

## Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote

# Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

This section of the Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote is devoted to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts. There are many ways to promote voting, including voter education, canvassing, phone banking, coordinating transportation to the polls, and coordinating childcare on Election Day. It's important to remember that elections are held year-round, every year. Be aware of your local election cycles so you know when to organize GOTV campaigns.

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 party, or ideology, but you can emphasize the importance of voting. See "Q & A On NCJW's 501(C)(3) Status On Election Related Activities" (Resource 1.3) or Alliance for Justice's "The Rules of the Game: A Guide to Election-Related Activities for 501(c)(3) Organizations" (<https://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Rules-of-the-Game.pdf>) for more information.

## Voter Education

There are two components to voter education: educating individuals about when and how to register and vote, and educating individuals on the issues at stake. Both elements are crucial to providing individuals in your section and community with the tools needed to participate in the electoral process. Voter education tactics can include:

- Vote plans;
- Voter information pamphlets;
- Candidate forums;
- Candidate questionnaires;
- Voter guides; and
- Ballot initiative campaigns.

In-depth explanations of voter education tactics are included in the Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote resource guide. Contact NCJW at [action@ncjwdc.org](mailto:action@ncjwdc.org) if you have questions about how to provide voter education in a way that complies with 501(c)(3) rules.

## Creating a Vote Plan

Vote planning is a technique to ensure voters turnout to the polls. The goal of a vote plan is to encourage an individual to envision themselves voting and identify any potential barriers they might have or encounter. You can make a vote plan with someone when phone banking, canvassing, or in normal conversation. Develop a vote plan by asking questions such as:

- What time will you be voting?

- Where are you voting? Do you have a mail-in ballot or are you going to the polls?
- How are you getting there? Do you need a ride?
- Who else can you bring with you?
- Do you need to take off work or secure childcare?
- *In states with voter I.D. laws:* Do you have all the necessary documents to vote?

## Canvassing

Face-to-face contact is the most effective tool for registering voters and reminding them to vote. Here are some tips for successful canvassing:

- Train canvassing volunteers on messaging, procedure, and the dos and don'ts for nonpartisan, 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 nonpartisan leaflets that remind people when and where to vote. Include election protection hotlines (1-866-OUR-VOTE or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA) 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, *but be sure to leave it in their door and not their mailbox, which is illegal.*
- Follow state regulations on registering voters and become a registrar if required.
- Document where you have gone and whom you reminded or registered to vote, including their name, address, phone number, and email. This will aid in both avoiding duplicating efforts and supporting follow-up closer to Election Day.

## Phone Banking

Here are some tips for successful phone-banking:

- Create a brief, nonpartisan sample script for phone banking volunteers.
- Use an office with multiple phone lines so many volunteers can make calls at once.
- Train volunteers about 501(c)(3) rules and record-keeping beforehand.
- Keep track of whom you've contacted for follow-up closer to Election Day and in case they need transportation to the polls.
- Call section members and work with them to make a vote plan. Ask members to do the same with friends and family.

## Arrange Transportation or Childcare

Make it as easy as possible for individuals to cast a ballot by arranging transportation to the polls, or child care while people vote. Providing these resources is especially important for low-income voters.

- Recruit available drivers for Election Day, preferably owners of vehicles with larger capacities (without partisan bumper stickers).

- Secure space in an office or home to watch children while parents cast a ballot. Recruit section members, or their parents or children, to act as babysitters.
- Remind volunteers that they must be nonpartisan and cannot discriminate against anyone based on that person's expressed candidate/political party preference.
- Advertise rides to the polls and childcare services using a central phone number.
- 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 nonpartisan, 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.

## Suggested GOTV Calendar

Below are efforts your section's Get Out the Vote (GOTV) team can take in the months leading up to an election.

### Evergreen Efforts

- Establish a GOTV team in your section to plan and implement your work.
- Assess and gather needed resources including funds, volunteers, etc.
- Collaborate with other 501(c)(3) groups or join existing local efforts.
- Plan and hold voter education events.
- Select appropriate activities for your community that will attract volunteer participation.
- Develop and gather the plans and materials for your activities such as leaflets for canvassing, vote plan templates, phone bank scripts, press releases, candidate questionnaires, voter registration forms, etc.
- Confirm that your activities comply with your state's election and voting laws.
- Educate and advocate for expanded access to the ballot.
- Bring voter registration forms to all section events and activities (check your state laws to ensure compliance).
- Invite the local press to cover your activities.
- Visit <https://www.ncjw.org/work/civic-engagement/> to ensure you have the latest information and resources for your work.

### Six Months before the Election Day

- Recruit, organize, and train volunteers to phone bank and canvass.
- Make a plan and recruit volunteers for transportation to the polls or childcare on Election Day.
- Organize a candidate forum and develop and disseminate a candidate questionnaire.
- Recruit, organize, and train volunteers for Election Day activities, such as poll monitoring.
- Educate your community about early, absentee, and in-person absentee voting.

### **4-8 Weeks before the Election Day**

- Contact every member of your section and work with them to make a vote plan.
- Assign roles to Election Day volunteers.
- Do final rounds of canvassing, phone banking, and leafleting.