
- ❑ Use the [Domestic Violence Community Checklist](#) and the new [Civic Engagement Community Checklist](#) to see issues of concern for survivors in your community.
- ❑ Use the [WWV Fact Sheets](#) to learn about gender-based violence and educate your staff, board, volunteers, and community. Train your staff to answer basic questions.
- ❑ Show your support for survivors and for the end of gender-based violence on social media. Use [sample posts and images](#) in the media section of this toolkit to get out the word about the Week Without Violence!
- ❑ Circulate an Online Petition / Digital Pledge. Encourage your community and local elected officials to take a pledge work to end gender-based violence each and every day, and to pledge to vote in the upcoming election. Feel free to use the [YWCA WWV 2020 Community Pledge](#), [YWCA WWV 2020 Policymaker Pledge](#), and the [YWCA Voting Pledge](#) or create your own through free survey platforms like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey.
- ❑ [Launch a Social Media Challenge](#) Encourage your followers to engage in a video or photo challenge on your social media platforms. For example, some YWCAs are planning to ask supporters to take pictures of themselves holding [Week Without Violence signs](#) where they've indicated what a world without violence looks like to them.
- ❑ [Join the YWCA Week Without Violence Briefing](#) Registration information coming soon!

Tier 2

ENGAGE THE WOMEN AND FAMILIES YOUR SERVE

- Use your list of client emails to [share action alerts](#) on important legislation!
- Host a Virtual Film Screening / Watch Party** Platforms like Netflix are available for hosting virtual film screenings with your community, some of which have the capability of hosting discussions or Q&As after the film. Please note: it is critical to confirm with a legal expert that films are either within the public domain or acquired with public performance rights to avoid running afoul of copyright laws.
- Host a Panel Discussion** Recruit speakers from within your organization, your programs, and/or your community to join a video conference and speak about their expertise and experiences around gender-based violence as well as field questions from the community. Please note, it is important to test video conferencing platforms in advance and understand platform limitations ahead of time, such as maximum caps on the number of participants.
- Invite local elected officials to issue a formal [proclamation](#) to eliminate gender-based violence, then encourage them to create policies that support survivors.
- Host a brownbag lunch** (in-person or virtual) for your staff and board to learn more about the barriers to voting faced by survivors of gender-based violence.
- Make a **public statement** about your support for survivors and for ending gender-based violence by issuing a press release, letter to the editor, and/or radio announcement. Use the messaging in this toolkit to craft a message illustrating the importance of preventing and eliminating gender-based violence, the impact of COVID-19 on survivors, and uplifting ways to support survivors. Submit to your local media outlets, especially those that have robust online circulation.

Tier 3

ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

- ❑ **Host a Webinar, Virtual Learning Session, or Online Workshop** Consider hosting a series—or a single virtual event—that includes a facilitator guiding participants through a training on gender-based violence. Platforms like Zoom or Adobe Connect are available for hosting video conferences, some of which also have unique features conducive to building more engaging trainings. For example Zoom offers “**breakout rooms**” for participants to separate into small group discussions as well as **screen sharing** for workshop leaders to present PowerPoint and other multimedia. Please note, it is important to test any platform ahead of time and understand existing logistical limitations like whether there is a cap on the number of participants.
- ❑ **Host a Virtual 5k or 10k Race/Walk** During Week Without Violence, race participants can run or walk at a place and time of their choosing and then log and submit their time to your YWCA. Winners could be announced on the final day of WWV and could be featured on your social media/newsletter and receive virtual medals or an award in the mail.
- ❑ **Host a Virtual Rally, Town Hall, or Briefing** Consider partnering with other community organizations to host a video conference that includes speakers on various issues, multimedia presentations, artistic and interactive components like live polls, as well as potential local celebrity or public figure guest speakers. This is an ideal opportunity to engage your mayor, town council member, superintendent of education, public health official, state legislator, Member of Congress, or other policymakers in your community. Please note, it is important to test video conferencing platforms in advance and understand platform limitations ahead of time, such as maximum caps on the number of participants.
- ❑ **Host a Phone or Text Banking “Party”** Consider hosting a “party” where volunteers would commit to calling or texting 4 or more friends, family, acquaintances with a reminder to **register to vote** or take **the YWCA Pledge to Vote** in 2020. You may want to designate a specific day and time, design a script for volunteers to follow, and develop a system for tracking participation.
- ❑ **Educate voters and candidates** about issues of gender-based violence.

WWV 2020 TALKING POINTS & MESSAGING GUIDE

During YWCA's 26th annual Week Without Violence — on October 18-24, 2020 — we invite YWCAs and allied groups to organize events that raise awareness about gender-based violence and the issues that survivors face. Most importantly, we encourage you to explore how the tools of civic engagement can advance the work of justice in your community, highlight critical voices and issues in your community, and empower people.

This Messaging Guide provides talking points to assist you in framing communications around gender-based violence; YWCAs' response to gender-based violence; survivors—including their needs, solutions for meeting those needs, as well as the barriers survivors face and solutions for overcoming those barriers; and results from our recent YWomenVote survey.

YWCA's Response to Gender-Based Violence

YWCA is the largest network of domestic and sexual violence services providers in the United States.

- More than 140 (70%) of YWCAs around the country provide domestic and or sexual violence services to survivors

Gender-Based Violence Overview

Gender-based violence impacts the lives of countless women and their families across the United States. Women and girls of all ages, income levels, racial and ethnic communities, sexual orientations and religious affiliations experience violence in the form of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, trafficking and stalking.

- Every 90 seconds another American is sexually assaulted.
- Out of every 1000 cases of rape, only 57 lead to an arrest, 11 are referred to prosecutors, and 7 lead to a felony conviction.
- Only half of domestic violence incidents are reported to police.
- 1 in 3 girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the United States.
- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence and, on average, more than 3 women are murdered by their current or former partners in the United States every day.
- 1 of every 4 homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her and over 92% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime.
- Victims of domestic violence lose about 8 million days of paid work per year because of the violence that they experienced.

- 81% of all women have experienced street harassment. Among all women, 51% have been sexually touched, 34% have been followed, and 27% have survived sexual assault.
- Food service and hospitality workers report the highest levels of sexual harassment in the workplace and often have the least amount of employment protections.

Gender-Based Violence and Women of Color

Gender-based violence occurs across all races, ages, classes, and ethnic backgrounds, though at disparate rates and with disproportionate impacts for women of color.

- Native Americans are victims of rape or sexual assault at 2.5 times the rate of other racial groups. In fact, more than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3%) have experienced violence in their lifetime. This includes 56.1% who have experienced sexual violence, 55.5% who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 48.8% who have experienced stalking, and 66.4% who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.
- Black women experience intimate partner violence (IPV) at a rate 19% higher than that of White women. 45% of Black women experience physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetimes, compared with 37.3% of all women.
- Black women are at an especially high risk of homicide by men compared with all women. In 2015, Black women were two and a half times more likely to be murdered by men than White women. 92% of Black female victims were killed by men they knew, and 56% were killed by current or former intimate partners. In cases where the murder weapon was identified, 59% of Black female victims were shot and killed with guns.
- In an ongoing study conducted by Black Women's Blueprint, 60% of Black girls will experience sexual abuse before the age of 18.
- 21–55% of Asian and Pacific Islander (A/PI) women report experiencing intimate physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime. A/PI survivors are more likely to experience abuse from multiple family members, including a spouse, and in-laws than other survivors.
- Approximately 1 in 3 Hispanic/Latinx women have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime and 1 in 12 of Hispanic/Latina women experienced this violence in the previous 12 months. Additionally, a national study found 63.1% of Latina women who identified being victimized in their lifetime reported having experienced more than one victimization.

Housing and Gender-Based Violence

Housing is the most common need for survivors of domestic violence and is often the most unmet need. No one should have to choose between shelter and safety.

- Recent statistics suggest that on a single night in January 2017, 16% of the overall homeless population, 87,329 people, reported having experienced domestic violence at some point.
- Due to “zero-tolerance” nuisance ordinances, many landlords can evict domestic violence survivors because of the damage their abusers inflict in the apartments they lease. Women who have experienced recent or ongoing domestic violence are more likely to face eviction than other women.
- In 2014, FVPSA grantees reported 196,467 unmet requests for shelter—a 13% increase over those reported in 2010. This represents a count of the number of unmet requests for shelter due to programs being at capacity.
- Access to safe housing is even harder for some survivors. In a national survey, more than 60% of LGBT sexual and domestic violence survivors said they were denied access to domestic violence shelters. In a 2014 national study, more than half of transgender individuals who accessed homeless shelters were harassed by shelter staff or residents, and almost 29% were turned away altogether.
- By age 12, 83% of homeless children have been exposed to at least one serious violent event and nearly 25% have witnessed acts of violence within their families.

Immigration and Gender-Based Violence

In addition to the risk of violence, immigrant women experience increased barriers to fleeing abuse due to a complex set of factors. Among those are language barriers, fear or confusion about US legal systems, financial abuse, and social isolation.

- Immigrant status has been found to have an impact on survivors’ help-seeking behavior. A study found that Latinx immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to seek help for domestic violence from formal agencies (6.9% vs. 14.7%).
- In a review of community-based studies, 41–61% of respondents in Asian homes reported experiencing intimate partner violence (physical and/or sexual) during their lifetime.
- 48% percent of Latinas in one study reported that their partner’s violence against them had increased since they immigrated to the United States.
- Married immigrant women experience higher levels of physical and sexual abuse than unmarried immigrant women, 59.5% compared to 49.8%, respectively.

Economic Abuse

Economic abuse can have severe and lasting consequences on survivors' economic security that undermines their ability to recover from trauma or be independent from an abuser.

Economic abuse may leave survivors homeless, unemployed, or unable to access supports or resources that can help them rebuild their lives.

- Financial abuse is experienced by 94 to 99% of domestic violence survivors and occurs across all socio-economic, educational, racial and ethnic groups.
- In a recent study, DV programs across 10 states reported that 88% of abusers controlled all finances and 73% stole money from their victims.
- DV shelters report that 74% of survivors stay with an abuser longer due to financial concerns.
- Between 1/4 and 1/2 of domestic violence victims report that they have lost a job due to domestic violence. 24% of survivors report being asked to resign or fired due to stalking at work.
- Between 35% and 56% of victims of intimate partner violence are harassed at work by their abusers.

Domestic Violence and Voting

Survivors of gender-based violence face many unique obstacles and barriers to voting.

- Survivors are often isolated from election information and voting materials by abusers. Using physical, psychological, and economic means, abusers often restrict survivors' access to the outside world and information via the phone and internet, particularly social media platforms.
- Abusers may use intimidation or threats of violence if survivors vote or fail to vote in a specific way. For instance, Abusers may threaten to restrict survivors' access to children, eliminate survivors' financial support, or physically or sexually abuse survivors if they express a voting preference.
- Survivors must often supply their home address to register to vote, placing them in further danger even once they've left abusive partners. Only 11 states prohibit the public sharing of voter registration lists, other states make them publicly available or permit them to be purchased.

