



LOOKOUT

AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

PAGE 2 What is an ambassador?

PAGE 3 Expectations/Contract/Payment PAGE 4-6 How to
conduct an interview PAGE 7-10 Questions and how to
document answers



WHAT IS AN AMBASSADOR?

At LOOKOUT, we do the news a bit differently. In traditional news outlets, reporters are often tasked with finding stories within government agencies and then relaying that information down to the people. It's a successful model, in some respects. Those kinds of stories help keep governments and leaders accountable using verified data from a trusted source. But it doesn't work in all cases.

Unfortunately, when reporting on government accountability, oftentimes the people on the ground are the least often to be heard. Instead, they are used as a sound bite or a quote to simply show that they went into a community to speak with people affected. What they often don't do successfully is report directly from the community and relay that back to the people in power.

That's what we do at LOOKOUT. But we can't be everywhere at once and oftentimes communities that are distrustful of news are less likely to talk to reporters or organizations because of a bad experience or they simply distrust newspapers.

We rely on people like you to talk to other people within your own communities. And we don't expect them all to be the same! Some of you might be religious and attend your place of worship regularly, but don't see your values represented. Some of you are teachers and get to see the effects of local policy directly on your students, but don't get asked how you feel about it. Others of you might live in a suburban community and are queer yourself, but may not see your local community highlighted.

Ambassadors aren't just people who we rely on to get information, but they help foster community in places where we simply can't always reach. In our experience doing this, these kinds of opportunities not only help us in news, but they also create a better sense of trust among people who may not think alike.

You might find that you understand your neighbor better. You may realize that you might not have been listening fully to what your students have been saying. You may even walk away from someone with the realization you're not alone in how you feel. These are all great outcomes and we welcome you to share those kinds of stories with us.



EXPECTATIONS/CONTRACT/PAYMENT So now

that you know what ambassadors do, here's what we expect from you:

As a LOOKOUT Ambassador, you will be paid \$20 an hour, not to exceed 15 hours of work. In that time, we hope you should be able to gather up to 10 people within your community and have deep conversations with them on:

- where they get their news
- what level of trust in news they have
- what they want seen done within their communities

Each interview should take you about 35 to 45 minutes, and you will be provided a list of questions to ask. Some of them are Core Questions that are mandatory for data collection purposes. It's expected that you record your interviews either with a voice recorder or through detailed notes. Ambassadors will be required to fill out a form that documents each of their interviews in great detail.

We recommend having the conversations individually, rather than a group. If in your conversations you'd rather have a focus group meeting instead of one-on-one, please contact Jake Hylton at jake@lookoutphx.org, so we can help facilitate that conversation with you for better record-keeping.

We do not allow anonymous conversations. However, all answers and information gathered will be kept confidential and private. No names, answers, or personal information will be revealed to the public without prior consent from the interviewee via phone or email.

Payment will be delivered in a lump sum, within 14 days after your full submission of interviews and hours worked. Payments can be made either through Zelle, Venmo, Cashapp, or a mailed check.



TIPS ON HOW TO DO AN INTERVIEW

As an ambassador, the main goal is to have conversations with people. That being said, we wanted to give you some basic tips for how to conduct interviews that lead to fruitful answers and not dead-ends. **Remember: these are interpersonal conversations, not journalistic interviews.**

You know better than anyone else how to talk to people who are a part of your community and your inner circle.

TIP 1: Be candid about what you're doing.

One thing that people often get turned off on during interviews is being blindsided by questions. No one likes to think they're speaking to someone about animals and then get asked questions on politics. To avoid that, simply be honest with what you're trying to get. We recommend starting off the conversation by saying something like this:

"I'm working as an ambassador for Arizona's only queer news organization, LOOKOUT. We're trying to know where you get your news, who you trust to get information from, what experiences you have in the community, and what topics you think needs better or less coverage."

TIP 2: Make sure you understand their answers.

