



WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

ADVOCACY & MEDIA TOOLKIT

August 2022

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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 nearly 30 years, YWCA has set aside one week in October as a Week Without Violence—a week when YWCAs join as part of a global movement with World YWCA to end gender-based violence. This year, Week Without Violence will take place from October 17-22, 2022.

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, and which is too often compounded by experiences of racism and racial violence—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 how its impacts are compounded by racism and racial 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, compounding issues of gender-based violence and racism continue 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, which is compounded by experiences of racism and racial violence.



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 with compounding experiences resulting from racism and racial 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 2022. Please use this guide to inform your WWV 2022 efforts—and don't forget to register your events on your [Week Without Violence](#) dashboard.

We understand that the novel coronavirus crisis continues to present challenges for local YWCAs, which may limit your capacity to participate and host events. You can request guidance and support by emailing weekwithoutviolence@ywca.org.

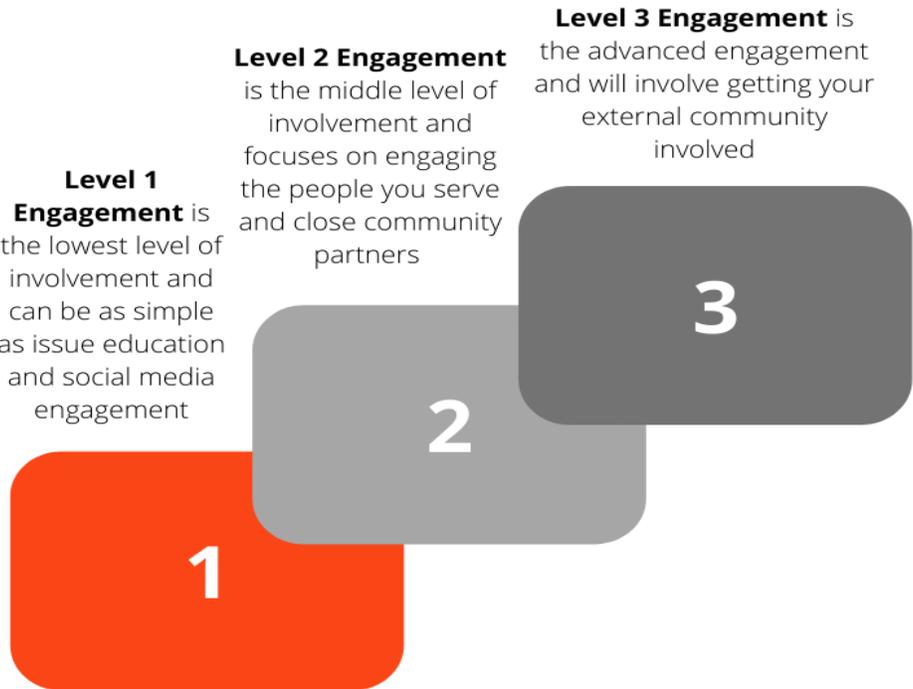
Our collective efforts can root out injustice, transform institutions, and create a world that sees women, girls, and people of color the way we see them: Equal. Powerful. Unstoppable. Join Us for Week Without Violence 2022!

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 2022 Week Without Violence. However, you may be wondering how your YWCA can meaningfully participate in Week Without Violence this year, given limited capacity and ongoing 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 end 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, 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 2022, listed from the lightest level of engagement to the most advanced.

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 **August 15, 2022** to gain access to a digital toolbox and receive additional details concerning programming and merchandise!
- ❑ Use the [Domestic Violence 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, for ending gender-based violence, racial violence, and for declaring racism a public health crisis 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!
- ❑ [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.
- ❑ [Educate voters](#) about issues surrounding gender-based violence, including the impact that current divisive issues have on survivors.

Tier 2

ENGAGE THE WOMEN AND FAMILIES YOUR YWCA SERVES

- ❑ Use your email lists of clients 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 reproductive health restrictions, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, gun violence, and police violence 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 pledge to vote in 2022. You may want to designate a specific day and time, design a script for volunteers to follow, develop a system for tracking participation, and provide awards to incentivize volunteers with the most logged contacts.

WWV 2022 TALKING POINTS & MESSAGING GUIDE

During YWCA's 28th annual Week Without Violence — October 17-22, 2022 — we invite YWCAs and allied groups to organize events that raise awareness about gender-based violence and the issues that survivors face.

