VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

A Nonpartisan Guide for 501(c)3 Nonprofits







A Letter from the Leaders

Nonprofit New York is proud to partner with Community Votes and Nonprofit VOTE to share these critically important resources with nonprofits across the sector.

Nonprofit organizations are integral contributors to the New York area's economy and social safety net. Nonprofits are crucial components in how we build community, create art, and push for change together.

We are also important drivers of our multi-racial democracy. The past year has provided powerful illustrations of why we must not take our democracy for granted. Making sure that all New Yorkers have their voices heard, supporting voter education, and encouraging participation are not partisan or political issues — they are responsibilities.

Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status are prohibited from engaging in any efforts to influence the outcome of an election, but this does not mean that nonprofits need to be passive observers of democracy in action. We need to embrace and expand our role in motivating and facilitating civic engagement. And that is exactly what this toolkit makes possible.

We extend enormous thanks to Nonprofit Vote, Chai Jindasurat, and Celine Yip - for the vision, dedication and hard work clearly reflected in this document.

Signed Meg and Louisa,

Louisa Hackett

Founder & Director, Community Votes

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Meg Barnette

President & CEO, Nonprofit New York

"The toolkit is the ideal solution for a comprehensive list of election information tailored to community-based organizations in New York City and State."

Lena Cohen | Senior Policy Analyst United Neighborhood Houses

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We wish to thank Nonprofit VOTE for their assistance in the creation of this toolkit, Nonprofit New York for their design work, and the Charles H. Revson Foundation for supporting Community Votes' work to incorporate New York State-specific information.

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NONPROFIT NONPARTISAN POWER

The 2022 Voter Engagement Toolkit

[Checklist] Staying Nonpartisan: Permissible Election Activities for 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organizations

The federal tax code contains a single sentence that defines the prohibition of partisan political activities by 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. It states 501(c)(3) organizations are "prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in - or intervening in - any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for elective public office."

When activities are considered partisan political activity depends on the "facts and circumstances" in each situation. What is clear is that there's still a lot a 501(c)(3) can do on a nonpartisan basis to promote voter and civic engagement as part of its charitable and educational mission during the election season.

Permissible Nonpartisan Activities - with common examples

The IRS affirmatively states that 501(c)(3) organizations may conduct voter engagement or connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis. This includes encouraging voter participation, educating voters, and talking to candidates about issues. 501(c)(3) organizations may:

1. Conduct or Promote Voter Registration

- a. Conduct a voter registration drive at your nonprofit or in your community.
- b. Encourage people to register to vote in your communications, on your website or at events.

2. Educate Voters on the Voting Process

- a. Provide information on when and where to vote such as finding their poll location, getting an absentee ballot or contacting their local election office for help.
- b. Remind people of registration or election deadlines and dates.

3. Host a Candidate Forum

- a. Sponsor a candidate forum with other community partners for all the candidates.
- b. Encourage your community to attend your forum or another candidate forum sponsored by a trusted partner.

4. Create a Candidate Questionnaire

- a. Submit questions to all the candidates in a race of interest to your nonprofit.
- b. Use Nonprofit VOTE's fact sheet or Bolder Advocacy's fact sheet on creating a candidate questionnaire for specific guidelines to follow to remain nonpartisan.

5. Distribute Sample Ballots or Nonpartisan Voter Guides

a. Provide nonpartisan information about who and what is on the ballot.

6. Continue Issue Advocacy During an Election

a. Continue your regular advocacy or lobbying activities during the election period, as long it is related to pending legislation on issues you have a history of working on and not timed or otherwise structured to influence how people vote.

7. Support or Oppose a Ballot Measure

Unlike candidates for office, nonprofits may take sides on a ballot measure. IRS rules treat this as a lobbying activity, not electioneering.

- a. Educate the public on your position within your normal lobbying limits.
- b. Have your board take a position for or against a question on the ballot.

Note: If you plan to make a significant investment of staffing and funds on ballot measure advocacy, review the state's campaign spending disclosure laws regarding ballot measures.

8. Encourage People to Vote

- a. Send reminders to your staff, clients and constituents about voting in the next election and why voting is important.
- b. Nonprofits may conduct any type of get out the vote activity to encourage people to vote as long as it's about participating as a voter and not suggesting who to vote for.

Prohibited Partisan Activities

The partisan prohibition means a 501(c)(3) organization or a staff member speaking or acting on behalf of the nonprofit may not:

- Endorse a candidate.
- Make a campaign contribution or expenditure for or against a candidate.
- Rate or rank candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s).
- Let candidates use your facilities or resources, unless they are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value - such as a room commonly used for public events.

The main principle for being nonpartisan is to conduct voter engagement and education in the context of your educational and civic mission and not in a way intended to support or oppose a specific candidate. So if you hold a candidate forum or offer to brief the candidates on issues of importance to your organization, make sure you treat the candidates equally. When you do voter registration or remind people to vote, do it in the context of the importance of voting – encouraging active citizenship and giving voice to the communities you serve.

What does it mean to rank or rate a candidate?

Anything that indicates which candidates you think are better or worse on your issues could be seen as a partisan endorsement. This would include things like giving candidates letter grades (A, B, C, etc.), but even commentary that compares candidates' views to yours is a problem. Take, for example, a voter guide you create to publicize where candidates stand on an issue that also includes your organization's position on the issue. This would tell the voter which candidates you believe gave the "correct" answer. When you circulate or publicize a nonpartisan guide giving candidate positions, keep your opinion out of it. Let voters use the information presented to make their own decisions.

