CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CALCASA
CALIFORNIA COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Voter Engagement Guide

November 2016

Every vote matters! Voting is an important way to make your voice heard on the issues facing our state. There are many important issues at the national, state and local level and voting sends a strong message about the people who should represent you and your community.

The representatives you elect help determine the future of policies and funding for domestic and sexual violence services at the national, state and local level, and it's critical that you and your community register and vote on November 8th.

You and your community have the power to make change, educate yourselves and others about the issues you care about and elect the representatives that would best represent your community. You can impact changes in your community and support a positive future.

Voter Engagement As a Non-Profit and in Your Community

You have the power to participate in voter engagement activities including registering people to vote, providing information about the voting process like dates and deadlines and also letting people know about candidate forms and debates. As a trusted community organization interacting with individuals every day, you can fill an important role by providing information and resources for your community.

As a non-profit 501(c)(3), you may have some questions about what you can do and how to remain nonpartisan during the elections season. http://www.Nonprofitvote.org has many resources available for nonprofits who want to participate in voter engagement activities in their communities, including some informative fact sheets including "What Nonprofit Staff Can Say About the Election" and "What Nonprofit Staff Can Do". Additionally, http://www.nonprofitvote.org has a webinar on the topic. You can access their PowerPoint slides here and listen to the audio recording of their webinar here.

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations may NOT:

1) Endorse a candidate or support a political party,
2) Donate money or resources to a candidate or party
3) Conduct any partisan election-related activity

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations MAY:

1) Conduct nonpartisan voter engagement activities designed to help the public participate in elections including:
   a. Voter registration
   b. Voter education
   c. Candidate engagement
   d. Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

Nonprofit staff are free to engage in partisan activities such as supporting a candidate on their own time, outside of work. However, staff need to avoid using nonprofit resources including their paid time

for partisan political purposes, or being partisan when representing their nonprofit at or outside of work.

Ideas for Voter Engagement Activities

Your voter engagement activities can range from simple to more involved, depending on what feels right for your organization. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Voter Registration

The deadline to register to vote in California is October 24th; registration must be postmarked or submitted electronically no later than midnight.

Online Voter Registration

California now allows online voter registration. This can be an easy and convenient option for you, your staff, and your clients.

- Share the link: http://registertovote.ca.gov/ and encourage folks to register.
- Online registration is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese, a great accessibility element for many of our communities.

Paper Voter Registration

Any nonprofit 501(c)(3) can provide copies of the voter registration forms as a part of your nonpartisan voter engagement activities.

- You can get a paper voter registration application at your county elections office, library, Department of Motor Vehicles office or U.S. post office.
- To obtain more than a handful of forms, contact your county elections office or the California Secretary of State's Office.
- If you need 50 or more voter registration cards, complete and submit a Statement of Distribution form, which is located here.

Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

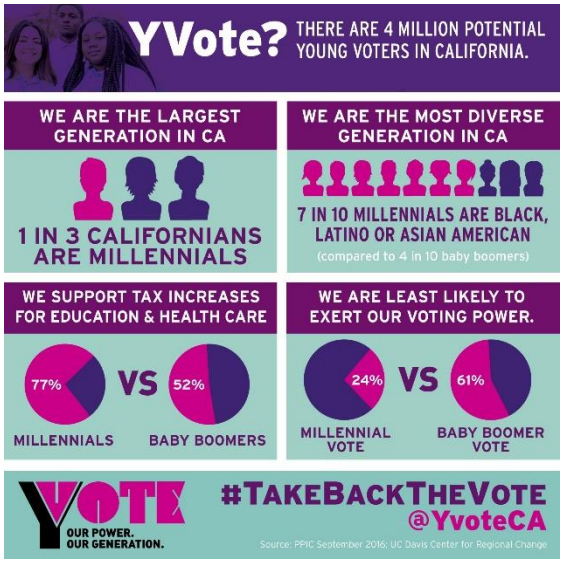
Voter registration is an essential first step, but voters must submit their ballots to impact the outcome of elections. In 2012, only 72% of Californians that were registered to vote actually voted in the election. This means that over a quarter of registered California voters did not cast a ballot.

While non-profits cannot engage in partisan efforts such as encouraging people to vote for/against a particular candidate, you can still encourage them to get out and vote! For example, you can:

- Communicate with your community to remind people about the election
- Use meetings and events to share information about elections
- Highlight reasons to vote (in general) and give information about where to vote and what is on the ballot
- Use posters and public displays to provide information about elections

- Provide voting rights information
- Help first time voters

Youth Voter Engagement



Young voters are often directly impacted by many of the policy decisions being made in any given election, and yet typically have low voter turnout rates. If your organization has a youth program, this can be an opportunity to empower them and help them navigate the process for casting their first ballot.

