

Guide: Planning and Running a Voter Registration Drive

This tool provides ideas on when, where and how to get your staff and volunteers registered to vote.

Timing: When to do it

We recommend doing it in one week before the voter registration deadlines. Remember there are deadlines for the Primary election and deadlines for the General Election. The week of National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) happens on the fourth Tuesday of September. This holiday takes place in advance of states' voter registration deadlines for the fall elections. Set up a table in a central location or share information for the duration of the week and plan a special event on NVRD itself. Alternatively, you may prefer to do it at a time when more volunteers are around or around a major staff event.

Staffing: Who coordinates and who does the voter registration

Every voter registration drive needs a coordinator or staff team to run the activity. It could be a program or policy staff person, or someone who ordinarily organizes staff activities. For staff and volunteers doing voter registration, it helps to have someone who is naturally outgoing and is passionate about voting.

Larger nonprofits may want to make each of their department heads responsible to make sure staff gets registered, like issuing a reminder during a weekly staff meeting.

Kick Off: Inform staff about the drive and encourage them to participate

A voter registration drive can start with an email to staff from the CEO/Executive Director or senior staff two to three weeks before the drive begins. It can also be an announcement at an all staff meeting. All staff need to know this is an important commitment of the organization.

Suggested Tactics: Ideas to get started

Virtual Voter Registration Week

Dedicate a week to sharing information about voter registration digitally both internally inside your office and on social media. This can look like sharing information about how to register to vote or check your registration in staff emails or hosting a webinar for staff on how they can register and vote with an expert.

Door knock – or “cube knock” - your office (even virtually)

Door knocking is a campaign staple. Try it in your office. If you are working remotely, create an individual check-in plan to serve as a “door knock.” Have a few volunteers divvy up the work, or have one person do it. Find someone who is passionate about voting and to whom you just can't say “no” or “I don't have time” to take it on.

A staff member with ACCESS in Dearborn, MI takes his cube-knocking duties seriously and makes the rounds every election cycle. Part of his role with ACCESS also includes raising money for scholarship funds for the organization, and reports that staff know that “when he comes knocking, he’s either asking people to register to vote or to donate to the organization’s scholarship fund.” He reports it’s much easier to get to yes for voter registration.

A Table or Booth

Set up a table or booth for a week during work hours and in an area convenient for staff and volunteers. One or two people may primarily staff the table, but consider rotating in other staff for short shifts. Make the booth festive and appealing. Use red, white and blue balloons, bunting or other inexpensive decorations. Provide treats or giveaways to make the booth more inviting.

Staff meetings

Some nonprofits can register staff to vote in a regular staff meeting. Be prepared with links, forms and information about voting in your state. Make sure to ask staff who say they’re registered if they’ve moved recently or changed their name, and may need to update their registration.

Join the party

Join the party! We won’t say which political party but we will give you pizza and cake to make it inviting to register. Virtual party? We can provide gift cards for food. At a “civic engagement” party no one attending has to register but it’s a good time to offer it.

Partnership Health Center in Missoula, MT hosted a National Voter Registration Day VRD party to celebrate the holiday for democracy, complete with an American flag shaped cake for their staff and volunteers.

Department competition

Create a little competition between departments. Who can get to 100% of eligible staff registered first or the most total registrations turned in.

For your volunteers

Voter registration is a perfect activity to integrate into volunteer orientation to show your organization’s commitment to civic participation and active citizenship. Or include volunteers in any of the above activities.

For those who are already registered

Some staff and volunteers are likely already registered. You can have information for them about requesting a mail-in ballot or pledge to vote cards that can be sent to them closer to the election as a reminder to vote.

Promotion: Create visibility for the drive

- Provide email and social media reminders.
- Place promotional posters in high-traffic areas, such as the main lobby, elevators and employee break rooms.
- Take pictures and post them in your internal communications.

Recognition: Give props to those who led the effort.

Hand out awards or give recognition to coordinators and registrars in a staff meeting or newsletter. A personal note of thanks is always welcome!

The YWCA USA learned in 2014 that local affiliates are motivated by opportunities for recognition across their network. They made sure the actions of their participating local affiliates were publicly recognized.

Source: [Nonprofit VOTE](#)