Resources

• Nonprofits, Voting and Elections: A 501(c)(3) Online Guide to Nonpartisan Voter Engagement, located at nonprofitvote.org

• Federal Funds and Voter Registration: for organizations receiving Community Service Block Grants or AmeriCorps/National Service programs, located at nonprofitvote.org

If you have a question, contact Nonprofit VOTE at info@nonprofitvote.org or Bolder Advocacy at advocacy@afj.org. Or visit online:

- Nonprofit VOTE nonprofitvote.org
- Bolder Advocacy bolderadvocacy.org

Source: Nonprofit VOTE

[Checklist] Seven Reasons to Do Voter Registration

1. Get the Attention of Candidates

Communities with high registration and turnout rates are more likely to get attention from candidates and campaigns, including more frequent candidate appearances and campaign contacts (campaign literature, reminders to vote, etc.)

2. Build Community Clout

Office holders pay close attention to who turns out to vote. Communities with high turnout gain increased access to office holders and increased clout.

3. Create Community Advocates

Voters are more likely to become advocates for their community and to participate in the political process in other ways, for example, by volunteering for a political campaign or training to become a poll worker.

4. Build Community Leadership

As communities become mobilized to vote, leaders from within the community emerge, including those who will seek office.

5. Gain Representation that Reflects the Diversity of Your Community

Communities that register and vote are more likely to gain representation that reflects the diversity and interests of their community.

6. Reach Voters Whom No One Else Can

Because of the work you do, you have access to community members whom traditional campaigns are often unable to reach. Furthermore, you've earned your clients' and constituents' trust and respect, giving you the opportunity to reach them in a way that no one else can.

7. Create a Lifelong Voter

A registered voter is a likely voter. Typically, nine out of ten registered voters will turn out to vote in a presidential election. Voting is habit forming. Getting someone registered and helping them turn out to vote in one election dramatically increases the chance that they'll vote again.

Source: Nonprofit VOTE

[Guide] Dos and Don'ts: Federal Funds and Voter Registration

All 501(c)(3) organizations must follow the same IRS rule barring charities from conducting partisan political activities to support or oppose candidates while allowing nonprofits to conduct voter engagement and election activities on a nonpartisan basis. In a few special cases Congress has added stipulations on the use of certain federal funds to restrict voter registration activities. In contrast, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) requires state agencies offering federal assistance like Medicaid or WIC to offer voter registration to those who sign up.

Federal Funds with Voter Registration Restrictions

Community Service Block Grants (CSBG)

Nonprofits who receive Community Service Block Grant funding, like Community Action Agencies:

CANNOT

- Use CSBG funds to pay for staff or materials to conduct voter registration.
- Use CSBG funds to provide rides to the polls.

CAN

- Use non-CSBG funds to do voter registration such as having staff or others not paid by CSBG funds help register voters, so long as it's not identified as a service of the agency. In this case, voter registration should be done outside of service delivery, for example, at a table or local event.
- Use CSBG or other funds to do any other kinds of nonpartisan voter engagement activities to promote voter education and voter participation such as reminding staff and clients about an upcoming election. However, it is recommended that CSBG funds used for nonpartisan election activity be limited and not done in a way to give public perception of the agency as being in any way involved in partisan politics.

Head Start

Head Start has similar restrictions to that of CSBG recipients, except Head Start had language added in 2007 to amend the Head Start Act to affirm a Head Start program's right to have outside groups do nonpartisan voter registration drives at their sites. A Head Start program:

CANNOT

- Use Head Start funds to conduct or have employees conduct voter registration activities.
- Use Head Start funds to provide rides to the polls.

CAN

- Have a nonpartisan organization or non-Head Start personnel do voter registration at Head Start facilities during all hours of operation.
- Do any other type of nonpartisan voter education, such as keeping parents and others informed about how, when, and where to vote.

Do CDBG funds have similar restrictions?

No. Unlike with CSBG funds, there are no restrictions on doing voter registration or any type of nonpartisan activity. A nonprofit funded by CDBG should follow the same rules that apply to any 501(c)(3) organization barring partisan, political activity to support or oppose candidates.

AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

AmeriCorps members and other recipients of CNCS funding are subject to the standard 501(c)(3) prohibition on partisan political activities for or against candidates. Additionally, while charging time to the AmeriCorps program or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program, CNCS supported personnel or service volunteers:

CANNOT

• Do voter registration during work hours or while performing work for the host organization.

CAN

- Make voter registration forms and information available on the premises for clients.
- Conduct any other type of nonpartisan voter education as undertaken by the organization where they are doing service.
- Do political activities in personal time outside of work and when not representing the organization they are assigned to.

Legal Services

Legal Services groups are the most restricted. Legal Service employees and volunteers are generally prohibited by the Legal Services Act (LSA) and related policies from conducting any kind of nonpartisan or partisan political activity or issue advocacy.

Federal Funds with Requirements to Do Voter Registration

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 requires several types of federally supported agencies—such as those that offer public assistance or primarily serve people with disabilities—to proactively offer the people they serve the opportunity to register to vote. These include nonprofit agencies like community health centers or food pantries that sign people up to receive Medicaid, WIC, food stamps and other federally funded public assistance programs.

See Nonprofit VOTE's factsheet on the National Voter Registration Act for more information.

Resources

- CAPLAW, Election Year Refresher for Nonprofit Community Action Agencies
- Legal Information Institute, Prohibited uses of CDBG Funds
- Corporation for National and Community Service, Prohibited Activities
- Legal Services Corporation, Regulations CFR 45 Part 1608
- Nonprofit VOTE, National Voter Registration Act Factsheet
- Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) FAQ

Source: Nonprofit VOTE

[FAQ] HIPAA and Civic Engagement at Health Centers

This fact sheet is provided for guidance only. It is not a legal opinion.

What is HIPAA? HIPAA is the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The primary goal of the law is to make it easier for people to keep health insurance and protect the confidentiality and security of healthcare information. For health centers, protecting patient health information is also a legal requirement under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

What does the Privacy Rule protect? The HIPAA Privacy Rule protects the confidentiality of identifiable health information, including personal and demographic data, that relates to:

- the individual's past, present or future physical or mental health or condition,
- the provision of health care to the individual, or
- the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that identifies the individual or could be reasonably used to identify the individual and their personal information.

