Voter Registration and Engagement at Your Organization

National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
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.
Agenda – At a Glance

What we will cover:

• Why we can and should engage the people we serve as voters
• How to remain nonpartisan when engaging voters
• Making a voter engagement plan
• BREAK (15 min)
• Talking with voters
• Filling out the voter registration form
• Handling data
Why engage voters?
YOUTH MIDTERM TURNOUT INCREASES SHARPLY IN 2018

VOTER TURNOUT BY YOUTH 18-29 YEARS

- 1994: 26%
- 1998: 22%
- 2002: 22%
- 2006: 26%
- 2010: 24%
- 2014: 20%
- 2018: *31%

Sharp Youth Turnout Increase

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LATINO VOTE DOUBLES IN 2018

LATINO VOTERS 1986 - 2018 SHOWN IN MILLIONS

Historic Increase in Latino Vote

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## Change in Voter Turnout by Characteristic: 2014 to 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>2014 Voter Turnout</th>
<th>2018 Voter Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Hispanic Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black alone, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (any race)</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Campaigns and candidates are not focused on promoting equity in our democracy, they are simply trying to win an election.

As such, they focus their limited time and resources on voters with a history of voting. This fuels a negative feedback loop.
Nonprofits have a fundamentally different goal that transcends any one election cycle – to ensure the communities they serve are heard.

Nonprofits have trust, cultural competency, and deep, long-term roots with the communities served.

Our research shows, it works!
1. Take one minute to select and think about a question below.
2. Turn to a partner and take three minutes to share your answers (it’s okay if you picked different questions!)

- Have you ever missed an election before? What happened or why did you miss it?
- Why do you think some of your clients/community members don’t vote? Are they too busy, don’t understand how the process works, don’t know the importance or impact in on their daily lives, or lack trust in the process?
- For your clients/community that are not eligible to vote, how could having more people in their community voting impact their lives?
1. Find another pair to team up with. Spend 10 minutes discussing the following questions.

- Do we have the trust of our community and clients needed to engage them as voters? If so, how do you know? If not, how could you gain that trust?
- If someone served by your organization asked you why you are talking about voting, what would you tell them?
Staying Nonpartisan
Agenda – Staying Nonpartisan

What we will cover:

• Tax rules on nonpartisanship for 501(c)(3) organizations
• Nonpartisan voter registration
• Talking about candidates
• What staff can do

What we will not cover today:

• Regulations for 501(c)(4) organizations
• Lobbying using the 501(h) test or insubstantial part test
Visit BolderAdvocacy.org for factsheets and training on the above topics
• In depth candidate engagement
A 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization may not intervene in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

-1954 amendment to US Tax Code (The Johnson Amendment)*

* The words “or in opposition to” added by Congress in 1987.
What a charitable organization CANNOT do

What that means:

A 501(c)(3) organization may not:

- Endorse a candidate or support a political party
- Donate money or resources to a candidate or party
- Conduct any partisan election-related activity
501(c)(3) organizations **may conduct nonpartisan voter engagement activities** designed to help the public participate in elections:

- Voter Registration
- Voter Education
- Candidate Engagement
- Get Out The Vote (GOTV)
Common nonpartisan activities

Promote voter registration
- Announce deadlines.
- Provide info on where/when to register

Conduct voter registration
- A table in your lobby, at events.
- Register staff and volunteers.
- Conduct a voter registration drive.

KNOW YOUR STATE’S RULES on party affiliation and closed or open primaries

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Talking about candidates

**Comparing?**
It’s okay to compare candidates in questionnaires and voter guides. Keep your opinion out of it.

**Criticizing?**
Avoid making positive or negative statements about candidates. You may correct a factual misstatement related to your issue.

**Ranking?**
A charity may not publish rankings or ratings of candidates.
What can we say (or not say) about electeds who are also candidates? When do they become 'candidates' vs. electeds or public figures? Especially for incumbents?
What staff can do

The Basic Guideline: Nonprofit staff are free to engage in partisan activities, such as supporting a candidate, on their own time (i.e., outside of work).

What to avoid:

- Using nonprofit resources including your paid time for partisan political purposes
- Being partisan when representing your nonprofit at or outside of work
What Staff Can Do

What:
- Volunteer on campaigns
- Attend political events
- Support your candidate
- Run for office

When:
- Personal time outside work hours
- On vacation
- On personal days
- On unpaid leave
Q: If I am the Executive Director of a nonprofit, should I stop my personal giving and personal support to candidates? If not, how do I handle this in media, social media, etc?
Making the Plan
Preparation for 2020 Elections

1. Recognize your organization’s assets
2. Get leadership buy-in
3. Learn your state’s voter registration deadlines and procedures
4. Set goals and plan activities
Preparing for the 2020 Elections

Organization Assets

- Number of people of voting age interact with each year
  - Staff, participants, volunteers, Board and community members...
- Number of ways your organization reaches people
  - By website, social media, email
  - By in-person interactions
  - At community events
- Staff ‘political nerds’
- Existing and potential partners
Preparing for 2020 Elections

Get Leadership Buy-In

Why?
- Spreads the message voter engagement is important
- Shows promotion of voting supports the mission
- Makes it easier to recruit additional staff to help
- Opens doors to support: communication, $ and partners

What it looks like
- A presentation to your Board
- A staff memo about the importance of voting and review of time off to vote policies
- A letter from the Director on your website/digital channels
- VE is discussed in staff meetings and strategic plans
Registration Drives
If you are submitting voter registration forms on behalf of voters, you need to find out:
• When the deadline is
• How to acquire forms
• Where and when to submit forms
• Who is allowed to help collect forms (do they have to be a resident, registered etc?)

Eligibility and Voting
Clients will have questions! Make sure you know:
• Age of eligibility and other requirements
• Voter ID needed to cast a ballot
• Deadlines and period for absentee ballot requests and early voting
• Where they can figure out their polling place

Learn the dates and rules in your state

Preparing for 2020 Elections

Nonprofit VOTE
Preparing for 2020 Elections

Access the template at https://bit.ly/2Yjw71D
Making the Ask and Filling out the Form
Making the ask

Best practices for talking to voters

• If you’re tabling in your lobby or at a special event, get out from behind that table and invite people to talk to you.
• Talk to everyone you see and always make the ask. If you can, put the clipboard and pen in their hand while you’re talking to them.
• Connect voting to their lives and the issues they care about.
• Have a conversation, rather than talking at people.
Making the ask

Best practices for talking to voters

DON’T ASK  “Are you registered to vote?”

DO ASK:

• “Did you know you have to update your voter registration every time you move? Let’s check your registration to make sure it’s up to date.”

• “Our community needs more voters. Can you help out by updating your registration today?”

• “The deadline for voter registration is approaching. Do you have 2 minutes to make sure you’re registered?”
### MOST COMMON MISTAKES

- Forgetting to check the citizenship and age boxes at the top
- Putting a PO box instead of home address
- Putting the day’s date instead of their DOB
- Forgetting to sign and date the form
Recruit and train staff and volunteers

Provide training for staff and volunteers on:

- Why this is important
- Answering FAQs about voting
- Answering FAQs about the voter registration form
- Making the ask
- Filling out the form