YWCA 2020 Get Out The Vote Guide

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

YOUR VOICE.
YOUR VOTE.
YOUR FUTURE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring access to the voting booth is an important part of YWCA's commitment to eliminating racism and empowering women and—now more than ever—it is critical to ensuring a healthy, safe, empowered future for our communities. Higher voter participation has been associated with higher employment rates, lower recidivism rates, and more positive health outcomes in communities, as well increased attention from our elected officials and candidates for office. New challenges to the voting process posed by the COVID-19 global pandemic, along with pre-existing systemic and historical barriers to the voting booth for communities of color, have made our collective commitment to civic engagement even more critical this election year.

As trusted leaders in our communities, YWCAs are in a unique position to ensure that women—especially women of color—get to the polls and that our experiences and needs are valued, represented, and made a priority to those we elect to public office on November 3, 2020. Studies have shown that nonprofits like YWCA play a vital role in increasing voter participation, especially among historically marginalized groups. Nonprofit organizations tend to reach individuals who are younger, lower-income, and more diverse than the general public. Moreover, the national reach of the YWCA network affords us the opportunity to reach the estimated 37 million women of color voters in this country with timely information and tools to fully exercise our right to vote.

You may be wondering how your YWCA can meaningfully engage voters in your community this year, especially given new challenges posed by COVID-19, limited resources, and rules around 501(c)(3) organizations participating in elections. This toolkit and the accompanying workshop series hosted by YWCA USA and national partners are intended to provide a menu of engagement options and tools for developing a GOTV plan that is responsive to your YWCA's goals, interests, and capacity.

2020 is an important year - we encourage every YWCA to participate in one way or another!

STAYING 501(C)(3) DURING AN ELECTION YEAR

You may be wondering how your YWCA can meaningfully engage voters in your community this year, given the existing IRS rules around 501(c)(3)s and elections. The good news is that you can probably do a lot more than you expect, as long as your activity falls within the limitations outlined below.

The IRS clearly states that 501(c)(3) organizations may conduct voter engagement or connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis. This includes encouraging voter participation, educating voters, and talking to candidates about issues. Below are guidelines for YWCAs conducting activities during the 2020 election season.

As 501(c)(3) organizations, **YWCAs can**:

1. Promote or conduct voter registration
2. Educate voters on the where, when, and how of voting
3. Encourage and remind people to vote
4. Encourage staff to serve as an Election poll worker, translator, or other nonpartisan volunteer
5. Distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, or voter guides
6. Host or cosponsor a candidate forum (the forum must be open to all candidates, conducted in a balanced way, and include a nonpartisan panel of questioners)
7. Hold a voter education event
8. Educate the candidates on your issues
9. Continue issue advocacy during an election
10. Support or oppose ballot measures as a lobbying activity (subject to normal lobbying limits)
11. Conduct nonpartisan training on issues and organizational skills
12. Allow staff to participate as individuals in political campaigns, on their own time and not as representatives of the organization

YWCAs may NOT conduct *partisan* activities to support or oppose any candidate for public office and are prohibited from:

1. Endorsing a candidate
2. Making a contribution to a candidate or party. This includes "in-kind" contributions such as publicity, staff time, and use of facilities or assets, *unless* those resources are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value
3. Rating or ranking candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s)

Have questions about the do's & don'ts for 501(c)(3)s or a GOTV activity not included above?
Check out the GOTV Tools & Resources included in this toolkit below for additional guidance around 501(c)(3) rules & regulations. You can also call the toll-free Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229) or reach out to the YWCA USA Policy & Advocacy Team at advocacy@ywca.org.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE
ON ELECTION YEAR MESSAGING

501(c)(3) nonprofits like YWCAs are prohibited from conducting any campaign intervention. This means 501(c)(3) organizations may not help or hurt the chances for election of any particular candidate or group of candidates, regardless of political party affiliation. For instance, 501(c)(3) organizations may not campaign to get specific women or Latinos elected, even if they don't care which party the candidates are, or even if the election is non-partisan.

Risk can arise when a communication could be perceived as attempting to influence voters. **Here are some topics to avoid**:
➔ talking about a candidate's qualifications
➔ commenting on whether someone is a good or a bad candidate
➔ discussing a candidate's record
➔ talking about "voters" and making references to the election (*e.g.*, instead of saying "voters understand" or "voters will not accept," say "the community understands" or "Americans won't accept")
➔ identifying a candidate by name
➔ making a statement about which candidate is better on the 501(c)(3) organization's issues
➔ asking a candidate to commit to supporting a particular issue or piece of legislation if elected

These documents from Bolder Advocacy clearly outline these parameters:
● [Commenting on Candidates and Campaigns](#)
● [Praising and Criticizing Incumbents](#)
● [Election Checklist for 501(c)(3) Nonprofits](#)

Once the election is over, we have a bit more leeway in commenting on the election outcome. However, even in the post-election context, it's important that we continue to avoid making partisan comments, particularly ones that suggest that one party or candidate is more favorable for an organization's issue or concerns. Don't focus on the candidate, but keep your focus on our public policy concerns.

 While the number of women and diversity of candidates running for office could make this a potentially historic election, context is critical in any comments that YWCAs may want to make through social media, a press release, or in other communications. We hope the following language and suggestions are a helpful guide as you think through your messaging.

 Tips to guide your messaging:

➔ Frame your message around YWCA's history, community presence, and continuing readiness to work with policymakers at all levels to address the critical issues in your community, and to further our mission to eliminate racism and empower women.
➔ If there is a "notable first" for an elected office, a historically significant number of seats won, or other "first" for women, women of color, people of color, LGBT+ people, or other community, take notice of that historic fact along the lines of "women have the power and

capability to be leaders" or "seeing the rich diversity of our community reflected in the leaders who represent us makes a difference."
➔ Focus on the issues, not the candidates.
➔ Call on leaders/policymakers to step aside from partisan divides to focus on the issues and solve the problems that are impacting women, families, and communities.
➔ Emphasize that our focus will remain where it has been for 160 years: on advocating for policies, services, and supports that advance our mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.

A Note about Commenting on Historic Firsts

If the historic firsts from the 2018 election continue in 2020, many of us may want to publicly comment on women and people of color being elected to office. Such statements also need to comport with the guidelines shared here for 501(c)(3) organizations.

We provide here a *sample* message that can be modified as appropriate for this purpose:

> YWCA is happy to be celebrating the [first woman governor of ___ state] [historic number of women/people of color running for/elected to Congress]! We have worked for women's empowerment and racial justice for [# of years of local YWCA] [more than 160 years] and know that [women's / diverse] leadership can change history. These firsts truly matter. When Helen Claytor became the first African American president of YWCA USA in 1967, she led change for our organization. It's no surprise that in 1970 we adopted the One Imperative to eliminate racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary – work that continues today at the center of our mission.
>
> "We look forward to seeing how this historic moment will impact not only our [nation's][state's] history," said ___, CEO/ED of YWCA ___. "We are building a future where nothing is off-limits to them."

This is *one* example to demonstrate the nuance and flexibility that is needed in making statements about candidates and elections. We'll share more communications tools and guidance in future toolkits.

CAPACITY & ASSET MAPPING WORKSHEET

You may be wondering how your YWCA can meaningfully engage voters in your community this year, given **limited staff time and resources**. The good news is that you may already have access to several key assets that would make GOTV work easier. Use the worksheet below to help you identify your available assets and evaluate your organizational capacity to empower voters this year.