What are the HIPAA issues when doing voter registration? Voter registration cards and information are not subject to HIPAA regulations. A center's ability to copy voter registration data to later contact a registered voter is a matter of their state's election law. There is no law or rule in New York State prohibiting photocopying or retaining information from completed registration applications. A voter's date of birth, signature, full or partial Social Security Number and driver's license number should be removed before copying any application.

How does HIPAA affect collecting advocacy or pledge to vote cards? Voter and civic engagement is a voluntary, opt-in activity. Patients voluntarily provide contact information for this purpose. It is okay for health centers to ask patients to fill out a pledge to vote or advocacy card and to track the data for follow up and program evaluation. It's a good policy to restrict what staff have access to the list. Please see the 2nd bullet below regarding sharing of the list with a civic engagement partner.

How does HIPAA apply to creating a civic engagement database used for advocacy, education or program evaluation? HIPAA prohibits the use of your electronic health records (EHR) or other patient database for activity related to your civic engagement program. You should not use patient data from the patient's record to fill out voter registration forms or add to your database. Only use information you received directly from the patient on their voter registration form, voter pledge or advocacy card or other civic activity.

A civic engagement database may include staff, family, community members as well as patients.

- Don't include a special field in your database that identifies the individual as a patient.
- You may share contact information with another civic partner to, for example, invite people to a forum or do nonpartisan voter education. If you do, you should request they not identify the list with your health center.
- Your health center may also use a civic engagement list to evaluate the success of your outreach program.

Please contact info@nonprofitvote.org for more information and guidance. Health care providers can contact vot-er.org to get a free healthy democracy toolkit to help their patients register to vote.

Source: Nonprofit VOTE

[FAQ] Nonprofits and Ballot Measures

Ballot measures ask voters to vote on laws, bonding issues, or constitutional amendments. New York State allows ballot questions or propositions to be put before the voters by legislative action.

Can a nonprofit take a position for or against a ballot measure?

Yes. Activity on ballot measures is lobbying - not electioneering. Ballot measure advocacy is an attempt to influence the passage or defeat of a law or constitutional amendment – not the election or defeat of a candidate. 501(c)(3) organizations are free to take sides on ballot measures as a lobbying activity, subject to normal limits on lobbying. If an organization is communicating with the general public about a ballot measure, it is considered Direct Lobbying (rather than Grassroots Lobbying) because the organization is speaking directly to the decision makers. This is important because there are different limits on the two types of lobbying, with grassroots lobbying being more restricted than direct lobbying. Ballot measure advocacy is more a first amendment right to advocate on issues than a matter of tax law. Any organization or individual is free to express their opinion for or against a proposed law or constitutional amendment.

What are common activities for nonprofits on ballot measures?

Your organization can engage in a range of activities related to ballot measures, such as: making an endorsement, communicating your position to the public, organizing volunteers to work on passage or defeat of an initiative, or hosting an educational forum or event. You can also distribute neutral educational materials designed to inform the public about both sides of the question.

How much can a 501(c)(3) nonprofit spend on lobbying?

Your spending limits depend on which federal test your nonprofit chooses to measure its lobbying and how much you anticipate to spend on lobbying in one year

- 1. Under federal law, if your nonprofit has elected to measure its lobbying under the 501(h) expenditure test, you will have clearer guidance and can do more advocacy. Under this test, you can spend as much as 20% of your annual budget on lobbying, including influencing ballot questions or legislation. Filing the 501(h) form is generally recommended for nonprofits that do any significant amount of lobbying and advocacy.
- 2. If your 501(c)(3) has not filed the 501(h) form, your lobbying falls under the "insubstantial part test." In this case, you may only spend an "insubstantial" amount of money on lobbying efforts. "Insubstantial" is generally assumed to be 3-5% of annual spending.¹
- 3. In New York State, if a 501(c)(3) expects to spend \$5,000 or more lobbying they must register with the Joint Commission on Public Ethics.²
- 4. In New York City, if a 501(c)(3) expects to spend \$5,000 or more lobbying on New York City legislation they must register with the City Clerk Lobbying Bureau.³

Are there any spending limits for ballot measure advocacy?

There are no limits on spending on ballot measures, beyond the limits on lobbying discussed above. Some states require you to file an expenditure report if you devote substantial funds to ballot measure

¹ Lobbying Under the Insubstantial Part Test, Bolder Advocacy.

² For more information, please see the Lawyers Alliance for New York's <u>Advocacy</u> resources.

³ See footnote 2.

advocacy as, for example, a primary sponsor of a ballot measure or an active partner. Contact your state's campaign finance office for more information.

Staff Activity

There are no limitations to what nonprofit staff can do regarding ballot initiatives, except those set forth by the nonprofit itself as a matter of employee policy. As a matter of good policy, the decision to endorse or oppose a ballot measure should be made by the organization's Board of Directors.

