

Promote the  
Protect the **VOTE 2012**

## **Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote 2012 Resource Guide**

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**NCJ** ®

National Council of Jewish Women

# Table of Contents

## Introductory Materials

▶ Introduction	1
▶ Q & A on NCJW's 501(c)(3) Status	2
▶ Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Activity Timeline	3
▶ Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Activity Ideas	4

## Promote the Vote

▶ Guide to Voter Registration	5
▶ Before Election Day: Get Out The Vote (GOTV)	7
▶ Election Day: Get Out The Vote (GOTV)	8
▶ Creating Candidate Forums, Questionnaires, and Voter Guides	9
▶ Tips on Building Partnerships: Coalition-Building Dos and Don'ts	11
▶ Absentee Voting	12
▶ Registration Poster to Display at Events	13

## Protect the Vote

▶ Election Day Protect the Vote Activities	14
▶ Understanding and Applying the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)	15
▶ Ensuring Enfranchisement	16
▶ Guarding Against Obstacles to Voting on Election Day	17
▶ Know Your Rights: Poster for Distributing	18

## Resources

▶ Contact Information for Every State Board of Elections	19
▶ Guide to Additional Resources	24
▶ Taking Action on Ballot Initiatives	26

## Introduction: Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote 2012

*The most important political office is that of the private citizen. ~ Justice Louis Brandeis*

For decades, NCJW members and supporters across the country have worked to encourage civic engagement by registering voters, educating communities, and getting out the vote on Election Day. NCJW advocates have also long pursued the expansion and protection of voting rights for historically disenfranchised individuals and communities through the suffrage movement, the struggle to end poll taxes, the campaign to pass the Voting Rights Act, and the effort to change the voting age to 18, among other efforts.

In recent years, election irregularities and policies that disenfranchise whole groups of voters have increased and become more insidious. As a result, NCJW has responded by renewing our efforts to protect voting rights and ensure laws and policies that facilitate voter participation.

The *2012 Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Resource Guide* is designed to help NCJW sections, members, and supporters continue the legacy of voter registration, education, and protection that has been the hallmark of NCJW for many decades. This year's guide includes planning tips, activity ideas, resources, and information to help you make a difference in the upcoming 2012 election. Please use this guide to promote and protect the vote in your community, and regularly visit [www.ncjw.org/vote](http://www.ncjw.org/vote) for updates, additional resources, training opportunities, and more.

As you develop and implement your plans, please remember that the NCJW Washington office is available to provide additional resources and technical assistance. **Because of our tax-exempt status, NCJW and its sections are subject to certain restrictions on election-related activities. As a result, it is critical that any Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote activities you undertake be vetted in advance with the Washington office to ensure compliance.** Contact: Sammie Moshenberg ([sammie@ncjwdc.org](mailto:sammie@ncjwdc.org) or 202 296 2588 x 1), Elissa Froman ([elissa@ncjwdc.org](mailto:elissa@ncjwdc.org) or 202 296 2588 x 3), or Lindsay Morris ([lindsay@ncjwdc.org](mailto:lindsay@ncjwdc.org) or 202 296 2588 x 6) to get approval for your plans and to share the work that you are doing in your community.

Together, we can ensure that, in 2012, every eligible voter is able to vote, and every vote cast is counted.

## Q & A on NCJW's 501(c)(3) STATUS

NCJW is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. While this status allows tax advantages for organizations such as NCJW, it also limits some of the political activities in which the organization can engage. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers regarding permissible activity by NCJW and its sections during an election year.

**Can NCJW sections or members endorse a candidate or party?** No, only as private individuals can NCJW members endorse. Their role in NCJW must be completely distinct from any personal activity endorsing, supporting, or promoting a candidate or party.

**Can NCJW endorse or work for or against referenda or ballot initiatives?** Yes, we can do advocacy for issue-related measures, and sections are encouraged to do so.

**Can NCJW encourage members to vote for candidates with certain views?** No, telling members to vote for candidates based on their positions is an endorsement of individual candidates.

**Can NCJW do candidate questionnaires?** Yes, with restrictions. NCJW must:

- ▶ Distribute the questionnaire to every candidate.
- ▶ Ask a broad range of unbiased questions.
- ▶ Print responses exactly as received from the candidates without edits, editorial comment, and without stating NCJW's views.

**Can NCJW host candidate forums?** Yes, with restrictions. NCJW must ensure that:

- ▶ All candidates are invited to participate.
- ▶ A broad range of unbiased questions are asked.
- ▶ Candidates do not solicit contributions.
- ▶ NCJW's views on the issues are not mentioned or available in writing at the event.

**What if one of the candidates cannot attend or does not respond to a questionnaire?** First, ask the candidate to send a campaign representative to participate in the forum. If only one candidate is left to attend the forum, you must cancel. In the case of questionnaires, make it clear when you release your results that you received no response from a candidate. Again, if only one candidate provides answers, you should cancel the questionnaire. In the case of a multi-candidate race where some participate and some do not, please contact the NCJW Washington office to determine next steps.

**May we invite someone who is running for office to speak at an event unrelated to the election?** It is safest not to invite candidates to speak at any program during the election cycle. If, however, you do invite a candidate to speak as an expert on an issue or as a sitting public official, make it clear to the invitee that they must not refer to their candidacy or electioneer in any way. Clarify in your program that the appearance does not constitute a political endorsement.

**In what sort of election activities is NCJW allowed to participate?** NCJW members can and should engage in voter registration, conduct public education and trainings about participation in elections, initiate get-out-the-vote drives that are directed at all voters irrespective of their views or party, and publish voting records if guidelines are observed.

**Are there restrictions on publishing voting records?** Yes. NCJW must:

- ▶ Include the entire legislative body/delegation.
- ▶ Ensure that a broad range of issues are covered.
- ▶ Limit distribution of the voting records to NCJW members if the publication states NCJW's positions on issues and compares those positions with the candidates' votes. It cannot be distributed to the general public.

**What are some basic tips for 501(c)(3) compliance when planning election activities?**

- ▶ Always include all candidates.
- ▶ Never state positions or editorialize on any questions asked of candidates.
- ▶ Present a broad and varied array of questions.
- ▶ Never endorse or oppose a candidate or party.
- ▶ Make sure your presentation is unbiased.

**Do I need approval for election-related activities?** Yes, please contact the NCJW Washington office at 202 296 2588 or [action@ncjwdc.org](mailto:action@ncjwdc.org) to have your activity or event approved.

## Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Activity Timeline

Planning is everything! Here's a suggested plan and timeline for engaging in the Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote initiative along with some suggested activities. As you or your section determine a plan for participating in Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote, adapt this timeline for your unique needs, complete with concrete deadlines and goals as you prepare for the election.

