Strategies for Nonpartisan Voter Engagement

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About Us

Nonprofit VOTE is a 501(c)(3) organization founded by a consortium of state nonprofit associations and national nonprofit networks.

Founded in 2005, Nonprofit VOTE partners with America’s nonprofits to help the people they serve participate and vote.

We are the leading source of nonpartisan resources to help nonprofits integrate voter engagement into their ongoing activities and services.
The Landscape

➔ Democracy is distorted by gaps in voter participation
➔ We cannot rely on political actors to ensure a representative democracy
➔ Voter-friendly policies are good but not enough
Lack of Voter Contact Fuels Gaps

Voters who don’t show up at the polls are labeled as “unlikely voters,” and as such, are not contacted by campaigns about voting. Without that critical voter contact, they don’t vote, fueling a negative feedback loop as the cycle repeats itself.
How can organizations like ours make a difference?
11%

When engaged by nonprofits potential voters 11 percentage points more likely to cast a ballot than comparable people not engaged by nonprofits. - 2018

Engaging New Voters Report
Engaging Potential Voters Also...

- Gets the Attention of Candidates
- Builds Community Clout
- Creates Community Advocates
Staying Nonpartisan

In 1954 Congress added a sentence to Treasury regulations requiring charities to remain nonpartisan in elections.
IRS restrictions

501(c)(3) organizations are permitted to conduct certain voter education activities (including the presentation of public forums and the publication of voter education guides) if they are carried out in a non-partisan manner. In addition, section 501(c)(3) organizations may encourage people to participate in the electoral process through voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, conducted in a non-partisan manner.

IRS Factsheet “Election Year Activities and the Prohibition on Political Campaign Intervention for Section 501(c)(3) Organizations”
Nonpartisanship

In 1954 Congress added a sentence to Treasury regulations requiring charities to remain nonpartisan in elections.

➔ Respects the diversity of political opinions
➔ Strengthens our ability to advocate across partisan lines and have access to community leaders and funding sources
➔ Makes us trusted messengers who can engage underserved populations
Engaging Potential Voters

Nonprofits Can
Provide unbiased information about the election:

➔ Dates and deadlines for elections, early voting, registration, and mail ballots
➔ How to find a polling place
➔ What’s on the ballot
➔ Why voting is important
Engaging with Candidates

**Nonprofits Can**
Facilitate relationship building between candidates and your community:

➔ Share policy ideas and educate candidates about your issues

➔ Attend candidate forums and events to ask questions

➔ Host a candidate forum

➔ Create a candidate questionnaire
Nonprofits Can’t

➔ Endorse a candidate
➔ Make campaign contributions
➔ Rate or rank candidates
➔ Let candidates use your facilities or resources, unless they are made equally available to all candidates

If you have a question:

➔ contact Nonprofit VOTE at info@nonprofitvote.org or
➔ Bolder Advocacy at advocacy@afj.org

Or visit online:

➔ Nonprofit VOTE – www.nonprofitvote.org
➔ Bolder Advocacy – www.bolderadvocacy.org
Voter Registration and Education

Check out our “Getting Started at Voter Engagement: A Checklist” fact sheet to get more information.
Engaging New Voters report findings

**Motivation**

➔ Tie it to client empowerment
➔ Align it with your mission
➔ Highlight visibility
➔ Engage stakeholders
➔ Motivate and inspire your staff

**Implementation**

➔ Designate a point person
➔ Make it personal
➔ Rely on your existing services
➔ Use active tabling to boost results
➔ Partner up
➔ Don’t leave out staff

https://www.nonprofitvote.org/engaging_new_voters-2/
Engaging New Voters report findings

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7 things to do from now until Election Day

1. Promote early voting opportunities
2. Distribute sample ballots
3. Mobilize staff and volunteers
4. Educate voters on the voting process
5. Encourage and remind people to vote
6. Advertise Election Day help
7. Plan an Election Day celebration
How can voters cast a ballot by Nov. 3, 2020?
Making a plan to vote

➔ Check voter registration status
➔ Decide how they will cast a ballot
  ◆ By mail,
  ◆ Early in person,
  ◆ On Election Day
➔ Find out what’s on their ballot
➔ Know what they need to vote
Voting by mail

➔ Do they have to apply for a mail-in ballot?
   ◆ Excuse, no excuse, all mail-in

➔ What do they need to know when they fill in the ballot?
   ◆ Envelopes, signatures

➔ How can they turn in their ballot?
   ◆ By mail, ballot drop box, voting site

Voting by Mail Factsheet

Nonprofit VOTE
Voting in person

➔ Where is their polling location?
➔ What do they need to bring to the polls?
  ◆ Face mask, hand sanitizer, identification
➔ Does their employer have a time off to vote policy?
  ◆ Paid, unpaid, no policy
Our resources
Resource library

Nonprofit VOTE has an extensive resource library to help you engage your staff and community in all elections covering a variety of topics.

Nonpartisanship - We can help organizations learn the rules and identify what staff can and cannot do to remain nonpartisan

Voter Engagement - Our resources cover voter registration, education, mobilization, and why voting matters to help organizations navigate election information

Engaging with Candidates - Our resources help nonprofits navigate working with candidates leading up to an election

Advocacy - We can support organizations in talking about issues and advocacy in the lead up to an election

Census 2020 - Our “Nonprofits Count: 2020 Census” resource library has everything nonprofits need to know about engaging their communities in the census

www.nonprofitvote.org
Nonprofits countdown to the election

you can expect to find templates for various platforms, extra resources, graphics, and other tools you need to share information about the election with the people your nonprofit serves.

https://www.nonprofitvote.org/sign-up-for-countdown-to-election-guide/
State-by-state guides

that are **printable** and shareable online.

https://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/
National holidays

October 5-9, National Voter Education Week

October 24, Vote Early Day
Questions?