This Messaging Guide provides talking points to assist you in framing communications around gender-based violence; YWCAs' response to gender-based violence, reproductive health restrictions, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and policies, gun violence, and police violence; and survivors—including their needs, solutions for meeting those needs, and the barriers survivors face.

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 and their families

YWCA's Response to Reproductive Health Restrictions

YWCA has supported access to abortion for more than 50 years.

- In 2021, YWCA USA submitted an [amicus](#) or “friend of the court” brief in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the case that ultimately overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

YWCA's Response to Anti-LGBTQ+ Policies & Legislation

YWCA advocates for LGBTQ+ equity, providing housing, gender-based violence services, counseling, and safe spaces in communities around the country.

- YWCA's provide housing, gender-based violence services, counseling, and safe spaces in more than 1,000 communities across the country.

YWCA's Response to Gun Violence

YWCA supports systemic and structural policy changes that focus attention and resources on the places, spaces, and contexts in which women and girls—particularly women and girls of color—experience significant threats from gun violence: in their homes, as victims and survivors of intimate partner violence; in mass shootings, which are most often perpetrated by those with a history of domestic violence; and at school, where students of color both face the threat of school shootings and bear the brunt of harsh school surveillance and security measures.

- YWCA has issued [policy recommendations](#) to reduce the impact of gun violence, particularly against women and girls of color.

YWCA's Response to Police Violence

YWCA focuses on ending the criminalization of women and girls of color, documenting racial profiling and police abuses against women of color, and providing resources to communities and organizations to root out injustice and systemic racism.

- The [We Still Deserve Safety Report](#) documents incidents in which women and girls of color have experienced violence, racial profiling, and criminalization at the hands of police, immigration enforcement, and other state actors and renews YWCA's call to end the criminalization of women and girls of color.

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 68 seconds another American is sexually assaulted.
- Out of every 1000 sexual assaults, less than a third are reported to police, only 50 lead to an arrest, and only 28 lead to a felony conviction.
- Only half of domestic violence incidents are reported to police, while more than 2 out of 3 sexual assaults go unreported.
- More than 40% of teen girls have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.
- 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. Over their lifetimes, victims of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking lost nearly 741 days of school and paid work, at a cost of \$110 billion.
- 81% of all women have experienced street harassment. Among all women, 49% have been sexually touched, 27% have been followed, and 23% have survived sexual assault.
- Overall, 71% of restaurant workers have been harassed at least once during their time in the industry; 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 women are victims of rape or sexual assault at 1.5 times the rate of other white, non-Hispanic women. In fact, more than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) 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, nearly 1 in 3 (29.5%) who have experienced rape, 55.5% who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 42.1% 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 2019, Black women were 2.3 times more likely to be murdered by men than white women: 91% of Black female victims were killed by men they knew, and 60% were killed by current or former intimate partners. In cases where the murder weapon was identified, 70% of Black female victims were shot and killed with guns.
- One in four Black girls will be sexually abused before the age of 18 and more than one in four Black women are survivors of rape. Additionally, 38% of Black women have experienced some form of sexual violence other than rape during their lifetime and 17% of Black women have experienced this violence at the hands of an intimate partner.
- 9-20% of Asian and Pacific Islander (A/PI) women report experiencing intimate physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime, though rates of violence in specific A/PI communities have been reported to be as high as 56%. 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 (34.4%) of Hispanic women and Latinas have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime and 1 in 12 (8.6%) of Hispanic women / Latinas has experienced this violence in the previous 12 months. Additionally, a national study found 63.1% of Hispanic women / Latinas who identified being victimized in their lifetime reported having experienced more than one victimization.

Abortion Restrictions and Gender-Based Violence

Barriers to accessing abortion increase poverty and violence, and have a disproportionate impact on people of color, young people, survivors of gender-based violence, people in the LGBTQ+ community, and others who lack access to the full range of reproductive health care.

- As many as 30% of women have experienced reproductive coercion, included unprotected sex, contraceptive sabotage, coerced continuation of a pregnancy, forced or induced

termination of a pregnancy, and coerced conception. Young Black women are more likely than women of other races to experience reproductive coercion.