### Up to a Year Before the Election:

- ▶ Visit [www.ncjw.org/vote](http://www.ncjw.org/vote) often to make sure that you have all the latest information and resources for your Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote 2012 work.
- ▶ Identify a group of interested individuals within your section to take the lead planning and implementing your efforts.
- ▶ Seek out community partners — other 501(c)(3) groups — for collaboration or join in existing local efforts.
- ▶ Assess and gather the resources you will need — funds, volunteers, etc.
- ▶ Decide on your strategies — select activities that will attract volunteer participation and that are appropriate for your community (see page 4 for a list of ideas).
- ▶ Begin to develop and gather the plans and materials you will need for your activities (leaflets for canvassing, phone bank scripts, press releases, candidate questionnaires, voter registration forms, etc.).
- ▶ Check your state's laws to make sure that your activities comply.
- ▶ Educate and activate on decisions being made long before the election that will make an impact, like voter ID laws, ballot initiatives, and redistricting efforts.

### Six Months Before the Election:

- ▶ Recruit, organize, and train volunteers to phone bank and canvass (a good opportunity to recruit and engage new members for your NCJW section).
- ▶ Reach out to local press for coverage of your activities.
- ▶ Hold a candidate forum and develop and disseminate a candidate questionnaire.
- ▶ Bring voter registration forms to all section events and activities (check your state laws to ensure compliance).
- ▶ Recruit, organize, and train volunteers for Election Day activities.
- ▶ Line up “in-kind” donations of staff, office space, transportation, phones, and food for Election Day.
- ▶ Remind absentee voters to request absentee ballots (be sure to check the deadlines in your state).

### 4-8 Weeks Before the Election:

- ▶ Organize a phone tree, ensuring that you contact every member of your section to make sure that they vote.
- ▶ Assign roles to Election Day volunteers.
- ▶ Do final rounds of canvassing, phone banking, and leafleting.
- ▶ Coordinate transportation to take people who need rides to the polls.

## Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Activity Ideas

There are many ways to promote and protect the vote. Voter registration and education, work on ballot initiatives, combating voter suppression policies prior to the election, get out the vote (GOTV) efforts, and Election Day monitoring to protect the vote are all important activities. Remember that you can amplify your effectiveness through partnerships with local and national 501(c)(3) groups who share NCJW's goal of ensuring broad participation in the electoral process. A successful NCJW Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote campaign takes hard work but can make a significant impact! Here are some ideas for activities in which you might engage:

### Promote the Vote Activities:

- ▶ Register Voters
  - Hold registration drives regularly in visible public places like high schools, colleges, community fairs, and supermarkets, consistent with your state's laws.
  - Provide voter registration forms at NCJW and other well-attended community events.
  
- ▶ Get Out the Vote (GOTV)
  - Canvass and leaflet door-to-door urging voting and giving polling information.
  - Phone Bank.
  - Coordinate transportation to the polls on Election Day.
  
- ▶ Educate Voters
  - Organize candidate forums.
  - Create candidate questionnaires.
  - Write an informative voter guide on ballot initiatives.
  - Prepare press releases or media kits for coverage of your activities.
  - Use social media, like Facebook and Twitter, to keep your members informed.

### Protect the Vote Activities:

- ▶ Work in opposition to laws like voter photo ID requirements.
- ▶ Educate yourself, your section, and all volunteers about the voting laws in your states.
- ▶ Engage in support of, or opposition to, ballot initiatives.
- ▶ Ensure that voters know their rights leading up to, and on Election Day.
- ▶ Be a poll worker: volunteer to help voters on Election Day.
- ▶ Be a poll watcher: volunteer to guard against voter obstacles on Election Day.

When planning your efforts, remember the rules that govern NCJW as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. *You can't tell people to vote for a specific candidate, a specific party, or even a specific ideology, but you can emphasize the importance of participating in the democratic process by voting.*

## Guide to Voter Registration

Registering voters is the first step in promoting the vote. Non-partisan organizations like NCJW can undertake this important activity without jeopardizing their tax-exempt statuses. Each new voter registered strengthens our democracy. The information below is intended to help you plan voter registration drives and events in your community and to ensure that registration opportunities are available at NCJW section meetings and events.

With the development of the National Mail-In Voter Registration Form, registering voters has become a more standardized and somewhat easier process on the national level; however, it is extremely important that the form be filled out accurately according to the specific rules of your state. Pay particular attention to deadlines — only a handful of states allow same-day voter registration. In most states, you must register to vote between 10 and 30 days before the date of an election.

### The National Mail-In Voter Registration Form

Download the National Mail-In Voter Registration Form from the US Election Assistance Commission's website: [www.eac.gov/voter/](http://www.eac.gov/voter/). All states, except New Hampshire, Wyoming, and North Dakota, permit the use of this standard form as a valid means of voter registration.

Make sure to read the instructions carefully, particularly the state-specific instructions located in the downloadable application packet. Each state's specific registration policies vary, as in the examples below:

- ▶ **Item 6 – ID Number:** Every state requires some form of ID, but the specific requirements vary as follows:
  - ▶ States requiring a full Social Security Number (SSN): AL, HI, KY, NM, SC, TN, VA
  - ▶ State requiring the last four digits of SSN: OK
  - ▶ State requiring the last four digits of SSN and driver's license number: MO
  - ▶ States requiring the last four digits of SSN or driver's license number: IL, ID, MS
  - ▶ States requiring driver's license number or state ID or the last four digits of SSN: AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IN, IA, KS, LA, MA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MT, NE, NJ, NY, NC, NV, OH, OR, PA, RI, SD, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI
- ▶ **Item 7 – Choice of Party:** In many states, you must register with a party in order to vote in that party's primary election, caucus, or convention.
  - ▶ States that require advance party registration in order to vote in primaries: CO, CT, DE, FL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, NE, NV, NM, NC, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, WV
- ▶ **Item 8 – Race or Ethnic Group:** Few states require this information, and it can never be used to deny registration.
  - ▶ States that require or request this information: AL, FL, GA, LA, NC, PA, SC, TN
- ▶ **Item 9 – Signature:** Before you submit a voter registration form, you must swear/affirm to certain facts, which vary widely from state to state.
  - ▶ Note: You must contact your state or local officials to find out the rules in your state. They will also be able to give you the mailing address for the form

- ▶ **Proof of Identification:** If you are registering to vote for the first time in your jurisdiction and are mailing your registration application, you may be required to provide proof of identification the first time you vote. The list of acceptable documentation includes:
  - ▶ A copy of a current and valid piece of photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address in the jurisdiction.