- At least 29 of the 41 states that have Address Confidentiality Programs for survivors prevent participants' voter records from being shared in order to keep survivors' addresses from being sold and accessible in voter lists. However, this is not a guarantee of privacy.
- Some survivors do not feel safe going to their polling place to cast their ballot. However, 16 states require survivors to meet certain conditions in order to vote absentee. During the COVID-19 pandemic, survivors are still required to meet conditions (beyond a fear of COVID-19) in 7 states.
- Women who are worried about experiencing or sexual assault or domestic violence are much less likely to vote than women who are not worried. Women who are not worried are 26 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are worried, and 41 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are very worried about experiencing gender-based violence.
- Women who are worried about accessing counseling and other needed services after experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence are much less likely to vote than women who are not worried. Women who are not worried are 21 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are worried, and 37 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are very worried about access.
- Women who have experienced sexual harassment at work within the last year are more likely to be very worried about both being able to cast their vote without interference or obstacles (38% v. 24%) and about whether their vote will count in the election (46% vs. 34%).

YWomenVote and Gender-Based Violence

New data from [YWomenVote2020](#) — YWCA's 3rd national survey of women in the United States — reveals that women around the country are deeply concerned about gender-based violence, and this concern is also impacting their views on voting.

- Women have substantial concerns about gender-based violence: 36% of women are concerned about experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence (21% are very worried); 49% are worried about being believed when reporting gender-based violence (31% very worried); and 38% of women are worried about being able to access counseling and other needed services after experiencing gender-based violence (22% very worried).
- Women of color are more likely to experience higher levels of concern than white women about all aspects of gender-based violence.

- Gen Z women’s concerns about gender-based violence are substantially higher than those of other age cohorts. As many as 8 in 10 Gen Z women are worried about aspects of gender-based violence.
- Women who are worried about gender-based violence are more likely to be worried about all concerns, but are particularly more likely to be worried about keeping themselves and their families safe from gun violence (+33 percentage points), and having a medical expense that they or their family cannot afford (+30 percentage points).

WWV ADVOCACY 101

While advocacy can include visits to Capitol Hill and meetings or calls with state legislators, it is much more than supporting legislation or being involved in politics. Advocacy for Week Without Violence can include a wide array of activities that range from individual actions to group, community, and legislative or policy efforts:

PERSONAL

Represent and speak up for yourself and/or your loved ones. Be informed about the issues that impact you, your friends, your family, and your community.

COMMUNITY

Represent the rights and interests of your community (your neighborhood, place of worship, community organization, etc.). Educate those around you so you can work together to build the strongest community possible.

LEGISLATIVE

Work with elected officials (at local, state, or federal levels) to educate and influence them on important legislative decisions. Every citizen has a constitutional right to have their voice heard by their elected decision makers.

MEDIA

Increase public awareness and influence public interest in eliminating gender-based violence. Promote support for survivors through letters to the editor, social media, radio and television interviews, etc.

POLICY

Influence laws, regulations, and rules that have an impact on eliminating gender-based violence and supporting survivors. This can be as lofty as commenting on a federal regulation or as simple as a helping to implement rules at your workplace that ensure safety and support survivors.

ADVOCACY TOOLS

Engaging in advocacy doesn't have to be difficult; these tools can help you connect with your community and your elected officials. Utilize the following tips, templates, and examples and tailor them to fit your message and achieve your goal.

VIRTUAL EVENT PLANNING TIPS

As our nation continues to grapple with the unprecedented COVID-19 health crisis, it is essential that previously planned in-person events for Week Without Violence shift to virtual education and activation of our communities. Several paid platforms -- like [GoToMeeting](#), [Mailchimp](#), [Google Hangouts](#), and others -- are offering free trials right now to nonprofits in response to COVID-19. [Zoom](#), for example, has a free option that will allow you to host a group of up to 100 for 40 minutes, and Adobe Connect is currently offering a free 90-day trial. For more information on accessing the free Adobe Connect trial, contact Matt Preiss (mpreiss@ywca.org). Platforms like Zoom or Adobe Connect are available for hosting video conferences, some of which also have unique features conducive to building more engaging trainings. For example Zoom offers “[breakout rooms](#)” for participants to separate into small group discussions as well as [screen sharing](#) for workshop leaders to present PowerPoint and other multimedia. Please note, it is important to test any platform ahead of time and understand existing logistical limitations like whether there is a cap on the number of participants.

We encourage you to continue sharing your own ideas for virtual events within the new [Week Without Violence Community](#) on the intranet. If you have any questions about the suggestions below, would like to be connected to YWCAs already planning some of these strategies, or need additional help transitioning from in-person to virtual events, YWCA USA staff are available to assist you. Email weekwithoutviolence@ywca.org.

HOW TO HOST A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FORUM

Community forums serve as opportunities to uplift the voices of women of color leaders and experts, to host critical discussions around issues impacting our communities, and to empower our communities with information, tools, and resources to end gender-based violence and support survivors; and to highlight key messages from YWomenVote to mobilize our constituents to vote in the 2020 election. Given COVID-19, this year advocates are turning to virtual or online community forums to continue to host these important discussions. A virtual community forum can take many forms -- for example, it can look like a webinar or briefing, a panel discussion or town hall, a learning session, a Q&A with experts or candidates, or a workshop. No matter what you call your event, or how you structure it, a virtual community forum can be an effective way for your YWCA to engage your community in Week Without Violence this year.

KEY BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits:

- Raise the profile of your YWCA in your community
- Deepen relationships with elected officials, sponsors, and partner organizations
- Fundraising opportunity through event sponsorship
- Educate candidates on issues of importance to your community and your YWCA
- Educate, register, and mobilize voters in your community

Challenges:

- Heavier lift and time consuming to plan & manage
- Moderate to high level of technical sophistication
- Maintaining 501(c)(3) nonpartisanship

TIPS & TRICKS

GOALS

- **Setting goals for an event will enable you to measure success.** Consider setting numeric goals (i.e. audience turnout, funds raised, actions taken) as well as non-numeric goals (i.e. to educate the community about institutional and gender-based violence, to raise awareness about

Week Without Violence, to celebrate a local elected official signing the Week Without

Violence Proclamation). For example, setting a goal to have 150 people to attend your virtual forum or have 50 people take action to support the VAWA, provides a clear statement of what you are trying to

accomplish that can guide your planning decisions.

LOGISTICS

- **Type of event.** Will your forum be structured more as a webinar or briefing? A panel discussion or town hall? A learning session, Q&A, or workshop? The format depends, in part, on whether your goal is to educate or motivate. If your goal is to educate, a forum or panel discussion is an engaging way to provide information. A single-focused speaker or group of speakers, or a screening of a video about gender-based violence, allows for an emotional presentation that will motivate your audience. A virtual town hall allows community members to hear and share thoughts with community leaders. Potential speakers include experts in gender-based violence, YWCA staff, local or community leaders, local college or university professors, or elected officials.
- **Public or private.** Determine whether you want your event to be open to the public, or to be a private affair.
- **Co-hosts/co-sponsors.** Hosting a virtual forum can be a heavy lift for your YWCA and working with another organization to co-host or co-sponsor your event offers several

As you undertake your planning, make sure to center the voices and experiences of survivors and acknowledge that experiences vary based on gender, race, socio-economic status, sexual identity, and ability. Especially as we look to solutions for issues impacting survivors, it's important for us to listen to the wants and needs of those who are most directly impacted.

advantages, especially if you've never hosted a virtual event before. Collaboration provides a bigger pool for resources and potential attendees. It can also result in a more balanced or diverse perspective. Moreover, working with other organizations represents a great opportunity to build and maintain coalitions. If you do co-sponsor your event, make sure that you have the same goals.

- **Create an event description and secure your speakers.** Early in your planning process, develop a description of the forum that can be used when conducting your outreach to potential speakers, sponsors, and partner organizations, and can later form the basis of your official event invitation.
 - Make a list of who you'd like to speak at your forum and use the event description to invite them to participate.
 - Remember that your speakers do not have to be national political figures or celebrities. Consider inviting direct service staff, program participants, community leaders, local candidates for office, local news anchors, etc., to speak at your event and provide their perspective.
- **Platform.** Choosing the right platform for your Week Without Violence virtual event depends on who you'd like to attend and the

environment you want to create. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How many attendees are you expecting?
 - How will participants engage with the speaker?
 - How many attendees are you expecting?
 - How will participants engage with the speaker?
 - How will participants engage with each other?
 - What preparation do participants need in order to use the virtual platform?
 - How will materials be shared with participants before, during, and after the sessions?
 - What will your community norms be, and how much control do you want over their adherence?
 - How can you build an agenda that balances content sharing, engagement, and time in front of a computer to keep participants engaged?
- **Design a promotional graphic for your forum.** Design a graphic that you and your event partners can share to promote participation in your event, using free graphic design software like [Canva](#) to get started. Encourage your partners to share the promotional materials you've developed with their network of staff, followers, clients, supporters, etc.
- **Familiarize yourself with the platform and test in advance.** Ideally, you will host a training (or at least a run through) for your staff and event speakers on how to use the platform prior to your event. Consider also sending instructions for how to use the

platform via email to your event attendees in advance of the event and have someone on hand who is especially familiar with the platform and can handle questions or troubleshoot during the event.

- **Set up a registration form for RSVPs.** While it's often easiest to set up an RSVP through the platform you will be using for the event, you can also use free services such as [Eventbrite](#) or [Google Forms](#) to set up an event registration form. Just make sure to collect contact information (most likely, email addresses) from those who register to enable follow up communications about the event.

PUBLICITY

- **Know Your Audience.** Not every event is of interest to every audience. Before you develop your publicity plan, decide who you want to attend your event.
- **Personal or public.** If you are hosting a small private party, personal invitations are the only "publicity" you will need. These can take the form of phone calls, e-invites, or written notes.
- If you are planning for a large audience, newsletters, email, Facebook events, and community event calendars can all prove useful. The personalized event page you receive when registering your event at [Week Without Violence](#) can also be incredibly useful in promoting your event.
 -

➤ **Paid advertising.** If your YWCA has funds at its disposal, consider using paid advertising for event promotion. Knowing your intended audience will ensure that resources are targeted and well spent.

➤ **Know Your Event.** If you are hosting a large public event, make sure you have planned it to be interesting to the general public. What is unique about your event? Different angles will help you to catch the interest of potential attendees and the media who can help raise awareness about racial justice and your event.

➤ **Decide on your “look”.** All your materials should have a consistent theme and share similar design elements that highlight the message of your event. Make sure to include a link to your registration form. Consider using free graphic design software like [Canva](#) to design your own graphics or use these [YWCA template social media graphics](#). You can download [promotional materials](#) for use in your publicity in your Week Without Violence digital toolkit.

➤ **The Five W’s:** In everything you produce — flyers, posters, e-invites, news alerts, event listings — you must have the correct 5 W’s:

- Who will be speaking?
- What will they be addressing?

- When will it happen?
- Where will it take place?
- Why are you sponsoring the event?

➤ **Make Your PR Plan.** Having focused on your audience and your event, and designed your promotional materials, you are now ready to make your publicity plan. Calendarize all relevant deadlines, e.g., for publications, as well as “lead times” required for design and distribution of invitations.

DON’T FORGET: Once you’ve determined logistics, return to your Week Without Violence account to register your event. Registered events will appear on our event map and will help us show the depth and breadth of support around the country for ending gender-based violence. Plus, all registered events receive a unique, customizable mini site (including a unique URL!) to use in event promotion!

➤ **Promote your event.**

Consider promoting the event through your website, newsletter, social media, and email to community partners or coalition listservs, and encourage your event partners and sponsors to share the promotional materials with their network, as well. If it makes sense in your

community, consider printing the graphic and pinning it to community bulletin boards in places of business that remain open and frequented like grocery stores, coffee shops, and laundromats.