Resources

- Bolder Advocacy, 501(c)(3) Public Charities and Ballot Measures: An online toolkit
- National Council of Nonprofits, <u>A Guide to taking the 501h-election</u>
- National Council of Nonprofits, *The Benefits-of-filing-the-501h-election*
- Bolder Advocacy, Lobbying Under the Insubstantial Part Test

Source: Nonprofit VOTE

Nonpartisan Education Resources

Websites

ballotpedia.org

Information about candidates, politicians and government institutions

congress.gov

Voting records of a U.S. Senator or Representative

nyassembly.gov/mem

List of legislation sponsored or co-sponsored by a NY State Assembly member

nysenate.gov/senators

List of legislation sponsored or co-sponsored by a NY State Senate member

vote411.org

Personalized voting information

New York Organizations

Common Cause New York

Campaigns to make voting easier and holding government accountable

COMMUNITY Votes

Supports the integration of voter engagement within existing nonprofit programs

Lawyers Alliance of New York

Helps organizations understand laws on lobbying and political activity

Let New York Vote Coalition

Working to make registering and voting more accessible and equitable

New York City Campaign Finance Board - NYC Votes

Promotes civic engagement through community outreach, voter registration and educational resources

New York Civic Engagement Table

Supports partner organizations' voter engagement activities

New York State League of Women Voters

Source of nonpartisan election information

New York City League of Women Voters

Provides guides to government and legislators representing New York residents

National Organizations

Ballot Ready

Resources to inform and turn out voters

Bolder Advocacy

Resources and trainings to help nonprofits advocate

Fair Vote

Promotes electoral reforms, including Ranked Choice Voting

Nonprofit VOTE

Provides resources and training on nonpartisan voter and civic engagement

RESOURCES FOR VOTERS

The 2022 Voter Engagement Toolkit

[Pocket Guide] New York State Voting Facts

This fact sheet summarizes the most important facts that voters in New York should know. Click here to view and/or download this file as a PDF.

Preview of Document





VOTER FAQS:

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW TO BE REGISTERED TO VOTE?

- How Old Do I Need to Be? Turn 18 by the election in which you want to vote, or pre-register at 16 or 17
- Can I Register Online? Yes, with NYS driver license or non-driver ID card
- I Have a Felony Record, Can I Still Register? Yes, must not be on parole for a felony conviction (unless parole pardoned or restored rights of citizenship)
- I Am Homeless, How Do I Register? List the address of the homeless shelter or drop-in center as your residential address
- Where Do I Register in Person? Your county board of elections or at any New York State Agency-Based voter registration center.
- Is there a residency requirement? Yes, you must be a resident of the county, city, or village for at least 30 days prior to the election

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT VOTING IN-PERSON?

- Do I Need ID to Vote? No, unless you did not prove your identification while registering to vote
- When Can I Vote? See the Important Dates.
- Where Can I Find My Polling Place? See the State Voter Portal.
- I Have a Disability, Are Polling Places Accessible to Me? Yes, polling places are accessible

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT VOTING BY MAIL?

- Who Can Vote By Mail? Any registered voter who will be absent from their county on Election day or are currently ill or disabled (including COVID-19)
- How Do I Apply for a Vote By Mail Ballot? Download or pick up the application at the Board of Elections offices and return it by mail or in person
- How Do I Return My Ballot? By mail (postage paid) or in-person drop off
- When is My Ballot Due? Postmark no later than election day or in-person on election day by 9 pm



PRIMARIES

Early Voting Period: Jun 18 - 26

Election date: Jun 28

Registration deadline: Jun 3

Vote by Mail request deadline: Jun 13

GENERAL ELECTION

Early Voting Period: Oct 29 - Nov 6 Election date: Nov 8

Registration deadline: Oct 14

Vote by Mail request deadline: Oct 24



Register to Vote Online:

https://www.ny.gov/services/register-vote

State Voter Portal:

voterlookup.elections.nv.gov

Additional Info:

Social distancing and mask wearing is encouraged

[Guide] Timeline: New York State Election Timeline

Click here to view and/or download this file as a PDF.

Preview of Document

2022 NEW YORK STATE ELECTION TIMELINE

Primary Election

- Register to Vote by June 3
- Request to Vote by Mail by June 13
- Vote Early: June 18 June 26
- Election Day & Return Mail Ballot: June 28

General Election

- Register to Vote by October 14
- Request to Vote by Mail by October 28
- Vote Early: October 29 November 6
- Election Day & Return Mail Ballot: November 8

[FAQ] Researching Candidates

New York State has an election every year! Unlike Presidential elections, there is less news about state and local elections.

How do I find out what offices I will be voting for this year?

Enter your address on these on-line resources.

Ballotready.org | New York State **Voting.nyc** | New York City Only

These sites will also have nonpartisan information about candidates closer to election day.

How do I research candidates?

- Check out their campaign's Websites, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and/or YouTube sites.
- Visit ballotpedia.org to get information about elected officials and candidates
- Find news from local newspapers, radio and television.
- Ask your neighbors, coworkers, friends and family.

[FAQ] Becoming a Poll Worker

When are poll workers needed?

During early voting, June 18 to June 26, and Primary Election Day, June 28. During early voting, October 29 to November 6, and General Election Day, November 8.

Who is eligible to be a poll worker?

Poll workers must be New York State registered voters.

- Students 17 years old are eligible if their school participates in a qualifying program.
- Interpreters do not need to be registered voters.
- All poll workers are paid for training and each day they work.

People living in New York City can get an application by visiting **vote.nyc** People living outside of New York City can get an application by visiting elections.nv.gov

What do poll workers do?

- 1. Prepare the polling place for voting
- 2. Set up the voting equipment
- 3. Sign-in and process voters
- 4. Enforce social distancing
- 5. Demonstrate voting procedures to the voters
- 6. Sanitize voting equipment
- 7. Close the polling place
- 8. Canvass and report the results
- 9. Assist voter if requested

Are poll workers paid?

Yes, poll workers get paid for training and each as they work.

How can someone become a poll worker?

An application is required.

- People living in New York City can get an application by visiting vote.nyc
- People living outside New York City can get an application by visiting elections.ny.gov

Sources: New York State and New York City Board of Elections

Shareable Social Media Graphics

Social media is an effective way to garner interest and attention, particularly now with less in-person events. Nonprofits can use social media to inform their network and clients of important information on voting.

These graphics are designed so people can check their registration status, register to vote, request to vote by mail and find their polling site.

