

**OUR HOMES**

**OUR VOTES**

BECAUSE HOUSING IS BUILT WITH BALLOTS



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**Getting Started on Election Work!**

# Agenda

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- **Strategies, Partnerships, and Key Considerations for Nonprofit Election Work**
  - Caitlin Donnelly, senior program director, Nonprofit VOTE
- **Planning a Voter and Candidate Engagement Campaign**
  - Abby Ng, policy and communications coordinator, Tenants & Neighbors (NY)
- **Our Homes, Our Votes Resources**
  - Courtney Cooperman, housing advocacy organizer, NLIHC

# Welcome

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***Courtney Cooperman***

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[ccooperman@nlihc.org](mailto:ccooperman@nlihc.org)

# Strategies, Partnerships, and Key Considerations for Nonprofit Election Work

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***Caitlin Donnelly***

Senior Program Director

Nonprofit VOTE

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# Reaching Voters: What 501c3s Need to Know



How to conduct nonpartisan voter outreach to increase turnout  
among the people you serve

# The Basics of Voter Engagement

## What I'll cover:

- Why your organization should engage voters
- What types of assistance and information you can offer
- How to keep efforts nonpartisan

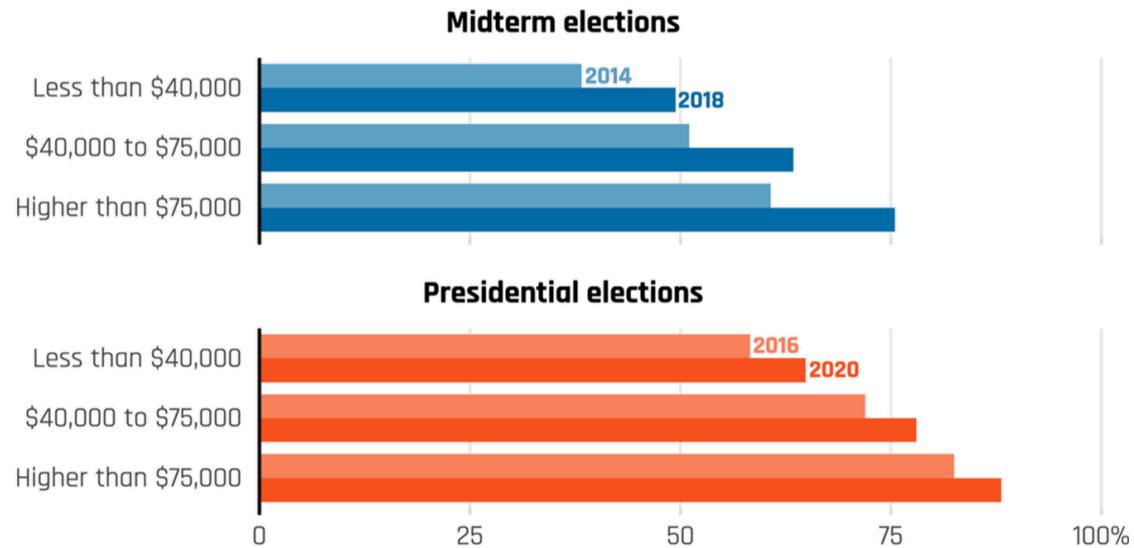
## Find more online:

- [Case studies and reports](#)
- [Guidance](#) on voter engagement activities
- Factsheets on [nonpartisanship](#)
- Links to your [state information](#)

# Why Engage Voters?

Gaps in turnout persist even in record-breaking elections.

This distorts the policy landscape and can leave potential voters feeling disempowered.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement" [n.d.].

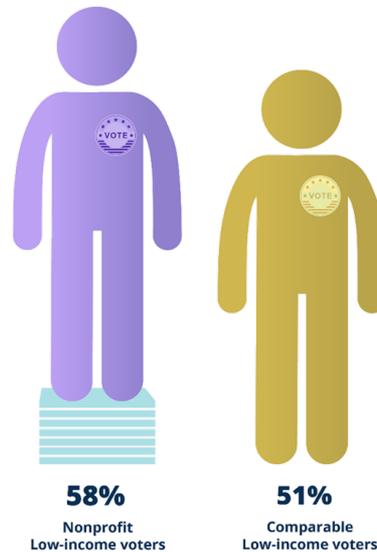
Note: Percentages omit respondents who did not answer the voting question.