PRE-EVENT

➤ **Develop a run of show.** A run-of-show helps to ensure an organized and timely program. Share the goals of your event, discussion questions, and clear presentation requests with your speakers in advance of the event.

- To prepare event support staff, make sure to designate roles ahead of time,

i.e. someone to: run the technology during the event, pass along audience-generated questions to the moderator, share information and resources via the chat, run any multimedia components, track the time, *etc.*

- To prepare your speakers, consider including the questions your event moderator will ask within the run-of-show and send the run-of-show to speakers as far in advance as possible.

- **Send important details to participants.** In advance of the event, send detailed instructions for how to join the event and use the platform, as well as the contact information for someone who will serve as your “IT expert” to handle questions and troubleshoot as needed during the event.

THE EVENT

- **Introductions and opening remarks.** As your participants get settled, take the opportunity to welcome and thank them. It’s important to acknowledge the time and effort people make to show up — let them know it’s appreciated.
 - Introduce yourself — what YWCA is, what Week Without Violence is, and why you are holding an event — with a few brief comments reminding attendees of the importance of ending gender-based violence.
 - If you notice any local elected officials, community leaders, or other key individuals, introduce them and thank them for their attendance.
 - In your opening remarks, briefly explain

the format of the event so that people know what to expect and how long they might be there. Also, inform participants how they can share questions, comments, or ideas they have during the presentation or to bring up during a group discussion, if applicable.

- **Presentation.** Follow your run-of-show to ensure an organized and timely program.
- **Group Discussion.** An important part of many events is the time when individuals can share ideas. Leave ample time for Q&A / group discussion and suggestions for individual action to follow the presentation.
 - Have a few pre-planned topics or questions. If everyone seems to have something to contribute, you can scale back to focus on a few central points. On the other hand, you can use a question or idea as a way to elicit a response.
 - Stick to a time limit. If you hit your time limit and there are still questions and responses, take one last question.
- **Take Action.** One of the most important parts of your event is encouraging your attendees to take action to end gender-based violence and support survivors.
 - Invite your attendees to take action to end gender-based violence and support survivors. Some ideas include taking urging policymakers to support full funding of the Violence Against

Women Act and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act through letters, phone calls, or through [YWCA's online Action Center](#).

- **Wrapping Up.** At the end of your event, it is a good idea to give a short concluding address.
 - Thank everyone again for attending and be sure to remind them to sign up for the [YWCA Action Center](#) and to receive updates from you about future events and actions to end gender-based violence and support survivors.
 - This is also a good time to let people know about all the great work your YWCA has been doing and what is coming in the future.

AFTER THE EVENT

- **After the event, pull together your team.** Evaluate whether you achieved your goals and what you would do the same/differently next time. Celebrate a job well done!
- **Use your registration list.** The registration list from your event becomes one of your most valuable organizing tools. That list contains the names of people you already knew were inspired to become supporters of YWCA, someone you met whom you had not worked with before, a key leader in your community, or an organization you can ally with in the future. For your next event, invite them and ask them to bring a friend!

- **Follow up with your attendees.** Include a “call to action” in some way before too much time passes. If it was a small event, give everyone on your list a call or send an email or note. If you had a large event, choose a select number of people to contact. Tell attendees how glad you are that they participated and ask for feedback on the event. If you already have plans for another event, give them a heads-up and ask if they will commit to being there.
- **Week Without Violence and your event are powerful because they inspire people in your community.** You can share news about your event with your community, suggest ways that people can get involved in ending gender-based violence and supporting survivors in your community, and provide a

YWCA USA would love to hear more about your event! Share livestreams and quotes from your event with us and we will elevate your work on social media and the YWCA USA website.

way for them to get in touch with you. Send a letter-to-the-editor to your local newspaper.

REPORT BACK

- Don't forget to let YWCA USA know how your event went by filling out the report back form about your event on your dashboard. Your feedback helps us highlight the amazing work YWCAs are doing across the country!

HOW TO ORGANIZE A VIRTUAL VOTER REGISTRATION / GOTV DRIVE: PHONE/TEXT BANKING

Phone/text banking serves as an opportunity to empower our communities with timely voting information, tools, and resources; to reach program participants and voters who may not have reliable broadband internet access; and to highlight key messages from YWomenVote that help mobilize our constituents to participate in the 2020 election.

KEY BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits:

- Raise the profile of your YWCA in your community
- Deepen relationships with partner organizations
- Educate, register, and mobilize voters in your community
- Mobilize current & former program participants
- Mobilize community members who do not have with unreliable internet access
- Well-suited as a volunteer activity

Challenges:

- Potential costs associated with securing access to voter contact lists - partnerships are key!
- Moderate to high level of technical sophistication
- Managing volunteers & tracking progress
- Maintaining 501(c)(3) nonpartisanship

NOTE: Election canvassing (including in-person, via phone, and via text) can pose a unique potential threat to survivors of intimate partner violence. **A few reminders about communicating with individuals who may be survivors of intimate partner violence:**

- Canvassers are often hired by a specific issue campaign, organization, candidate, or political party, and therefore target relevant party members as well as individuals who voted in the last election.
- When using a pre-written script or designing your own, make sure you are not identifying a potential voter as being a member of a party, a supporter of a candidate, or as a voter in a previous election. If an abuser hears or reads that a survivor is involved in political activism, the survivor may be subjected to more abuse.
- Keep your message general and simply ask individuals if they are registered to vote and if they plan to vote on Election Day, thereby providing survivors with deniability if needed.

TIPS AND TRICKS

LOGISTICS

➤ **Decide upon your approach to contacting voters.** Consider the following questions as you decide:

- Will you be hosting your event in English or in another language spoken by your community?
- Will you be hosting a phone bank, text bank, or both?
- What makes the most sense for your community?
- How much time do you have available? One benefit of texting is that you may be able to reach more people in a given period of time, but it might not be as effective as good old-fashioned, human-to-human conversations.
- Do you need access to a database of phone numbers for your event? If so, see the partnership suggestions below.
- Would a relational organizing approach to contacting voters work for your YWCA? A relational organizing approach might look like asking staff to call ten current or former program participants with whom they've worked. Or it might look like asking volunteers to text 20 friends, clients, family members, neighbors, or colleagues with timely voting information during a specific "day of action."

REMEMBER: YWCA is a 501(c)(3) organization, so YWCAs may not target any voter registration efforts at members of a particular political party.

- Are there ways for you to focus your outreach on breaking down barriers to voting? For example, you might consider encouraging volunteers to contact people they know who face particular barriers to voting—a cousin who recently turned 18 and hasn't voted before, a friend who just earned her U.S. citizenship.

A relational organizing approach capitalizes on the strength of your staff and volunteers' existing relationships and might be a lighter lift for your YWCA. In contrast, an approach that utilizes voter databases might be a heavier lift to set up and manage, but it would allow you to target specific neighborhoods, communities, or groups, such as unregistered voters.

- **Partner with an organization that has access to a phone / text banking platform.** If you decided against a relational approach in favor of a more traditional text or phone banking event, you will likely need to obtain access to a database of voter phone numbers. Unfortunately accessing such databases usually costs considerable money. Consider partnering with your state or local [League of Women Voters](#), [State Voices Table](#), or another GOTV-focused group to find a partner willing to cost-share around this resource or share access to their voter contact lists.

- Decide which platform you will use.
 - If you are partnering with another organization to access voter contact information, explore whether you can also utilize their text/phone banking platform.
 - Research popular peer-to-peer texting platforms like [Hustle](#) and [ThruText](#) and phone banking platforms like [CallHub](#), [OpenVPB](#), and [HubDialer](#)-- to understand costs, features, and limitations.

➤ **Determine the time and scope of your phone and/or text banking event(s).**

- Will you encourage phone/text banking in advance of your state’s voter registration deadline, perhaps on National Voter Registration Day (September 22), to remind potential voters to register?
- Will you be doing so during your state’s early voting period to provide timely information about absentee and early in-person voting?

REMEMBER: there are primary and general elections, with different deadlines for each.

- Will you be running a phone/text banking event the week before the election reminding voters of polling hours, locations, and election protection hotlines?
- Decide whether you have the capacity (and volunteer availability) to organize only one round of phone/text banking or, ideally, multiple rounds that are tied to critical voting deadlines in your state.

GOALS

➤ **Set reasonable goals and develop a plan.**

- How many people do you plan to contact through this activity and how will you track the number reached? REMEMBER: It takes less time for a volunteer to send a pre-written text than to complete a phone call.
- Make sure the goals you set are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (“SMART” goals). Example: Reach 200 voters by your state’s voter registration deadline or receive 100 commitments to vote by the week before the election.

RECRUIT AND TRAIN VOLUNTEERS

➤ **Once you have your partners, platform, and dates confirmed, you are ready to develop promotional language and materials for your events.**

- Create an event description that can be used in all your promotional outreach as well as an RSVP form that collects contact information that can be used in follow-up communications.
- Develop a graphic that you and your event partners can share via email and social media. Consider using free graphic design software like [Canva](#) to design your own graphics or use these [YWCA template social media graphics](#) as a starting point.
- Encourage your event partners to share the promotional materials you’ve developed with their network of staff, followers, clients, and supporters, etc.
- If it makes sense in your community, consider printing the graphic and

pinning it to community bulletin boards in places of business that remain open and frequented like grocery stores, coffee shops, and laundromats.

- Is there a required training for volunteers to be able to register voters?
- Is there a way for survivors of violence to register securely and privately?

➤ **Train your volunteers so that they feel comfortable registering voters and confident they are following community registration rules.** In your training session:

- Review the registration site and rules
- Discuss the importance of voter registration
- Practice asking people to register

REMEMBER: Voter registration drives can attract people who were looking for ways to become more involved in your YWCA, or who weren't even aware they would be interested in YWCA. Let people know that your YWCA is looking for extra help—you may end up with more YWCA volunteers!

USE THE RIGHT FORM TO REGISTER VOTERS

➤ **Remember to check with your local election official to see if a county or state-specific form is needed.**

- If a specific form is not required, you should be able to direct voters to whatever form is provided by your local official OR the [national voter registration form](#).
- If multiple languages are spoken in your area, use links to forms in those languages.

KNOW YOUR STATE'S RULES

➤ **Make sure you and all your voter registration drive volunteers understand your [state's rules for voter registration](#) before you start registering voters:**

- How long before the election do voters need to register to be eligible to vote?
- What is the age requirement for volunteers registering people to vote?
- Do voters need to declare a party affiliation?
- What are the rules for people who have been convicted of a felony?
- How must registration forms be submitted to election officials?
- What is the required length of residency prior to registering to vote?
- Are college students eligible to register to vote where they are enrolled?

PRE-EVENT

- **Create a script for phone/text banking volunteers to follow.** Consider the following questions as you develop your script:
- How should volunteers begin the conversations? How should they introduce themselves?
 - What exactly should volunteers be asking or encouraging? Do you want to focus the message on voter registration? Early voting options? Mobilization and election protection? Make sure to include upcoming deadline and opportunities [specific to your state](#).
 - Should you be providing the script in languages other than English?
 - Consider creating your own script that best serves your community and goals, or utilize sample scripts developed by

nonprofits—like [this phone script from VoteRunLead](#), [this phone script from NonprofitVOTE](#).