STEP 1

What are my YWCA's unique strengths and assets? Check all that apply to your YWCA:

Staff Assets
- ☒ CEO/Exec. Dir. committed to GOTV work
- ☒ Staff person whose role includes civic engagement, policy, or advocacy
- ☒ Staff person whose role includes volunteer recruitment & management
- ☒ Staff person whose role includes communications

Communications Assets
- ☒ Organization is active on social media
- ☒ Strong social media following
- ☒ Access to email lists of supporters, donors, and/or program participants
- ☒ Familiarity working with local news media
- ☒ Strong reputation in community

Expertise Assets
- ☒ Prior experience doing GOTV work
- ☒ Young Leaders Program or Other Civic Engagement Programming

Relationship Assets
- ☒ Active board members willing to engage
- ☒ Ability to contact current and/or former program participants
- ☒ Reliable group of volunteers
- ☒ Relationships with other organization(s) in the area potentially interested in GOTV collaboration
- ☒ Relationships with local elected official(s)
- ☒ Relationships with local news media outlet(s)

Field Assets
- ☒ Space for hosting a GOTV event
- ☒ YWCA centrally located & accessible
- ☒ Good foot traffic through YWCA
- ☒ Racially/ethnically diverse community
- ☒ Community likely receptive to GOTV efforts
- ☒ Funding designated for GOTV work
- ☒ Access to, or familiarity with, video conferencing platforms
- ☒ Access to, or familiarity with, text or phone banking platforms

STEP 2

Add the number of boxes you checked above and write the total here: _____ / 25
- ➔ 12 - 25 suggests your YWCA may have **high capacity** to engage in GOTV work.
- ➔ 6 - 11 suggests your YWCA may have **moderate capacity** to engage in GOTV work.
- ➔ 1 - 5 suggests your YWCA may have **minimal capacity** to engage in GOTV work.

Consider also doing an asset and capacity analysis over time, as some of the assets you identified above may be less available during certain months (*for e.g.* scheduled renovations to an event space).

STEP 3

If you determine your YWCA has minimal capacity, consider undertaking the "**Tier 1**" activities listed below. Consider "**Tier 2**" activities if/when you have moderate capacity and "**Tier 3**" activities if/when you have high capacity to engage in GOTV work.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

You may be wondering how your YWCA can meaningfully engage voters in your community this year, given limited capacity and novel challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The good news is that there are still many opportunities to register, educate, and mobilize voters in your community, whatever your capacity level may be!

Below is a list of suggested activities for YWCAs interested in engaging voters, organized from the lightest lift engagement (Tier 1), to moderate lift engagement (Tier 2), to the heaviest lift engagement (Tier 3). If you are unsure where your YWCA might fall on this spectrum, consider filling out the Capacity & Asset Mapping Worksheet included earlier in this toolkit.

> *As you plan your GOTV activities, remember to always consider who in your community is being served by them and who is being left out.* Although it might be easiest to engage in only digital advocacy this election season, doing so would likely neglect those with unreliable internet access in your community. Moreover, this "digital divide" in broadband access has been found to disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income families.
>
> 2020 is not only an election year — it also marks the 55th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment expanding the right to vote in this country. As YWCAs, it is imperative we prioritize GOTV activities that will empower historically marginalized communities and ensure that women — especially women of color—are able to fully exercise their fundamental right to vote on November 3rd.

Tier 1

- ❏ **Educate your community through your social media, newsletters, and/or website**.
  Consider developing a digital communications plan to share timely information around:
  - How to register or update an existing voter registration in your state;
  - When, where, & how to vote in your community;
  - Upcoming election deadlines in your state;
  - The rights of voters; and
  - Why voter participation is important to your YWCA.

  Not sure what the voting procedures and deadlines are for your state? Fill out the "My State Worksheet" and see the list of GOTV Tools & Resources included in this toolkit below.
- ❏ **Ask your staff and board members to add a line to their email signature encouraging voter participation.** Consider focusing your message on voter registration over the summer and shifting to a message of education and mobilization in the fall.
- ❏ **Ensure your staff are registered to vote and aware of key deadlines and voting options**.
- ❏ **Display printed GOTV materials around your YWCA, especially in highly trafficked areas**.
- ❏ **Ask front desk staff to remind visitors of upcoming election deadlines**. (once safe to do so)
- ❏ **Set out blank voter registration and/or mail-in ballot request forms in spaces accessible to program participants & public.** (once safe to do so)

- ❏ **Designate a public computer in your YWCA for voter registration.** (once safe to do so)
- ❏ **Sign up to participate in National Voter Registration Day, September 22nd**.
- ❏ **Share YWCA Voter Registration Portal, PSA, and/or YWomenVote Report**.
- ❏ **Follow YWCA USA's Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram pages & reshare GOTV posts on your social media platforms**.

Tier 2

- ❏ **Contact clients or program participants with GOTV information**. Consider asking direct service staff to reach out to program participants with information on voter registration and voting options in your state, as well as reminders to vote closer to the election.
- ❏ **Launch a creative social media challenge**. Consider asking followers to post photos or videos of themselves pledging to vote, tagging three friends, and explaining #YWomenVote and/or why voting is important to them. Consider a GOTV art or poetry competition with the winner's work featured on your social media platforms or printed as a poster at your YWCA.
- ❏ **Place printed GOTV flyers in local businesses and public places that remain open**. Consider places that are highly trafficked, like grocery stores and laundromats.
- ❏ **Place printed GOTV flyers in meal deliveries and/or mailings to program participants**.
- ❏ **Share GOTV information at virtual fundraisers & events for your YWCA**. Consider developing a message for staff leading the event to share at the beginning or end of the event.
- ❏ **Distribute GOTV flyers at organization fundraisers and events**. (once it is safe to do so)
- ❏ **Write an op-ed or letter to the editor**. Consider writing about why voter participation in your community is important to your YWCA and submit your piece to local newspapers that have wide print and online circulation in your community.
- ❏ **Translate existing GOTV materials into languages spoken by your community.**
- ❏ **Organize tabling at your YWCA to share voting information**. (once it is safe to do so)
- ❏ **Host a community discussion with a panel of experts and/or community leaders.** Consider selecting a diverse group of panelists and leading a discussion exploring voting barriers and options in your community, highlighting the importance of voter participation for your YWCA and any upcoming deadlines in your state. This can be done virtually through a video conferencing platform or in person. (once it is safe to do so)
- ❏ **Introduce your YWCA to candidates running for office in your area**. Consider sharing issues that are of importance to your YWCA and providing a tour of your YWCA to the candidates once it is safe to do so, but avoid endorsing or opposing any candidates.
- ❏ **Reach out to other community organizations in your area to identify upcoming GOTV events, potential opportunities to collaborate, and useful resources to share**.

Tier 3

- ❏ **Host a text or phone banking event**. Consider hosting an event where volunteers commit to calling or texting 4 or more friends, family, acquaintances from the comfort of their home with timely voting information. You may want to designate a specific day and time, design a script

for volunteers to follow, develop a system for tracking participation, and provide incentives for volunteers with the most logged contacts. Consider partnering with other organizations in your area to leverage collective resources and maximize impact.

❏ **Host an issue forum or candidate forum on gender and racial equity issues**. This is an ideal opportunity to engage your mayor, town council member, superintendent of education, public health official, state legislator, Member of Congress, or other policymakers in your community. Make sure to follow c3 guidelines, especially when you have invited any candidates for elected office to participate. Consider partnering with other organizations in your area to leverage collective resources and maximize impact.

❏ **Develop a candidate questionnaire focused on gender & racial equity**. Consider using the questions to structure a nonpartisan candidate guide, article pitched to local news media, or a candidate forum. Consider partnering with other organizations in your area, like the League of Women Voters or others with experience in developing election guides.

❏ **Organize an Early Voting Day of Action**. Consider selecting a day to highlight early in person and early mail-in voting opportunities in your state. Consider partnering with other organizations in your area or your local election office.

❏ **Develop a fact sheet on voter information and deadlines specific to your state**. See the worksheet below to help you get started.

❏ **Conduct follow up outreach to those who filled out digital or paper pledge to vote cards**. Consider calling pledgers closer to the election with reminders about available voting options.

❏ **Take a position and educate your community about ballot measures**. Reminder: Though 501(c)(3)s may NOT endorse a candidate, they may take a stance on a ballot measure.

❏ **Host debate watch parties**. (once it is safe to do so)

❏ **Organize door-to-door canvassing to share voting information**. (once it is safe to do so)

❏ **Provide rides to the polls on election day.** Consider organizing carpools and recruiting volunteers to drive people to and from polls. Choose a central gathering location, potentially at your YWCA. Consider providing meals or snacks for clients and community members who you are transporting to the polls. (once it is safe to do so)

❏ **Provide child care for voters.** (once it is safe to do so)

❏ **Accompany voters to the polls.** (once it is safe to do so)

❏ **Throw an election day party**. Consider gathering in the morning to encourage voters to get to the polls or in the evening to watch the results together. (once it is safe to do so)

Have questions about any of these suggestions? Interested, but not sure how to start?
Check out the GOTV Tools & Resources included in this toolkit below for additional guidance around voter registration, voter education, candidate engagement, voter mobilization, and more. You can also reach out to the YWCA USA Policy & Advocacy Team at advocacy@ywca.org.

