



**EQUALITY**  
SOUTH DAKOTA

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

### Introduction

It is through strategic communications, integrated advocacy, and defined programmatic efforts and refined fundraising streams that Equality South Dakota will eradicate fear and uncertainty within South Dakota's LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit community over time.

### Goals

- Position Equality South Dakota as the go-to nonprofit statewide organization for LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit political advocacy and education for every South Dakotan.
- Elevate consistent brand awareness with local and national media outlets.
- Increase Equality South Dakota's ability to impact legislative decisions in key districts.
- Establish Equality South Dakota as a resource for pro-LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit campaigns and candidates.
- Solidify Equality South Dakota as a resource for ally employers and LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit job seekers.

### Target Audiences

- LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit and Allied communities across the state of South Dakota with particular attention to rural, youth, and Indigenous communities.
- Individuals seeking information on LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit advocacy including those who don't speak English as a first language.
- Local, state, and federal policymakers inclusive of all political parties.
- Faith leaders of all denominations including the Catholic church and Baptist churches and Muslim faith.
- Business leaders including small businesses owners, colleges and universities, and corporations.
- Statewide media including reporters from weekly publications, national outlets, and everything in between.
- Donors and volunteers looking to give their time and resources to LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit advocacy organizations.

### Key Messages and Talking Points

For decades, LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans have been singled out, silenced, and ignored by elected officials, healthcare providers, and certain faith communities. Evidenced by a slew of anti-LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit sentiment and 21 anti-LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit bills proposed over the last five years.

Outside of the legislature, LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans face uncertainty in the workplace, houses of worship, and lack robust knowledge of their constitutional rights under the law and at the ballot box. It shouldn't be a shock that many LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans are fed up and tired.

- **GENERAL BRANDING MESSAGING:**
  - Equality South Dakota is a statewide LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit fact-driven grassroots advocacy organization that aims to make life better for every South Dakotan.

- o Equality South Dakota is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization advocating for equality in all communities.
- o Equality South Dakota is a statewide organization which fights to secure and advance equality in every community.
- **GENERAL ADVOCACY MESSAGING:**
  - o All of us, including LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans, are similar — we binge Netflix on the weekends, we farm, we hike, and we vacuum.
  - o Highlighting intersection of Native American Values with Equality SD mission
  - o All of us, including LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans, want the same things out of life. We want to live in safe communities and have the opportunity to earn a living to provide for ourselves and our families.
  - o LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit people belong in South Dakota.
  - o Like all South Dakotans, LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit people belong in classrooms, courtrooms, the legislature, the voting booth, on school boards, and everywhere else.
- **GENERAL NONDISCRIMINATION MESSAGING:**
  - o Equality South Dakota supports updating state laws to ensure all people are treated fairly and equally in the workplace and in our communities. No law will ever be perfect or change overnight, but updating laws to protect LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans from unfair treatment can be a tool to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
  - o Everyone should feel safe, secure, and supported in their community.

## Strategies & Tactics

**Strategy:** Embrace earned media as an avenue to position Equality South Dakota as a resource for LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit advocacy and education for all South Dakotans.

- **Tactic:** Procure a list of LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit friendly reporters and publications. By compiling a list of statewide and weekly publications and reporters, we can determine who to send our messages to and when to get the most impact.
  - o Work with Equality Federation and utilize Meltwater to source an all new list of media connections.
- **Tactic:** Utilize Twitter to engage with reporters and media figures to increase the reach of our digital messaging. By engaging with reporters and supporters on social media, we can increase our online engagement organically and increase the likelihood of our message getting to reporters.
- **Tactic:** Proactively comment on LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit issues, news, and stories as they arise in South Dakota and nationwide. By sharing our thoughts and commentary directly with reporters in a quick and detailed fashion, we can push our narrative and draw attention to issues that face our communities.

**Strategy:** Create a stronger business community and employment landscape for LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans.

- **Tactic:** Compile information on issues facing LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit individuals in South Dakota related to employment.
- **Tactic:** Survey South Dakota businesses to compile a bank of businesses and organizations that are LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit owned, managed, and open to all.
  - o Publish as a page on our website and Facebook photo album and Instagram story highlight to archive the information.

- **Tactic:** Host training sessions for South Dakota businesses on how to be a strong ally to LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans on Zoom or in person when it is safe.
- **Tactic:** Work with media outlets to promote the fact that area businesses are working hard to be better informed on how to appropriately support LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit South Dakotans.

**Strategy:** Elevate brand awareness and sharpen authority of Equality South Dakota in government by proactively commenting on news and training an active and informed base of supporters to advocate independently.