➤ **Establish a system for tracking progress.**

- Many popular phone/text banking platforms will automatically track volunteer participation and progress.
- You will need to find another way to log completed interactions if you adopt a relational organizing approach to your event.
- Consider creating a brief survey through a free survey platform like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey and strongly encourage your event participants to log their interactions using the survey.

➤ **Send important details to volunteers in advance.** Make sure to include:

- Copies of phone and text scripts;
- Detailed instructions for how to use the platform;
- Instructions on how to log their calls / text; and
- Contact information for someone who will serve as your “IT expert” to handle questions and troubleshoot during the event.

THE EVENT

➤ **Host a video call or pre-record a welcome video to open the text/phone banking event.** Use the video call or pre-recorded video to:

- Welcome and thank your volunteers;
- Explain the importance of voting to your YWCA;

- Get your volunteers pumped to take action; and
- Provide important instructions for making calls/text and tracking progress.

REMEMBER: Keep it personal – talk to people about why voting is important to your community.

➤ **Keep track of information so you can follow up with voters before the next election.** The people you register will be natural targets for your Get Out the Vote (GOTV) work next fall!

FOLLOW-UP

➤ **A good GOTV campaign stays in touch with the people it has registered throughout the year.** Contact newly registered voters a few weeks after they register to ensure that they received a registration confirmation, know the date of upcoming elections, know where to vote, and what to bring to the polls.

REPORT BACK

➤ Don't forget to let YWCA USA know how your voter registration drive went by filling out the report back form about your event on your dashboard. Your feedback helps us highlight the amazing work YWCAs are doing across the country!

SOME IMPORTANT RULES AROUND VOTER ENGAGEMENT



The IRS clearly states that 501(c)(3) organizations may conduct voter engagement or connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis. This includes encouraging voter participation, educating voters, and talking to candidates about issues. Below are guidelines for YWCAs in conducting activities during the 2019 election season.

As 501(c)(3) organizations, YWCAs can:

1. Promote or conduct voter registration
2. Educate voters on the where, when, and how of voting
3. Encourage and remind people to vote
4. Encourage staff to serve on Election Day as a poll worker, translator, or other nonpartisan volunteer
5. Distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, or voter guides
6. Host or co-sponsor a candidate forum (the forum must be open to all candidates, conducted in a balanced way, and include a

- nonpartisan panel of questioners)
7. Hold a voter education event
8. Educate the candidates on your issues
9. Continue issue advocacy during an election
10. Support or oppose ballot measures as a lobbying activity (subject to normal lobbying limits)
11. Conduct nonpartisan training on issues and organizing skills
12. Allow staff to participate as individuals in political campaigns, on their own time and not as representatives of the organization

YWCAs may NOT conduct *partisan* activities to support or oppose any candidate for public office, including:

1. Endorsing a candidate
2. Contributing to a candidate or party. This includes “in-kind” contributions such as publicity, staff time, and use of facilities or assets, *unless* those resources are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value
3. Rating candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s)

For more information about YWCA’s Voter Engagement and resources for 2020, please join the [Voter Engagement Intranet Community](#).

Have more questions about the do’s and don’ts for 501(c)(3)s? Check out [this webinar](#) or [this resource](#) from Nonprofit Vote. You can also call the Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229).

HOW TO HOST A VIRTUAL RACE

Virtual races are great way to raise awareness about your YWCA, the impact of gender-based violence in your community, and the 2020 election in a safe, socially-distanced way. Races can also be used as a fundraiser for your organization.

KEY BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits:

- Raise the profile of your YWCA in your community
- Deepen relationships with partner organizations
- Educate your community about gender-based violence and its impact in your community
- Mobilize current & former program participants
- Mobilize community members who do not have with unreliable internet access
- Well-suited as a volunteer activity

Challenges:

- Potential costs associated with securing promotional items
- Moderate level of technical sophistication
- Managing participants and tracking progress

TIPS & TRICKS

PLAN YOUR RACE

➤ Details:

- Date: Choose a date during Week Without Violence that makes sense for your location. Or, open up your race so that participants can join on any day that week.
- Distance: Determine what distance you will have participants run / walk. Common distances are 5k and 10k.

- **Set reasonable goals.** For instance, setting goals around the number of participants or the total amount fundraised will help keep you on track.

- **Safety First:** Safety is your number one priority for your race. Here are a few pointers:

- Remind your race participants about health and safety needs, such as social distancing guidelines, masks, and hand sanitizer.

TIP: Set reasonable goals. How many people do you want to register? It is better to be conservative with your goals so you can exceed expectations and grow next year!

- **Sponsorship:** Typically, a road race will cost the amount of money you are

charging participants to register. However, a virtual race doesn't have many costs. If you wish to raise money for your YWCA's other projects to end gender-based violence and support survivors, finding a sponsor may help you cover the costs of your race:

- Go to networking events to meet people. Find out what they do — it might be relevant to your race.
 - Post flyers when you're at community locations like supermarkets and banks. Promote your event to potential participants and sponsors at the same time.
 - Contact local businesses and see if they want to donate money, be listed on promotional materials, or donate stuff for the race goodie bags.
 - If you notice teams signing up for the event, approach them and see if they have a company that would like to participate in being a sponsor.
 - Post a sponsorship packet on your website.
- **Publicity:** The internet is the best way to promote your event. Try promoting your event through email blasts, your website, and your social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). But don't forget advertising in local newspapers and going to other races can also gain additional registrations.
- **Registration:**
- Once race details have been confirmed, you need to offer a way to sign up. Cumbersome registrations can turn people away. An online registration system available 24/7 allows racers to

sign up at their convenience and saves you time. Tools like Eventbrite and Facebook are useful if you are keeping your race simple and are also great for publicizing your event.

- If your event is more about raising awareness than raising funds, you might decide to forego a formal registration. In this case, Eventbrite and Facebook are excellent tools for simply helping to get the word out about your event.
- **Design Race Day Shirts:** One way to mark your event AND to raise extra funds is to design and sell t-shirts and/or sweatshirts. This is a great way to raise money for your cause without charging a participation fee. Runners/walkers can simply purchase a shirt and then go out and run during Week Without Violence.
- **If you're pressed for time:** YWCA USA has Week Without Violence merchandise available in the merchandise store for purchase.
- **Make sure participants know where to upload their times.** Participants need to know where to send and/or post their race times once they finish their race so that you can determine race winners.

TIP: Be ready for participants to email you their compliments and complaints about their experiences as early as the day of the race. Remember to prepare your staff to respond appropriately to both.

RACE DAY / WEEK

- **It's time to run!** There are lots of ways to engage with your supporters during your race day / week and really form a community around the race, ending gender-based violence, and your YWCA. For instance:
 - Make a race playlist and share it with participants so they can listen while they run.
 - Share race updates through the day / week on social media. If you have any special guests participating, ask them to post live Instagram and/or Facebook stories showing themselves participating.
 - If you also have a fundraising goal, push out fundraising updates during the event. Make sure supporters have a way to donate!
 - Ask participants to wear their shirts and post photos/videos of themselves wearing the shirt and running the race. Ask them to tag your organization (and YWCA USA!) in the photos.
 - Keep your shirts available for purchase throughout your event – just in case others want to commemorate the race with a shirt.

AFTER THE EVENT

- **Thank your participants:** Go live on Instagram or Facebook to thank participants, announce the winners (if this

was a race), and give a final fundraising update at the end of your event.

- **Gather photos and videos.** Ask participants to send you photos of them participating and/or wearing their commemorative gear. These can be compiled for your later use.
- **Send follow-up emails to thank:**
 - Your participants - send an email directing them to race results, where to find your next event, and when more info will be available.
 - Your sponsors – thank them for their sponsorship and let them know about any future events.
- **Post race results and photos.** Participants want to see anything associated with the event so they can remember their experience and remember to sign up next year!
- **Send medals/awards to race winners.**

REPORT BACK

- Don't forget to let YWCA USA know how your race went by filling out the report back form about your event on your dashboard. Your feedback helps us highlight the amazing work YWCAs are doing across the country.

TIPS FOR GETTING TO KNOW YOUR POLICYMAKERS

Week Without Violence is a great time to ramp up your advocacy to elected officials.

WHO ARE YOUR ELECTED POLICYMAKERS?

- **Make a list of the local, state, and federal legislators you want to influence.** Make sure you cover the entire area that you serve and where your staff and volunteers live; don't just limit yourself to where your YWCA is physically located. Consider asking members of your board if they have any personal or professional relationships with lawmakers and can help connect you to

TIP: You can find your federal legislators [here](#). Through GovTrack, you can also see their bio, committee assignments, official website, donors, and scores from interest groups on their votes.

them.

- **What Do You Know About Them?** Learn the basics such as:
 - Which committees do they serve on? Prioritize building relationships with lawmakers who serve on key committees.

TIP: For example, Congress' Appropriation Committees are key to federal funding decisions. The federal Judiciary Committees are key on VAWA's reauthorization. The Senate Banking Committee determines housing policy.

- What is the e-mail and contact information for their staff? On a state and local level, prioritize Chiefs of Staff. On a federal level, include key Washington, D.C. staff aides who handle health and children's issues, local district directors, and schedulers (Note: D.C.-based legislative staff have a high turnover, so set a reminder to confirm the staff on a regular basis such as every six months).

TIP: YWCA USA can also provide much of this information about Members of Congress.

- What are their social media channels?
- What biographical information might be important for you to know about them?
- What are their voting records or sponsorships on legislation that is central to your work?

- **You also need to determine:**

- Are they known to your Board members, other senior leadership, or volunteers? Do you have people in your network who personally know these legislators?
- What issues do they care most about? The answer to this question is essential to know before you meet.

STARTING AND KEEPING A RELATIONSHIP

- After every election, make a point of introducing your YWCA to each newly elected or re-elected legislator by:
 - Sending a letter expressing interest in working together in the years ahead.
 - Providing brief background information, including, for example, your annual report or promotional brochure, along with a standing invitation to visit your local association to see your services.
 - Put the legislator on your outreach list as you would a potential big donor and join their e-newsletter/follow their social media channels.
 - When you are ready, request a meeting at the legislator's office to discuss your organization, its current situation, future plans, and issues of concern. Consider checking in with your state legislator once a quarter, and at minimum, a month or two before the legislative session begins and once during session.

A member of Congress should meet with representatives of your organization about once a year, and additionally, you should try to interact with their staff at least once a quarter. If you are hoping to meet with the Member of Congress, suggest dates that are during Congressional Recess. Periodic, regular interactions are critical to building relationships, so that Members of Congress take your call or respond to your email when there is a time-sensitive vote or policy ask. The regular check-in can be simply sharing a success story, inviting them to your big fundraising gala, or sharing a publication from YWCA or one of your other professional partners.

FACILITY TOUR

- What better way to cultivate a relationship with a policymaker than inviting him or her to see your organization in action? Check out our [hosting a legislator](#) how-to guide!



CONTACTING YOUR POLICYMAKERS

While it's important to do whatever you can, given the time you have available, here is what Congressional staff rank as most effective to least effective in terms of making your voice heard:

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR POLICYMAKERS

- **Personal call or meeting.** If someone from your board/network knows the legislator, you can ask the scheduler to add this person to the legislator's list of supporters whose calls they will return during a set "call time" each day. A request for a call through a personal connection can be key if there is a time-sensitive issue/vote. Otherwise, a personal meeting or facility visit is the most effective way to have the legislator understand your issue. You don't need to know the legislator personally to request a

Your voice and your community deserve to be heard. Use these tips and tools to ensure that you are using the most effective way of advocating on the issues you care about!