Tips and Tricks

- Remember, graphics should be attention-grabbing with short, punchy text. Use colors and pictures to grab the attention of viewers!
- Since links can not be embedded in Instagram posts, this take-action-vote link can be included to provide easy access to all the websites mentioned in the graphics.
- Include a caption alongside each of the graphics such as "Visit this link!"

Use the following sample social media graphics as they are or as inspiration for your own graphics! To download these graphics as PNG files, click here.

Preview Social Media Graphics





RESOURCES FOR STAFF

The 2022 Voter Engagement Toolkit

[FAQ] New York State Voter Registration

Who is eligible to register to vote?

- United States Citizens
- Adults 18 years old by election day
- Residents of NY for at least 30 days before election
- Not claim the right to vote elsewhere
- Not be in prison or on parole for a felony conviction (unless received a pardon by the Governor)

NOTE: People sixteen and seventeen may preregister to vote. They will automatically be registered upon reaching the age of eligibility.

Can a person with a criminal record register to vote?

YES | In New York State, someone **CAN VOTE** if they are:

- Convicted of a misdemeanor or violation
- Incarcerated for a misdemeanor (able to vote by absentee ballot)
- Convicted of a felony by a state or federal court and on probation
- On parole AND pardoned by the Governor

NO | In New York State, someone **CANNOT VOTE** if they are:

- Convicted of a felony by a state or federal court and currently incarcerated
- Convicted of a felony by a state or federal court, on parole and not pardoned by the Governor

Can a student in New York State register to vote in New York?

YES | Students from out of state can register to vote in New York.

New York State students that have a residence in another state must fill out a registration form indicating New York State residency. The New York State registration will cancel out the registration in the other state.

Can a person without a home register to vote?

YES | A homeless person has the right to vote.

On the voter registration form, use the location/address that is considered home, such as the address or cross street where they sleep. For the mailing address, use the address of a shelter or P.O. box.

Can a person use a PO mailbox as their permanent address on the voter registration form?

NO A voter registration form will not be processed if a P.O. box is the permanent address. A physical address is needed to determine the political district a person votes in. There is a section on the form to put in a mailing address. The mailing address can be a P.O. box.

What are the voter registration deadlines for 2022?

PRIMARY ELECTION DATE - June 28, 2022

- February 14, 2022 is the last day to change party affiliation and be able to vote in the primary
- June 3, 2022 is the last day to postmark a voter registration application
- June 3, 2022 is the last day to submit an application in person

GENERAL ELECTION - November 8, 2022

- October 14, 2022 is the last day to post mark a voter registration application
- October 14, 2022 is the last day to submit an application in person

Does a person have to register every year?

NO | Once a person registers, they are permanently registered unless:

- Their **name changed** since the last election
- They have not voted for 5 years
- They want to change party affiliation

NOTE: February 14, 2022 is the deadline to change a party affiliation and be able to vote in the June 28, 2022 primary.

Does a person have to re-register if they move?

NO | The registration of voters who move within New York State and fill out a change of address with the United States Postal Service will automatically be updated.

YES | If a person moves out of state they will need to register to vote in that state.

Are registered voters more likely to be called for jury duty?

Possibly, but people are called who are not registered. Jurors are drawn from lists of state taxpayers and licensed drivers as well as from voter registration rolls.

How can a person find out if they are registered to vote?

- Call the Board of Elections 1-866-868-3692
- Check On-Line: voterlookup.elections.ny.gov

How does a person register to vote?

On-line via the New York Department of Motor Vehicles at dmv.ny.gov Requires drivers license or government issued identification

By mail

Download a form at the New York State or New York State or City Board of Elections Requires printer, envelope and stamps

Pick up a form at the Library, Post Office or Department of Motor Vehicles Requires envelope and stamps

By mail via Third Party Website at register2vote.org Requires

- 1. Signing the registration form sent to your address.
- 2. Mailing the form back to the Board of Elections in the stamped envelope.

Someone registered to vote, but never received anything. What do they do?

If they registered correctly, check with the New York Board of Elections by calling, visiting in person, or going online and using the voter lookup tool: voterlookup.elections.nv.gov

What happens if a person doesn't pick a political party?

- They will not be allowed to vote in the primary.
- New York State has closed primaries.
- Only party members are allowed to vote in the primary that selects the party's candidates for the general election.

NOTE: February 14, 2022 is the deadline to change a party affiliation and be able to vote in the June 28, 2022 primary.

Where can someone get nonpartisan information about the election and candidates?

- Ballotpedia: Information about Elections, Elected Officials and Candidates: ballotpedia.org
- League of Women Voters Candidate Guide: vote411.org
- New York City Campaign Finance Board Candidate Guide: nyccfb.info

Source: New York State Board of Elections. The information contained herein is current as of 2/15/22. The best way to get current information is to check with the New York State Board of Elections office.

[FAQ] New York State Elections

What is the difference between a primary and general election?

Primary elections are like play off games in sports where the winners (best candidates) go on to compete in the championship game (the general election). Candidates from the same political party compete in a primary election in order to determine who will represent the party in the general election.

General elections are open to all registered voters. Eligibility to vote in a primary is determined by each state. New York has closed primaries; meaning only voters registered in a political party are eligible to vote in that party's primary election.

What is a closed primary?

In a closed primary, only registered members of a political party can vote in that party's primary. For example, only voters registered in the Republican Party are allowed to vote in the Republican primary election and only registered Democrats are eligible to vote in the Democratic primary.

When are the 2022 elections?

The Primary Election is June 28, 2022.

- People can also vote early from June 18, 2022 June 26, 2022
- June 3, 2022 is the last day register to vote (post mark)
- June 3, 2022 is the last day to register to vote in person

The General Election is November 8, 2022

- People can also vote early from October 29 Nov 6, 2022
- October 14, 2022 is the last day to register to vote (post mark)
- October 14, 2022 is the last day to register in person

How does a person find out where to vote?

