



Harnessing the Power of the Nonprofit Vote

Planning and Running Your Staff and Volunteer Voter Registration Activity



Along with our 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 – specifically the week of National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) which happens on the fourth Tuesday of September. That's September 22nd this year (2015). NVRD takes place in advance of states' voter registration deadlines for the fall elections. Set up a table in a central location 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 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 drive should start with an email to staff from the CEO/Executive Director or senior staff two to three weeks before the drive begins. Or it can be an



announcement at an all staff meeting. All staff need to know this is an important commitment of the organization.

The toolkit has an email outline and a sample email.

SUGGESTED TACTICS: Ideas to get started

Door knock — or “cube knock” — your office

Door knocking is a campaign staple. Try it in your office. Have a few volunteers divide and conquer, 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 nonpartisan, national campaign to encourage every eligible nonprofit staff and volunteer to register and vote.

A project of Independent Sector, National Council of Nonprofits, Nonprofit VOTE and the United Way Worldwide

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A staff member with ACCESS social services in Dearborn, MI takes his cube-knocking duties seriously and makes the rounds every election cycle. 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 week during hours and in an area convenient for staff and volunteers. While one or two people may primarily staff the table, 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. Use our "Active Tabling" resource to learn more about effective tabling.

Staff meetings

Some nonprofits can register staff to vote in a regular staff meeting. Be prepared with 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. 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.

Send us your ideas here.

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.
- ★ Place a reminder in paycheck envelopes that are distributed just before the week of the drive.
- ★ 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.



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