### Resources for State-Specific Information

Several organizations devote time and resources to monitoring specific state requirements and deadlines for voter registration. Any of the following websites will provide you with reliable information on individual state policies:

- ▶ **Declare Yourself:** A national non-partisan, non-profit campaign to empower and encourage every eligible 18-year-old to register and vote in the presidential primaries and 2012 presidential election. [www.declareyourself.com/voting\\_faq/state\\_by\\_state\\_info\\_2.html](http://www.declareyourself.com/voting_faq/state_by_state_info_2.html)
- ▶ **Rock the Vote:** A non-profit, non-partisan organization, founded in 1990 in response to a wave of attacks on freedom of speech and artistic expression. <http://www.rockthevote.org/>
- ▶ **Project Vote Smart:** A non-partisan, non-profit organization that brings citizens of all backgrounds together to defend democracy. [http://www.votesmart.org/voter\\_registration\\_resources.php](http://www.votesmart.org/voter_registration_resources.php)
- ▶ **State's Board of Elections:** See the list of websites and contact information for every state's Board of Elections at the end of this guide.

## Before Election Day: Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

There are many ways to promote voting including canvassing door-to-door, phone banking, and coordinating transportation to the polls for those who need it. When planning your efforts, remember the rules that govern NCJW as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. You cannot tell people to vote for a specific candidate, a specific party, or even a specific ideology, but you can emphasize the importance of participating in the democratic process by voting. Here are some ideas for activities:

### Canvassing Door-to-Door to Register and Turn Out Voters

Face-to-face contact has proven to be the most effective tool in registering voters and reminding them to go to the polls. Here are some tips for successful canvassing:

- ▶ Train canvassing volunteers on messaging, procedure, and the dos and don'ts for non-partisan, tax-exempt organizations.
- ▶ Provide volunteers with maps of the neighborhood, voter registration forms, a clipboard, pens, and pencils.
- ▶ Wear comfortable shoes and NCJW-branded items to increase visibility.
- ▶ Produce and distribute non-partisan leaflets that remind people when and where to vote. Include the 1-866-MYVOTE1 or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA numbers for voters to call if they have a problem at the polls, and provide an NCJW contact if they need transportation on Election Day. Leave these leaflets at houses where no one is home.
- ▶ Follow state regulations on registering voters and become a registrar if required.
- ▶ Carefully document where you have gone and whom you reminded or registered to vote (name, address, phone number, and email) to avoid duplicating efforts and to ensure that you can follow-up closer to Election Day.

### Phone Banking to Remind People to Vote

- ▶ Create a brief, non-partisan sample script for phone banking volunteers.
- ▶ Use an office with multiple phone lines so multiple volunteers can phone at once.
- ▶ Train volunteers about 501(c)(3) rules and record-keeping beforehand.
- ▶ Keep track of whom you have contacted in case they need transportation to the polls.
- ▶ Organize a phone tree in your section to remind people to vote on Election Day, asking each NCJW member to make additional calls to their friends and family.

### Arrange Transportation to the Polls

- ▶ Recruit available drivers for Election Day — preferably owners of vehicles with larger capacities (without partisan bumper stickers). Remind volunteer drivers that they must be non-partisan and cannot discriminate against anyone based on that person's expressed candidate/political party preference.
- ▶ Identify areas/populations that may need rides (e.g. disabled and elderly voters) and publicize your service. Advertise a central phone number that voters may call if they need a ride on Election Day.
- ▶ Prepare maps and lists of poll locations and pick-up sites as well as a way for drivers to keep track of whom they drive to the polls.
- ▶ Create non-partisan, NCJW-branded posters or vehicle decorations reminding people to vote and notifying them of a number to call to request a ride to the polls.

## Election Day: Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

Election Day is the culmination of all of your work to promote the vote, and it is the most important day of all! On Election Day, efforts turn to getting out the vote. As you canvass, phone bank, and hold registration drives in the weeks and months leading up to the election, maintain a list of individuals whom you have helped register to vote and use this list as a starting point for get-out-the-vote activities. Here are some ways to amplify your impact on Election Day.

- ▶ **Phone Banking**  
Set up a volunteer phone bank to contact individuals with whom you made contact through Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote efforts, as well as your NCJW membership, to remind them that it is Election Day and the polls are open. Make sure you provide callers with a list of polling locations and voting hours, so that they can give people specific instructions on where to vote. These calls can be made the night before Election Day.
- ▶ **Door-to-Door Canvassing**  
Face-to-face contact has proven to be the most effective tool in registering voters and getting them out to the polls. Identify neighborhoods that typically have low voter turnout. Send volunteers to knock on doors to remind people to go to the polls and to provide accurate polling information. Distribute non-partisan leaflets that remind people when and where to vote, provide the 1-866-MYVOTE1 or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA number to call if they have a problem at the polls, and include an NCJW contact person.
- ▶ **Transportation to the Polls**  
On Election Day, ensure that those voters who need transportation to the polls get rides. Make sure to coordinate volunteers and those individuals who have signed up for rides and prepare maps and lists of poll locations and pick-up sites as well as a way for drivers to keep track of whom they drive to the polls. Your volunteer drivers for Election Day should be individuals without any partisan bumper stickers on their cars but should be encouraged to decorate their cars with NCJW-branded posters, and post signs in the windows that remind people to vote and notify them of a number to call to request a ride to the polls.
- ▶ **Go Get Out the Vote!**  
With proper planning and committed volunteers, your Election Day GOTV efforts will be fruitful, rewarding, and fun. By the time the polls close, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped people in your community participate in the democratic process by casting a ballot.
- ▶ **Evaluate your GOTV Efforts**  
In the weeks following the election, be sure to plan time to evaluate your get-out-the-vote efforts. What worked well, what challenges did you encounter and how did you respond, and what could strengthen your GOTV efforts in the future? Be sure to share successes and challenges experienced with the NCJW Washington office by contacting Lindsay Morris at [lindsay@ncjwdc.org](mailto:lindsay@ncjwdc.org) or 202 296 2588 x 6.

## Creating Candidate Forums, Questionnaires, and Voter Guides

Educating voters about the position of every candidate on a diverse set of issues is an important community service. NCJW's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status requires us to plan candidate forums and craft candidate questionnaires and voter guides carefully. The information below can help you undertake this important voter education effort consistent with rules governing a tax-exempt non-profit.

### ▶ **Planning Candidate Forums**

Candidate forums provide an excellent opportunity for constituents to hear the views of candidates running for office. For the candidate, such events provide a chance to address the concerns of the community in a fair and open setting. Holding a forum shows the candidates that community members care about the issues and want to be informed voters. It also demonstrates NCJW's commitment to election issues and educating voters. Candidate forums should be viewed as a great opportunity to: work with other 501(c)(3) organizations, raise your section's profile with the media, recruit new members, keep current members engaged, and help inform voters.

