

# 2024 Anti-Disinformation Resource Guide

As the 2024 elections approach, this resource guide is intended to provide information and tools for State Tables and partners working to combat election-related mis and disinformation. The resources here are informed by State Voices' election protection efforts and collaboration with a wide variety of voting rights and democracy advocates.

If your organization would like further help or state-specific training to coordinate a strategy for combating misinformation and disinformation, please reach out to [GVelasco@StateVoices.org](mailto:GVelasco@StateVoices.org) for policy, training, and programmatic questions or to [ASaslow@StateVoices.org](mailto:ASaslow@StateVoices.org) for questions related to communications.

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## Definitions

**Misinformation:** False or inaccurate information that's spread, regardless of intent to mislead.

**Disinformation:** False information that's deliberately spread in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth.

**Malinformation:** Information based on fact, but presented outside of context in order to cause harm.

**Inoculation messaging:** Messages you can use with audiences to combat misinformation before they even encounter it. These messages explicitly warn about the danger of being misled by misinformation and provide counter arguments explaining the flaws in that misinformation. Much like a vaccine, the objective is to proactively inoculate against anticipated problematic or false content before it takes hold.

**Debunking:** Messaging designed to counter mis and disinformation that's spreading. Best practices for debunking messaging include 1) Clearly naming what is false; 2) Highlighting the motivations of the actors spreading the false claims and; 3) Stating the truth and linking to trusted sources.

**Generative AI:** The umbrella term for artificial intelligence tools capable of creating text, image, and video content using generative models, often in response to prompts from users.

## 2024 Disinformation Narratives

Based on elections in 2020 and 2022 as well as ongoing disinformation campaigns, we can predict that the following disinformation narratives are likely to be prominent on a national scale in 2024. The narratives below may be promoted by bad actors aiming to erode trust in the electoral process in order to advance their own self-interest or political agenda.

**False Voting Issues and False Allegations of "Voter Fraud":** This includes false claims such as double-counting of ballots, ballot dumping and machine errors, as well as a more recent narrative wave falsely suggesting a surge in migrants registering to vote. In some cases, such disinformation is an outright lie; while in other instances it's an exaggeration or mischaracterization of a one-off example designed to create the perception of widespread problems.

**Attacks on Election Workers:** Public employees at the federal, state, and local level have become the target of conspiracy theorists aiming to sow distrust in our elections and vote tabulation in particular – leading to resignations and adding risk and uncertainty to jobs that would be challenging even under the best circumstances.

**Propagating the 2020 “Big Lie”:** Donald Trump’s false claims about widespread election fraud in 2020 fuels discussion that ultimately serves to erode public faith in the electoral process and encourage voter apathy.

**Incorrect Information about How, When and Where to Vote:** This form of online voter suppression uses false information to mislead voters about key dates, deadlines, and the processes for voting. Recently, online platforms have improved their monitoring of such blatant disinformation – but the problem is far from resolved. Additionally, advances in generative AI (artificial intelligence) have made high-quality “deep-fake” video and audio messages (such as a fake message about a change to one’s polling location) cheaper to produce and more dangerous to democracy.

**Sham Election Reviews:** Bad actors have advocated for using taxpayer funding to conduct sham reviews (i.e., so called “audits”) of elections despite no evidence of widespread voting issues. These election reviews, while baseless, can appear legitimate and thereby lead voters to question the legitimacy of election results.

**False Claims about Vote-By-Mail:** With more states expanding vote-by-mail opportunities since the pandemic, some bad actors continue to weaponize the changes to elevate false claims about the security of mail-in voting. In fact, there’s no evidence of security issues with voting by mail, which has been a trusted part of the electoral process for years.

**Attacks on Specific Communities & Identities:** Advocates working on issues related to reproductive rights; democracy, equity and inclusion; and immigration policy are likely to face disinformation attacks. Black women democracy leaders and TLGBQIA+ community members will likely be targets of disinformation campaigns.

**The Rapid Emergence of Artificial Intelligence:** In the last several years, we’ve experienced explosive growth in the field of generative artificial intelligence tools capable of producing written content, photos, and videos that can be used across a variety of purposes and professions. Unfortunately, the new technology lacks regulatory guardrails, and can be nearly impossible to distinguish from human-created content – setting the stage for bad

actors to use generative AI to spread disinformation. Though we cannot predict exactly when, how, or by whom generative artificial intelligence tools will be used in the run-up to the 2024 elections, it's fair to assume this new technology will play a role in accelerating disinformation narratives.