VOTING IN MY STATE WORKSHEET

The 2020 General Election will be held on November 3rd across the United States, but the voting process -- including voter deadlines, options, and barriers -- **vary widely by state.** Use the worksheet below along with nonpartisan databases like The League of Women Voters' vote411.org/select-state to position yourself as an educational resource for your community and plan your engagement around upcoming deadlines and requirements in your state.

Voter Registration
1. The voter registration deadline in my state is: _____ for new voter registration and _____ for updating an existing registration.
2. Same-day voter registration is available in my state: YES / NO
3. Online voter registration is available in my state: YES / NO
4. Eligibility criteria in my state: _____
5. ID Requirements in my state: _____
6. An Address Confidentiality Program for voter registration is available in my state: YES / NO
7. Available languages: _____
8. ADA Accessibility: _____

Voting By Mail, *i.e.* Absentee Voting
9. Voters in my state automatically receive a vote-by-mail ballot: YES / NO
10. Voters in my state must request a ballot but no excuse is needed: YES / NO
11. Voters in my state must request a ballot *and* need an excuse: YES / NO
    a. Valid excuses in my state include: _____
12. The deadline for requesting a mail-in ballot in my state is: _____
13. The deadline for returning a mail-in ballot in my state is: _____
14. ID Requirements in my state: _____
15. Available languages: _____
16. ADA Accessibility: _____

Voting In Person
17. Early in-person voting is available in my state: YES / NO
18. Early in-person voting will be held during the following dates: _____
19. Polling sites are open during the following hours on Election Day: _____
20. Guaranteed time off to vote is available in my state: YES / NO
21. ID Requirements in my state: _____
22. My state has committed to the following health & safety precautions:
    _____
23. Available languages: _____
24. ADA Accessibility: _____

Please note -- the only official source of voting information in your state will be your state or local election office. Make sure to confirm the details above by reviewing your local election office's website.

MY GOTV PLAN & TIMELINE WORKSHEET

Now that you have identified your YWCA's available assets and capacity to engage in GOTV work (pg. 5), explored GOTV activities that would leverage your assets and empower marginalized voters in your community (pg. 6-8), and gained a deeper understanding of the election rules and deadlines within your state (pg. 9), **you are ready to incorporate that information into a plan of action**.

The election is less than five months away! Use the worksheet below to develop a GOTV plan and timeline that is responsive to your YWCA's particular needs, interest, and capacity. As a frame of reference, YWCA USA will be focusing on voter registration July through September, voter mobilization September through November, and voter education throughout. Voter registration training will be provided in mid-July, followed by training on organizing GOTV events in August and GOTV communications training in September. YWCA USA also plans to activate our supporters and network around key dates like the 55th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act (8/6), the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment (8/18), Women's Equality Day (8/26), National Voter Registration Day (9/22), the presidential debates (9/29, 10/15, 10/22), and of course Election Day (11/3).

	PRIMARY GOAL	MAJOR GOTV ACTIVITIES	STAFF LEAD / PARTNER(S)
JULY			
AUGUST			
SEPTEMBER			
OCTOBER			
NOVEMBER			

#YWOMENVOTE COMMUNICATIONS

BACKGROUND

2020 is a critical year for civic engagement. The 2020 Presidential Election and Census fall on the 100th anniversary year of the 19th amendment and the 55th anniversary year of the Voting Rights Act -- two critical milestones that expanded voting rights to women and people of color. Through this multimedia campaign, we will work to ensure that all voices are heard this election season, particularly those of women of color.

LINK

YWomenVote.org

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Through this multimedia campaign, we encourage you to participate in digital efforts to uplift the importance of voting in the 2020 Election.

HASHTAGS AND TWITTER HANDLES

Please use the hashtag #YWomenVote for anything on social media related to the 2020 Election and YWCA's national Get Out The Vote campaign. You can also use 2020 Election and Get Out The Vote hashtags like #Election2020, #GetOutTheVote and #GOTV to join the national conversation. Engage YWCA USA by tagging us @YWCAUSA or sharing our posts on Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram.

GRAPHICS

Share these graphics on social media to further amplify our Get Out The Vote messaging.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

We have drafted these sample social media posts to make engaging in our Get Out The Vote campaign as easy as possible. Please feel free to draft your own as well. Remember to use appropriate hashtags to help further amplify your messaging and tag YWCA USA on Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram.

- As Americans come together to demand justice for George Floyd and countless others, the need for everyone's voices to be heard in our elections is clear. Will your voice be heard in #Election2020?

- We know that women of color have always led change and we won't stop now. Make sure you and your community members are registered to vote TODAY. It's Your Voice. Your Vote. Your Future. Visit ywcavote.org. @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

- In this critical moment for our nation, our collective efforts can root out injustice, transform institutions, and create a world that sees women, girls, & people of color the way we do:

  Equal.
  Powerful.
  Unstoppable.

  Register to vote TODAY.
  @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

- Voting rights and the fight for racial justice are deeply interconnected. As communities across the country are taking to the streets to demand justice and equality, it's more important than ever to ensure fair and equal access to the ballot box. @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

- In this critical moment, remember: our voices have power. And through our votes, we will be heard. @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

- Amid a pandemic AND this historic moment in our fight for civil and human rights, our work to dismantle barriers to the ballot box is more vital than ever. No voter should have to choose between their health or participating in our democracy. @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

- This is a moment of reckoning for our nation, and a moment that demands more:
  More voices heard. More votes cast. More Americans coming together to decide our collective future. @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

- Healthcare was a top priority for women in this country even before #COVID19. We need to safeguard healthcare coverage for preexisting conditions, birth control, and preventative services like mammograms. Ensuring comprehensive #HealthCare is #YWomenVote. @YWCAUSA

- Women are change-makers—in our families, our workplaces, our communities, and our country. This November, let's make sure our voices are heard at the polls! bit.ly/2O9Nfmy @YWCAUSA #YWomenVote

GOTV TOOLS & RESOURCES

501(c)(3) Rules & Regulations
- Bolder Advocacy Checklist
- Nonprofit VOTE Checklist
- Nonprofit VOTE Toolkit
- United Way Toolkit
- Bolder Advocacy Toolkit
- Using Social Media to Promote Voting
- Being Nonpartisan Webinar
- Engaging Your Staff in Elections
- What Staff Can('t) Do
- Commenting on Candidates and Campaigns
- Praising and Criticizing Incumbents
- Sample 501(c)(3) Organizational Policy for Election Season
- Ballot Measures and Public Charities: Yes, You Can Influence That Vote
- Bolder Advocacy Ballot Measure Toolkit
- Nonprofit VOTE Ballot Measure Toolkit
- 501c3 Ballot Measure Webinar
- Toll-Free 501(c)(3) Hotline

YWCA-Branded
- YWCA GOTV Social Media Graphics
- YWCA Voter Registration Flyer
- YWCA Voter Registration Portal
- YWCA Voter Registration Sticker
- YWCA GOTV Postcards (template)
- YWCA GOTV Door Hanger
- YWCA Dear Neighbor Letter (template)
- YWCA Forum Description (sample)
- YWCA Forum Graphics (Sample)
- YWCA Forum Invitation (Sample)
- YWCA Forum Run-of-Show (Sample)
- YWCA Speaker Outreach (Sample)
- YWCA Partner Outreach (Sample)
- YWCA Sponsor Outreach (Sample)
- Your Voice. Your Vote. Your Future. PSA
- YWomenVote Report

- YWCA Register to Vote Here Poster
- YWCA GOTV Webpage
- YWCA Digital Pledge to Vote
- Paper Pledge to Vote Cards
- Stand Against Racism 2020 Toolkit