- Encourage youth to think about and discuss why the election matters to them. They can create videos, written content, and social media posts all about the importance of voting.
- YVote is a great resource for engagement with youth voters. Follow them on Twitter @yvoteca or Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/yvoteca.
- #takebackthevote and #ourpowerourgeneration are great ways for program staff and youth to engage in the conversation about youth voter engagement.

Using Social Media

Posting information and reminders on social media can be one of the easiest ways to engage and still reach a wide audience. While creating original content is a great idea, you don't need to reinvent the wheel. Be sure to follow the Partnership and CALCASA and share our content:

@cpedvcoalition — Facebook.com/CAPartnershiptoEndDV

@CALCASA — Facebook.com/CALCASA

When creating your own posts, here are some ideas for simple posts:

- Posting reminders about key deadlines:
  - The voter registration deadline is **October 24th**. Be sure to also share the link to online voter registration: http://registertovote.ca.gov/.

    Sample tweet: Did you know California has online voter registration? Register now at: http://registertovote.ca.gov/ #Election2016

    Sample tweet: Your vote matters! Make sure you're registered by Oct. 24th to vote in the November election. Register here (link). #EveryVoteCounts

    Sample tweet: Voter registration deadline is October 24th - are you registered? #takebackthevote
  - **November 1st** is the deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot.

    Sample tweet: Need to vote by mail this year? Request a vote by mail ballot by Nov 1 using the application in your sample ballot. #EveryVoteCounts

- Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked by **November 8th**, and received by the county elections office by **November 14th.**

  Sample tweet: Don't forget! Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked by November 8th. Be sure to put yours in the mail! #EveryVoteCounts

- Share information about how to find your polling place by:
  - Calling 1-800-345-VOTE (8683)
  - Online at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place
  - Texting Vote to GOVOTE (468683)

    Sample tweet: It's almost Election Day! You can find your polling location at: http://votersedge.org/ca #Election2016

- Post reminders that polls are open on Election Day, Tuesday, November 8th, 7 AM to 8 PM.

  Sample tweet: Election Day is November 8th! Do you know what time you'll vote? Polls are open from 7am to 8pm.

  Sample tweet: Today's the Day! Polls are open from 7am to 8pm. Be sure to vote and make your voice heard! #GOTV #EveryVoteCounts

- Use images and videos to gain viewers. These are great way to engage your followers in the community and attract more attention that text-only posts.
  - Create selfie signs with #IVoteBecause _____ and ask people to post photos with their answers

    Sample tweet: #IVoteBecause elections have an impact on my community. Why do you vote?
  - Encourage staff or community members to post short videos about why it's important to them that they vote.
  - On Election Day, invite people to share photos with them wearing their "I voted" sticker to celebrate and promote voter engagement.

Sample hashtags:
#Election2016
#EveryVoteCounts
#IVoteBecause
#GOTV
#TakeBacktheVote

Twitter accounts to follow/retweet:
@RockTheVote
@CASoSVote

Considerations Around Voting and Safety

If you are a first time voter in California, you may need to show a form of ID that shows your name and photograph or your name and current address. Acceptable forms of ID include a current and valid photo ID that includes your name and photograph. Examples of acceptable documents could include:

- Driver's license or ID card of any state
- Passport
- Employee ID card
- Military ID card

- Student ID card
- Copy of a recent utility bill
- Bank statement
- Sample ballot booklet, or other documents issued by a governmental agency

Voting can be a safety concern for victims of domestic violence and others who are wary of sharing their information. Voter registration applications are considered public records, and in California voter registration data files are available for purchase only for election, scholarly, journalistic, political or governmental purposes. It is important to note that this information will not include Driver's License numbers, Social Security Numbers and voters' signatures. Because voter registration applications are public records, domestic violence survivors and others may be reluctant or refuse to register because of concerns about their safety. For more information on voting and privacy, please see the National Network to End Domestic Violence's "Voter Registration Records and Privacy" handout here.

Safe at Home Program

In California, the address confidentiality program is called Safe at Home. This program is administered by the California Secretary of State's office and provides a free post office box and a mail forwarding service to support the safety of victims and survivors of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault. This program can provide services including confidential voter registration, mail-forwarding services, a Department of Motor Vehicles records suppression.

To be eligible for enrollment in this program, you must be:

- A resident of California
- In fear for your safety or the safety of a minor or incapacitated person for whom you are applying
- A victim of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault
- A reproductive healthcare employee, patient or volunteer

For more information about this program and information about enrollment, please visit the Safe at Home website here. Please click here for a list of Frequently Asked Questions about the Safe at Home program.

Information About What is on the Ballot this Year

California's ballot this year will be long – very long. With the longest list of state ballot propositions since March 2000, plus Presidential, Senate, and local races, there's a lot for voters to consider. The following are resources to help you and your community get started in understanding what will appear on the ballot.

- The Partnership and CALCASA's November 2016 Voter Information
- Official California Voter Information Guide
- Legislative Analyst's Office Ballot Analysis
- CalMatters 2016 Ballot Proposition Information
- Voter's Edge California Web site