WEBINAR

Mobilization: Getting Out the Vote!

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Overview

1. Brief Introduction and Review of NLIHC’s Voterization Project
2. Overview of Legal Considerations for Nonprofits
3. Effective Language
4. Considerations Leading Up to Election Day
5. Tactics and Strategies for Mobilization on Election Day
6. Voter Suppression on Election Day
7. Other Resources
8. Q&A
Review of the Voterization Project

- The Voterization Project is our effort to help housing advocates and service providers legally and effectively engage their clients and constituents in voting.

- Voterization is a term that encompasses the three part process of effective voter engagement:
  1. Registration
  2. Education
  3. Mobilization
Review of the Voterization Project

- We have previously covered voter registration and voter education.
  - Recordings of previous webinars and the PowerPoint slides are available at: [http://nlihc.org/library/voterization](http://nlihc.org/library/voterization)

- It’s NOT too late to engage in either registration or education efforts.
  - Voter registration is still open in all 50 states.
  - National Voter Registration Day is Sept. 23, 2014.
  - Sign up at [http://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/](http://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/)
Legal Considerations for 501(c)(3) Organizations

• Knowing the law is not just about not breaking the rules, it is also about knowing how to fully exercise your rights.

• Golden Rule: Stay Non-partisan.
  • We will give some specific examples when we discuss actual voter mobilization activities later in the webinar.
Effective Language

- Why talk about language?
- The Brennan Center for Justice conducted public opinion research about effective messaging around voting.
- They came up with a helpful guide called Talking About Voting 2012.
- It provides examples of effective messaging for encouraging people to vote.
Examples of Effective Language

• Focus on values.
• Notice how these messages below are generally positive:
  • **It is your civic duty:** As an American citizen, it is your responsibility to do your civic duty and vote on Election Day.
  • **Improve your future:** Voting brings us together as Americans and is something you can do to help strengthen your community. All eligible Americans should cast a ballot on Election Day for their future, their children’s futures, and the future of our great nation.
Examples of Effective Language

• **Taking control**: Voting is your chance to take control over what happens to your family and your community. Many Americans are struggling these days in the economy — to find jobs, pay their mortgages, and put food on the table — and all Americans deserve a say in how to solve these problems.
Examples of Effective Language

- **Stand up**: It is important to stand up for our rights and elect leaders who will lift up our country and our communities. America’s future is our future, and we need to vote and make sure the politicians hear our voices and know we count and we matter. We cannot complain about the way things are going if we do not take responsibility and stand up for what we believe in.
Examples of Effective Language

• **Your voice matters:** Your vote — along with everyone’s vote — matters. It lets politicians know that the American people have an opinion, and that they need to listen to what we have to say.
Mobilization: Use NLIHC Voterization Materials

NLIHC’s Voterization Plan and Voterization Narrative are available at: http://nlihc.org/library/voterization

MOBILIZATION CHECKLIST
For each following section, check those ways in which your agency will mobilize voters and candidates. In the space after the activity, list the staff or resident(s) who will carry out the activity, and the timeframe for carrying it out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Months and Weeks Before Election Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__ If time allows, request an updated list of registered voters from your Board of Elections to ensure the voters you registered are included.</td>
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<tr>
<td>__ Investigate the possibility of adding a polling place at your agency.</td>
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<td>__ Download and print GOTV materials, including posters, from <a href="http://www.nonprofitvote.org">www.nonprofitvote.org</a>.</td>
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<td>__ Host voting-related events on the first Tuesday of the month to get residents used to participating in civic engagement activities on that day.</td>
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<td>__ Make your first contact with each voter in your database. Call them, thank them for registering, and remind them to vote.</td>
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<td>__ Plan for Election Day:</td>
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<td>• Recruit residents or other volunteers who will spend Election Day doing door-to-door to GOTV.</td>
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<td>• Prepare captains to turn out all registered people on their floor, in their building, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Once the deadline for registering new voters has passed, obtain an updated voter registration list from your county. Check against your database and prepare a final list of voters to be mobilized.</td>
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<tr>
<th>One To Two Weeks Before Election Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>__ Make your second contact with each voter in your database. Call them, remind them to vote on Election Day, and provide them with their polling place. Ask whether each will need a ride to the polls.</td>
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<td>__ Continue to plan for Election Day:</td>
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<td>• Hold a training session for Election Day volunteers.</td>
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<td>• From your database, print lists of all of your registered clients whose doors will be knocked on Election Day. Print in groups of 20-30 people, based on geography and the number of Election Day volunteers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Arrange to provide rides to the polls for those who need them.</td>
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<td>• Plan to provide lunch for your Election Day volunteers.</td>
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<td>• Plan a party for after the polls close!</td>
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Mobilization—Voter Lists

- **Voter mobilization begins with a good target list of registered voters.**
  - Who do you want to make sure gets to the polls?
    - Your clients? The neighborhood that you serve?
  - Who have you registered from your Voter Registration campaign?
    - Make sure to copy all voter registration forms, where it is legal, in order to capture voter addresses and contact information.

- In Get out the Vote (GOTV) materials and emails, you should try to list a voter’s specific polling location.
  - Up-to-date addresses are necessary to find polling locations.
Building Voter Lists

• **Augment your voter registration lists** with other lists of contact information that might broaden the pool of targets for GOTV efforts.
  • Include lists of your clients, volunteers, and donors.
  • Incorporate lists from voter engagement coalition partners.