Voter Registration
- YWCA Voter Registration Portal
- YWCA Voter Registration Flyer
- National Voter Registration Day 2020 Field Organizer Toolkit
- Check Your Voter Registration Status
- Check Your State's Voter Registration Deadline
- Nonprofit Votes Count Voter Registration Toolkit
- Nonprofit Registration Toolkit
- Voter Registration in the Age of COVID-19 Webinar
- Running a Nonprofit Voter Registration Drive Webinar
- Registering Staff and Volunteers to Vote Webinar
- Voter Registration Drives
- Seven Reasons to Do Voter Registration
- Debunking Voter Registration Myths
- Online and Mail-In Voter Registration During COVID Crisis
- Tips for Asking Someone to Register
- YWCA Register to Vote Here Poster
- Sample Script for Voter Registration with Common Responses

Candidate Engagement

- [YWCA YWomenVote 2020 Report](#)
- [Engaging in Party Conventions](#)
- [Hosting a Candidate Forum](#)
- [Hosting Candidate Debates](#)
- [Forum Checklist](#)
- [Guidance on Candidate Questionnaires from Bolder Advocacy](#)
- [Guidance on Candidate Questionnaires from Nonprofit VOTE](#)

Voter Education

- [Check Your Voter Registration Status](#)
- [Check Your State's Voter Registration Deadline](#)
- [Check Your State's Absentee Ballot Request & Return Deadlines](#)
- [Requesting an Absentee Ballot](#)
- [Check Your State's Early In Person Voting Schedule](#)
- [Find Your Local Election Office](#)
- [Find A Sample Ballot](#)
- [Find Your Polling Place](#)
- [Find the Voter ID Laws in Your State](#)
- [Know Your Rights - Voting Rights](#)
- [Check Your State's Ballot Measures](#)
- [Rock the Vote State Voting Guide](#)
- [COVID-19 State Voting Guide from Vote.org](#)
- [COVID-19 State Voting Guide from National Conference of State Legislatures](#)
- [COVID-19 State Voting Guide from Vote411](#)
- [State Absentee/Vote-By-Mail Policies](#)
- [Report: Making Vote By Mail Work for Everyone](#)
- [COVID-19 & Policy Options for Expanding Mail-in Ballots](#)
- [Report: How to Protect the 2020 Vote from COVID Report](#)
- [April](#) & [March](#) letters from the civil rights community

Voter Mobilization

- [Get Election Reminders](#)
- [Find A Sample Ballot](#)
- [Personalized Ballot Information](#)
- [Getting Out The Vote for Nonprofits: Tactics and Messaging that Work](#)
- [Nonprofits Get Out the Vote](#)
- [Mobilizing Voters Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Mobilizing Voters Who Are Survivors of Domestic Violence](#)
- [Mobilizing Voters With Disabilities](#)
- [Mobilizing Voters Who Were Formerly Incarcerated](#)
- [I Have a Felony Conviction - Can I Vote?](#)
- [Engaging New Voters - Planning & Best Practices](#)
- [Making a Voter Engagement Plan: Questions to Consider](#)
- [Seven Tips on Getting Out the Vote](#)
- [10 Things to Do from Now Until Election Day](#)
- [State-By-State Provisional Voting Rules](#)
- [Sample Email to Staff to Vote](#)
- [YWCA Digital Pledge to Vote](#)
- [Your Voice. Your Vote. Your Future. PSA](#)
- [Nonprofit Votes Count Get Out The Vote Toolkit](#)
- [Stand Against Racism 2020 Toolkit](#)
- [Election Protection Hotlines in Multiple Languages](#)

GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

Absentee Ballot: A ballot completed by a voter who cannot physically be present at their precinct on Election Day. Sometimes used interchangeably with "mail-In ballot."

Ballot Initiative: A proposed law drafted by citizens and placed on the ballot, which voters are asked to approve or reject on Election Day. Similarly, a **referendum** is a proposed law *or* the repeal of an existing law, which voters are tasked with approving or rejecting.

Citizens United v. FEC ("Citizens United"): A 2010 Supreme Court decision striking down all caps on the amount of money a person could donate to a Political Action Committee (PAC) and declaring that corporations and unions could also make unlimited donations to a PAC. Previous to the decision, campaign finance regulations limited who could donate and how much could be donated to a PAC.

Delegates: People chosen to represent their town or state at a national political convention. A pledged delegate must support the candidate chosen by the voters they represent. An **unpledged delegate** is not bound to support a specific candidate. A superdelegate is often a party official or veteran politician. **Superdelegates** are not required to be chosen or elected to the position. They can support any candidate they choose.

Elector: A person who is certified to represent their state's vote in the Electoral College. The **Electoral College** is the process Americans use to elect the president and vice president. The number of electors a state receives is equal to that state's number of U.S. senators and representatives. Those electors then gather to cast the state's votes in the Electoral College. They vote for the candidate who won in their state during a presidential election. (*but c.f.* National Popular Vote Interstate Compact)

Gerrymandering: The practice of drawing district lines to favor one political party, individual, or constituency over another. **Racial gerrymandering** is the practice of drawing district lines to favor one racial group over another.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA): A law that authorizes federal funds for elections and created the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, which helps states comply with HAVA to adopt minimum standards on voter education, registration, and ballots

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC): An agreement, adopted by states through legislation, to give all of that state's electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the popular vote nationwide, rather than the candidate who won the vote in just that state

Nonpartisan: Not tending to help or hurt the chances for election of any particular candidate or group of candidates, regardless of political party affiliation

Political Action Committee (PAC): A group organized to raise money or support for a politician or cause. Prior to Citizens United, campaign finance laws limited who could donate and how much could be donated to a PAC. Citizens United struck down these rules and opened the doors for PACs to accept unlimited donations from individuals, corporations, or unions. A **Super PAC** is a group able to accept unlimited political donations. Although technically they are barred from coordinating activities with any candidate or campaign, they often find ways around this rule.

Polling Place: The location where voters cast their votes. This may be in a school, community center, church, or other centrally-located public place.

Popular Vote: The votes cast during an election for a candidate or about an issue. Whichever candidate or decision about an issue gets the most votes has won the popular vote. (U.S. president and vice president are determined by an Electoral College vote.)

Precinct: Each city, county, state, or other geographic area is divided into precincts for the purpose of assigning polling places and gathering votes. Precincts are sometimes called "districts."

Provisional Ballot: a type of ballot used when there are questions about a voter's identity or their ability to vote in a specific precinct. Provisional ballots are counted once a voter's information is confirmed. No voter can be turned away without being allowed to vote. If you believe that you are registered to vote, you have the right to cast a "provisional ballot".

Sample Ballot: An example of what the official ballot will look like. These can be used to help people make decisions, and are often published by newspapers or websites.

Shelby County v. Holder: A 2013 Supreme Court decision striking down the formula used to determine when a jurisdiction is required to obtain "preclearance," or approval, for changes to their voting laws or practices. Preclearance is required under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act for jurisdictions with a history of race-based voting discrimination. Although preclearance is technically still required of these jurisdictions, it is unenforceable until Congress passes a new formula.

Voter Intimidation / Voter Suppression: Attempts to prevent eligible voters from voting, or to force them to vote a certain way.

Voting Rights Act of 1965 ("the VRA"): A law that prohibits voter discrimination based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group. It also requires certain places to provide election materials in languages besides English and requires certain jurisdictions with a history of voting discrimination to obtain "preclearance," or approval, for changes to their voting laws or practices

WOC: Acronym for "women of color"

19th Amendment: An amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1920, that proclaimed "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Although expanding access to the voting booth for White women, women of color continued to be disenfranchised until voter discrimination based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group was outlawed by the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Sources:
https://www.usa.gov/voting-and-election-definitions
https://www.usa.gov/voting-laws
https://ballotpedia.org/Glossary_of_election_policy_terms
https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/national-popular-vote.aspx
https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/super-pac-short-history/story?id=16960267
https://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Rules-of-the-Game.pdf
https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/policy-solutions/effects-shelby-county-v-holder

APPENDIX A: ORGANIZING GOTV EVENTS

Although COVID-19 has created new challenges, **grassroots field organizing remains an absolutely essential tactic** for ensuring that women, especially women of color, get to the polls and that our experiences and needs are valued, represented, and made a priority to those we elect to public office in 2020.0

As trusted leaders, it is particularly important for YWCAs to reach program participants and other communities who face systemic barriers to the voting booth with timely, nonpartisan voting information. Studies have shown that nonprofits like YWCA tend to reach individuals who are younger, lower-income, and more diverse than the general public and thereby playing a vital role in increasing voter participation, especially among historically marginalized groups.