#### **Do:**

- ▶ Invite all viable candidates for an office. Even if all are invited, there is a risk that the event could appear partisan if some candidates refuse to participate. **If only one candidate agrees to attend, you should cancel the forum.**
- ▶ Pick an accessible and neutral location — the location must not be selected for political reasons. It should be accessible to people with disabilities and, when possible, to public transportation.
- ▶ Use an independent moderator so that the rules of the forum don't favor any one candidate over another.
- ▶ Compile a list of fair questions. Questions must address a broad range of issues and should not suggest the response the forum sponsor prefers. Questions should not be selected to show particular candidates in a better or worse light. (This doesn't mean they can't be controversial, but it does mean you should ensure your questions are broad and unbiased.)

#### **Don't:**

- ▶ Don't invite only the candidates with whom you agree.
- ▶ Don't select a location designed to intimidate a particular candidate.
- ▶ Don't indicate support for or opposition to a particular candidate or party.
- ▶ Don't use the forum as a political fundraiser or allow others to do so.
- ▶ Don't give any indication of NCJW's views on issues so as not to prejudice the forum. This means that NCJW materials distributed or displayed should not give the organization's position on issues raised in the forum.

### ▶ **Crafting Candidate Questionnaires**

Like the candidates forum, the questionnaire is a valuable tool to educate and inform voters about the views of those running for office. A questionnaire, which must cover a broad range of issues that candidates would address if elected, provides an opportunity for all candidates to make their positions known.

**Do:**

- ▶ Invite all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, to complete the questionnaire.
- ▶ Include a deadline for completion of the questionnaire, maximum word count for answers, information about where candidates should send responses, and an explanation of how the questionnaire will be used (e.g. printed in a local newspaper, online, in an NCJW section bulletin, posted on Facebook, etc.).
- ▶ Verify that all candidates have received the questionnaire and provide a reasonable amount of time for them to respond.
- ▶ Compile a list of neutral, unbiased questions on a variety of issues. NCJW resolutions are a useful tool in selecting the broad range of issues that your questionnaire will address.
- ▶ Print answers in their entirety unless they exceed the previously established word limit.
- ▶ List all candidates and indicate if they did not respond to the questionnaire or to a particular question.

**Don't:**

- ▶ Don't include only the candidates or parties with whom you agree.
- ▶ Don't write biased questions that reflect approval or disapproval of a particular candidate's position or give a hint as to NCJW's bias.
- ▶ Don't highlight any one question or the response of any one candidate.
- ▶ Don't ask only yes or no questions without allowing for an explanation.
- ▶ Don't compare candidates' positions to NCJW's positions on the issues or state NCJW's position anywhere where the questionnaire will be published.

▶ **Writing an Informative Voter Guide**

A voter guide is a voter education tool that offers “one-stop-shopping” for information about each candidate's positions on the issues. By compiling voting histories, responses from a candidate questionnaire, and candidate position statements, the voter guide is a great way to educate the public and makes it easy for voters to compare candidates' positions.

**Do:**

- ▶ Include all viable candidates' positions, regardless of party affiliation.
- ▶ Cover a broad range of issues that the candidates would address if elected.
- ▶ Describe the issues using unbiased, neutral language that does not hint at NCJW's positions.
- ▶ Use only positions that are in the candidates' own words in response to a question or are described in a neutral, unbiased, and complete manner.

**Don't:**

- ▶ Don't include only the candidates with whom you agree.
- ▶ Don't highlight only a narrow set of issues.
- ▶ Don't use biased language to describe the issues or the candidates' responses.
- ▶ Don't edit candidates' statements.
- ▶ Don't compare candidates' positions to NCJW's views on the issues or put NCJW's positions anywhere in the guide.

## Tips on Building Partnerships: Coalition-Building Dos and Don'ts

Efforts to promote the vote can be amplified through partnerships with local and national 501(c)(3) groups who share NCJW's goal of ensuring broad participation in the electoral process. Coalitions unite a group of individuals and/or organizations with a common interest that agree to work together toward a common goal. Elections provide a great opportunity to seek out new partners. The effectiveness of your promote the vote efforts can go hand-in-hand with building trust and working relationships with organizations and individuals with whom you may not typically work.

### Getting Started:

- ▶ Investigate whether there are existing nonpartisan coalitions in your community, city, or state working to promote and protect the vote.
- ▶ Contact interested 501(c)(3) organizations to invite them to participate in your Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote activities.
- ▶ Follow up written or electronic invitations or introductions with personal phone calls.
- ▶ Build on connections you already have with community organizations.
- ▶ Develop a plan with coalition partners and implement, monitor, and adjust the plan together.

### Do:

- ▶ **Use activities to build working relationships with other organizations.** Collaborate through co-sponsored educational events, GOTV efforts, voter registration drives, and other events aimed at promoting and protecting the vote.
- ▶ **Use available resources.** Before creating something from scratch, check out the resources included and/or referenced in this guide or those available from other partners.
- ▶ **Be inclusive and participatory.** Work to make the coalition a group in which anyone in the community will feel welcome. Seek diverse partners.
- ▶ **Acknowledge diversity among your members.** Your coalition may represent a diversity of opinions and individuals. Make sure to take everyone's perspective into account and use that diversity to spur discussion rather than let it become a source of division.
- ▶ **Communicate.** Open communication will assure that no one feels left out of the loop, and that everyone has the information necessary to make coalition efforts successful. Create a listserv for your group. Use social media to organize.
- ▶ **Set concrete, reachable goals.** Achieving attainable goals can help a coalition develop the strength and motivation to pursue and achieve longer-term goals.
- ▶ **Be realistic and keep your promises.** It's important to be viewed as a reliable ally. Make sure you can follow through on everything you say you will do.

### Don't:

- ▶ **Don't work in partnership with parties, candidates, or other political organizations** such as 501(c)(4) advocacy groups. If working with a 501(c)(4) organization, or a 501(c)(3) organization that also has a 501(c)(4) component, be absolutely certain that the activity will be conducted in a nonpartisan fashion.
- ▶ **Don't reinvent the wheel.** One of the benefits of working in coalition is that you can share resources. Save time and money by maximizing your partnerships.
- ▶ **Don't give the impression of partisanship.** Be careful not to allow your efforts to be timed in such a way as to appear to coincide with politically significant events in a particular candidate's campaign.

## Absentee Voting

Promote the vote by educating people about their right to cast a ballot even if they cannot be present on Election Day, through absentee ballot or other provisions. Protect the vote by ensuring that these rules are followed in your community.