TIP: A personal meeting or facility tour in the district usually takes at least a month to schedule. If you can meet with your legislator in Washington, D.C. or the state capitol, you can usually get a meeting with the legislator or staff member within 1-2 weeks.

meeting or site visit.

- **Signed coalition letter.** Send a letter signed by a few prominent local organizations (associations, nonprofits, or for-profit companies) with your logos at the top and the signatures of key senior

- executives. Once you've sent the letter by email to the office, be sure to send it directly

- to the staff contact responsible for the issue you are addressing and/or District Director. You can also link to the letter on your social media channel and send to the policymaker's account.

- **Social media messages.**

A [survey](#) of Congressional staff found that as few as 30 social media comments were effective to get a lawmaker's attention on a given topic. Check out our [Social Media Tools](#) for tips and best practices.

- **Personal emails to staff with whom you have built relationships or met recently.** Use an eye-catching, or at least clear, subject line. Each day, Congressional staff receive hundreds of e-mails. If you have not yet met with a staff member and there is an urgent reason to get in touch, call the main

TIP: Sometimes you will only be given the name, but not the email address. If you are contacting a staffer for your House Member, the standard format is "Firstname.LastName@mail.house.gov" and if they work for your Senator, it is "Firstname_Lastname@Senator'sLastname.senate.gov".

line and ask for the name and email of the staffer who handles the issue of interest to you.

- **Letters on letterhead.** Letters from local organizations e-mailed to the right staff member also get noticed. If members of your board or coalition partners are also business owners, encourage them to speak up in that capacity. Personal stories are also very powerful.
- **General emails sent through the office's website account** are fine but may go to spam. Send directly to individuals as often as possible.
- **Scripted calls to the main office line / postcards to offices** are among the least effective communications, unless they are

received by the office at an extraordinarily high volume. Physical mail goes through security and is often delayed. Some offices just count the number of calls they receive but don't take your information.

- **Petitions. Please, please know the limits of petitions!** Elected officials dismiss messages that aren't confirmed to come from their own constituents. With rare exceptions, the primary purpose of petitions is for the organization to collect your contact information for future use. Sign them if you will but know that your job as an advocate is not done by doing so!

TIP: In addition to building a relationship with the elected official, also try to get to know their local key staff member. For a Member of Congress, that is usually the District Director.



HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATOR SITE VISIT

What better way to cultivate a relationship with a policymaker than inviting him or her to see your organization in action?

*Please note YWCA USA can help you turn these visits into **virtual** meetings. We can help facilitate that meeting on a variety of platforms. YWCA USA is using Zoom, but Members of Congress may require another technology platform. If you do a virtual meeting with your Senators, this is a great opportunity to make this a joint opportunity with your sister associations in the state just as you did with Capitol Hill Day during the national conference. After each meeting, please remember to share your notes that list the Member of Congress, staffer, and any feedback with advocacy@ywca.org so we can track our progress and collective impact.*

PLANNING AND ASKING FOR THE SITE VISIT

- **Identify the correct legislators.** In Congress, each of your associations is represented by at least one Representative and two Senators. Even if you have employees or families that you serve from multiple Congressional districts, it is considered bad form for Members of Congress to host events outside of their district. So, if you have multiple service locations, make sure to provide the opportunity to visit a location in the area they represent.
- **Identify windows of opportunity.** Most groups will plan local events around federal recess periods, particularly around Easter, Memorial Day, July 4th, and the entire month of August. You can see the House schedule [here](#) or the Senate schedule [here](#).

Inviting a legislator to tour your local YWCA of one of your offsite programs is one of the **best ways to show them the impact of our mission to your community.**

- **Sending and confirming the invitation.** Their schedules fill up early, particularly around long recess periods, so the invitation should be sent at least three weeks to a month in advance of your preferred date. It is helpful if you provide a few possible dates. For a Senator, they will plan a series of events in the same part of the state when home, so your willingness to be flexible will be helpful.

After emailing the invitation letter on your official letterhead to the office's scheduler, wait a day or two and then follow up to confirm it was received.

- **Share a brochure and relevant materials.** Share with the legislator's office by email material about your association, the programs you provide, and information about your impact (employment numbers, a few positive testimonials from women and families served) along with brief information on the policy issue you're interested in having addressed. You can send this in advance of the visit and then

give to the legislator as “take away” material from the visit.

- **Confirm with scheduler.** About 1-2 weeks before the event, check in with the scheduler to confirm the visit and who will be attending with the member and your cell phone as a contact for that day. When confirming, you can provide map/directions for parking, check on whether the legislator wants it to be open to the media, and provide any bios of the key staff/board members that the legislator will be meeting.
- **Work with Communications staff.** If you and the legislator agree that at least part of the visit can be open to press, ask the scheduler to connect you with their press secretary. You’ll want to do a media advisory, and for your press release, you can ask for a press quote from your legislator. Finally, the visit should be featured on your social media, tagged with the legislator, and included on your website. Consider sharing the opportunity with Board members or prominent supporters. Sometimes the legislator will prefer a behind-the-scenes tour, and then you can highlight the visit afterward on your social media channels, e-newsletters, blogs, and website.

TIP: Remember to have clients who may be in pictures sign waiver forms.

VISIT

- Legislators want to know **how your organization impacts the local**

community. It always helps to have external stakeholders, such as parents, private funders, community or school partners join the visit even for a few minutes to speak in support of your work. Provide a clear timeline of the event and everyone’s role in advance.

- Highlight the **connection between public funding (VAWA/FVPSA/Child Care/Housing, etc.) and the impact** your organization has in the local community.

TIP: Be ready to be flexible if the legislator is running late.

- **Make the “ask.”** At some point during the visit, someone (such as a Board member or executive) should ask the legislator about your policy issue. YWCA USA can help work with you to identify a timely and appropriate request. Many legislators will not be experts on your work. Use the time to educate them about the families you serve, the issues you need help addressing, and that you are part of a broader, national YWCA network.
- **Draft Timeline of Event (30-60 minutes)**
 -
 - Greet the legislator and staff with brief introductions (2-3 minutes)
 -
 - Tour of the facility should begin promptly, and you should be ready to have someone take photos as you show your work in action supporting families (20 minutes)

- Meet with community partners and/or staff to allow the legislator to make remarks, answer questions, and have an open interaction with your stakeholders and their constituents (30 minutes).
- Closing remarks and thank you (2-3 minutes – if you want to present a small token of gratitude, it must be under \$50 for Ethics rules.) Don't forget to provide take away materials with your card/contact information included.
- Issue press release or photos/social media

POST-VISIT

- **Send a thank you letter** shortly after the visit to the scheduler and staffer who accompanied the legislator
- **Monitor for any press coverage** and share with the legislator's communications staff

GENERAL TIPS

- **Plan well in advance.**
- **Be flexible with dates/times.**
- **Invite the relevant policy staffer** or District Director to accompany the legislator
- **Share schedule/flow of event** with relevant employees, staff, board members, and the scheduler for the legislator in advance.
- **Involve your key cheerleaders in the community** whether it is someone who was helped by your association, a board member, or corporate sponsor so the legislator hears about your broader impact.
- **Take the legislator wherever they request** (sometimes they will stop to talk to employees in passing, etc.) so make sure everyone is aware that the legislator is visiting and is prepared to answer questions.
- **Don't be discouraged** if it takes more than one invitation to schedule the visit.
- **Don't assume** they know about your association or your policy issues.

TIPS FOR MEANINGFUL COALITION & BASE BUILDING

REFLECTING ON YWCA'S PLACE AS A LEADER IN THE ANTI-GBV SPACE

As YWCA prepares for Week Without Violence, there is much we can learn from reflecting on our leadership on issues related to gender-based violence and considering whether we are coming from a place of “impacted leadership” or “privileged leadership.”

Impacted leadership refers to leadership by those who are, or who have, experiencing the impacts of the issues we are advocating around. In this case, impacted leadership would be leadership by survivors of gender-based violence.

Too often, the people most directly impacted by gender-based violence have been pushed to the margins in the collective conversation around gender-based violence and excluded from conversations about survivors' concerns, needs, and wants.

Privileged leadership comes from people not directly affected by the issues. If you are not a survivor and not directly affected by gender-based violence, you can consider yourself privileged in the anti-violence space.

As leaders, it is incumbent on all of us to consider how we are exercising our leadership. Are we leveraging any privileged leadership we may have to center and support the leadership of those most directly impacted by gender-based violence? Are we intentionally creating space for impacted leadership in our YWCAs and communities?

Meet Your Network Where They Are

As you evaluate how best to engage your network in the 2020 Week Without Violence campaign, consider the preparedness of your existing grassroots network to engage on issues of gender-based violence. Is your network ready to:

- Respect and follow the impacted leadership of others?
- Work with GBV coalition partners?

“Survivor leadership is crucial at this moment. Now is our time to work across the nation to advance survivor justice and shift the narrative around ...violence in America.”

–Survivors' Agenda

- Respond to calls to action from GBV coalition partners?

The answer to these and other questions can help you “right-size” your Week Without Violence activities for your network and your community. Your network might benefit most from awareness raising about gender-based violence in general—or they may be ready to participate in hosting a virtual town hall about the impact of COVID-19 on survivors, or to help insure that survivors are able to safely register and vote in your community.

Intentionally and realistically assessing your network’s readiness to engage around gender-based violence issues at the outset of your planning can help you engage your network where they are and build your relationship for future efforts—inside and outside of YWCA’s national Week Without Violence campaign.

Building Relationships and Trust with Community Partners

Build trust with your allies by showing up for their work in solidarity. As you plan for your upcoming Week Without Violence events, take time to make authentic connections and listen to their experiences. Here are some things you can do to build strong relationships with your community partners:

- Attend a forum, webinar, call, or town hall held by one of your partners
- Participate in a social media “push” by one of your partners
- Read your partner’s materials about gender-based violence
- Read out to learn more about the issue and the advocacy your community is already engaged in
- Consider co-convening an event

Remember: showing up only gets you partway. To build meaningful relationships, particularly with individuals and organizations working at the frontlines of justice issues, we must continually center and amplify the experiences of those closest to the issues. Strategies for advocating around ending gender-based violence and supporting survivors are most authentic when they come from survivors themselves.

Consider recruiting community partner—like other service providers, organizations, institutions, or businesses—as potential advocacy allies to expand your YWCA’s grassroots network. Working in concert with local organizations and building lasting meaningful relationships with them can support your work for Week Without Violence as well as strengthen your long-term grassroots base-building efforts. Consider reaching out to:

Direct service providers: Look for other groups in your community who focus on providing services to survivors. Learning from these service providers and the people they serve can strengthen your YWCA's efforts.

Community Advocacy Partners: Reach out to groups and organization you have worked within the past for Week Without Violence, Stand Against Racism. Share resources, talk about strategy, and plan shared events.

State, local, and national advocacy organizations: These organizations can provide information and expertise on state and/or federal legislation that will impact survivors, insight into issues facing survivors from various communities, and experience navigating the issues of survivors in various communities in your community, as well as on a national level. Moreover, many of these advocacy organizations will have grassroots networks developed that you may be able to tap into. National organizations often provide general information on issues, analysis of federal legislation and, in some cases, state-level data.