 Equitable Growth

# Why Engage Voters?

But nonprofits can increase turnout and close gaps.

Voters of color, voters with less income, and younger voters get the biggest advantage from nonprofit engagement.



## NONPROFIT POWER FINDING:

Low-income voters engaged by nonprofits saw a **7 percentage point** boost in turnout over comparable low-income voters (under \$30K / year).

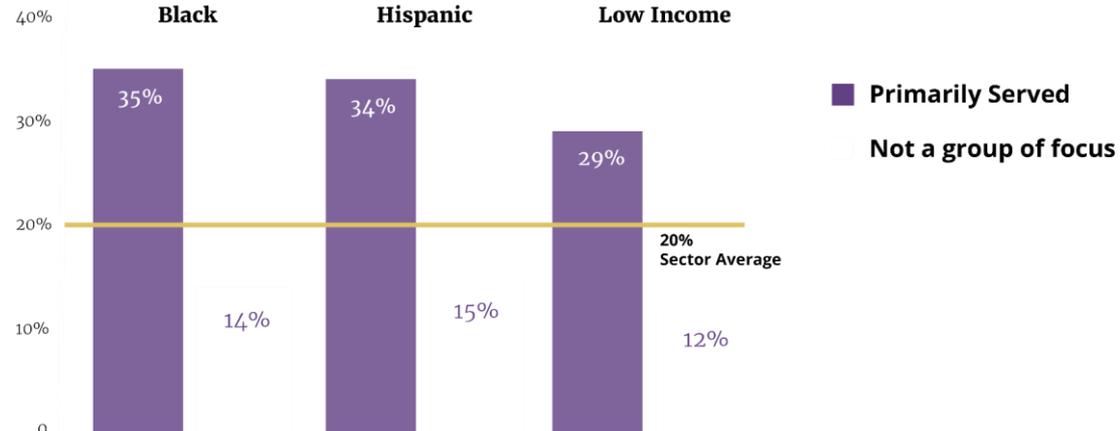
*Comparable low-income voters of similar age, race, sex, marital status, and county*

# Why Engage Voters?

20% of nonprofits report that they engage voters.

For nonprofits serving low-income communities, nearly a third engage voters. You're in good company.

Percentage of nonprofits by community served doing voter engagement occasionally to all the time



# Why Engage Voters?

There are many reasons to engage voters. Here are some common ones:

Voting benefits our clients' social connections and personal agency

Their voices are often left out of policy decisions that impact their lives and ability to thrive

Demonstrating that our community is active in voting bolsters our influence and advocacy efforts

We have a responsibility to promote diversity, equity, and an inclusive democracy

# What Can Your Organization Do?

Political campaigns typically focus on registering voters, then reminding them to vote (GOTV) in the weeks ahead of the election.

They miss voters who participate less frequently, including voters you may serve:

- New voters (those who have just turned 18, have been recently naturalized, or recently had their right to vote restored)
- Voters who move often or have changed their name