## General Practices for Responding

The instinct may be to address every piece of false information online, but it's far more strategic to be selective and take a step back before amplifying or responding to these messages.

- **Avoid amplification:** Social media algorithms feed on engagement, whether negative or positive. Even reacting with “angry” on a Facebook post boosts it and creates the possibility for more people to see the piece of disinformation. In general, only comment on disinformation that represents a high-level threat to debunk false information (see more on response strategies in the threat matrix graphic on page 6).
- **Do report:** If you encounter a piece of disinformation, flag it for removal from the social network and [submit to the Common Cause tip line](#).
  - Note about platform regulation: A number of social media platforms made changes to their platform policies and regulation since the last election cycle. In the absence of federal regulation, tech companies are free to change their disinformation policies and procedures on a whim, posing challenges for researchers and anti-disinformation advocates. The resources below outline the most recent changes from tech platforms and their current anti-disinformation policies (or notable lack of clear policies in several cases).
    - GLAAD: [Social Media Safety Index](#)
    - Accountable Tech: [Democracy by Design: Social Media’s Policy Scores](#)
    - Free Press: [Big Tech Backslide report](#)
- **Avoid cross-pollination:** If you see a post on Facebook, avoid posting on Twitter about it, even to remark that it is incorrect. That only helps the disinformation spread and makes it more likely that it will become viral on other platforms.
- **Do inoculate:** Prime your audience to distrust disinformation when they see it by naming bad actors’ motivations and sharing factual information from trusted sources that encourages people to make a plan for voting. The following message guides

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from Spitfire Strategies can help you to proactively inoculate against election-related disinformation:

- [Pre-Election Debunking Messaging](#)
- [Hand-Count Messaging](#)
- [Threats and Burdens on Elections Officials](#)
- [Voter Intimidation Canvassers](#) (from 2022)
- [Election Police Messaging](#)

Deciding whether or not to respond to disinformation should depend on two things: the likelihood of the message reaching voters and the likelihood of it causing voters harm. Use the questions below to guide your decision, and the threat matrix to figure out what your response should be (excerpted from the [Election Protection Threat Matrix](#) from 2020).

### Likelihood of reaching voters:

- Does the disinformation target historically disenfranchised voters, such as people of color, young people, older adults, and people with disabilities?
- Does this story have potential for topic momentum, or the capacity to turn into a larger narrative?
- Has the disinformation spread from one social media platform to another (e.g., from Twitter to Facebook)?
- Does it appear to come from a trusted source?
- Is the post receiving more than 1,000 interactions (e.g., likes, reposts, comments)?
- Are journalists or trusted messengers engaging and amplifying the disinformation?
- Are trusted messengers engaging and amplifying the disinformation?

### Likelihood of causing voters harm:

- Does the disinformation hit on issues that are known to depress turnout and/or disenfranchise voters, such long lines at polling stations, voter intimidation and health concerns?
- Does this content put voters, poll workers, election officials or volunteers in danger?
- Is the content specific? Does it seem actionable and have potential to be true?
- Is the content posted with earnestness, or is posted as a joke, sarcasm or trolling?
- Does it have a specific call to action (e.g., signing a petition, voting for a candidate, protesting, etc.) that could influence how real voters behave offline or incite violence directed at voters?
- Is there fact-check content out there that accidentally amplifies the lie?

There is often overlap in the impact of disinformation and political violence. To learn more about the resources available for the network, State Voices has created an [Electoral Safety Overview](#).

The [Election Protection threat matrix](#) (excerpt below) can help you plan out your response.

**THREAT MATRIX**

Note: In addition to the actions below, in all cases where you spot mis/disinformation you should enter the content via the EP tipline or Junkipedia. If you have any questions, please contact Jesse Littlewood at [jlittlewood@commoncause.org](mailto:jlittlewood@commoncause.org).