Individuals unable to get to the polls on Election Day may vote by absentee ballot, but please be mindful of absentee ballot submission or postmark deadlines, which vary by state and educate your communities and individual volunteers about these laws.

### Registered voters are eligible to cast an absentee ballot if they are:

- ▶ Students, their spouses, and dependents residing with them.
- ▶ Members of the Armed Forces, Merchant Marines, Red Cross, USO, government employees, their spouses, and dependents residing with them.
- ▶ Workers who, for reasons of employment, will not be able to vote on Election Day.
- ▶ Physically disabled persons.
- ▶ Persons on vacation.
- ▶ Persons age 65 or older.
- ▶ Persons admitted to the hospital as emergency patients on Election Day or at least four days prior to the election.
- ▶ Persons with a death or funeral in the family within three days prior to the election.
- ▶ Persons confined to a jail or pre-trial facility pending disposition of arrest or trial.
- ▶ Persons attending sick or physically disabled persons.
- ▶ Persons who cannot vote at the polls due to religious beliefs.

These are only some of the criteria for obtaining absentee ballots. Each state has its own rules for absentee voting and may have other provisions such as early voting. Use the resources listed below to learn your state's procedures and key deadlines to cast a vote by absentee ballot.

### Resources for More Information on Absentee Voting

- ▶ **State-by-State Guide to Absentee Voting** to identify each state's requirements for absentee voting and access related forms or applications, [http://www.longdistancevoter.org/absentee\\_ballots](http://www.longdistancevoter.org/absentee_ballots)
- ▶ **Federal Voting Assistance Program** for Uniformed Services members and US citizens living abroad, <http://www.fvap.gov/>
- ▶ **US State Department** provides details on Overseas Voting, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/overseas\\_voting/overseas\\_voting\\_4754.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/overseas_voting/overseas_voting_4754.html)

**Our voter registration services are available without regard to the voter's political preference.**

Information and other assistance regarding registering or voting, including transportation and other services offered, shall not be withheld or refused on the basis of support for or opposition to particular candidates or a particular party.

*The posting of this notice is required by the Federal Election Commission*

## Election Day Protect the Vote Activities

Election Day is the culmination of all the hard work you will have done to promote the vote. As essential as this work is, strong voter turnout is not enough to ensure that the democratic process will work. It is also important that we ensure that every vote counts and that everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so. Consider the following options for you and your section to protect the vote on Election Day:

### Be a poll worker

- ▶ Sign-up to be a poll worker through your local government, the US Election Assistance Commission, the National Association of State Election Directors, or coordinate with national organizations like People for the American Way, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, or other groups. Often, poll workers are required to participate in a short training so be sure you sign up well before Election Day and organize other volunteers to do the same.
- ▶ Prepare yourself with the tools in this packet and recommended additional resources — your knowledge of permissible and impermissible election activity may be critical to voters in your community. This year, more than ever, make sure you know the ID requirements for voters in your state.
- ▶ Be prepared with contact information for your local election commission and watchdog groups so that you can help individual voters contact the right authorities or legal counsel if they are intimidated, harassed, kept from casting their ballot, or if you observe a poll worker make an error that nullifies a ballot.

### When you're working at the polls, it is essential that you:

#### Are informed

- ▶ Review the materials provided in this packet about the Help America Vote Act, enfranchising traditionally disenfranchised communities, and protecting against and reporting problems at the polls.
- ▶ Bring the one-pager in this section entitled “Guarding against Obstacles to Voting on Election Day” with you to the polls. Use it as a quick reference guide for some of the more common barriers to voting and to know whom to call if you observe an act of voter intimidation or other problems.

#### Remember to vote!

- ▶ If you are volunteering at a polling place outside of your own precinct or working in your neighborhood as a driver or canvasser, make sure you schedule plenty of time for yourself and the volunteers you are coordinating to cast your ballots. If you know you won't have time, consider casting an absentee ballot prior to Election Day or participate in early voting if it is available in your state.

## Understanding and Applying the Help American Vote Act (HAVA)

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was enacted in 2002 to give voters across the country basic rights and protections to cast a ballot and have their vote count. Prior to HAVA, most election matters were left up to the states and local authorities to regulate, except where elections were subject to the Voting Rights Act as a result of past discrimination. HAVA is very comprehensive, addressing many facets of election law. Some specifics that may help shape you and your sections efforts to protect the vote are listed below. To view a copy of the law, visit [http://www.fec.gov/hava/law\\_ext.txt](http://www.fec.gov/hava/law_ext.txt).

### HAVA protects these basic rights for every voter:

- ▶ The right to verify (in a private and independent manner) their vote before their ballot is cast and counted.
- ▶ The opportunity (in a private and independent manner) to change the ballot or correct any error before the ballot is cast and counted, including the opportunity to correct the error by using a replacement ballot if the voter was otherwise unable to change the ballot or correct any error.
- ▶ If the voter accidentally selects more than one candidate for a single office:
  - ▶ The right to be notified by election officials that they have selected more than one candidate for a single office on the ballot;
  - ▶ The right to be notified by election officials, before the ballot is cast and counted, of the effect of casting multiple votes for the office; and
  - ▶ The right to have a chance to correct the ballot before the ballot is cast and counted.

**To comply with HAVA, any state or jurisdiction that uses a paper ballot voting system, a punch card voting system, or a central count voting system, including mail-in absentee ballots and mail-in ballots, is required to:**

- ▶ Establish a voter education program specific to that voting system that notifies each voter of the effect of casting multiple votes for an office.
- ▶ Provide the voter with instructions on how to correct the ballot before it is cast and counted, including instructions on how to correct errors through the issuance of a replacement ballot if the voter was otherwise unable to change the ballot or correct any error.

## Ensuring Enfranchisement

Historically, the right to vote has not been applied equally across communities, counties, or states nationwide. Our nation's history is blemished by incidents of systematic voter disenfranchisement. As we engage in our efforts to protect the vote by safeguarding our communities against the practice of exclusion, please be aware of these specific rights provided for in HAVA, designed to help protect all-too-frequently disenfranchised communities.

### Voters with Disabilities

- ▶ Under HAVA, every voting system must be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including, but not limited to, non-visual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters.
- ▶ According to HAVA, every polling place must use at least one direct recording electronic voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities.

### Language Minority Voters

Under HAVA, a voting system must provide alternative language accessibility as specified in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which covers jurisdictions meeting certain criteria regarding non-English speaking voters. The Voting Rights Act states that:

- ▶ Whenever any state or political subdivision covered by the Voting Rights Act provides any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language.
- ▶ If the predominant language is historically unwritten, the State or political subdivision may instead furnish oral instructions, assistance, or other information relating to registration and voting. Contact your local board of elections to determine regulations associated with voter assistance.