# What Can Your Organization Do?

## Voter Registration

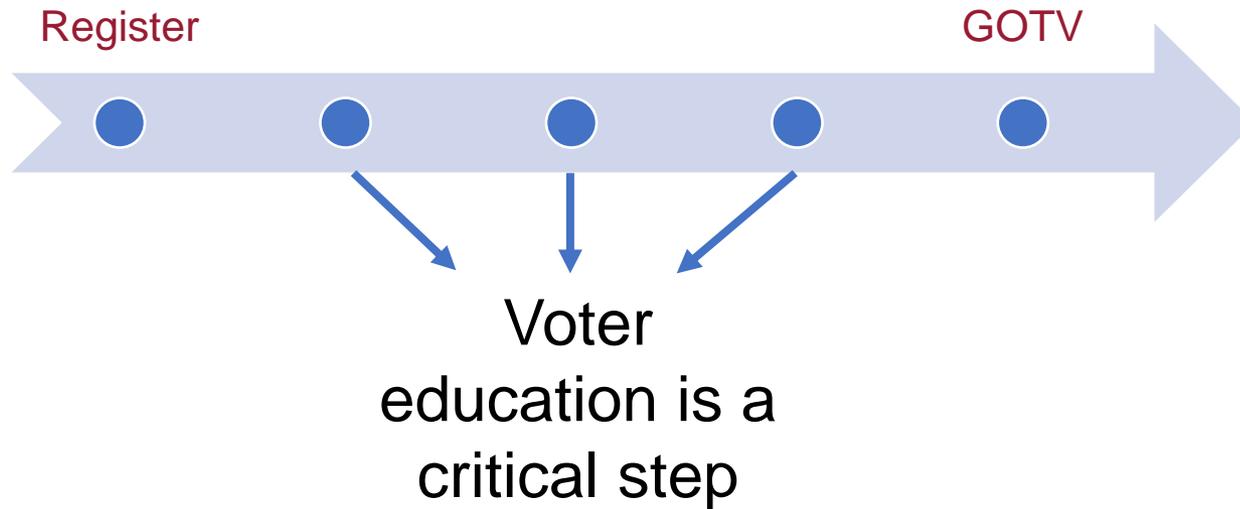
- Include registration forms in move-in paperwork
- Door-knock residents offering registration assistance
- Place registration forms in your lobby or high-traffic area

## GOTV

- Send postcards with important date reminders to residents
- Conduct a phone or text bank to reach clients
- Put up posters or flyers with election information around your facilities

# What Can Your Organization Do?

Voter registration and get out the vote reminders are important, but...



# What Can Your Organization Do?

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# What Can Your Organization Do?

Talk to voters about why their vote matters:

- How it impacts services you provide
- How it impacts other aspects of their lives
- The historical significance of voting rights
- How redistricting impacts this election



# What Can Your Organization Do?

Explain the process of voting and options for voters:

- Early voting and locations
- Election day polling place
- Voter ID (if needed)
- State laws regarding time off to vote
- How to vote by mail
- How to get assistance or report an issue:  
866-our-vote

**MY VOTING PLAN**

I'm registered     Not yet\*

**Voting in Person**

Early     Election Day  
 Morning     Afternoon     Evening

My polling place is Elm Street Post Office

**Voting by Mail**

Mailing in my ballot (ASAP!)

Dropping off my ballot  
Polling place | Election Office | Ballot Box

# What Can Your Organization Do?

Prepare voters for what they'll see on their ballot:

- Pass out sample ballots
- Educate voters on what offices on the ballot do and decisions they will make
- Advocate for or against a ballot measure
- Co-host a candidate forum or develop a candidate questionnaire

The image shows a screenshot of the BallotReady website (https://ballotready.org) with two callout boxes. The main interface displays a 'My Voter Guide' for the general election on Tuesday, November 6, 2018. It lists candidates for County Commissioner, including Claire Lemont, and provides options to print or email a ballot. A callout box titled 'BAR ASSOCIATION EVALUATIONS' shows 'Highly Qualified' candidates (Women Lawyers' Association, Hispanic Lawyers Association) and 'Qualified' candidates (Illinois State Bar Association). Another callout box titled 'BALLOT MEASURES' highlights 'Colorado \$12 Minimum Wage Amendment 70 (2018)', explaining that the current minimum wage is \$8.31 per hour and the measure would raise it to \$12 in increments.