- 1 in 6 women has reported experiencing birth control sabotage.
- According to the CDC, 10.3 million women have had a partner who has tried to force them to become pregnant against their will, or has refused to wear a condom, and 2.1 million have become pregnant due to rape by an intimate partner.
- Between 6% and 22% of women terminate their pregnancies because they are experiencing intimate partner violence, and 34% of survivors report that their abusive partners limit their childbearing decisions.
- The six states with the highest maternal mortality rates have quickly banned abortion following the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*; maternal deaths in states with “trigger” laws average almost two times higher than those in states with laws protecting abortion access.
- Women of color already experience higher rates of maternal mortality than white women and are less likely to have access to quality, affordable, appropriate, and timely maternal care, placing them at higher risk for poor maternal health outcomes. Black and Latina women receive lower quality care on 40% of measures of overall health, including quality reproductive health care. 32% of Black women and 41% of AI/AN women do not receive adequate prenatal care; consequently, they are 3-4x more likely to die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth than white women;
- The maternal mortality rate in the U.S. could increase by 24% if a nationwide ban was enacted; the increase would be greatest among non-Hispanic Black women – 39%.
- Homicide is the leading cause of death in the U.S. among pregnant persons, and 1 in 6 survivors of gender-based violence are first abused during their pregnancy. More than 320,000 pregnant women are abused by their partners every year, which leads to a 37% higher risk of obstetric complications.
- Black women are at an increased risk of homicide during their pregnancies, compared to other races. Black women aged 10-19 are 6x more likely to be killed during their pregnancies, while Black women aged 20-24 are 65% more likely to be killed than other women in their age group. Overall, pregnant Black women are 3x more likely to be the victims of intimate partner homicide than white or Hispanic women / Latinas.
- 22 states have laws that are being used, or could be used, to restrict the legal status of abortion.

- Access to abortion services empirically affects the level of violence against women in communities; for every 30-minute increase in time to reach the nearest abortion clinic, rates of gender-based violence will increase by up to 5% the following year.
- Intimate partner physical violence decreases over time for women who seek and receive abortions, but not for women who are denied abortions.

Anti-LGBTQ+ Policies and Gender-Based Violence

Anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation—including “Don’t Say Gay or Trans” laws—create increasingly hostile climates towards LGBTQ+ individuals and result in increased violence and new barriers to safety for LGBTQ+ survivors of gender-based violence.

- LGBTQ+ communities experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and sexual assault than heterosexual communities
- 44% of lesbian women and 61% of bisexual women, versus 35% of heterosexual women, have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, while 26% of gay men and 37% of bisexual men, versus 29% of heterosexual men, have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.
- Lifetime rates of intimate partner violence in the transgender community range from 31% to 50%, and multiple studies indicate that over 50% of transgender people have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives.
- LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected people of color make up the majority (51%) of intimate partners violence (IPV) survivors. Specifically, LGBTQ+ Black/African American survivors were 1.89 times more likely to experience physical violence within IPV when compared to all non-Black survivors.
- In 2015 alone, there were 13 reported LGBTQ+ intimate partner violence related homicides. 77% of those murdered were LGBTQ+ people of color.
- In a national survey, more than 60% of LGBTQ+ sexual and domestic violence survivors said they were denied access to domestic violence shelters. In a 2011 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.
- After the passage of anti-trans legislation in North Carolina, 1 in 10 transgender /gender-nonconforming (T/GNC) youth reported experiencing emotional abuse; there was also a 10% increase in physical and sexual dating violence among T/GNC youth.

Firearm Violence and Gender-Based Violence

Women's experiences of gun violence are inextricably linked to domestic violence, whether in the home, in mass shootings, or at school.

- Every month, ~70 women are shot and killed by a current or former intimate partner with a gun.
- 13.6% of American women alive today (4.5 million women) have been threatened by intimate partners with firearms; 43% of these women have been physically injured. Nearly 1 million women report being shot or shot at.
- Most intimate partner homicides are committed with firearms, and this number is on the rise. The percentage of intimate partner homicides committed using a firearm increased by 26% between 2010 and 2017.
- The risk of femicide is increased by 1,000% when an abuser has access to a firearm.
- Of all women killed by men, 35% are killed by intimate partners with guns.
- 59.1% of mass shootings between 2014 and 2019 were related to domestic violence, and the shooter had a history of domestic violence in 68% of mass shootings.
- Nearly 3 in 4 children and teens killed in mass shootings died in incidents connected to domestic violence.
- Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic women / Latinas are victims of domestic violence and intimate partner homicide at much higher rates than white women, and in 55% of these cases, a firearm is involved.
- Black women are 2x as likely to be fatally shot by an intimate partner than white women; younger Black women (aged 18-34) are nearly 3x as likely.