Often when people ask questions during a survey or interview, they get the answer and

move on. We're not trying to get sound bites, we're trying to get to know people and their needs and wants. These are informal conversations, so no need to feel like you have to be robotic in your chats. In order to do that, it's important that every answer someone gives, you either follow it up with asking for more information or simply saying in your own words what you think they said.

A few examples from actual conversations we've had, and our follow ups:

1- A conversation with a follow up question asking for more info:

Question: "What do you wish the news would report on more in your community?"

Answer: "I'm concerned about the unhoused population in Phoenix and what they're getting in regard to resources."



FOLLOW UP: "Can you explain a bit more? Do you have an example of what you mean by resources?"

2- A conversation with a follow up question repeating what they said:

Question: "Do you trust any local news outlet to cover queer issues well?" **Answer:** "Not really. Everything is just so negative, I'd prefer to have better news about our community, not just our struggles. I'm tired of seeing news about our bodies being violated."

FOLLOW UP: "So what I'm hearing is that you only want to see good news about the community, and not about the issues?"

FOLLOW UP ANSWER: "No, not really. I want to know about the bad stuff happening. It's important we know about that. But it needs to be balanced out with good news, too."

In the first example, the person interviewed was given an opportunity to explain what kind of resources they'd like to see talked about. In the second example, not only did it clarify what the interviewee meant, but also gave a more nuanced perspective on good vs. bad news.

You can see that in both situations, asking follow ups allows the person to explain in a bit more detail what they mean the first time around. This also allows your questions to be more thoughtful, and lets people know you're listening to what they have to say.

TIP 3: Relate to the person you're speaking with.

The reason why ambassadors are so important is that communities often have a hard time trusting outsiders coming in and telling their stories accurately and in full. You being part of the community have a leg up in that you know what it's like to be part of similar lived experiences.

Children of immigrants have different experiences than children of parents who have never left the state they were born in. Nonbinary people have a different experience than a person who has never met someone queer. It's important that you embrace your experiences and bring that into the conversation.

Don't be afraid to be relatable.



TIP 4: Embrace the tough conversations.

If someone says something that maybe goes against your own values, **don't get into a fight**. That's an easy way to shut someone down. Instead, ask them to explain a bit more. Or feel free to give them an alternative viewpoint and ask them to respond to it.

A simple question such as, "*Have you ever thought about how [insert the counter point here]?*" can go a long way in making people understand a different view or even give a more thoughtful answer.

TIP 5: Remember to enjoy yourself.

This doesn't have to be a situation where it feels hierarchical or haughty. These are people, just like you. So be sure to feel comfortable with them, make sure they feel comfortable with you, and let the time pass organically.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINE:

Ask demographic information last.

Be sure to close out the interview with demographics (pronouns/email/zip code/identifiers). It's best to keep these at the end so people aren't caught off guard at the very top of an interview. Asking the interviewee for their full name and how to spell it

at the very beginning is OK, but leaving the rest of the demographic questions for the end will allow them to feel more comfortable disclosing that information to you.



QUESTIONS TO ASK AND HOW TO RECORD THEM

It's easiest and best to record your interviews through the voice recorder app on your phone or through a microphone of some kind, that way it's easier to transcribe later on. It also keeps you present in the conversation rather than having to look down while writing. However, if you don't have access to a voice recorder application, or you don't have space on your phone to record an interview, or you don't have a microphone device, writing down your notes by hand on a pad of paper works fine. Just be sure to be thorough in recording answers correctly. **Always let people know they are being recorded!**

[The full list of questions and requirements are also in a separate document HERE, please read in full.](#)

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS (ask at least two of these):

- 1- How would you describe your community and the people in it? (Also clarify what their community is: Are they religious? A civil rights activist? Bisexual and conservative?)
- 2- What do you love about your community?
- 3- What are some of the things that excite you about your community?
- 4- Tell me about the first time you came into contact with this community? How did it make you feel?