# How to Remain Nonpartisan

## Do!

- Train staff on nonpartisanship (staff time vs. personal time)
- Treat and speak about candidates in a neutral/unbiased manner
- Offer registration and info regardless of party affiliation or candidate preference
- Learn your state rules for registration

## Don't!

- Express support or opposition for any candidate or party
- Allow candidates to campaign at your location or events
- Combine issue advocacy directly with voting info or encouragement
- Offer incentives or giveaways only to people who register and/or vote

# Thank you!

Keep in touch – [Caitlin@nonprofitvote.org](mailto:Caitlin@nonprofitvote.org)

# Planning a Voter and Candidate Engagement Campaign

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*Abby Ng*

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Tenants & Neighbors (NY)

[ang@tandn.org](mailto:ang@tandn.org)

# Who is Tenants & Neighbors?



**We are a members-led statewide center for tenant power in New York!**

New York State Tenants & Neighbors helps tenants build and strategically wield collective power to keep New York diverse and its housing affordable. We do that via base building, grassroots organizing, and leadership development.

We organize at the building and community level to preserve at-risk affordable housing developments and also organize broader campaigns for administrative/policy reforms.

# Our Base and Our Capacity

- 3 full-time staff
- 3 full-time volunteer organizers (AmeriCorps VISTA & Jesuit Volunteer Corps)
- Currently organizing in 12-15 buildings, primarily in New York City
- We represent approximately 3000 tenants
  - Project-Based Section 8
  - Rent controlled and rent stabilized
  - Mitchell-Lama
  - Market-rate



# Our Goals

- Expand the pool of eligible voters in low-income communities and subsidized properties
- Hold leadership development trainings and workshops to educate and mobilize tenants to engage voters
- Develop and distribute a candidate questionnaire and score card on housing and state policy
- Host two tenant candidate nights (Federal and State)



# Our Tactics & Tools



- Leverage our existing building organizing with tenant associations and leaders to build capacity
- Target districts where we have a strong base
- Utilize VAN, Spoke, ThruTalk to canvass and phone bank
- Partner with local non-profit organizations to co-facilitate trainings

## Our Homes, Our Votes



What matters to YOU should matter to YOUR elected officials!

**FEB 15** 6:00PM on Zoom | Register:  
<https://bit.ly/TenantsAreVoters>

Help us create a candidate questionnaire and get ready to mobilize your neighbors to the polls.

Questions?  
Contact us at [questions@tandn.org](mailto:questions@tandn.org) or  
(212) 608-4320



# TENANTS & NEIGHBORS



## NYS Tenants & Neighbors 2022 Candidate Questionnaire: Federal

As a candidate in the upcoming 2022 elections, NYS Tenants & Neighbors invites you to complete the following Candidate Questionnaire on key housing issues.

## Our Tactics cont.

- Monthly workshops:
  - Media training
  - Creating a campaign strategy
  - Candidate questionnaire brainstorm session
  - Reporting building violations
  - Canvassing & Phone banking training



# Contact Us

- Genesis Aquino, Executive Director
  - [gaguino@tandn.org](mailto:gaguino@tandn.org)
- Abby Ng, Policy & Communications Coordinator
  - [ang@tandn.org](mailto:ang@tandn.org)



# Our Homes, Our Votes Resources

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***Courtney Cooperman***

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# Voter Engagement Plan: Determine Goals

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## WHY PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS?

Below are some goals driving organizations' efforts with voter engagement projects. Check those that apply to your organization and add any others.

- Engage residents in civic participation and help them become familiar with how the decisions of elected officials affect their lives.
- Elevate the issue of homelessness and housing scarcity in public debate.
- Educate elected officials on low-income housing issues and on how their decisions affect residents.
- Build influential relationships with elected officials. Help develop residents' leadership skills.
- Assist residents in meeting community service requirements, if applicable. Earn positive press for your program or project.
- Other:

# Voter Engagement Plan: Legal Considerations

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## LEGALLY SPEAKING

501(c)(3) organizations can, and should, engage in nonpartisan election-related activity, including voter registration, education, and mobilization. 501(c)(3)s cannot in any way support or oppose particular candidates. For detailed information on these issues:

- Contact the Office of the Secretary of State or Board of Elections in your state to learn your state's rules for voter registration drives.
- Look at the Permissible Activities Checklist put together by Nonprofit VOTE at: <https://www.nonprofitvote.org/resource/staying-nonpartisan-permissible-election-activities-checklist-2/>.
- Visit the League of Women Voters at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) for the latest information on voting in your state.