Organizing grassroots GOTV events —such as **phone banking, text banking**, **leafleting**, **postcard campaigns**, or **virtual community forums**— remains an effective and COVID-safe way for YWCAs to engage voters this year. Remember to plan your events with national events and your state deadlines in mind, allowing ample time between your event and deadlines given potential mail delays.

YWCA USA has created this addendum to the 2020 Get Out the Vote Guide to provide our member associations with the tools, resources, and recommendations to plan GOTV events. Keep the "Staying 501(c)(3) During an Election Year" (p. 2 in this Toolkit) close at hand as you plan your activities, and call the toll-free Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229) if you need guidance around 501(c)(3) rules and regulations for GOTV activities.

If you have any questions about organizing grassroots events in your community, need customized materials for your YWCA, or would like to be connected to other YWCAs planning GOTV events, please reach out to the Public Policy & Advocacy Team at advocacy@ywca.org.

YOUR VOICE.
YOUR VOTE.
YOUR FUTURE.

Phone/Text Banking

Phone/text banking serves as an opportunity to empower our communities with timely voting information, tools, and resources, to reach program participants and voters who may not have reliable broadband/internet access, and to highlight key messages from YWomenVote that help mobilize our constituents to participate in the 2020 election. Phone/text banking involves organizing volunteers to call or text specific messages about the election to friends, clients, family members, neighbors, colleagues, or specific voters in the community. You may also want to organize your staff to incorporate phone or text banking into their scheduled outreach to program participants. Phone/text banking is one type of GOTV event that has largely remained unaffected by COVID-19 and is an effective way for your YWCA to engage volunteers and voters this year.

Key Benefits & Challenges

Benefits:
  ★ Raise the profile of your YWCA in your community
  ★ Deepen relationships with partner organizations
  ★ Educate, register, and mobilize voters in your community
  ★ Mobilize current & former program participants
  ★ Mobilize community members who do not have reliable internet access
  ★ Well-suited as a volunteer activity

Challenges:
  ★ Potential costs associated with securing access to voter contact lists - *partnerships are key!*
  ★ Moderate to high level of technical sophistication
  ★ Managing volunteers & tracking progress
  ★ Maintaining 501(c)(3) nonpartisanship

Tips & Tricks

  ❖ **Decide upon your approach to contacting voters in your community**.
    Consider the following questions as you decide on your approach:
      ➢ Will your event be held in English or in another language spoken by your community?
      ➢ Will you be hosting a phone bank, text bank, or both?
      ➢ How much time do you have available? One benefit of texting is that you may be able to reach more people in a given period of time, but it might not be as effective as a good old-fashioned, human-to-human phone conversation.
      ➢ Do you need to access a database of phone numbers for your event? If so, see the partnership suggestions below.
      ➢ Would a relational organizing approach to contacting voters work for your YWCA? A relational organizing approach might look like asking staff to call ten current or former

program participants with whom they've worked. Or it might look like asking volunteers to text 20 friends, family members, neighbors, or colleagues with timely voting information during a specific "day of action." Relational organizing capitalizes on the strength of your staff and volunteers' existing relationships and might be a lighter lift for your YWCA.

➢ Are there ways for you to focus your outreach on breaking down barriers to voting? For example, you might consider encouraging volunteers to contact people they know who face particular barriers to voting -- a cousin who recently turned 18 and hasn't voted before, a friend who just earned her U.S. citizenship.

➢ What makes the most sense for *your* community?

❖ **Partner with an organization that has access to a phone/text banking platform.**
  ➢ Do you need to access a database of phone numbers to reach more people or target specific neighborhoods, communities, or groups, such as unregistered voters?
  ➢ Do you have funding to support paying for access to a voter database?
  ➢ Consider partnering with your state or local League of Women Voters, State Voices Table, or another GOTV-focused group to find a partner willing to cost-share around this resource or share access to their voter contact lists.

❖ **Define goals for your phone or text banking event.**
  ➢ How many people do you plan to contact through your event?
  ➢ How much time do you have available? Remember that it takes less time for a volunteer to send a pre-written text than to complete a phone call.
  ➢ How will you track the number of people contacted and/or reached?
  ➢ Are your goals for the event Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound ("SMART" goals)? For example, a SMART goal might be engaging 50 volunteers/staff to provide accurate voting information via phone calls to at least 250 registered voters (5 calls per person) on September 22nd during National Voter Registration Day.

❖ **Decide which text or phone banking platform you will use for the event.**
  ➢ If you are partnering with another organization to access voter contact information, explore whether you can also utilize their text/phone banking platform.
  ➢ Research popular peer-to-peer texting platforms like Hustle and ThruText and phone banking platforms like CallHub, OpenVPB, and HubDialer-- to understand costs, features, and limitations.

❖ **Familiarize yourself and your volunteers with the platform & designate someone to be your "IT expert" during the event.**
  ➢ Send instructions for how to use the platform via email to your volunteers in advance of the event (see tips below).
  ➢ Consider also hosting a training for your volunteers on how to use the platform prior to, or at the beginning, of your event.

➢ It would be prudent to also have someone on hand who is especially familiar with the platform and can handle questions and troubleshoot during the event.

❖ **Determine the timing and scope of your phone or text banking event(s).**
➢ Will you encourage phone/text banking in advance of your state's voter registration deadline, perhaps on National Voter Registration Day Sept. 22, to remind potential voters to register?
➢ Will you be doing so during your state's early voting period to provide timely information about absentee and early in person voting?
➢ Will you be running a phone/text banking event the week before the election reminding voters of polling hours, locations, and election protection hotlines?
➢ Decide whether you have the capacity (and volunteer availability) to organize only one round of phone/text banking or, ideally, multiple rounds that are tied to critical voting deadlines in your state.

❖ **Promote your phone or text banking event & recruit volunteers and staff.**
Once you have your partners, platform, and date(s) confirmed, you are ready to develop promotional language and materials for your event.
➢ Create an event description that can be used in all your promotional outreach as well as an RSVP form that collects contact information that can be used in follow up communications.
➢ Develop a graphic that you and your event partners can share in your promotional outreach via email and social media. Consider using free graphic design software like Canva to design your own graphics or use these YWCA template social media graphics as a starting point.
➢ Encourage your event partners to share the promotional materials you've developed with their network of staff, followers, clients, supporters, etc.
➢ If it makes sense in your community, consider printing the graphic and pinning it to community bulletin boards in places of business that remain open and frequented like grocery stores, coffee shops, and laundromats.

❖ **Create a script for phone/text banking volunteers to follow**.
Your event participants will need suggestions for what to say in their texts or calls. Consider the following questions as you develop your script:
➢ How should volunteers begin the conversation? How should they introduce themselves?
➢ What exactly should volunteers be asking or encouraging? Do you want to focus the message on voter registration? Early voting options? Mobilization and election protection? Make sure to include upcoming deadlines and opportunities specific to your state.
➢ Should you be providing the script in languages other than English?
➢ Consider creating your own script that best serves your community and goals, or utilize sample scripts developed by nonprofits—like this phone script from VoteRunLead or this phone script from NonprofitVOTE—to get you started.

❖ **Send important details to volunteers in advance of the text/phone banking event**.
Make sure to include:

- ➢ Copies of phone and text scripts;
- ➢ Detailed instructions for how to use the platform; and
- ➢ Contact information for someone who will serve as your "IT expert" to handle questions and troubleshoot during the event.

❖ **Host a video call or pre-record a welcome video to open the text/phone banking event**.
Use the video call or pre-recorded video to:
- ➢ Welcome and thank your volunteers;
- ➢ Explain the importance of voting to your YWCA;
- ➢ Get your volunteers pumped to take action; and
- ➢ Provide important instructions for making calls/texts and tracking progress.

❖ **Establish a system for tracking progress**.
- ➢ Many popular phone/text banking platforms will automatically track volunteer participation and progress
- ➢ If you adopt a relational organizing approach to your event, you will need to find another way of logging completed interactions. Consider creating a brief survey through a free survey platform like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey and strongly encourage your event participants to log their interactions using the survey.