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

## You Have the Right to:

### 1. Receive a Ballot

If you are a registered voter, but your name is not on the rolls, you have the right to request a provisional ballot.

### 2. Use an Accessible Polling Place

Persons with physical disabilities and persons in need of language translation must be provided with accommodation and must be assisted in voting.

### 3. Review a Sample Ballot Before Voting

If you want to see a sample ballot in order to help you vote properly, you are entitled to do so.

### 4. Cast a Vote As Long As You Arrive Before the Poll Closes

If you are in line before the polls close, you are entitled to vote, no matter how long it may take.

### 5. Have Your Vote Count

If you fail to vote in some of the races on the ballot or if there is an error on your ballot and you fill out a provisional ballot instead, your vote must still be counted.

**If you experience or witness voter disenfranchisement, please call 1-866-MYVOTE1 or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA**

## Contact Information for Every State Board of Elections

Below is contact information for every state's Board of Elections. For state-specific voter information (registration deadlines, election dates, absentee voting, polling hours, voting machines, or provisions for voters with disabilities), call or visit your state's website. These offices can answer state-specific questions that may arise.

### ALABAMA

Office of Secretary of State  
PO Box 5616  
Montgomery, AL 36103  
(334) 242-7210 FAX (334) 242-2444  
<http://www.sos.alabama.gov/elections/default.aspx>

### ALASKA

Division of Elections  
PO Box 110017  
Juneau, AK 99811-0017  
(907) 465-4611 FAX (907) 465-3203  
<http://www.elections.alaska.gov/>

### ARIZONA

Office of Secretary of State  
1700 W. Washington Street, 7th Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2888  
(602) 542-8683 FAX (602) 542-6172  
<http://www.azsos.gov/election/>

### ARKANSAS

Secretary of State  
State Capitol, Room 256  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
(501) 682-5070 FAX (501) 682-3408  
<http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx>

### CALIFORNIA

Secretary of State  
1500 11th St., 5th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 657-2166 FAX (916) 653-3214  
<http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections>

### COLORADO

Secretary of State  
1700 Broadway, Suite 270  
Denver, CO 80290  
(303) 894-2200 FAX (303) 869-4861  
<http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/main.html>

### CONNECTICUT

Secretary of State  
30 Trinity Street  
PO Box 150470  
Hartford, CT 06115-0470  
(860) 509-6100 FAX (860) 509-6127  
<http://www.ct.gov/sots/site/default.asp>

### DELAWARE

State Election Commissioner  
111 S. West Street, Suite 10  
Dover, DE 19904  
(302) 739-4277 FAX (302) 739- 6794  
<http://elections.delaware.gov/>

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Executive Director  
Board of Elections & Ethics  
441 Fourth St., NW, Suite 250N  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 727-2525 FAX (202) 347-2648  
<http://www.dcboee.org>

### FLORIDA

Division of Elections, Dept. of State  
Room 316, R.A. Gray Building  
500 S. Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250  
(850) 245-6200 FAX (850) 245-6217  
<http://election.dos.state.fl.us>

**GEORGIA**

Secretary of State  
 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive  
 Suite 802 Floyd West Tower  
 Atlanta, GA 30334  
 (404) 656-2871 FAX (404) 651-9531  
<http://www.sos.ga.gov/elections/>

**GUAM**

Election Commission  
 P.O. Box BG  
 Hagatna, Guam 96932  
 (671) 477-9791/2/3 FAX (671) 477-1895  
<http://gec.guam.gov/index/>

**HAWAII**

Office of Elections  
 802 Lehua Avenue  
 Pearl City, HI 96782  
 (808) 453-8683 FAX (808) 453-6006  
<http://hawaii.gov/elections>

**IDAHO**

Secretary of State  
 700 West Jefferson  
 PO Box 83720  
 Boise, ID 83720-0080  
 (208) 334-2300 FAX (208) 334-2282  
<http://www.idsos.state.id.us/elect/eleindex.htm>

**ILLINOIS**

State Board of Elections  
 1020 S. Spring Street  
 Springfield, IL 62704  
 (217) 782-4141 FAX (217) 782-5959  
<http://www.elections.il.gov>

**INDIANA**

Indiana Election Division  
 200 W. Washington St., Room 201  
 Indianapolis, IN 46204  
 (317) 232-6531 FAX (317) 233-3283  
<http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/index.htm>

**IOWA**

Secretary of State  
 First Floor, Lucas Building  
 321 E. 12th Street  
 Des Moines, IA 50319  
 (515) 281-0145 FAX (515) 281-4682  
<http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/index.html>

**KANSAS**

Secretary of State  
 120 SW 10th Avenue  
 First Floor, Memorial Hall  
 Topeka, Kansas 66612-1594  
 (785) 296-4561 FAX (785) 291-3051  
<http://www.kssos.org/elections/elections.html>

**KENTUCKY**

Secretary of State  
 Elections Branch  
 700 Capital Avenue, Suite 148  
 Frankfort, KY 40601  
 (502) 564-3490 FAX (502) 564-5687  
<http://sos.ky.gov/elections/>

**LOUISIANA**

Elections Division  
 8585 Archives Ave.  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70809-9125  
 (225) 922-0900 FAX (225) 922-0945  
<http://www.sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/68/Default.aspx>

**MAINE**

Deputy Secretary of State  
 101 State House Station  
 Augusta, ME 04333-0101  
 (207) 624-7736 FAX (207) 287-5874  
<http://www.state.me.us/sos/cec/election/index.html>

**MARYLAND**

State Board of Elections  
 151 West St., Ste 200  
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401-0486  
 (410) 269-2840 FAX (410) 974-2019  
<http://www.elections.state.md.us/>

**MASSACHUSETTS**

Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Elections Division  
McCormack Building, Room 1705  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 727-2828 FAX (617) 742-3238  
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm>

**MICHIGAN**

Bureau of Elections  
Richard H. Austin Building - First Floor  
430 W. Allegan Street  
Lansing, MI 48918  
(517) 373-2540 FAX (517) 241-4785  
<http://www.michigan.gov/vote>

**MINNESOTA**

Secretary of State  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
Blvd., Suite 180  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 215-1440 FAX (651) 296-9073  
<http://www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=4>

**MISSISSIPPI**

Assistant Secretary of State, Elections  
401 Mississippi Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
(601) 576-2550 FAX (601) 359-5019  
<http://www.sos.ms.gov/elections.aspx>

**MISSOURI**

Missouri Secretary of State's Office  
James C. Kirkpatrick State Info. Ctr  
PO Box 1767  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1767  
(573) 751-2301 FAX (573) 526-3242  
<http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/>