New York State and City residents can visit: voterlookup.elections.ny.gov New York City residents can visit: findmypollsite.vote.nyc

Is identification required before voting in person?

NO, New York State does not require voters to present identification before voting.

BUT, if a voter did not fill in the last 4 digits of their social security or driver's license number on the voter registration form, identification must be provided at the polling place when voting for the first time.

Voters can present the following forms of identification:

- A current, valid photo ID, including but not limited to a drivers' license or a DMV-issued non-driver photo ID
- A current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document with the voter's name and address.

Is voting by mail an option?

YES | All registered voters can request an absentee ballot and vote by mail. An excuse is required, such as being absent from the country, having a disability or a temporary illness such as the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

To request an absentee ballot visit: elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee New York City voters can visit: vote.nvc/page/absentee-voting-0 June 13, 2022 is the deadline to request a ballot to vote by mail in the primary election. October 28, 2022 is the deadline to request a ballot to vote by mail in the general election.

Can the status of a mail-in ballot be checked?

To track your New York State ballot visit: nysballot.elections.ny.gov To track your New York City ballot visit: nycabsentee.com/tracking

What if a person's name is not on the voter roll at the polling site?

The polling site is based on a person's address. If they are at the correct polling site, they have the right to ask and vote by an affidavit ballot. The affidavit ballot will be counted after election officials confirm that you are registered to vote.

What if a voter has a disability?

All polling sites in New York must be compliant with the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA). All polling sites must have a Ballot Marking Device (BMD). A voter with sight or physical restrictions can use the BMD machines. There are certified inspectors at each location to assist a voter with using the BMDs.

Residents living outside New York City can apply through the NYS Board of Elections website (search: become a poll worker).

What if a voter encounters a problem voting on Election Day?

The New York Attorney General runs an Election Protection Hotline: 1-800-771-7755

Sources: New York State and New York City Board of Elections. The information contained herein is current as of 2/15/22. The best way to get current information is to check with the New York State Board of Elections office.

[Guide] Planning and Running a Voter Registration Drive

Along with the voter registration drive checklist, this tool provides ideas on when, where and how to get your staff and volunteers registered to vote.

Timing: When to do it

We recommend doing it in one week before the voter registration deadlines. Remember there are deadlines for the Primary election and deadlines for the General Election. The week of National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) happens on the fourth Tuesday of September. This holiday takes place in advance of states' voter registration deadlines for the fall elections. Set up a table in a central location or share information for the duration of the week and plan a special event on NVRD itself. Alternatively, you may prefer to do it at a time when more volunteers are around or around a major staff event.

Staffing: Who coordinates and who does the voter registration

Every voter registration drive needs a coordinator or staff team to run the activity. It could be a program or policy staff person, or someone who ordinarily organizes staff activities. For staff and volunteers doing voter registration, it helps to have someone who is naturally outgoing and is passionate about voting.

Larger nonprofits may want to make each of their department heads responsible to make sure staff gets registered, like issuing a reminder during a weekly staff meeting.

Kick Off: Inform staff about the drive and encourage them to participate

A voter registration drive can start with an email to staff from the CEO/Executive Director or senior staff two to three weeks before the drive begins. It can also be an announcement at an all staff meeting. All staff need to know this is an important commitment of the organization.

Suggested Tactics: Ideas to get started

Virtual Voter Registration Week

Dedicate a week to sharing information about voter registration digitally both internally inside your office and on social media. This can look like sharing information about how to register to vote or check your registration in staff emails or hosting a webinar for staff on how they can register and vote with an expert.

Door knock - or "cube knock" - your office (even virtually)

Door knocking is a campaign staple. Try it in your office. If you are working remotely, create an individual check-in plan to serve as a "door knock." Have a few volunteers divvy up the work, or have one person do it. Find someone who is passionate about voting and to whom you just

can't say "no" or "I don't have time" to take it on.

A staff member with ACCESS in Dearborn, MI takes his cube-knocking duties seriously and makes the rounds every election cycle. Part of his role with ACCESS also includes raising money for scholarship funds for the organization, and reports that staff know that "when he comes knocking, he's either asking people to register to vote or to donate to the organization's scholarship fund." He reports it's much easier to get to yes for voter registration.

A Table or Booth

Set up a table or booth for a week during work hours and in an area convenient for staff and volunteers. One or two people may primarily staff the table, but consider rotating in other staff for short shifts. Make the booth festive and appealing. Use red, white and blue balloons, bunting or other inexpensive decorations. Provide treats or giveaways to make the booth more inviting.

Staff meetings

Some nonprofits can register staff to vote in a regular staff meeting. Be prepared with links, forms and information about voting in your state. Make sure to ask staff who say they're registered if they've moved recently or changed their name, and may need to update their registration.

Join the party

Join the party! We won't say which political party but we will give you pizza and cake to make it inviting to register. Virtual party? We can provide gift cards for food. At a "civic engagement" party no one attending has to register but it's a good time to offer it.

Partnership Health Center in Missoula, MT hosted a National Voter Registration Day VRD party to celebrate the holiday for democracy, complete with an American flag shaped cake for their staff and volunteers.

Department competition

Create a little competition between departments. Who can get to 100% of eligible staff registered first or the most total registrations turned in.

For your volunteers

Voter registration is a perfect activity to integrate into volunteer orientation to show your organization's commitment to civic participation and active citizenship. Or include volunteers in any of the above activities.

For those who are already registered

Some staff and volunteers are likely already registered. You can have information for them about requesting a mail-in ballot or pledge to vote cards that can be sent to them closer to the election as a reminder to vote.

Promotion: Create visibility for the drive

- Provide email and social media reminders.
- Place promotional posters in high-traffic areas, such as the main lobby, elevators and employee break rooms.
- Take pictures and post them in your internal communications.