❖ **Verify that your activity is (c)(3) compliant**.
- ➢ Refer to the Staying 501(c)(3) During an Election Year and GOTV Tools & Resources sections of this toolkit for additional guidance around 501(c)(3) rules & regulations.
- ➢ You can also call the toll-free Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229) or reach out to the YWCA USA Policy & Advocacy Team at advocacy@ywca.org with specific questions.

❖ Election canvassing (including in-person, via phone, and via text) can pose a unique potential threat to survivors of intimate partner violence.
A few reminders about communicating with survivors of intimate partner violence:
- ➢ Canvassers are often hired by a specific issue campaign, organization, candidate, or political party, and therefore target relevant party members as well as individuals who voted in the last election.
- ➢ When using a pre-written script or designing your own, make sure you are not identifying a potential voter as being a member of a party, a supporter of a candidate, or as a voter in a previous election. If an abuser hears or reads that a survivor is involved in political activism, the survivor may be subjected to more abuse.
- ➢ Keep your message general and simply ask individuals if they are registered to vote and if they plan to vote on Election Day, thereby providing survivors with deniability if needed.

YWCA Samples & Templates

- ➢ YWCA Get Out The Vote webpage
- ➢ YWCA Voter Registration Form
- ➢ YWCA Pledge to Vote

- ➢ [YWCA template social media graphics](#)
- ➢ Please reach out to the Policy & Advocacy team at YWCA USA (advocacy@ywca.org) to obtain editable versions of these templates.

Leafleting

Door-to-door canvassing has traditionally been one of the most effective ways to register, educate, and mobilize voters and engage volunteers in your community. Given COVID-19, this year advocates are turning to knockless leafleting as a replacement. Knockless leafleting involves organizing volunteers to leave printed flyers, leaflets, door hangers, or postcards at residences and local businesses. You may also want to organize your staff to incorporate leafleting into your scheduled deliveries and other services you offer to the community.

Key Benefits & Challenges

Benefits:
- ★ Raise the profile of your YWCA in your community
- ★ Deepen relationships with local businesses and partner organizations
- ★ Educate, register, and mobilize voters in your community
- ★ Mobilize current & former program participants
- ★ Mobilize community members who do not have reliable internet access

Challenges:
- ★ Potential costs associated with printing
- ★ Potential costs associated with securing access to voter address lists
- ★ Managing volunteers & tracking progress

Tips & Tricks

- ❖ **Determine the scope & define goals for your leafleting activity.**
    - ➢ Will you be leafleting homes in neighborhoods?
    - ➢ Local businesses that remain open during the pandemic?
    - ➢ Will you be seeking to reach your program participants?
    - ➢ How many homes, businesses, or clients do you plan to reach through this activity?
    - ➢ How will you track the number reached?
    - ➢ Try to identify goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound ("SMART" goals). For example, a SMART goal might be engaging 30 volunteers to leaflet 600 neighbors (20 per person) and engaging staff to leaflet all current residents of your housing program(s) on September 22nd during National Voter Registration Day.

❖ **Design the material volunteers will leave behind**.
  ➢ Consider using free graphic design software like Canva to design your own YWCA-branded flyer, leaflet, door hanger, or postcard. Make sure to include deadlines and opportunities specific to your state.
  ➢ If you do not have the time or capacity to create material from scratch, consider partnering with another organization on design or use these YWCA template postcards, YWCA voter registration flyer, or YWCA template door hanger to get started.
  ➢ Consider how accessible your materials are to your particular community or target population, including whether you should design your materials in a language other than English or add information about your state's address confidentiality program.

❖ **Determine how you will cover the cost of printing.**
  ➢ Will you ask volunteers to print their own materials?
  ➢ Will you be printing the materials for volunteers and having them available for pick up, dropping them off, or mailing them to volunteers?
  ➢ If printing is cost-prohibitive for your YWCA, consider partnering with your state or local League of Women Voters, State Voices Table, or another GOTV-focused group to explore cost sharing, or reach out to YWCA USA at advocacy@ywca.org.

❖ **When leafleting homes & neighborhoods, decide upon your approach to voter targeting**. Consider the following questions as you decide on your approach:
  ➢ Do you need to access a database of addresses for your event? Adopting an approach that utilizes voter address lists could allow you to target unregistered voters, specific communities, and/or neighborhoods, but such lists usually cost money to access. Consider reaching out to your state or local League of Women Voters, State Voices Table, or another GOTV-focused group to explore whether these groups already have access to voter address lists and would be willing to partner or cost share.
  ➢ Would a relational organizing approach to contacting voters work for your YWCA? A relational organizing approach might look like asking your volunteers to print and drop off your materials with ten friends, family members, neighbors, or colleagues over the course of a "week of action." Or it might look like encouraging your volunteers to write a personalized letter to their neighbors about why voting is important to them and drop off that letter on their neighbors' doorsteps. Consider using this YWCA template Dear Neighbor letter as a starting point. Relational organizing capitalizes on the strength of your staff and volunteers' existing relationships, can be very effective, and may be a more manageable lift for your YWCA.
  ➢ What makes the most sense for *your* community?

❖ **When leafleting local businesses, map out the businesses in your community that are highly trafficked and remain open.**
  ➢ Consider using Google's My Maps function to create maps that volunteers can follow.
  ➢ Grocery stores, laundromats, and coffee shops are good places to start and often have community bulletin boards where volunteers can pin your materials.

- ➢ Local restaurants might also be amenable to displaying your GOTV materials in their window, adding the YWCA Voter Registration Form to their online menu or website, or pasting a sticker on their delivery bags that includes the YWCA QR code.
- ➢ Consider designing your own sticker on Vistaprint or use this YWCA template sticker to get started.
- ➢ You may also want to partner with your local chamber of commerce to assist with distributing your materials to local businesses more broadly and efficiently.

❖ **When leafleting program participants, identify easy ways of incorporating GOTV materials into existing programs and services.**
- ➢ For example, consider adding your materials to meal deliveries or to back-to-school packages for students in your community.
- ➢ Consider passing out flyers to customers at your resale shop or dropping off your materials at the doors of your housing program(s).
- ➢ If sharing materials with residents of domestic violence housing, consider including information in your materials explaining any address confidentiality programs in your state that would protect your residents' privacy when they register to vote.

❖ **Promote participation in your leafleting event**.
- ➢ Create a description of your leafleting event that can be used in all your promotional outreach as well as an RSVP form that collects contact information from volunteers that can be used in follow up communications.
- ➢ Consider designing a graphic that you and your event partners can share to promote participation in your event, using free graphic design software like Canva or these YWCA template social media graphics as a starting point.
- ➢ Encourage your partners to share the promotional materials you've developed with their network of staff, followers, clients, supporters, etc.

❖ **Send important details & materials to participants in advance of the event**.
- ➢ Make sure to send volunteers any directions and maps they might need and detailed instructions for how to conduct leafleting safely.
- ➢ Include a rain plan if your event is scheduled on a specific day and inclement weather prevents volunteers from leafleting.
- ➢ You may also need to mail your leave behind material to your volunteers or encourage pick up from your facility the week before the event.

❖ **Host a video call or pre-record a welcome video to open the event**.
Use the video call or pre-recorded video to:
- ➢ Welcome and thank your volunteers;
- ➢ Explain the importance of voting to your YWCA;
- ➢ Get your volunteers pumped to take action; and
- ➢ Provide important instructions for leafleting safely and tracking progress.

❖ **Establish a system for tracking progress**
- ➢ Log the homes, local businesses, and program participants that have been leafleted.

➢ You may want to designate several "team captains," *i.e.* reliable volunteers who are assigned a small team and follow up with members of their team to assess and report to you on progress or challenges during the day of the event.
➢ Consider creating a brief survey through a free survey platform like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey, and strongly encourage your staff or volunteers to log their leafleting progress using the survey.

❖ **Verify that your activity is (c)(3) compliant**.
  ➢ Refer to the Staying 501(c)(3) During an Election Year and GOTV Tools & Resources sections of this toolkit for additional guidance around 501(c)(3) rules & regulations.
  ➢ You can also call the toll-free Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229) or reach out to the YWCA USA Policy & Advocacy Team at advocacy@ywca.org with specific questions.