Police Violence and Gender-Based Violence

Survivors of gender-based violence, particularly survivors of color and those from other marginalized communities often experience additional violence at the hands of law enforcement.

- Less than half of domestic violence survivors ever call or report to the police. The number is even lower for sexual assault survivors; only 25% ever call or report. And these numbers are going down.

- 89% of survivors and service providers in one study indicated that contact with the police resulted in contact with child welfare; 61% reported that it could cause survivors to face criminal charges that could lead to deportation, and 70% reported that it sometimes or often resulted in the loss of housing, employment, or welfare benefits.
- An overwhelming majority of survivors and service providers (88%) say that police sometimes or often do not believe survivors or take their complaints seriously.
- Two thirds of survivors and service providers report that police use force sometimes or often when responding to domestic violence calls, particularly against Black survivors. More than half have reported anti-Black, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-LGBTQ attitudes among responding officers.
- Survivors are targeted by police for sexual harassment, extortion, and assault.
- 39% of survivors of homophobic and transphobic violence who report to the police say that police were hostile, 33% experienced verbal abuse, and 16% physical abuse.
- Mandatory arrest policies have increased the criminalization and arrests of survivors, particularly survivors of color, immigrant survivors, and LGBTQ+ survivors.

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 6 states prohibit the public sharing of voter registration lists, other states make them publicly available or permit them to be purchased.
- 44 states and the District of Columbia have Address Confidentiality Programs for survivors that 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, 15 states require survivors to meet certain conditions in order to vote absentee, and only 6 of those states permit survivors to use their participation in Address Confidentiality Programs as an excuse to vote absentee

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 unpredictability surrounding the COVID-19 health crisis, it is essential that Week Without Violence continues to have virtual options for participants. 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 30-day trial. For more information on accessing the free Adobe Connect trial, contact YWCA USA's IT Director, Matt Preiss, at 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 [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. Given the ongoing unpredictability surrounding COVID-19, advocates are still turning to virtual or online community forums 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:

- Educate your community and policymakers on issues of importance to your community and your YWCA
- Deepen relationships with elected officials, sponsors, and partner organizations
- Fundraising opportunity through event sponsorship

Challenges:

- Heavier lift and time consuming to plan and 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 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 FVPSA, 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. This also includes whether your event is open to the media.

➤ **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 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 diverse 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?

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.

- 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.

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 events page and will help us show the depth and breadth of support around the country for ending gender-based violence and supporting survivors. Plus, all registered events receive a unique, customizable mini site (including a unique URL!) to use in event promotion!

- **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 gender-based violence 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](#) to get started.
- **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.
- **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 and support survivors.
- Invite your attendees to take action to end gender-based violence and support survivors. Some ideas include urging policymakers to cosponsor and pass [Family Violence Prevention and Services Act \(FVPSA\)](#) through letters, phone calls, or through [YWCA's 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 eliminate racism, 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.

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.

- **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 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. 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 2022 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 20), 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 [YWomensVote social media graphics](#)
- 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.

➤ **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](#), to get you started.

➤ **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



This year, more than 7,000 federal, state, and local seats are on the ballot. And 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 2022 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

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).

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](#).

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 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 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 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!) using #WWV22 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 them.

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.

- **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

- 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 them to see your organization in action while also keeping in mind safety requirements? Check out our [hosting a legislator](#) how-to guide!



CONTACTING YOUR POLICYMAKERS

While it's important to do whatever you can with 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

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.

effective way to have the legislator understand your issue. You don't need to know the legislator personally to request a meeting or site visit.

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!

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

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".

➤ **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.

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.

➤ **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!

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](#).
- **Sending and confirming the invitation.** Their schedules fill up early, particularly

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.**

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

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.

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

TIPS FOR MEANINGFUL COALITION & BASE BUILDING

REFLECTING ON YWCA'S PLACE AS A LEADER IN ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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. They are often 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 2022 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?

“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

- Work with GBV coalition partners?
- Respond to calls to action from gender-based violence 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 ways in which today’s most divisive issues are directly impacting survivors, or to help ensure 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, and YWomenVote. 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.