Recognition: Give props to those who led the effort.

Hand out awards or give recognition to coordinators and registrars in a staff meeting or newsletter. A personal note of thanks is always welcome!

The YWCA USA learned in 2014 that local affiliates are motivated by opportunities for recognition across their network. They made sure the actions of their participating local affiliates were publicly recognized.

Source: Nonprofit VOTE

[Template] Sample Emails: Reminders to Register to Vote and Vote

An email from leadership, such as an Executive Director, board member, or CEO sends an important message to staff about how much your nonprofit values voting and civic participation. It encourages staff to make their voice heard and provides helpful election information.

Timing

Send an initial email 2-3 weeks in advance of the Voter Registration Deadline and Election Day. You can follow that email up with a reminder the day before the deadline. The samples can be modified for primary or local elections by changing the date.

Content

Typical content will include a short reason why voting is important and information and links to websites that help people register to vote, and vote such as a reminder of your "time off to vote" policy or information about casting your ballot on or in advance of Election Day. Include this take action-vote <u>link</u> to make it easy for people to show up on election day.

Voter Registration Ask – Sample Email

Subject Line

Register to Vote for the Upcoming Election

Email Draft

Dear Colleagues,

We at Organization Name are asking all our staff and volunteers who are eligible to register to vote. If you're already registered, now is the time to make sure your voter registration is up-to-date at your current address. Our goal is to have 100% of eligible staff registered by the week of [Insert Date]. Will you help us reach that goal?

When we ask elected officials to support our issues and funding for services like ours, having our staff, board, and volunteers be registered voters makes our voice that much stronger. [Insert org. specific or election-specific information].

Option 1: Direct

[Employee Name] will be coming around the office with registration forms asking you if you need to register or update your registration [Insert timeframe]. They can help you fill it out and return it.

Option 2: Indirect

You can learn more about registering and voting here.

We appreciate your service to [Organization Name]. Thank you for being a registered voter!

Sincerely,

[Insert sender]

Get Out the Vote Ask - Sample Email

Sample #1: Provide a Reminder to Vote and Helpful Voting Information

Subject line - Make Your Voice Heard Tuesday, November [X] – helpful voting information

Dear Colleagues,

As you are likely aware, there is an important election Tuesday, (Insert Date) for [Insert offices and ballot measure]. We depend on elected officials to support our issues, services, and funding. It makes a difference if we can say our staff and community are voting.

There are important issues at stake such [Insert One or Two]. We encourage you to cast your ballot. Polls are open [Insert Time and Date]. If you need help finding your poll, check with the New York State Board of Elections.

If you want to vote by mail, request a ballot from the New York State Board of Elections before [Insert Date].

Find information about where, when, and how you can vote <u>here</u>. Thanks again for your service to Our nonprofit/local community and for being a voter!

Should you have any questions, contact - Insert name and email of someone on staff who can help folks navigate voting concerns].

Signed,

[Insert name of sender]

Sample #2: Reminder of Your Policy on Time Off to Vote

Subject line: Election Day is [Insert date] – Take Time to Vote on Election Day

There is an important election Tuesday, [Insert Date] for [Insert Offices/Ballot Measure]. We encourage all staff who are eligible to vote to cast their ballot.

Add reason - for example

- Voting creates stronger communities for us, our members, our clients, and everyone that is a part of communities we live in.
- As civically engaged leaders in our community, we can set a good example by voting.

Here is a reminder of our time off to vote policy and helpful voting information.

You are allowed to take up to two hours off to vote on Election Day without loss of pay. We recommend taking time off at the beginning or end of your regular shift, whichever allows for more free time to vote. We also acknowledge that sometimes lines at the poll can be unpredictable. Should it take you longer to cast your ballot, please let your supervisor know.

You can check your registration status and find your polling site here.

If you experience issues at the polls, please call the election protection hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE.

Thanks again for your service to [our nonprofit/local community] and for being a voter.

Signed,

[Insert Name of Sender]

Source: Nonprofit VOTE and Community Votes

[Template] Pledge to Vote

Voter research shows that asking people to fill out a pledge to vote card increases voter turnout. Pledge cards have dual purposes. First, they communicate important election information, such as deadlines to register to vote and apply for a vote by mail ballot, as well as reminding people of election dates. Second, they capture a person's contact information so they can be sent reminders to vote.

Below are templates for a virtual and paper "I Pledge to Vote" card. The virtual pledge card can be set up using google forms or form site.

- Click here to view and/or download a paper pledge card template as a Word document
- Click here to view a digital pledge card for the June primary election
- Click <u>here</u> to view a digital pledge card for the November general election

Preview Pledge Card

PRIMARY ELECTION DEADLINES I PLEDGE Register to Vote by June 3 Apply to Vote by Mail by June 13 TO VOTE Early Voting: June 18 - 26 Election Day: June 28 Return Mail Ballot: June 28 IN 2022 GENERAL ELECTION DEADLINES Register to Vote by Oct 14 I want to stay informed about (INSERT Apply to Vote by Mail by Oct 28 ORG NAME) Early Voting: Oct 29 - Nov 6 I want to be sent reminders about the Election Day: Nov 8 election Return Mail Ballot: Nov 8 Help reduce inequities and Visit: vote.nyc to register to vote and bring resources to our request a mail-in ballot community Name ______ Visit: voterlookup.elections.ny.gov to Address_____ check your registration status and find your polling place City State Our organization is not affiliated with any political party or candidate. Your information will never be sold to a third party.

[Training] Nonprofit New York Elections

Help your community learn about the election! This training includes activities on increasing voter turnout, as well as informing voters about relevant information on how, when, and why they should vote.

Click here to view and/or download the full slide deck as a PowerPoint file.