- **Tactic:** Establish a recognizable and consistent brand with a trio of appealing and relatable logos and fully accessible websites.
  - Ensure that people with vision impairments can access information easily and accurately.
  - Ensure that Spanish speaking South Dakotans can access information easily and accurately.
- **Tactic:** Train media spokespersons from various regions of South Dakota including rural areas, urban, and tribal.
- **Tactic:** Create a media watch list of reliable news sources and accompanying media contacts for proactive media releases.
- **Tactic:** Create a proactive response plan to activate Equality South Dakota’s subscribers and social media followers. Deploy tactics when anti-LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit legislation are being dropped, calls to action should be clear, easy, and simple. Getting our message and actions out to the right place at the right time can be the difference between killing an anti-LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit bill or the bill advancing through the legislature.
- **Tactic:** Promote Equality South Dakota / Equality Federation bill trackers to inform supporters and draw attention to anti-LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit legislation.

*By equipping Equality South Dakota supporters with the information they need, we can embolden LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit people to take action when we need them to do so most.*

**Strategy:** Educate candidates on the importance and power of LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit voters.

- **Tactic:** Compile local and national statistics on LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit voters to brief candidates.
- **Tactic:** Host non partisan LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit messaging training events for legislative candidates or offer to share resources.
- **Tactic:** Survey Equality South Dakota supporters for their “2022 candidate wishlist” in an effort to better determine what voters want to see in the next legislative body and share that with our base of supporters and endorsed candidates.
- **Tactic:** Work with local and statewide media outlets to share stories of LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit voters and candidates ahead of Election Day 2022.
- **Tactic:** Set in person or virtual meetings with legislators and candidates and constituents.

## Mapping out the work

*This is how we track progress for our communications work and fundraising efforts and assign responsibility across the board and within our staff.*

Strategy	Tactic	Owner	Timeline
<b>Strategy:</b> Embrace earned media as an avenue to position Equality South Dakota	<b>Tactic:</b> Procure a list of LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit	Adam	Nov. 16 - Jan. 11, 2021

as a resource for LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit advocacy and education for all South Dakotans.	friendly reporters and publications.		
--	<b>Tactic:</b> Utilize Twitter to engage with reporters and media figures to increase the reach of our digital messaging and brand.	Adam	Ongoing, particularly during the legislative session.
--	<b>Tactic:</b> Proactively comment on LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit issues, news, and stories as they arise in South Dakota and nationwide.	Adam	Ongoing, particularly during the legislative session.

What could influence our timeline, tactics, and goals?

- COVID-19
- Weather and travel restrictions during the legislative session.
- Board member and volunteer workloads
- Coalition involvement
- Legislative priorities by current crop of lawmakers
- Wifi access of Equality South Dakota supporters
- Timeline of bills being proposed
- The event a bill is hoghoused
- A lack of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation (unlikely, but welcomed!)

### Metrics

How do we measure success or what would define a successful effort?

- Secure the placement of at least 3 op-eds or LTEs by Equality South Dakota members and supporters in local or statewide publications by April 1, 2021.
- Acquire 12 media hits by April 1, 2020 that positively highlight the work of Equality South Dakota.
- Train 5 spokespersons who are key to legislation we’re focusing on with Equality South Dakota or Equality Federation approved messaging and talking points by January 11, 2021. *(Before the start of the Legislative Session)*
  - If the spokespersons are comfortable with it, we should work with them on communications like graphics, videos, and other storytelling elements to draw attention to our legislative work. Similar to this: <https://www.hrc.org/in-your-area/south-dakota>
- Establish a recognizable and informative presence on Instagram by April 1, 2021.

- Create and frequently update a robust list of trusted members of the media by January 11, 2021. *(Before the start of the Legislative Session)*
- Grow Equality South Dakota’s base of supporters (likes/followers) by 5% on Facebook and Twitter by April 1, 2021.

## Communications Calendar

Timeline	Event(s)	Campaign(s)	Vehicle(s)
<i>When is this supposed to happen?</i>	<i>What is happening? What are we focusing on during this time?</i>	<i>Is this legislative, election related, an event or fundraising campaign? Are we working on a campaign with a coalition?</i>	<i>How are we getting the message out there? Email, social media, text?</i>
Nov. 2020	<p><b>Possible rebrand with contract designer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website</li> <li>- Logos</li> <li>- Digital presence and process</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications Coordinator hire and orientation</b></p> <p><b>Legislative session communications preparations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find and train spokespersons</li> <li>- Draft rapid response communication</li> <li>- Choose tactics with Equality Federation</li> <li>- Establish bill tracker page and process</li> </ul>	<p><b>Legislative planning</b></p> <p><b>General branding</b></p> <p><b>Fundraising?</b></p>	<p><b>Social media</b></p> <p><b>Earned media</b></p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <p><b>Texting platforms</b></p> <p><b>Email</b></p> <p><b>Peer to peer marketing</b></p>
Dec. 2020	<p><b>Fundraising for EOY asks?</b></p> <p><b>Finalize legislative session planning and communications</b></p> <p><b>Solidify Equality South Dakota rebrand ahead of SDLeg 2021 if possible</b></p>	<p><b>Fundraising?</b></p> <p><b>Legislative planning</b></p> <p><b>General branding</b></p>	<p><b>Direct mail</b> (for end of year asks?)</p> <p><b>Social media</b></p> <p><b>Earned media</b></p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <p><b>Texting platforms</b></p> <p><b>Email</b></p> <p><b>Peer to peer marketing</b></p>

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