**MONTANA**

Deputy for Elections  
PO Box 202801  
Helena, MT 59620  
888-884-VOTE FAX (406) 444-2023  
<http://sos.mt.gov/Elections/index.asp>

**NEBRASKA**

Secretary of State  
State Capitol  
1445 K Street, Third Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
(402) 471-2555 FAX (402) 471-7834  
<http://www.sos.ne.gov/dyindex.html>

**NEVADA**

Secretary of State  
101 North Carson St., Suite 3  
Carson City, NV 89701  
(775) 684-5705 FAX (775) 684-5718  
<http://nvsos.gov/index.aspx?page=3>

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Secretary of State  
State House, Room 204  
107 North Main Street  
Concord, N.H. 03301  
(603) 271-3242 FAX (603) 271-6316  
<http://www.sos.nh.gov/electionsnew.html>

**NEW JERSEY**

Division of Elections  
P.O. Box 304  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0304  
(609) 292-3760 FAX (609) 777-1280  
<http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/>

**NEW MEXICO**

Secretary of State  
New Mexico State Capitol  
325 Don Gaspar, Suite 300  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 827-3600 FAX (505) 827-8403  
<http://www.sos.state.nm.us/sos-elections.html>

**NEW YORK**

State Board of Elections  
40 Steuben Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
(518) 474-5086 FAX (518) 486-4546  
<http://www.elections.state.ny.us>

**NORTH CAROLINA**

State Board of Elections  
 506 North Harrington St.  
 Raleigh, North Carolina 27603  
 (919) 733-7173 FAX (919) 715-0135  
<http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>

**NORTH DAKOTA**

Deputy Secretary of State  
 600 E Boulevard Ave, Dept 108  
 Bismarck, ND 58505-0500  
 (701) 328-4146 FAX (701) 328-2992  
<http://www.nd.gov/sos/electvote/>

**NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

Election Commission  
 PO Box 500470  
 Saipan, MP 96950-0470  
 (670) 664-VOTE FAX (670) 644-8689  
<http://www.votecnmi.gov.mp/>

**OHIO**

Secretary of State  
 180 East Broad Street  
 Columbus, OH 43215  
 (614) 466-2585 FAX (614) 752-4360  
<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections.aspx>

**OKLAHOMA**

State Election Board  
 Room B-6, State Capitol  
 Oklahoma City, OK 73152  
 (405) 521-2391 FAX (405) 521-6457  
<http://www.ok.gov/elections/index.html>

**OREGON**

Secretary of State  
 255 Capitol St NE, Ste 501  
 Salem, OR 97310  
 (503) 986-1518 FAX (503) 373-7414  
<http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/index.html>

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Elections Division  
 210 North Office Building  
 Harrisburg, PA 17120  
 (717) 787-5280 FAX (717) 705-0721  
<http://www.votespa.com/>

**PUERTO RICO**

Commonwealth Election Commission  
 PO Box 195552  
 San Juan, PR 00919-5552  
 (787) 758-3333 FAX (787) 296-0173  
<http://www.ceepur.org>

**RHODE ISLAND**

Elections Division  
 148 West River Street  
 Providence, RI 02904-2615  
 (401) 222-2340 FAX (401) 222-1444  
<http://sos.ri.gov/elections/>

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

State Election Commission  
 Post Office Box 5987  
 Columbia, SC 29250  
 (803) 734-9060 FAX (803) 734-9366  
<http://www.scvotes.org>

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Secretary of State  
 500 East Capitol Avenue  
 Pierre, SD 57501  
 (605) 773-3537 FAX (605) 773-6580  
<http://sdsos.gov/Elections/Default.aspx>

**TENNESSEE**

Division of Elections  
 312 Rosa L Parks Avenue  
 9th Floor, Snodgrass Tower  
 Nashville, TN 37243  
 (615) 741-7956 FAX (615) 741-1278  
<http://www.tn.gov/sos/election/index.htm>

**TEXAS**

Elections Division  
 Secretary of State  
 P.O. Box 12060  
 Austin, Texas 78711-2060  
 (512) 463-5650 FAX (512) 475-2887  
<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/index.shtml>

**UTAH**

Lieutenant Governor  
 Utah State Capitol  
 Suite 220  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84114  
 (801) 538-1041 FAX (801) 538-1133  
<http://elections.utah.gov/>

**VERMONT**

Secretary of State, Elections Division  
 128 State Street  
 Montpelier, VT 05633-1101  
 (802) 828-2464 FAX (802) 828-5171  
<http://vermont-elections.org/>

**VIRGINIA**

State Board of Elections  
 1100 Bank Street, First Floor  
 Richmond, VA 23219  
 (804) 864-8901 FAX (804) 371-0194  
<http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/>

**VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Board of Elections  
 (877) 773-1021 St. Croix  
 (877) 774-3107 St. Thomas | St. John  
[www.vivote.gov](http://www.vivote.gov)

**WASHINGTON**

Secretary of State, Elections Division  
 PO Box 40229  
 Olympia, WA 98504-0229  
 (360) 902-4180 FAX (360) 664-4619  
<http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/>

**WEST VIRGINIA**

Secretary of State, Elections Division  
 Bldg. 1, Suite 157-K  
 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East  
 Charleston, WV 25305-0770  
 (304) 558-6000 FAX (304) 558-0900  
<http://www.sos.wv.gov/ELECTIONS/>

**WISCONSIN**

Government Accountability Board  
 212 East Washington Ave., Third Floor  
 Madison, WI 53707  
 (608) 266-8005 FAX (608) 267-0500  
<http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting>

**WYOMING**

Secretary of State, Election Division  
 200 West 24th Street  
 Cheyenne, WY 82002-0020  
 (307) 777-5860 FAX (307) 777-7640  
<http://soswy.state.wy.us/Elections/Elections.aspx>

## Guide to Additional Resources

Many non-profit and government entities have resources available to help in your efforts to promote and protect the vote. Below is a partial list of sites and organizations that have resources to supplement this guide.

### US Department of Justice

The Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice has a voting section devoted to enforcement of federal voting rights laws. Information about civil rights laws protecting the right to vote is available on their website.

[www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/)

800 253 3931

### US Election Assistance Commission

The US Election Assistance Commission (EAC) was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). EAC is an independent, bipartisan commission charged with developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements, adopting voluntary voting system guidelines, and serving as a national clearinghouse of information about election administration.