Slide Previews

New York Nonprofit 2022 Elections Training

Part One: Voting Matters Part Two: Nonpartisan Power

Part Three: New York State Voting Rules

Part Four: Get-out-the-Vote Tips

Being Nonpartisan – The One Rule

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

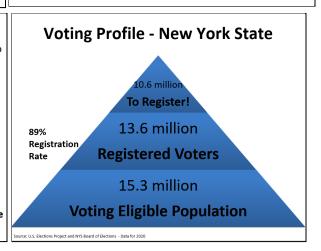
support or oppose a candidate for public office or a political party

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

- · Make an endorsement
- · Donate money or resources

SOME ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Email from the Executive Director about deadlines & links to register to vote
- Convene group to email/text their colleagues, friends and neighbors
- Table during work hours in an area convenient for staff
- Post information on website
- Promote voting via social media
- Make announcements at staff and community meetings
- Place posters in high-traffic areas
- Take pictures and post them internally
- Organize a civic engagement party and invite people to register to vote and/or request a mail in ballot
- Create a goal to get 100% of eligible staff registered to vote
- Create a goal to get 100% of eligible staff pledged to vote

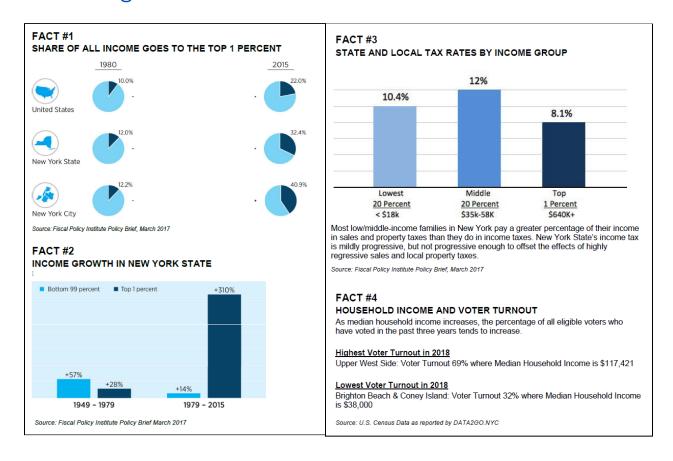


[Discussion Guide] Income and Taxes

This discussion guide outlines a series of activities to explain the income disparity among those who vote in New York City and the U.S.

Click **here** to view and/or download this discussion guide as a PDF.

Preview Pages

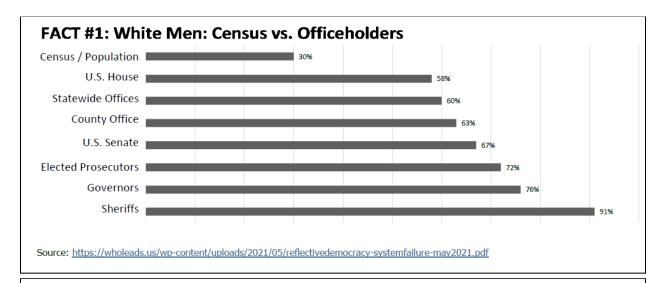


[Discussion Guide] Demographics and Political Representation

This discussion guide outlines a series of activities to explain the demographics among those who are elected in the U.S.

Click **here** to view and/or download this discussion guide as a PDF.

Preview Pages



FACT #2: DEMOGRAPHICS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS AND NEW YORK STATE **POPULATION**

New York has 213 legislators: 163 Senators and 150 Assembly Members. The data below does not include legislators who were newly elected in 2020 and took office in 2021.

NYS Elected Officials	68%	32%	2%	9%	15%	68%
NYS Population	49%	51%	9%	19%	18%	70%
	Male	Female	Asian/Pacific Islander	Latino	Black	White

https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/state-legislator-demographics.aspx

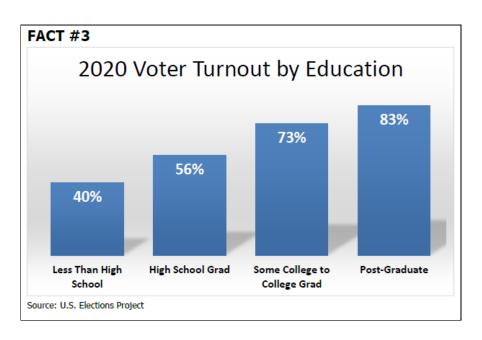
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/NY

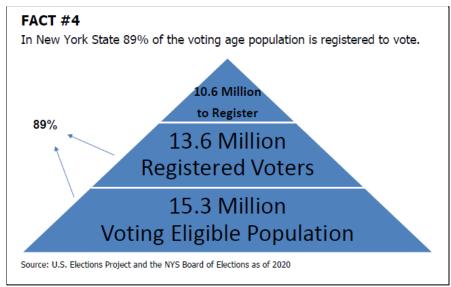
[Discussion Guide] Voter Registration and Turnout

This discussion guide outlines a series of activities to explain the voter registration vs voter turnout among those who vote in the U.S.

Click **here** to view and/or download this discussion guide as a PDF.

Preview Pages





About the Authors

Nonprofit New York's mission is to strengthen and unite New York's nonprofits. Engaging with over 4,000 nonprofits in the New York City area, we're building a thriving community of extraordinary nonprofits - a relentless, collective force for good.

Looking for ways to improve your management practices? Check out our upcoming trainings and other learning opportunities!

Community Votes builds the capacity of community-based social service agencies in New York City to take up nonpartisan voter mobilization so more unrepresented citizens participate in our democracy. Visit our website for more information!

Nonprofit VOTE works to build lasting capacity for nonpartisan voter engagement and a robust civic voice throughout the nonprofit sector. Visit our website to learn more about our webinars, trainings, toolkits, and on-line resources.

Have questions on this toolkit? Contact Louisa Hackett (lhackett@communityvotes.org), founder of Community Votes.