MEDIA TOOLS

Leverage your Week Without Violence campaign as an opportunity to engage with your community in traditional and social media.

When you draft a well-written piece to inform the public about racial justice issues, you can help inform and influence public opinion on issues that are important to you. People typically do this through letters to the editor or op-eds. Elected officials also often search newspapers from their home districts for mentions of their name. Use this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the importance of addressing institutional and systemic racism in your community, and the actions they can take to support this work. Use the chart below to help you decide which vehicle will best help you spread your message, then use the tips below and the [letter to the editor](#) and [op-ed](#) templates to get started!

	OP-ED	LETTER TO THE EDITOR
TOPIC	REGARDING A GENERAL ISSUE	IN REPOSE TO AN ARTICLE OR EDITORIAL
PLACEMENT	PUBLISHED OPPOSITE THE EDITORIAL PAGE	PUBLISHED ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE
PURPOSE	MORE THOROUGH ANALYSIS	BRIEF RESPONSE
LENGTH	500-800 WORDS	150-200 WORDS
FOCUS	STAY RELEVANT AND ON TOPIC	STAY RELEVANT AND ON TOPIC

TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OR OP-ED

- **Research the Guidelines.** Check the publication’s website for guidelines on letters to the editor or op-eds to make sure your piece satisfies length and formatting requirements. Most papers have a length limit on LTEs and op-eds. LTEs are usually 250 words or less. Op-eds are usually around 700 words, though this varies by outlet. Send your letter to the specific contact listed for your purpose (typically via e-mail or through an online form).
- **Keep it concise.** For a letter to the editor, focus on just one major concept or idea and limit it to 150 to 200 words. For an op-ed, focus on one or two major concepts or ideas and limit it to 500-800 words.
- **Assume nothing and keep it simple.** Remember, not everyone will have read the piece you are referencing or be familiar with your topic. Write clearly and avoid acronyms and jargon.
- **Keep it relevant and relatable.** Write about an event in the news or piece that was recently published and cite the article. Explain how your topic impacts your community — readers are more interested in an issue when they see how it affects their lives and communities.

- **Identify yourself as part of YWCA.** Most papers prefer printing opinion articles written by a local authority or community leader. Signing your LTE or op-ed as an YWCA leader or member with expertise on the topic may make it more likely to be chosen.
- **Clarify your expertise.** Someone with a closer-than-normal perspective on the issue is an expert. This may include a local lawyer discussing the impact of a Supreme Court nomination or a teacher discussing how cuts in education translate into the day-to-day situation in her classroom. **Include your name, address and phone number, as well as any relevant degrees or titles to demonstrate your qualifications to the media.**
- **Avoid form letters.** While we provide templates to help you get started, do not send the same letter to two competing papers in the same circulation area or many copies of an identical letter to a single paper.
- For a letter, **open with a sentence that includes the title of the article or editorial you are responding to and the date the piece was published.** State your thoughts on the article, editorial, or recent event. You can express disagreement, contribute to the discussion by offering information, or point out inaccuracies in an article.
- **Close with a call to action.** Encourage your federal legislators to co-sponsor the Voting Rights Advancement Act or other important legislation! You should tailor that call to the topic you're writing about.
- **Don't make personal attacks.** Avoid emphasizing that a reporter, editor, expert, or other individual was wrong.
- **Have someone review your writing** to make sure it is clear and effective.
- For a letter to the editor, it's important to **write and submit your letter as quickly as possible so it is still relevant.** If you are responding to an original article, you should submit your letter between 24-48 hours after publication. Send your letter by email to avoid time delays.
- **Follow up for op-eds.** It is vital to call the paper after an op-ed is submitted to verify that the opinion page editor received your e-mail and to pitch your topic in order to increase interest. With larger papers, you might want to wait a day after submitting. With smaller papers, you can call within a couple hours. LTEs do not require a follow-up.
- If relevant, **you may also want to send a copy of your letter or op-ed to your elected official's local office** if it is published.



SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Social media is a powerful tool for raising awareness, educating your followers, engaging your legislators, and building community. Please use these social media tools as a resource as you participate in Week Without Violence 2020.

GENERAL TIPS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Be authentic:** Determine a tone for your brand and stick to it. Make sure to be personable and use humor where appropriate. Instead of simply broadcasting information, try to speak as one individual to another individual or group of individuals.
- **Stay Focused:** Those who follow you on social media have certain expectations about your priorities, the content you will post, and the way you will post it. Straying too far from these expectations will lose their trust.
- **Be dependable:** Share quality content from trusted sources and avoid amplifying content from unreliable sources. Being dependable also means you should post to your social media platforms on a regular basis. Regularly sharing quality, reliable content establishes you as a trusted source of important information to your followers and community.
- **Be social:** More than anything social media is about, well, being social. Sharing, commenting, and liking other's posts can start new conversations or allow you to join in current conversations. The more you engage with your followers, the more they will understand that your priorities are their priorities too.

TWITTER

What You Can Do:

- Follow @YWCAUSA and other anti-gender-based violence (GBV) organizations, activists, advocates, and agencies on Twitter.
- Retweet tweets that you like about eliminating gender-based violence and supporting survivors, including barriers to survivors' voting rights.
- Tweet at your elected official about supporting survivors and ending gender-based violence.

Best Practices:

- **Less is more:** Tweets that don't use all 280 characters get more traction.
- **Use the right hashtags:** If you're not using hashtags, it's as if you're talking to a brick wall—don't let that happen! Check out the tips below for hashtags to use during WWV2020 to be part of the conversation. TIP: Don't forget to check for local hashtags. Sometimes state and local events (such as elections or monthly events like Domestic Violence Awareness Month) will create their own hashtags. Search for those to join in to amplify your WWV message.

- **Make it visual:** Tweets with photos can get a 150% increase in retweets! Try to attach a photo to a tweet whenever possible. Check out our [sharegraphics](#) for some WWV-specific graphics, or, even better, use photos from your own WWV events for a more personal touch.
- **Make it a conversation:** Don't just tweet. Favorite and reply to tweets that you find relevant and interesting. If you want to add a thought when retweeting, select "Quote Tweet" to add your comment above the original tweet on your feed.
- **Key influencers, community collaborators, and members of the media:** Make sure to follow key accounts in the anti-GBV space both nationally and locally. It's important to reach out to these people and organizations directly about your work; the goal, of course is for them to engage and to share your message.
- **Elected officials:** Elected officials are often highly active on Twitter, so tweeting officials with your message (asking them to take action on a policy proposal or piece of legislation) is a great way to interact.
- If your tweets begin with a twitter handle, use a period before the handle if you want all of your followers to see it.
 - **Example:** .@congressmember please co-sponsor and vote for the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019.

FACEBOOK

What You Can Do:

- Like @YWCAUSA and other anti-GBV organizations, activists, advocates, and agencies on Facebook. To see YWCA's latest updates in your newsfeed, click the "Follow" button at the top of the page and choose, "See First" from the drop-down menu.
- Share posts that you like about eliminating gender-based violence and supporting survivors, including barriers to survivors' voting rights.
- Post about Week Without Violence and ending gender-based violence on your own or your elected official's Facebook wall.

Best Practices:

- **Keep it really short:** Facebook users are most likely to interact with content that is brief and concise. Posts of up to just 40 characters—a few words or a short sentence—generate the highest levels of engagement.
- **Make it visual:** Attaching a photo to Facebook leads to an 87% rate of engagement by followers! Try to attach a photo to Facebook posts whenever possible and avoid text-only posts. Check out our [sharegraphics](#) for some WWV-specific graphics, or, even better, use photos from your own SAR events for a more personal touch.

- **Use popular hashtags:** Check out the tips below for hashtags to use during WWV2020 to be part of the conversation. TIP: Don't forget to check for local hashtags. Sometimes state and local events (such as elections and Domestic Violence Awareness Month) will create their own hashtags. Search for those to join in to amplify your WWV message.
- **Make it a conversation:** Don't just post. Comment on and share posts from other individuals, organizations, and elected officials that you find interesting.
- **Tag key influencers, community collaborators, and members of the media:** Make sure to tag relevant people and organizations (including YWCAUSA!) in your posts.
- **Elected officials:** Elected officials are also often active on Facebook, so posting on the Facebook pages of elected officials with your message (asking them to act on a policy proposal or piece of legislation) is a great way to interact.

KEY TACTICS FOR WWV 2020

- **Promote:** Announce your participation to your followers! Tell everyone that you're participating in Week Without Violence and why. Encourage others to support your advocacy efforts via social media. Add the event hashtag – #WWV20 – to your posts and share the provided graphics and facts. Invite others to join you by sharing the Week Without Violence website: www.YWCAWeekWithoutViolence.org.
 - Starting September 1: Use the Week Without Violence **graphics** to spread the word that you'll be taking part in Week Without Violence this October! Post a tweet with one of the graphics to highlight the work that you do to address gender-based violence in your community, and add Week Without Violence, #WWV20.
 - Sunday, October 19 through Saturday October 25: Post tweets, graphics, and photos of your Week Without Violence activities and events. If you schedule a tour of your facility or other event with your legislator(s), post a photo with your Member of Congress and/or their staff. Include a "thank you" message.
 - Week of October 26: Follow up and reflect on your Week Without Violence successes and share them across your social media platforms.
- **Educate:** Issue education is vital when it comes to public policy. Use the sample social media posts below and fact sheets in your toolkit to share information about gender-based violence in our country. Share statistics, data, and stories, as well as relevant research, news articles, blog posts, and other related content – there is a wealth of information out there! Share how gender-based violence affects your community, including the women, children, and families you serve.
- **Call to Action:** Tweet at or tag your legislators to implore them to support the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (VAWA) and the Family Violence

Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)—key legislation to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors—as well as full funding for both VAWA and FVPSA. You can also provide their contact information and urge your followers to do their part and contact their legislators as well. You can find many of your [legislators'](#) Twitter handles on this [list](#).

- **Engage:** Encourage your friends and followers to participate in Week Without Violence by sharing why it's important to end gender-based violence, using the event hashtag (#WWV20), contacting your legislators, and calling for others to get involved. Retweet partner organizations and tag them in relevant posts. Encourage them to retweet and share with followers and remind folks to contact their legislators. Week Without Violence is a movement that everyone is welcome to join!
- **Show:** Use the [sharegraphics](#) in your online toolkit, snap photos at event(s), ask staff and volunteers to briefly explain why they're working to eliminate racism in short videos/graphics, and more!

HASHTAGS

One universal hashtag helps unite us and keep our message consistent, unified, and cohesive throughout Week Without Violence, and helps us track the yearly campaign. Please use the hashtag #WWV20 for anything on social media related to Week Without Violence 2020. If you'd like, please feel free to add other hashtags from related YWCA campaigns, such as #YWomensVote and #OnAMission and #GOTV, as well as anti-GBV hashtags, such as #DVAM and #VAW.

GRAPHICS

Share the official [sharegraphics](#) on your social media platforms to further amplify our message, encourage engagement, heighten awareness about structural racism in our communities, and encourage participation in Week Without Violence.

If you create some great sharegraphics or original photos that you love, please feel free to share them with us! We always enjoy amplifying and sharing great images and work from the network.