YWCA Samples & Templates

➢ YWCA template door hanger
➢ YWCA voter registration flyer
➢ YWCA template postcards
➢ YWCA template sticker
➢ YWCA template Dear Neighbor letter
➢ YWCA template social media graphics
➢ YWCA Get Out The Vote webpage
➢ YWCA Voter Registration Form
➢ YWCA Pledge to Vote
➢ Please reach out to the Policy & Advocacy team at YWCA USA (advocacy@ywca.org) to obtain editable versions of these templates.

Postcard Campaigns

Postcard campaigns serve as important opportunities to empower our communities with timely voting information and are especially useful for reaching program participants and voters in our communities who do not have reliable internet access. Postcard campaigns are one type of GOTV event that has largely remained unaffected by COVID-19, and are a relatively low-lift activity for your YWCA to engage volunteers and voters this year.

Key Benefits & Challenges

Benefits:
★ Educate, register, and mobilize voters in your community
★ Mobilize current & former program participants

★ Mobilize community members who do not have reliable internet access
★ Lower lift to plan & manage, and well-suited as a volunteer activity

Challenges:
★ Potential costs associated with printing & postage
★ Mailing postcards in a timely fashion given your state deadlines

Tips & Tricks

❖ **Decide upon your approach to targeting voters through your postcard campaign**.
  ➢ Will you send postcards to former and/or current program participants?
  ➢ Will you need access to a database of addresses for voters in your community? Adopting an approach that utilizes voter address lists could allow you to target unregistered voters, specific communities, and/or neighborhoods like hard-to-count census tracts, but such lists usually cost money to access. Consider reaching out to your state or local League of Women Voters, State Voices Table, or another GOTV-focused group to explore whether these groups already have access to voter address lists and would be willing to partner or cost share.
  ➢ Would a relational organizing approach to contacting voters work for your YWCA? A relational approach might look like asking your staff to send the postcard to ten current or former clients with whom they've worked, or asking volunteers to mail your GOTV postcard to ten friends, clients, family members, neighbors, or colleagues over the course of a "week of action." Relational organizing capitalizes on the strength of your staff and volunteers' existing relationships & might be a lighter lift for your YWCA.
  ➢ Are there ways for you to focus your outreach on breaking down barriers to voting? For example, you might consider encouraging volunteers to send the postcard(s) to people they know who face particular barriers to voting -- a cousin who recently turned 18 and hasn't voted before, a friend who just earned her U.S. citizenship.
  ➢ What makes the most sense for *your* community?

❖ **Determine the timing and scope of your postcard campaign.**
  ➢ Will you be sending postcards in advance of your state's voter registration deadline with reminders to register?
  ➢ Will you be sending another round of postcards to the same voters during your state's early voting period with timely information about absentee and early in person voting?
  ➢ Will you be sending postcards the week before the election reminding voters of polling hours and locations?
  ➢ Decide whether you have the budget (and capacity) to organize only one round of postcards or, ideally, multiple rounds tied to critical voting deadlines in your state.
  ➢ ***Consider timing your postcard mailings earlier than in previous years, especially if you are targeting new voters or if your state has adopted changes to the voting process this year. Given recent changes to USPS procedures, it would be prudent to***

> *research the expected delays in your community and plan your GOTV outreach accordingly, well in advance of voting deadlines in your state.*

❖ **Design your postcard or series of postcards**.
➢ Consider using free graphic design software like <u>Canva</u> to design your own postcard or series of postcards.
➢ Consider designing a postcard focused on voter registration to be mailed in September possibly in concert with National Voter Registration Day (9/22), another focused on early voting in early October, and a third focused on voter mobilization mailed in mid-to-late October.
➢ Keep the information on your postcard(s) short and sweet, highlight deadlines and opportunities <u>specific to your state</u>, and remember to include space for the recipient's address, a return address, and postage.
➢ If you do not have the time or capacity to create a postcard from scratch, consider partnering with another organization or using these <u>YWCA template postcards</u> to get started.
➢ Make sure to also consider how accessible your postcards are to your particular community or target population, including whether you should be designing your postcard in a language other than English or adding information about your state's <u>address confidentiality program</u>.

❖ **Determine the scope & define goals for your postcard campaign.**
➢ Will you be sending your postcards to homes in neighborhoods?
➢ Will you be sending your postcards to current or former program participants?
➢ How many people do you plan to contact through this activity?
➢ How will you track the number of people contacted & reached?
➢ Try to identify goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound ("SMART" goals).

❖ **Determine how you will cover the cost of printing & postage.**
➢ Do you have the funding to cover printing and postage, given your goals?
➢ If printing and postage for your postcards is cost-prohibitive for your YWCA, consider partnering with your state or local <u>League of Women Voters</u>, <u>State Voices Table</u>, or another GOTV-focused group to explore cost sharing or reach out to YWCA USA.

❖ **Schedule your postcard mailings and follow through.**
➢ If you've asked volunteers to send postcards to friends or staff to send postcards to former and/or current program participants, consider sending a reminder close to the scheduled dates for your campaign and follow up with them to assess progress.
➢ If you have a large number of postcards and the addresses on hand, you may want to ask a volunteer to help add the stamps and recipient addresses to the postcards.
➢ Most importantly, make sure your postcards are sent out with enough time to be received before the deadline you are trying to educate around. *Given recent changes to USPS procedures, it would be prudent to research the expected delays in your*

> *community and plan your GOTV outreach accordingly, well in advance of voting deadlines in your state.*
> ➢ If possible, follow up with a phone call to those who were sent postcards.

❖ **Verify that your activity is (c)(3) compliant**.
  ➢ Refer to the Staying 501(c)(3) During an Election Year and GOTV Tools & Resources sections of this toolkit for additional guidance around 501(c)(3) rules & regulations.
  ➢ You can also call the [toll-free Bolder Advocacy hotline](#) at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229) or reach out to the YWCA USA Policy & Advocacy Team at [advocacy@ywca.org](#) with specific questions.

YWCA Samples & Templates

➢ [YWCA template postcards](#)
➢ [YWCA Get Out The Vote webpage](#)
➢ [YWCA Voter Registration Form](#)
➢ [YWCA Pledge to Vote](#)
➢ Please reach out to the Policy & Advocacy team at YWCA USA ([advocacy@ywca.org](#)) to obtain editable versions of these templates.

Community Forums

Community forums serve as opportunities to highlight YWomenVote, to uplift the voices of women of color leaders and experts, to host critical discussions around issues impacting our communities, and to empower our communities with timely voting information, tools, and resources. Given COVID-19, this year advocates are turning to *virtual or online community forums* to continue to host these important discussions. A virtual community forum can take many forms -- for example, it can look like a webinar or briefing, a panel discussion or town hall, a learning session, a Q&A with experts or candidates, or a workshop. No matter what you call your event, or how you structure it, a virtual community forum can be an effective way for your YWCA to engage voters this year.

Key Benefits & Challenges

Benefits:
★ Raise the profile of your YWCA in your community
★ Deepen relationships with elected officials, sponsors, and partner organizations
★ Fundraising opportunity through event sponsorship
★ Educate candidates on issues of importance to your community and your YWCA
★ Educate, register, and mobilize voters in your community

Challenges:
★ Heavier lift and time consuming to plan & manage

★ Moderate to high level of technical sophistication
★ Maintaining 501(c)(3) nonpartisanship

Tips & Tricks

❖ **Decide whether you will be hosting an issue forum or a candidate forum**.
- ➢ Will your speakers be community leaders discussing the issues outlined in the YWomenVote 2020 Report?
- ➢ Will you be inviting candidates to answer questions about their plans for advancing gender and racial equity?
- ➢ Keep in mind certain rules for maintaining nonpartisanship when hosting candidate forums, including that the forum must be open to all candidates, conducted in a balanced way, and include a nonpartisan panel of questioners.
- ➢ See the GOTV Tools & Resources section above for more guidance.

❖ **Decide the structure for your forum**.
- ➢ Will your forum be structured more as a webinar or briefing?
- ➢ Will it be structured as a panel discussion or town hall?
- ➢ Will it be structured as a learning session, Q&A, or workshop?
- ➢ Consider how much audience participation you would like there to be, if any.
- ➢ If you anticipate a lot of audience participation, consider hosting a series of events that might focus on different issues of importance to your community or host one event with breakout rooms to foster more intimate discussions.