MANDATORY CORE QUESTIONS:

- 1- Do you feel the news covers your community enough? Why?
- 2- When the news does cover your community, do you think they are fairly or accurately portrayed? Why?
- 3- If there was a problem within your community, such as an attack or even a health emergency, where would you go for information?
- 4- What news outlet specifically do you go to for LGBTQ+ news, locally? If you don't have one, explain why?
- 5- Is there a specific platform you prefer to get your news from? Instagram? Twitter/X? TikTok? Apple News? Newsletter?
- 6- What do you think local news could do better in covering your community? Can you

give an example of what you would like to see more or less of?
7- What news outlet do you generally trust most for local news?



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (ask at least three of these):

1- Have you ever been the subject or do you know someone who has been the subject in a local news story? What was the impact of that, if any?

2- Could you explain to me a time where you saw your community covered in the news and if you either did or didn't like the coverage. Do you remember the outlet? The subject? How did you feel?

3- What do you feel is most frustrating about LGBTQ+ coverage currently? 4- Finish this statement: "In regards to LGBTQ+ coverage, I wish local news would..." 5- What's the one thing reporters or news outlets don't understand about you or your community?

6- What is it like to be in this community right now?

7- Do you see concerns and issues from your own life reflected in the news? 8- What do journalists often get wrong about you or things in your life (interests, demographics, values, beliefs, etc.)?

9- What should journalists AVOID in order to more accurately portray people like you?

10- What should journalists DO to more accurately portray people like you? **Ask**

Questions 9 and 10 back to back.

11- Tell me about an issue in the community that you're passionate about. How do you feel about how local journalists have covered this issue? What—if anything—do you wish journalists were doing differently?

12- What could local news organizations and journalists do to earn more of your trust?

13- List at least three issues/events/solutions you think need to be covered more within your community?

14- List at least two issues/events/solutions that you think are already covered fairly well.

MUST ASK FINAL QUESTIONS:

1- If other news outlets did this process you just went through right now, would it make you trust them more? Do you trust LOOKOUT more for doing it?

2- Is there anything else you'd like to talk about regarding this topic that we have not discussed?

3- Would you like to subscribe to LOOKOUT's free weekly newsletter to stay up to date with local LGBTQ+ issues across Arizona? (get their email and full name if so)



MANDATORY DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS:

- 1- Name of Interviewee
- 2- Email of Interviewee
- 3- Pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, other)
- 4- What part of the community? (Lesbian, bisexual, gay, trans, 2-spirit, intersex, pansexual, questioning, queer, asexual, bisexual, prefer not to answer, ally)
- 5- Gender Identity (Cis-Male, Cis-Female, Nonbinary, Trans-Masc, Trans-Femme, Other)
- 6- Zip code where they live
- 7- Are you okay with LOOKOUT reaching out for clarifying questions?

These questions are for you to fill out once the conversation is over:

***Use the notes section at the end of the ambassador form to answer these questions**

- 1. About how many minutes did this conversation last?**
- 2. How did you reach this person?** Phone call? Zoom? WhatsApp? If the conversation takes place in person, please be COVID-safe.
- 3. How did the conversation go?** Was the person eager to talk or was it hard to get them to open up? What else was memorable about it?
- 4. Notes (optional):** Use this space to take additional notes about what you talked about, or anything else you want our research team to know.



IMPORTANT!

- ▼ **Make a record of each person you spoke to in the Ambassador Recording Form [here](#).**
- ▼ **Payment will not be released unless interviews are submitted through the Ambassador Recording Form.**

▼ Payment will be delivered in a lump sum, within 14 days after your full submission of interviews and hours worked. Payments can be made either through Zelle, Venmo, CashApp or mailed check. You can fill out your total hours worked on this time sheet [here](#). (Make a copy of the time sheet by clicking on File>Make a copy, so you can fill out the document.)

▼ Please send your completed sheet no later than [Jan. 13, 2024](#) to LOOKOUT Executive Director Jake Hylton at jake@lookoutphx.org. Questions can be sent to him via email, as well.

Please fill out the [Ambassador Onboarding Form HERE](#) to tell us a bit more about yourself, if you haven't already done so.