CUSTOMIZABLE SIGNS & SELFIES

Help us spread the word about [Week Without Violence](#) and show why you're committed to ending violence by taking a photo/selfie with a customizable sign! Here's how:

- Download and print one of our fillable [signs](#), which have the following prompts:
 - A world without violence looks like:

- Ending gender-based violence is important because:
- I stand with survivors because:
- Fill out a sign with your thoughts!
- Take a picture with your sign. Check out the end of this toolkit for tips for taking a good photo.
- Share the picture to your social media using the hashtag #WWV20, and tag 5 friends or organizations challenging them to do the same!

Your photo can be serious or smiling, include your face, or just show your hands holding the sign, and it can even include multiple people, each holding their own sign! It's up to you!

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Share your photo(s) to social media using any of the following sample content or draft your own! Be sure to use the hashtag #WWV20 and tag YWCA USA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and/or [Instagram](#), and then tag 5 friends or organizations encouraging them to take their own Week Without Violence photo.

- Week Without Violence is October 18-24. I'm joining @YWCAUSA help end gender-based violence. Will you? #WWV20 <http://www.ycaweekwithoutviolence.org/>
-
- I'm joining @YWCAUSA's #WeekWithoutViolence campaign because I want to raise awareness about ending gender-based violence. Won't you join us? Share your selfie and visit weekwithoutviolence.org to learn more. #WWV20 [insert photo]
- Together, we can continue to raise awareness about gender-based violence and the importance of supporting survivors. Post your #WWV20 selfie and share your thoughts to help raise awareness and inspire others. [insert photo]
- Everyone deserves justice and equity. That's why I'm joining @YWCAUSA's #WWV20 campaign to eliminate gender-based violence. Learn more: weekwithoutviolence.org [insert photo]
- #DV, sexual assault, trafficking, stalking & more impact women & girls of all backgrounds. It's long past time we end this culture of violence. Join us for Week Without Violence: ycaweekwithoutviolence.org/ #WWV20 [insert photo]

TIPS FOR YOUR WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN PHOTO

Take the photo in an area that is well-lit. Natural light is best, but indoors is fine as long as there is enough lighting. Avoid back-lit settings that can cause dark photos. Avoid pointing your camera directly into a source of light.

- Make sure your camera lens is clean!
- If you are taking a group shot, make sure everyone's faces are visible.
- Make sure your handwriting is legible on the sign, and if possible, use a bold, thicker writing tool when writing your answer.
- Please don't display any shirts or signage that support or negate a political party or candidate. (YWCA USA is a 501c3).



DEVELOPING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Use some of these prompting questions to help craft your social media posts that are specific to your YWCA and your community. Remember: we are aiming to show the impact of structural and institutional racism in your community and the importance of the work your YWCA does to prevent and eliminate that racism, as well as the importance of legislative and other action from decision-makers.

- How are the women, girls, and families in your community impacted by gender-based violence?
- What will you be doing this Week Without violence to highlight the need to prevent and end gender-based violence and to support survivors?
- Do you provide gender-based violence service(s) or engage in services for survivors? What do you want your legislator(s) to know about the service(s) you are able to provide because of federal funding or policies?

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA

Remember to tweet at or tag your legislator(s)' Twitter handle when possible! You can do so by including their Twitter handle in your tweet or tagging them in a photo or sharegraphic. If you are including their Twitter handle at the beginning of your tweet, be sure to include a period (“.”) beforehand so your tweet will appear publicly on Twitter.

PROMOTIONAL: To be used in advance of Week Without Violence

- Announce your participation
- Encourage others to join in
- Share images, facts, news articles, blog posts, etc. about institutional and structural racism
- Share information about Week Without Violence and direct people to the website
- If you will be hosting an event(s) in your community, share information and facts about the upcoming event

Facebook:

We are so excited for YWCA's upcoming Week Without Violence, taking place October 18-24, when we will join others around the country to raise awareness, support survivors, and make calls to action to end gender-based violence. Learn more and join us at ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org.

Twitter:

We are #OnAMission to end gender-based violence. Join us for Week Without Violence, October 18-24 ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org #WWV20

Gender-based violence impacts the lives of countless women & families across the country. Let's work to end it: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org #WWV20

#DV, sexual assault, trafficking, stalking & more impact women & girls of all backgrounds. It's long past time we end this culture of violence. Join us for Week Without Violence: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org #WWV20

Week Without Violence is October 18-24. I'm joining @YWCAUSA to #end gender-based violence. Will you? #WWV20 ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org

WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE: To be used throughout Week Without Violence, April 18-24

- Share images, facts, news articles, blog posts, etc. about structural and institutional racism
- Interact with others using the hashtag
- If you are hosting an event(s) in your community, upload and share content in real time
- Contact your legislators and ask them to support legislation that supports survivors and promotes safety
- Participate in YWCA USA-hosted social media events (more information to come!)

Facebook:

Example 1: We are proud to participate in YWCA's annual Week Without Violence. Join us as we fight to end gender-based violence. Visit ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/ to learn more.

Example 2: I am proud to join YWCA and others across the country for Week Without Violence. As the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the country, YWCA supports policies that protect survivors, promote safety, and ensure economic security and stability for victims of gender-based violence. This week join us as we raise awareness, support survivors, and advocate for critical policies. ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/

Example 3: Women of all backgrounds and identities disproportionately bear the burden of gender-based violence, and it is important to recognize the diverse experiences of survivors. LGBTQ+ people, women and girls with disabilities, communities of color, veterans, and those with multiple marginalized identities are just some of the groups that are at heightened risk for violence, and who often face greater barriers to safety and accessing resources and support. This week, I am joining YWCA and others for Week Without Violence, to elevate stories, share information, and raise awareness about gender-based violence. Please join us: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/

Example 4: Voting is a fundamental right in our democracy. However, survivors of domestic violence face many barriers in their attempt to access the ballot box and are often denied their rights altogether. This week, I am joining YWCA and others for Week Without Violence, to elevate stories, share information, and raise information about gender-based violence and how it impacts survivors' ability to participate in elections. ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/

Example 5: The Violence Against Women grants are critical for our domestic violence programs. Without this funding, [describe the impact e.g. we would struggle to keep our women's shelter open]. [Tag your legislator(s)]: Please support women and families by ensuring that we don't lose these vital funding streams.

Example 5: The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) supports 28 YWCAs across the country to provide preventive and support services to children and families. At YWCA [your local association], we provide [names programs or services supported by FVPSA funding], which have resulted in [describe the outcome and successes of your local YWCA's efforts]. By working as a community, we will ensure that women, children and their families are afforded a safe harbor with comprehensive services to help them heal and thrive.

Twitter:

PROMOTE:

#YWCA's Week Without Violence starts today! Join us in our commitment to ending gender-based violence: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/ #WWV20 @YWCAUSA

This week is Week Without Violence, a campaign by @YWCAUSA to end gender-based violence. Join us as we raise awareness & #EndDV: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/ #WWV20

This week is #YWCA's annual Week Without Violence. Tell us: why is it important to end gender-based violence? #WWV20 @YWCAUSA

EDUCATE:

Domestic violence overwhelmingly impacts women, regardless of socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, race, religion. #WWV20 #DV

Gender-based violence impacts 1 in 4 women in the U.S. On average, more than 3 women are murdered by their partners every day. #WWV20 #GBV

Survivors need enhancements like those in #VAWA19 and #FVPSA19. @SenSallySmith: please support #VAWA4ALL and #FVPSA in the Senate! # WWV20

.@RepSallySmith: We rely on #VAWA4ALL and #FVPSA to support much of our programming and services for women and families. #WWV20

1 of every 4 homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her. #WWV20

#DYK: In America, someone is sexually assaulted every two minutes. # WWV20

Because of #VAWA4ALL and #FVPSA, more survivors are able to seek and receive help from community service agencies and the criminal justice system. #WWV20

In the U.S., 1 in every 3 young girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse. # WWV20

Native Americans are victims of rape or sexual assault at more than double the rate of other groups, and more than half (51%) are very worried about experienced sexual assault or #DV. #WWV20 #YWomensVote

Domestic violence is the #1 cause of death for Black women between the ages of 15-35. #WWV20 #DV

#AAPI is an extremely diverse group, and the reality is that language is often a barrier to accessing safety & resources for #AAPI victims. # WWV20

In a study, 48% of Latinas reported that their partner's violence against them increased since immigrating to U.S. # WWV20

Staggering. 80% of women with disabilities have been sexually assaulted. # WWV20

What is the leading cause of injury to women ages 15-44 in the U.S.? # WWV20

Multiple studies indicate the over 50% of transgender people have experienced sexual assault in their lives. # WWV20

94-99% of domestic violence survivors have also experienced economic abuse. # WWV20#DV

This is the reality in America: Domestic violence is a public health epidemic. # WWV20 #DV

#GBV, #IPV and trauma have negative health consequences on survivors that can be seen and felt long after violence has stopped. #DV IS a women’s rights and health care issue. #WWV20

Abusers are increasingly misusing technology as a way to monitor, harass and abuse, making it harder for survivors to find safety. #WWV20

DYK – 1 out of every 10 women was sexually harassed at work within the last year? For women under 30, 22% faced harassment. #WWV20 #YWomensVote

Nearly half (49%) of women are worried about being believed when reporting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or domestic violence. #WWV20 #YWomensVote

#GenZ women are more likely than other age cohorts to be very worried about gender-based violence. #YWomensVote #WWV20

	Gen Z	All Women	Difference
Being believed when reporting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or domestic violence*	60	31	29
Being sexually harassed on the job*	41	17	24
Experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence*	38	21	17
Being able to access counseling or other services you need after experiencing sexual or domestic violence	28	22	6

The trauma of #GBV can have negative consequences on all aspects of women’s lives. Women who have been sexually harassed at work within the last year have more worries than women who have not. #YWomensVote #WWV20

Concerns Related to Experiencing Sexual Harassment % Very Worried		Yes, have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past year	No, have not experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past year
Health	Having affordable and secure health insurance for your family*	63	46
	Having a medical expense for you or your family that you cannot afford*	65	43
	Access to mental health services*	50	24
Economic	Getting a good paying job*	44	21
	Getting or keeping a good paying job with benefits*	50	29
	Paying for college or repaying student loans*	54	31
Caregiving	Balancing work responsibilities with your own personal and family needs*	52	26
	Having paid leave from work to care for yourself or a family member who is seriously ill*	58	32
Safety	Being able to access counseling or other services you need after experiencing sexual or domestic violence*	47	18
	Being believed when reporting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or domestic violence*	50	29

INSPIRE:

I'm #OnAMission to end gender-based violence because everyone deserves to be safe. Join me: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/ #WWV20#endGBV

I believe that together, we can end gender-based violence. Join me #OnAMission: ywcaweekwithoutviolence.org/ #WWV20 #endGBV

We work to #endGBV all year long. Help us keep the momentum by donating today: [link to your local YWCA or organization doing domestic violence work's donation page] #WWV20

Join us for a march to end violence against women this Friday at 7:30 pm. Volunteers needed! #domesticviolence #endDV #WWV20

We just posted new action alert! Email Rep. [NAME] to support #VAWA4ALL

SHOW:

Why are we #OnAMission to end gender-based violence? Find out: [link to impact story]. #WWV20

Our team at today's Week Without Violence event. Together, we are #OnAMission to #endGBV [share photo]. #WWV20

WATCH: Why I work to #endGBV [share an original video] #WWV20

Tune into @kabc, Wed 10/16 at 7 am to see how Martha got back on her feet after leaving a violent relationship. #domesticviolence #WWV20 #endDV

FOLLOW UP: To be used after Week Without Violence

- If you hosted an event(s) in your community, post a recap or share more content about the event
- Reflect on Week Without Violence in your posts, thank people for participating, and encourage everyone to continue to work against violence
- Thank your attendees and your followers for joining you.
- Show or tell how you will continue to work against violence throughout the year.