**Likelihood of message reaching voters**

	High	Medium	Low
Likelihood of voter harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send incident to rapid response team</li> <li>Request takedown of content on social media platform</li> <li>Craft inoculation messaging and talking points for organizers</li> <li>Consider running online ads (paid)</li> <li>Engage trusted reporters</li> <li>Engage trusted messengers (e.g., EP groups that are nonpartisan and Secretary of States)</li> <li>Monitor for additional momentum in newspapers, on Twitter</li> <li>Consider emergency litigation, if needed</li> <li>Report to relevant election officials at the state and local levels</li> <li>Report to DHS, Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs, and/or law enforcement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push proactive voting messages to change the subject</li> <li>Craft inoculation messaging</li> <li>Engage trusted journalists and sources of information</li> <li>Explore platform take down options</li> <li>Monitor for escalation</li> <li>Report to relevant election officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor for any changes or increases</li> <li>Push proactive voting messages to change the subject</li> <li>Explore platform take down options</li> </ul>
Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Craft inoculation messaging and talking points for organizers</li> <li>Engage trusted messengers</li> <li>Engage trusted reporters</li> <li>Report to relevant election officials</li> <li>Send incident to OVS listserv</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult experts</li> <li>Craft inoculation messaging</li> <li>Engage regional influencers on the ground</li> <li>Engage trusted journalists and donors</li> <li>Monitor for escalation</li> <li>Report to relevant election officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor for any changes or increase</li> <li>Do not engage</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send incident to OVS listserv</li> <li>Flag for experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor for escalation</li> <li>Do not engage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not engage</li> </ul>

## Messaging Resources

- [End Voter Disinformation Website from Spitfire Strategies](#)**: This Google website includes robust messaging guidance and talking points on key disinformation narratives and issues, and will be updated with new resources to respond to emerging state and national disinformation narratives. To access the site, email your name and affiliation to [voterdisinfo@spitfirestrategies.com](mailto:voterdisinfo@spitfirestrategies.com). Highlights of key messaging on the site include:
  - [Pre-Election Debunking Messaging](#)
  - [Hand-Count Messaging](#)

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- [Threats and Burdens on Elections Officials](#)
- [Voter Intimidation Canvassers](#)
- [Election Police Messaging](#)
- [AI and Disinfo Guidance](#)
- Anti-immigrant Disinfo Guidance (in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- [Hand Count Messaging](#)
- [Election Worker Guidance](#)
  
- **[Communication Strategies to Fight Disinformation \(Spitfire Strategies Training\)](#):**  
This training deck from Spitfire Strategies walks through best practices for communicators when dealing with disinformation and provides additional tips for reaching your audiences with trustworthy information.
  
- **[Anti-Disinformation GIF Library from Into Action Lab](#):** This image library from Into Action includes GIFs for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter that provide disinformation inoculation and promote media literacy.

## Training Resources

The training options below are open to all State Tables and partners ahead of the November election. For questions related to these available trainings, please contact Alec Saslow or Gabrielle Velasco.

- **The Drive Agency** offers four different training modules in a sequence: 101, 201, 301, 401.
  - The 101 training provides an overview of “what disinformation is, why organizations should care about what happens online, and how to use researchers like us.” It is usually one hour long.
  - The 201 training is 90 minutes long, and is a deep dive into how organizations “can more confidently assess mis-/disinformation threats when they surface and how they can build a more powerful menu of response options.”
  - The 301 and 401 are more customized training to build tactics to counter social media disinformation and build advanced toolkits, respectively. To connect with the Drive Agency and schedule a training, contact [GVelasco@StateVoices.org](mailto:GVelasco@StateVoices.org) or [ASaslow@StateVoices.org](mailto:ASaslow@StateVoices.org).
  
- **[Common Cause](#)** provides a more grassroots approach to anti-disinformation training and focuses specifically on voting and election disinformation. The focus is on how to



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monitor for disinformation and entering disinformation in the [Junkipedia](#) database, particularly for volunteers.

- [Disinformation Defense League](#) provides their own series of online seminars on different disinformation topics each week. To be alerted of upcoming trainings, join the email list [here](#).

## Disinformation Tracking

- If you are interested in supporting tracking of online disinformation, volunteers can act as social media monitors through a program run by Common Cause. Volunteers do not require training, and will be trained prior to shift assignments by staff members at Common Cause. Contact Audrey McCabe at Common Cause at [amccabe@commoncause.org](mailto:amccabe@commoncause.org) for more information..

Volunteer social media monitors will address issues on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor and Reddit and:

1. Promote correct civic information about voting (like how to get an absentee ballot, voter ID laws, etc);
  2. Help any voters who are struggling before or during the elections; and
  3. Monitor for disinformation in their communities, flagging it for expert analysts and, if necessary, engaging in counter-speech.
  4. Share inoculation messaging to address misinformation.
- If you are interested in establishing your own social media monitoring program, [Junkipedia](#) is an application that allows any organization with an account to submit tips about misinformation and disinformation on social media and in private communities within these platforms. If you or your partners would like to explore your own Junkipedia account for flagging mis and disinformation, contact Audrey McCabe at [amccabe@commoncause.org](mailto:amccabe@commoncause.org) for more information and training.