# Voter Engagement Plan: Voter Registration

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## REGISTERING VOTERS

### Setting Goals for Registering Voters

- What percentage of your clients will you register? What number?
- Will your agency also register other low-income members of the community, beyond those served by your programs?
- How many weeks do you have until the deadline to register voters?
- How many people must you register on average per week to meet your goal?

### Assigning Responsibilities

- Which staff person will ultimately be responsible for meeting registration goals?
- Which resident leaders will have responsibility for meeting registration goals?

### Preparing to Register Voters

Your local Board of Elections or County Clerk's office can be a valuable source of information as you plan to register clients to vote. You will want to check with them to:

- Learn the registration deadline for the general election in your state.

# Voter Engagement Plan: Education

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## EDUCATING CLIENTS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Which staff person will ultimately be responsible for meeting education goals?
- Which resident leaders will have responsibility for meeting education goals?

### Education Checklist

For each section, check the ways in which your agency will educate voters and candidates.

#### Educating Renters on Voting and Their Rights as Voters

- Educate clients and low-income renters, people experiencing homelessness, or members of other underrepresented groups on identification requirements for voter registration and voting in your state, especially if these rules have recently changed.
- Obtain sample ballots from your Board of Elections or County Clerk's office and distribute to residents.
- Arrange for someone from your Board of Elections or County Clerk's office to come to your agency to provide a demonstration of your county's voting machines and explain people's rights as voters.

# Voter Engagement Plan: Voter Protection

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## PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Some low-income renters, people experiencing homelessness, or members of other underrepresented groups are at a greater risk of being turned away from the polls on Election Day or otherwise being disenfranchised. Many national organizations participate in the nonpartisan Election Protection coalition, which staffs a voting rights hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE. In addition to the hotline, you can find more information about voting requirements and potential voter suppression issues in your state by visiting [www.866ourvote.org/state](http://www.866ourvote.org/state).

# Voter Engagement Plan: Mobilization

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## MOBILIZING VOTERS

### Setting Goals for Getting Out the Vote (GOTV)

- What is the total number of people your agency plans to register to vote?
- How many additional renters are already registered (from the voter list you obtained from your county's Board of Elections)?
- What is your total number of potential voters (add the preceding two numbers)?
- What percentage of these people would you like to see vote on Election Day?
- What is the total number of people you would like to see vote on Election Day?

### Reminding People to Vote

- Which staff person will ultimately be responsible for meeting mobilization goals?
- Which resident leaders will have responsibility for meeting mobilization goals?

## Monday, May 2: Legal Considerations for Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations, including housing justice nonprofits, can and should participate in nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement campaigns. To do so with confidence, organizations should be familiar with the laws that govern nonprofits' election-related work.

Join Tim Mooney from the Alliance for Justice who will address frequently asked questions, clear up misconceptions, and provide resources for 501c3 nonprofits that are launching voter and candidate engagement activities. Gabby Ross from NLIHC will discuss considerations for organizations that receive federal funding.



## Monday, May 16: With a Little Help from Our Friends...

Fortunately, no housing nonprofit needs to reinvent the wheel or go it alone when launching their election engagement work. Many organizations provide helpful resources and support for nonpartisan election activities.

Maggie Bush from the League of Women Voters will join NLIHC to review the tools and templates that housing organizations can use to jumpstart their election initiatives. Dominique Espinoza from the Coalition on Human Needs will discuss the Votes for Human Needs Campaign and how service providers can partner on voter engagement.



# Follow the Campaign!

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**Twitter: @OurHomesVotes**

**Facebook @OHOV2022**

**Email: [ourhomes@nlihc.org](mailto:ourhomes@nlihc.org)**

**Website: [ourhomes-ourvotes.org](http://ourhomes-ourvotes.org)**

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**OURHOMES-OURVOTES.ORG**