Facebook:

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Week Without Violence. Whether it was through sharing stories on social media, supporting survivors, talking to policymakers, or hosting an event, your work and engagement helped us collectively raise our voice about gender-based violence. This week might be over, but together, we made it clear that we must all continue to

work to end gender-based violence. You have the power to help YWCA in our mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities.

Twitter:

Gender-based violence is a public health issue as well as a moral one. Week Without Violence might be over but our work won't stop. Together, we are #OnAMission. #WWV20 #endGBV

We are committed to ending gender-based violence & continuing to support survivors. Today, tomorrow, and every day. #WWV20 #endGBV

Thanks for participating in Week Without Violence. The work continues and, together, we can end gender-based violence. #WWV20 #endGBV

APPENDIX

- [WWV Proclamation for Policymakers](#)
- [Elected Official Phone Call Script](#)
- [Elected Official Schedule Request Template](#)
- [Elected Official Meeting Follow-up Form](#)
- [Elected Official Site Visit Invitation Template](#)
- [Letter to the Editor Template](#)
- [Donor Letter Template](#)

WWV Proclamation for Policymakers

A Proclamation by the [list municipality] of ###
JOINT [LEGISLATIVE, COUNCIL, CITY] RESOLUTION

TEMPLATE: Week Without Violence Proclamation

WHEREAS, women and girls often face interlocking and compounding social barriers such as racism, sexism, and gender-based violence, which impact their ability to access full lives; and

WHEREAS, violence against women impacts the lives of countless women and their families across the United States, with one in four women experiencing domestic violence and more than three women murdered each day by their current or former partner in communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, every 90 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted, and, out of every 100 cases of rape, only 57 lead to arrest, 11 are referred to prosecutors, and seven lead to a felony conviction; and

WHEREAS, financial abuse is experienced in up to 99% of domestic violence cases and occurs across all socio-economic, educational, racial and ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, immigrant women, women of color, women with disabilities, and LGBTQ communities face heightened risks of violence and greater barriers to legal remedies and supportive services due to factors such as limited English proficiency and language barriers, fear of deportation, limited access to higher education and job resources, higher risks of poverty and limited resources for access to support and affordable child care;

WHEREAS, one of every four homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her, and over 92% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime

WHEREAS, the community of [insert city/state] will work to end the epidemic of gender-based violence and support families;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [insert name], serving as [insert title] of [insert city/state], do hereby proclaim **the third week of October** as the annual observance of **YWCA Week Without Violence**.

Signed this __ day of , 2020.

Elected Official Phone Call Script

SAMPLE SCRIPTS: LIVE PERSON

Please use the following scripts if you reach a live person on the phone:

INTRODUCTION:

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent calling from [CITY, STATE] with [INSERT YWCA]. May I speak to your judiciary legislative assistant or someone who works on the gender-based violence issues?

SCRIPT

Hi, my name is [NAME] from [CITY, STATE] with [Insert YWCA].

I'm calling today as part of YWCA's Week Without Violence to urge the Member to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (S. 2843/H.R. 1585) and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (S. 2259/H.R. 5041).

As you know, VAWA and FVPSA provide important federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combat violence. Together, they also support transitional housing and emergency shelter as well as provide aid for medical and legal counseling critical to survivors during the most vulnerable points in their lives. VAWA and FVPSA are critical, lifesaving legislation that maintain the safety, resources, and protections important to all survivors.

*The House passed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1585) with strong bipartisan support. We continue to wait for action on FVPSA reauthorization. **Can we count on the Member's support for reauthorization of VAWA and FVPSA this year?***

[Response: Yes]

Thank you for your support! Both VAWA and FVPSA take critical steps to expand protections for all survivors, works to break cycles of violence, and ensures survivors have access to the care and services they need.

Thank you again for your support and we look forward to continuing to work with you to get these bills to the President's desk!

[Response: Maybe/No]

Both VAWA and FVPSA take critical steps to expand protections for all survivors, break cycles of violence, and ensure survivors have access to the care and services they need. Every day they remain unauthorized is another day that Congress tells survivors to be silent.

Thank you for your time and, once again, we hope you will reconsider your position and reauthorize VAWA and FVPSA today.

SAMPLE SCRIPTS: VOICEMAIL

Please use the following scripts if you are prompted to leave a message. Remember to leave your full street address to ensure your call is counted.

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent calling from [CITY, STATE] with [INSERT YWCA] as part of our Week Without Violence campaign. Today I'm urging [MEMBER NAME] to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA).

As you know, VAWA and FVPSA provide important federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combat violence. Together, they also support transitional housing and emergency shelter as well as provide aid for medical and legal counseling critical to survivors during the most vulnerable points in their lives. VAWA and FVPSA are critical, lifesaving legislation that maintain the safety, resources, and protections important to all survivors.

The House passed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1585) with strong bipartisan support. We continue to wait for action on FVPSA reauthorization. Today, I'm calling on [MEMBER] reauthorize both VAWA and FVPSA without delay. Every day these bills remain unauthorized is another day that Congress tells survivors to be silent.

Thank you and I look forward to the Member's support.

Congressional Meeting Request Template

Dear [Sen./Rep.] [Name],

I write to request a meeting on [Date] between the hours of [Time Frame]. As a representative of YWCA [Your Local Association], I would like to meet with you or your relevant staffer to share information on YWCA's Week Without Violence Campaign.

Every year, over 200 YWCAs across the country join together to build community among those who work for racial justice and raise awareness about the impact of gender-based violence. This year, our focus is on the reauthorization of, and full funding for, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), as well as barriers to voting for survivors of violence.

[2-3 Sentences on your YWCA's previous work on WWV and/or your YWCA's impact on the community as it pertains to the Week Without Violence as well as any relevant legislative asks here.]

We look forward to hearing from you soon. For additional questions or to schedule a meeting, please reply to [Contact Name and Information].

In Solidarity,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your YWCA]

[Your Contact Info]

Please note the best time to request a meeting in your district is a month or two before a Congressional Recess. Members of Congress typically return to their home districts during this time and you will be more likely to meet with the member themselves rather than their staff. If you are able to meet with your Member of Congress in DC, you will likely be scheduled to meet with a staff member who handles issues related to the topic of your meeting. If possible, request to meet with a Legislative Director or Legislative Assistant rather than a Legislative Correspondent or Staff Assistant, as they will be closest to developing policy recommendations for your Member of Congress.

Congressional Meeting Follow-up Form

Thank you for taking action with YWCA! When you are done connecting with your legislator, please complete the following form and send to advocacy@ywca.org. Your responses will provide critical insight and help inform YWCA USA Public Policy and Advocacy staff.

Your Name:

YWCA:

Member of Congress:

Staffer you spoke with:

Staffer title:

Please Circle Below: Will the Member support policies to ensure civic engagement is equitable?

Strongly Support

Support

Neutral

Oppose

Strongly Oppose

Please provide any additional comments or information:

Please Circle Below: Will the Member support policies to ensure that the Census is equitable?

Strongly Support

Support

Neutral

Oppose

Strongly Oppose

Please provide any additional comments or information:

Is there any additional information you would like to provide? Anything that the YWCA USA Public Policy and Advocacy Department should follow up on with this office?

Elected Official Site Visit Invitation Template

Dear [Sen./Rep] [Name],

YWCA [Local Association] formally invites you to virtually visit our [Insert Facility Type] location for our annual Week Without Violence event on [Date]. This event is held in solidarity with over 200 YWCAs across the country who will be standing together to build community among those who work to end gender-based violence and support survivors. We hope that you can join us!

[2-3 Sentences on your YWCA's previous work on WWV and/or your YWCA's impact on the community as it pertains to the WWV]

[Site Visit or Event Details, including information on maintaining a safe social distance and following CDC safety precautions during the site visit]

We thank you for your consideration of this opportunity to meet with your constituents. For questions regarding this visit, please reach out to [Insert Contact Name and Information].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your YWCA]

[Your Contact Info]

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SERVICES ACT (FVPSA)

Note: *If possible, start your letter with a short reference to a recent article (within the last five days) in the paper about VAWA or about an incidence of violence against a woman in your community. If you do not know of a recent story, search your newspaper’s website for “violence against women act.” If there has been recent coverage, start your letter with a reference to the headline and the date it was published. Keep your final letter to less than 200 words.*

To the Editor,

In reference to your article, **HEADLINE**, on **DATE**, **ORGANIZATION** is urging our community and our elected officials to support the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention Act (FVPSA).

VAWA and FVPSA save lives, support families, and need to be reauthorized. A strong VAWA reauthorization bill (H.R. 6545) has been introduced in the House to improve the safety of survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Further, a non-controversial, straight reauthorization of FVPSA (S.2784 / H.R.6014) has been introduced in both the House and the Senate.

Around the country, one in five women has been raped in her lifetime; one in three women will experience domestic violence – and more than three women are murdered by their partners every day; and domestic violence is the immediate cause of homelessness for almost half of homeless women. In our own community **[INSERT LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS]**.

As an organization serving women and families in **TOWN/CITY**, we strongly support the reauthorization of VAWA (H.R. 6545) and FVPSA (S.2784 / H.R.6014). It is crucial that we know where our candidates and elected officials stand when it comes to preventing gender-based violence and protecting survivors.

Make sure that every candidate for office can tell you:

- (1) what they will do to prevent and ed violence against women,
- (2) whether they support reauthorization of VAWA and FVPSA, and
- (3) what services they believe survivors need, and how they will ensure those needs are met.

Every current Member of Congress should also publicly declare their support for the reauthorization of VAWA and FVPSA.

It’s time to take the politics out of domestic violence and hold Congress accountable for helping to make sure all survivors are safe and free from violence and fear.

NAME
TITLE, ORGANIZATION

(Include your phone number and email address. Some newspapers ask for a physical address as well, but none of that will be published.)

SAMPLE DONOR LETTER

Dear [Donor Name],

Throughout our 160-year history, YWCA has boldly stepped forward to address the most pressing social, economic, and policy issues that most affect women, girls, and people of color. In communities big and small, YWCAs open their doors to answer the cry for justice.

In 2020, as our nation conducts prepares for a national election, YWCA will continue our work to ensure that the voices of women and people of color in our country are heard. We've long understood that race and gender must be addressed together in order to create a society that ensures dignity and equity for all.

This year, YWCA will kick off our **14th Annual Week Without Violence campaign**—a national effort to engage our communities in eliminating gender-based violence and supporting survivors. From October 18-24th, YWCAs and our allies across the country will host virtual events, register voters, and lobby elected officials on issues affecting survivors. When we stand together, we show the nation the strength of our movement.

[YWCA Association Name] is forging new pathways to prosperity for women and girls through several new initiatives:

[Add association-specific information or programming.]

There is much work to do, and we can't do it alone. I hope you will consider supporting **Week Without Violence 2020** with a contribution. With your support, we can root out injustice, transform institutions, and create a world that sees women, girls and people of color the way we see them: Equal. Powerful. Unstoppable.

Thank you for all you do.

In solidarity,

[Local Association Contact and Contact Information]