[www.eac.gov/clearinghouse](http://www.eac.gov/clearinghouse)

866 747 1471

### US Federal Election Commission

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) was created to administer and enforce federal election laws. The Commission is made up of six members (no more than three from a single political party) who are appointed for six year terms. Their website has comprehensive information on a range of election-related topics. [www.fec.gov/](http://www.fec.gov/)

800 424 9530

### Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights

The Lawyers' Committee has been working toward achieving equality and to protect advances in voting rights for racial and ethnic minorities and other traditionally disenfranchised groups. Their website offers a wide range of information that can help support your efforts to protect the vote.

[http://www.lawyerscommittee.org/projects/voting\\_rights/about?id=0001](http://www.lawyerscommittee.org/projects/voting_rights/about?id=0001)

202 662 8600 or 888 299 5227

### League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a nonpartisan political organization that works to improve US systems of government and impact public policies through education and advocacy. LWV has an extensive voter registration and get-out-the-vote effort including a variety of helpful resources. Online voter registration, a polling place locator, and answers to questions about eligibility can be found on their website [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) or sister site:

[www.vote411.org/](http://www.vote411.org/)

202 429 1965

### National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The NAACP Civic Engagement Department is actively engaged in helping people to use the power of their voice by voting, with an aim to increase turnout among young voters. Resources address: voter education, get-out-the-vote activities, and election protection. [www.naacp.org/pages/civic-engagement-resources](http://www.naacp.org/pages/civic-engagement-resources)

877 622 2798 (877 NACCP 98)

**National Council of La Raza**

The National Council of La Raza's Latino Empowerment and Advocacy Project (LEAP) engages Latino and immigrant communities in the political process, focusing on unregistered and newly registered voters.

[www.nclr.org/index.php/issues\\_and\\_programs/advocacy\\_and\\_empowerment/civic\\_engagement/leap/](http://www.nclr.org/index.php/issues_and_programs/advocacy_and_empowerment/civic_engagement/leap/)

202 785 1670

[comments@nclr.org](mailto:comments@nclr.org)

**People for the American Way**

People for the American Way has a number of important resources for advocates working to protect the vote. Their guides for overcoming voter suppression efforts and information about voter ID laws are helpful for communities facing those challenges. [www.pfaw.org/issues/the-right-to-vote](http://www.pfaw.org/issues/the-right-to-vote)

202 467 4999

[Pfaw@pfaw.org](mailto:Pfaw@pfaw.org)

**Rock the Vote**

Rock the Vote is an organization aimed at increasing youth voter turnout through media campaigns and street team activities. Rock the Vote coordinates voter registration drives, get-out-the-vote events, and voter education efforts, all with the intention of ensuring that young people take advantage of their right to vote. Their online voter registration tool is an easy and efficient way to register new voters.

[www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)

202 719 9910

**Tufts University Civic Engagement Project**

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), has conducted research on civic education in schools, colleges, and community settings and on young Americans' voting and political participation, service, activism, media use, and other forms of civic engagement. CIRCLE is based at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University. <http://www.civicyouth.org/>

**Union for Reform Judaism**

The URJ has a voter registration manual directed at mobilizing the American Jewish vote. This guide provides some good recommendations for community events in advance of the election. [www.rac.org/gotv](http://www.rac.org/gotv)

202 387 2800

[info@rac.org](mailto:info@rac.org)

**The White House Project**

The White House Project aims to advance women's leadership in all communities and sectors, up to the US presidency. Their Vote, Run, Lead program is designed to engage women in the political process as voters, activists, and candidates through trainings, inspiration, and networking.

[www.thewhitehouseproject.org/](http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org/)

212 709 4450

**Women's Voices. Women Vote**

Women's Voices. Women Vote started with one goal in mind: improving unmarried women's participation in the electorate and policy process. They provide tools for both organizations and individuals to get more unmarried women registered to vote and to help get out the vote. Their Women's Voices section offers resources for those seeking political commentary from women.

[www.wvvv.org](http://www.wvvv.org)

202 659 9570

[info@wvvv.org](mailto:info@wvvv.org)

## Taking Action on Ballot Initiatives

Many of the issues most important to NCJW sections and members will be decided by state and local ballot initiatives during the 2012 election cycle. Working for or against ballot initiatives is a permissible lobbying activity with respect to NCJW's status as a 501(c)(3) organization. Below are some common questions NCJW members ask about working on these ballot measures.

- ▶ **Can I advocate for or against a specific ballot initiative?** Yes. Even though ballot initiatives usually appear alongside candidates for public office on the ballot, working for or against ballot measures is a permissible lobbying activity, not a prohibited political activity.
- ▶ **Is a ballot initiative the same thing as a referendum?** Yes. Ballot initiatives, referenda, state constitutional amendments, and bond measures are all legislative proposals that appear on the ballot for approval by the voters. When considering these measures, voters act as law-makers and their votes determine whether or not a policy or proposal is made law.
- ▶ **What's the difference between advocating for an initiative and advocating for a candidate?** Advocating for a ballot initiative is issue-based advocacy that advances our organizational mission. As a 501(c)(3) organization, working on ballot initiatives is a permissible component of our advocacy work. On the other hand, 501(c)(3) organizations like NCJW are prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for public office. You can work on a legislative measure appearing on the ballot. You cannot comment on candidates included on the same ballot. If you would like to work on a ballot initiative in your state, please contact the NCJW Washington office at [action@ncjwdc.org](mailto:action@ncjwdc.org) or 202 296 2588 to ensure that all of your activities comply with our tax-exempt status.
- ▶ **How do I know what initiatives are on the ballot in my state?** There are many great sources to help you find out what initiatives will be on your ballot in November. Most county websites offer a sample ballot. Here are a few additional sources:
  - ▶ **Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (BISC)** provides progressive information on state initiatives around the country. In addition to comprehensive lists of what is on the ballot in each state, BISC provides resources, research, and strategy for working on those initiatives as well. Visit BISC online at: <http://www.ballot.org/>
  - ▶ **Ballotpedia**, like Wikipedia, is populated with information created by its users. As such, the information on the site has not been vetted for accuracy or bias. However, Ballotpedia does provide a fairly comprehensive list of current initiatives that can serve as a good starting place for your research. Visit Ballotpedia online at: <http://ballotpedia.org/>
  - ▶ **Ballotwatch**, a project of the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California has state ballot initiative guides available online at: <http://www.iandrinstitute.org>
  - ▶ **Project Vote Smart** is a non-partisan organization that provides a [comprehensive list of statewide ballot initiatives](#) around the country. Visit Project Vote Smart online at: <http://www.votesmart.org/>
  - ▶ **The National Conference of State Legislatures** maintains a searchable database of ballot measures online at: <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=16580>

As always, you must notify the NCJW Washington office about all election-related activities at 202 296 2588 or [action@ncjwdc.org](mailto:action@ncjwdc.org) to have your activity or event approved.