## Additional Resources

- [Democracy Disinfo Update from Common Cause](#): This newsletter includes clips and examples of live disinformation that is useful for situational awareness of national and state trends of disinformation around democracy issues. [Click here to sign-up](#) and for questions, email Ishan Mehta at [imehta@commoncause.org](mailto:imehta@commoncause.org).



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- **[Disinformation Defense League Email List](#)**: The Disinfo Defense League is a real-time, rapid response network designed to disrupt disinformation and voter suppression campaigns deliberately targeting the intersections of Black, Afro-Latinx, Latinx, Indigenous, and immigrant communities. The DDL email list has roughly 500 members. [Click here](#) to apply for membership in the group.
- **[Disinfo Readouts from the Drive Agency](#)**: The Drive Agency provides updates via Signal on current mis and disinformation narratives, including an update focused on elections and voting. [Click here](#) to sign up to receive the readouts and contact Elise at [Elise@thesvf.org](mailto:Elise@thesvf.org) if you have questions.
- **[Disinformation Dashboard from the News Literacy Project](#)**: This 2024 mis and disinformation resource includes an organized dashboard that catalogs viral disinformation by theme (What are the viral falsehoods about) and type (What methods are being used to spread the falsehood).
- **[Preparing for Generative AI's Impact on 2024](#)**: This handbook from the Drive Agency outlines key information about the potential impact of artificial intelligence on our democratic process in the year to come – including education and training for progressive organizations, ethical guidance for using AI, and methods to increase pressure and accountability among technology companies.
- **[Political Ad Observatory from NYU Cybersecurity for Democracy](#)**: This tool allows users to explore political advertising across Facebook and Instagram and is searchable by keywords, topic, sponsor, or region.
- **[Election Protection Disinformation Threat Matrix](#)**: This resource from 2020 walks through examples of inoculation messaging and provides a matrix for guiding decisions about whether or not to respond publicly to online mis and disinformation.
- **[OverZero Guidance on Communicating During Contentious Times](#)**: This resource outlines the Do's and Don'ts for local leaders to avoid inadvertently causing harm; specific insights for countering misinformation; and action steps to defuse risks for violence before, during, and after voting occurs.
- **[Inoculation Theory](#)**: Digital Democracy Institute of the Americas (DDIA) published a report on inoculation theory and how it best works as a countermeasure against large scale disinformation. There is also a corresponding [60 Minutes story](#).

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- **Issue Research:** Media Matters for America is available to provide in-depth research into potentially impactful narratives based on tips and ideas from our network. If you hear of a problematic disinformation narrative related to democracy or elections in your state or region and would like research assistance to learn more, you can connect with Media Matters by reaching out to [GVelasco@StateVoices.org](mailto:GVelasco@StateVoices.org) or to [ASaslow@StateVoices.org](mailto:ASaslow@StateVoices.org).
  - For example: NYCET heard from canvassers in 2022 that voters were encountering misinformation connecting immigration to economic hardship and crime. Media Matters researched the topic and shared a number of studies of Spanish-language media to demonstrate the same misinformation would continue or escalate in 2024.
- **In Language Resources (Spanish and Asian Languages):**
  - **NALEO's [Defiende La Verdad Campaign](#)** focuses on building capacity among community members and leaders to counter misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (MDM) targeting the Latino community within the civic engagement space. If you are interested in supporting and /or have Spanish-speaking volunteers to support with Spanish language media monitoring, you can [sign up to work with NALEO here](#). If you are interested in learning more about the program or have questions, email Josué Romualdo at [jromualdo@naleo.org](mailto:jromualdo@naleo.org).
  - **APIAVote:** APIAVote compiles a biweekly report on problematic narratives impacting the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. To be added to the email list for these reports, email Kyle Van Fleet at [kvanfleet@apiavote.org](mailto:kvanfleet@apiavote.org)

*This document will be updated as new information is available throughout the 2024 election season. If you have questions, comments, or recommendations for additional resources to include in this guide, please contact [ASaslow@StateVoices.org](mailto:ASaslow@StateVoices.org) or [GVelasco@StateVoices.org](mailto:GVelasco@StateVoices.org).*