❖ **Create an event description & secure your speakers**.
Early in your planning process, develop a description of the forum that can be used when conducting your outreach to potential speakers, sponsors, and partner organizations, and can later form the basis of your official event invitation.
- ➢ Consider using this YWCA sample forum description or create your own event description that reflects your community and goals for the event.
- ➢ Make a list of who you'd like to speak at your forum, and use the event description to invite them to participate. Consider using this YWCA sample email seeking forum speaker to get you started.
- ➢ Remember that your speakers do not have to be national political figures or celebrities. Consider inviting direct service staff, program participants, community leaders, local candidates for office, local news anchors, etc. to speak at your event and provide their perspective.
- ➢ This is an ideal opportunity to engage your mayor, town council member, superintendent of education, public health official, state legislator, Member of Congress, or other policymakers in your community.

❖ **Consider partnering with like-minded nonprofit organizations**.

- ➢ Hosting a virtual forum can be a heavy lift for your YWCA and strategic partnerships can bring new expertise, access to technology, relationships with guest speakers, and more to the table.
- ➢ Consider seeking out partnerships with fellow nonprofit organizations, especially if you've never hosted a virtual forum before.
- ➢ Make sure to send partners your event description (and promotional graphic, if you have one), and consider offering to put their organization logo on the event's promotional materials and/or give them time to make remarks during the event as incentive for their partnership.
- ➢ See this YWCA sample email seeking forum partner organizations if you're looking for help getting started with this outreach.

- ❖ **Design a promotional graphic for your forum**.
  - ➢ Design a graphic that you and your event partners can share to promote participation in your event, using free graphic design software like Canva or these YWCA template social media graphics, these YWCA sample forum graphics, or this YWCA sample forum invitation graphic to get started.
  - ➢ Encourage your partners to share the promotional materials you've developed with their network of staff, followers, clients, supporters, etc.

- ❖ **Seek out corporate or foundation sponsorships, if needed**. If you are hoping for your forum to serve as both an educational community event *and* a fundraiser, consider devoting time to conduct outreach to potential sponsors.
  - ➢ Send potential sponsors your event description with promotional graphics and consider offering to add their logos to promotional materials or give them time to make remarks during the event or submit a short video as incentives for their sponsorship.
  - ➢ See this YWCA sample email seeking corporate/foundation sponsorship if you're looking for help getting started with this outreach.

- ❖ **Decide which video conferencing platform you will use for your forum.** Choosing the right platform for your virtual event depends on who you'd like to attend and the environment you want to create. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - ➢ How will participants engage with the speaker?
  - ➢ How will participants engage with each other?
  - ➢ What preparation do participants need in order to use the virtual platform?
  - ➢ How will materials be shared with participants before, during, and after the sessions?
  - ➢ What will community norms be, & how much control do you want over adherence?
  - ➢ How can you build an agenda that balances content sharing, engagement, and time in front of a computer to keep participants engaged?
  - ➢ Consider factors like how many attendees you expect will join, whether you want a platform that enables audience participation or interactive elements, your comfort using the platform, accessibility for your audience, etc.

- ➢ Research popular video conferencing platforms -- such as <u>Zoom</u>, <u>Adobe Connect</u>, or <u>Google Meet</u> -- to understand costs, limitations, and special features. For example, Zoom offers "breakout rooms" for enabling smaller group discussions and a "screen share" feature for presenting PowerPoint and other multimedia.
- ➢ Consider live streaming the forum through your social media accounts and collaborating with your partners to see if they have access to platforms that would work for the event.
- ➢ Some platforms also include a recording feature to enable sharing your event after it is finished.

❖ **Familiarize yourself with the platform & test the platform in advance.**
- ➢ Ideally, you will host a training (or at least a run through) for your staff and event speakers on how to use the platform prior to your event.
- ➢ Send instructions for how to use the platform via email to your event attendees in advance of the event (see tips below).
- ➢ It would be prudent to also have someone on hand who is especially familiar with the platform and can handle questions and troubleshoot during the event.

❖ **Set up a registration form through which people can RSVP for your event**.
- ➢ It's often easiest to set up an RSVP through the platform you will be using for the event
- ➢ You can also utilize free services such as <u>Eventbrite</u> or <u>Google Forms </u>to set up an event registration form.
- ➢ Make sure to collect contact information (most likely, email addresses) from those who register to enable follow up communications.

❖ **Finalize promotional materials & promote participation in your forum**.
- ➢ Add the final details for your forum to your promotional graphic or official event invitation, including a list of your speakers, your sponsors and partners if applicable, and a link to the event registration form.
- ➢ If you haven't already, develop a graphic that you and your event partners can share in your promotional outreach.
- ➢ Consider using free graphic design software like <u>Canva</u> to design your own graphics or use these <u>YWCA template social media graphics</u> or this <u>YWCA sample forum invitation graphic</u> as a starting point.
- ➢ Consider promoting the event through your website, newsletter, social media, and email to community partners or coalition listservs, and encourage your event partners and sponsors to share the promotional materials you've developed with their own network of staff, followers, clients, supporters, etc.
- ➢ If it makes sense in your community, consider printing the graphic and pinning it to community bulletin boards in places of business that remain open and frequented like grocery stores, coffee shops, and laundromats.

❖ **Develop a run-of-show that details the sequence of speakers & topics**. Coordinating multiple speakers often requires establishing some structure for your conversation in advance

of your forum. A run-of-show can help your speakers and event support staff know what is expected of each of them during the event (and when it is expected), thereby preventing any confusion on the day of the event.

➢ See these YWCA sample forum run-of-shows for an example.
➢ To prepare event support staff, make sure to designate roles ahead of time, *i.e.* someone to run the technology during the event, someone to pass along audience-generated questions to the moderator, someone to share information and resources via the chat, someone to someone to run any multimedia components, someone tracking time, *etc*.
➢ To prepare your speakers, consider including the questions your event moderator will ask within the run-of-show and send the run-of-show to speakers as far in advance as possible.
➢ Design your own questions or utilize the YWomenVote 2020 Report to get you started.
➢ If possible, host a run through with speakers and staff prior to the event to familiarize them with the run-of-show and using the platform.

❖ **Send important details to participants in advance of the event**, including:
➢ Detailed instructions for how to join the event;
➢ Instructions for use the platform; and
➢ Contact information for someone who will serve as your "IT expert" to handle questions and troubleshoot as needed during the event.

❖ **Verify that your activity is (c)(3) compliant**.
➢ Keep in mind certain rules for maintaining nonpartisanship when hosting candidate forums, and make sure to remind all of your speakers that they must participate in your event in accordance with all 501(c)(3) rules and restrictions as your YWCA is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization that does support or endorse any candidates for public office.
➢ Refer to the Staying 501(c)(3) During an Election Year and GOTV Tools & Resources sections of this toolkit for additional guidance around 501(c)(3) rules & regulations.
➢ You can also call the toll-free Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229) or reach out to the YWCA USA Policy & Advocacy Team at advocacy@ywca.org with specific questions.

❖ **Send a follow up email with a "call to action" shortly after the event** .
➢ A timely follow up email to everyone who RSVPed for your forum is a great opportunity to share a call to action, thank your sponsors, partners, and attendees, fundraise, or promote your next event.
➢ Depending on the timing of your forum and the deadlines and opportunities specific to your state, consider encouraging your event attendees to register to vote using YWCA's voter registration form, check their registration status, vote early in person or by mail, sign YWCA's pledge to vote, find their polling place/hours, or learn more about the voting options in your community at www.vote411.org.

YWCA Samples & Templates

- ➢ YWCA sample forum description
- ➢ YWCA sample email seeking forum speaker
- ➢ YWCA sample email seeking forum partner organizations
- ➢ YWCA sample email seeking corporate/foundation sponsorship
- ➢ YWCA template social media graphics
- ➢ YWCA sample forum graphics
- ➢ YWCA sample forum invitation graphic
- ➢ YWCA sample forum run-of-shows
- ➢ YWCA Get Out The Vote webpage
- ➢ YWCA Voter Registration Form
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- ➢ Please reach out to the Policy & Advocacy team at YWCA USA (advocacy@ywca.org) to obtain editable versions of these templates.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the YWCA USA Public Policy & Advocacy Team
at advocacy@ywca.org