• Remember, list management is a key role to have filled for any voter engagement campaign.
  • Assign volunteers and staff to update and keep the list.
  • The list will be used to generate call sheets, reminder emails, and any mailings.
Poll Watching

• **Poll watching**—Having a presence at polling locations to cross off voters from your list.
  • Measures progress of mobilization efforts.
  • Leaves a fresh list of people who need to be contacted at later parts of the day who have not yet voted.
  • Provides a presence to discourage voter caging and voter harassment.
  • Can be done through a continuous presence or through periodic check-ins.

• Lists must match—If poll watchers are crossing off voters who have come in, this needs to be reflected on a master list.
Phone Banking

• Effective GOTV requires contact with all voters on your list three times.
  • About two weeks prior to election day.
  • Within two days prior to election day.
  • On election day.

• Everybody LOVES election-related phone calls.
  • Don’t worry: nobody will refuse to vote because you bugged them with a phone call—quite the opposite.
Phone Banking Best Practices

• **Use a script!**
  • The message is simple:
    1. Your polling location is __________.
    2. The polls will be open from __________ to __________.
    3. You will need to bring _______ with you to the polls.
    4. Do you need a ride to the polls on election day?
    5. Would you like to see any information we have put together about candidates and ballot measures?
    6. Would you like to volunteer with our voter mobilization effort?

• **Update your list!**
  • Have staff and volunteers who are doing reminder calls verify addresses, emails, and phone numbers for election day mobilization.
Early Voting

- In 2012, more than 32 million votes were cast BEFORE election day.
- 40 states and the District of Columbia currently are set for early voting periods for the 2014 elections.
  - For state-by-state information on early voting, Reed College provides a great online resource: [http://reed.edu/earlyvoting/calendar/](http://reed.edu/earlyvoting/calendar/)
- Early voting can take the pressure out of Election Day, and give you a head start on GOTV.
Vote by Mail

- **Vote by Mail** allows voters to submit completed ballots through regular mail.
- The difference between Vote by Mail and regular absentee ballots is that under Vote by Mail a voter is not required to be unable to get to the polling location.
- In many states, registered voters will get mail ballots automatically if they are registered.
- Vote by Mail is most widely available in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington.
  - Check with your local election officials about standards for absentee ballots.
Considerations

• **Volunteers and staff can help voters** with their vote by mail ballots or absentee ballots.
  • Be extremely careful, as always, not to ever endorse a specific candidate or political party.

• **It is legal to provide a voter with postage** for their absentee ballots or Vote by Mail ballots.
  • This is **not** considered giving someone a reward for voting.

• **It is often allowed to hand-deliver absentee or Vote by Mail ballots** on someone else’s behalf, but this can bring on significant legal liability.
Questions?

Ask a question by submitting it in the “Questions” box on your webinar control panel, or by clicking on the hand icon to indicate that you have raised your hand.
Election Day

The Key Components

1. Poll watching
2. Visibility
3. Getting voters to the polls
4. Celebrate!
“It’s Election Day! Make Sure to Vote!”

- Put volunteers in high-traffic areas with visible signs reminding people to vote.
  - Major intersections
  - Bus stops
  - Apartment complex parking areas
  - College campuses

- Make sure volunteers have correct information about polling locations and any materials you are distributing to inform voters.
Getting People to the Polls

Coordinate rides to polling locations.

- Transportation concerns are among the primary reasons low income people vote in lower numbers.
  - It is completely legal to offer people rides to the polls
- No compensation of any kind can be given to voters.
  - Election night celebrations with food and drinks are great, but voting cannot be a condition for participation.
  - This applies regardless of whether voting rewards are being offered in a non-partisan way.
Voter Suppression

• What is voter suppression?
• The weeks leading up to the election and Election Day are a critical time for voter suppression.
• Prepare voters for it well in advance through good communication about voting logistics and requirements in your area.
  • If you’ve been thorough with the first two aspects of the Voterization process (reg. and ed.), then you’ll be in good shape.
Voter Suppression

• Voter ID Requirements
• How to combat?
  • Make sure you know the Voter ID requirements in your area and communicate this information to the people you mobilize.
  • If you have clients, help them get necessary ID well in advance.
  • If you’re giving rides to the polls, make sure people have proper ID with them.
Voter Suppression

- Misinformation Tactics
- How to combat?
  - Make sure you’re communicating correct information clearly and well in advance (date, poll locations, times, etc.).
  - Alert local election officials.
  - Counter messaging.
Voter Suppression

• **Voter Caging**
• **How to combat?**
  • Know the voter challenge laws in your state.
  • Make sure people have current addresses associated with their voter registration records.
    • Ideally part of the Registration phase of Voterization
  • Provisional ballots.
Additional Resources

- http://nlihc.org/library/voterization
- http://www.fairelectionsnetwork.com/
- http://www.nonprofitvote.org/
- http://www.brennancenter.org/
Stay Involved

If you enjoyed this presentation series, and would like to support our work...

• September is Membership Month at the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Please join us as an individual or organizational member.
  • You can join online by visiting this link: http://nlihc.org/membership
Additional Resources

For more information about Voterization, or to find out how you can get involved, please contact:

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