Agenda

1. Brief Introduction to the Voterization Project
2. Discussion of Housing as an Election Issue
3. Keeping It Legal as a 501(c)(3)
4. Effective Messaging and Phone Banking
5. Educating Voters about How and Where to Vote
6. Early Vote and Vote-by-Mail
7. Election Day
   1. Visibility
   2. Ride shares
   3. Voter Suppression
   4. Poll Watching--Knock and drag
8. Q&A
What is Voterization?

The Voterization Project is our effort to help housing advocates and service providers legally and effectively engage their clients and constituents in voting and encompasses the three part process of voter engagement:

1. Registration
2. Education
3. Mobilization
Housing is an Election Issue

Making Housing an Election Priority

• Join the Issue Debate!
• Housing is Bi-Partisan
• Campaign Attention Leads to Legislative Action
Voter Participation

U.S. Citizens Who Reported Voting in National Elections by Occupant Type (2006-2014)

Nonprofits: The Do’s and Don’ts of Voter and Candidate Education

Nonprofits CAN

- Conduct voter registration
- Conduct voter education and mobilizing efforts
- Conduct candidate engagement efforts
- Take official positions on ballot measures and campaign for those issues

Nonprofits CANNOT

- Make endorsements for any political candidates.
- Donate money, resources, or time to any particular candidate.
- Allow staff to represent the organization while privately engaging in partisan political activities.

501(c)(3) organizations ARE allowed to participate in voter and candidate education efforts as long as efforts stay nonpartisan!
The **Voterization Plan** is a step-by-step model for launching a campaign to register, educate, and mobilize voters.

The **Voterization Narrative** is a companion piece to explain steps in the Voterization process.

**VOTERIZATION: 2016 Voterization Plan**

Completing a Voterization plan for your agency will help you assess how best to incorporate voter registration, education, and mobilization into your agency’s work. This plan template presents a menu of activities that your organization may want to consider.

Please let us know if you are participating! Contact NLIHC’s Field Team at 202-662-1530 or outreach@nlihc.org with a description of your project.

**WHY BECOME VOTERIZED?**

Below are some reasons that organizations have undertaken Voterization projects.

- Engage residents in civic participation and help them become familiar with how decisions of elected officials affect their lives.
- Educate residents on housing issues and on how their decisions affect residents.
- Build influence with elected officials.
- Help develop residents’ leadership skills.
- Assist residents in meeting community service requirements, if applicable.
- Earn positive press for your program or project.
- Other

**LEGALLY SPEAKING**

Nonprofit organizations are, and should, engage in nonpartisan election-related activity, including voter registration, education, and mobilization. The basic rule is that 501(c)(3) organizations cannot in any way support or oppose particular candidates. For detailed information on these issues:

- Contact the Office of the Secretary of State or Board of Elections in your state to learn your state’s rules for third-party voter registration.
- Take a look at the Permissible Activities Checklist put together by Nonprofit VOTE at: [www.nonprofitvote. org/documents/301c3-nonpartisan-election-activities-v2.pdf](http://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/301c3-nonpartisan-election-activities-v2.pdf)
- Visit the League of Women Voters at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) for the latest information on voting in your state.
Getting out the Vote (GOTV)

Part 1: Overcoming Common Obstacles
Getting out the Vote!

Most Common Reasons Given For Not Voting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Reasons for Not Voting in the 2014 Elections</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too busy, conflicting schedule</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness or disability</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of town</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgot to vote</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not like candidates or campaign issues</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration problems</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient polling place</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation problems</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad weather conditions</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or refused</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: November 2014 Current Population Survey
Effective Messaging about Voting

Tone and Language Matters

• Connect voting to the lives of low income households.
• Connect voting to your issues
• Stay positive
• Focus on values

Important resource: “How to Talk about Voting” by the Brennan Center for Justice.
• Available at: http://bit.ly/2cR1XdY
Effective Messaging about Voting

Some Examples

• Stand up for your community!
• Voting is your civic duty.
• Help craft a better future.
• Your voice matters!
• Take control of what’s next.
Educating Voters: The Process of Voting

Election Day Considerations

• Know Polling Locations and Times
• Required Documents
• Accessibility Considerations

www.nlihc.org
Educating Voters: The Process of Voting

Publicize Election Information

• Organizational newsletters
• Email alerts
• Flyers
• Posters
• Sample ballots
GOTV-Voter Lists

A Good Target List of Registered Voters

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

In GOTV materials and emails, you should try to list a voter’s specific polling location.

- Up-to-date addresses are necessary to find polling locations.
Building a Voter List

Combine Contact Lists

• Include lists of your clients, volunteers, and donors.
• Incorporate lists from voter engagement coalition partners.

Remember, list management is a key role to have filled for any voter engagement campaign.

• Assign volunteers and staff to update and keep the list.
• The list will be used to generate call sheets, reminder emails, and any mailings.
Three Contacts Rule

Effective GOTV requires contact with all voters on your list three times.

• About two weeks prior to election day.
• Within two days prior to election day.
• On election day.

Everybody LOVES election-related phone calls.

• Don’t worry: nobody will refuse to vote because you bugged them with a phone call—quite the opposite.
Use a Script!

The message is simple:

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

Update your list!

- Have staff and volunteers who are doing reminder calls verify addresses, emails, and phone numbers for election day mobilization.
Getting out the Vote (GOTV)

Part 2: Mobilization Prior to Election Day
Alternative Voting

• Early voting
  • Make sure your constituency knows about opportunities for early voting and any eligibility requirements

• Mail-in ballots
  • Learn what your community requires for the submission of absentee ballots

TWITTER VIA MICHELLE OBAMA
GOTV is about more than Election Day

• In the 2012 presidential election, 32 million votes were cast BEFORE Election Day.

• 37 states and the District of Columbia allow voting prior to election day.

• 3 states conduct elections entirely through the mail: Washington, Oregon, and Colorado.
  • Drop-off boxes are used in addition to mail options.
Where is Early Voting and Vote-by-Mail Available?

Source: National Council of State Legislatures
Important Considerations

Volunteers and staff can help voters with their vote by mail ballots or absentee ballots.

- Be extremely careful, as always, not to ever endorse a specific candidate or political party.

It is legal to provide a voter with postage for their absentee ballots or Vote by Mail ballots.

- This is not considered giving someone a reward for voting.

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

• Any Questions so far? Please post them in the question chat box!
Getting out the Vote (GOTV)

Part 3: Election Day
The Key Components

1. Visibility
2. Getting voters to the polls
3. Voter suppression
4. Poll Watching—Knock and drag
5. Celebrate!
“Hey! It’s Election Day! Go Vote!”

Put volunteers in high-traffic areas with visible signs reminding people to vote.

- Major intersections
- Bus stops
- Apartment complex parking areas
- College campuses

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

Coordinate Rides to the Polling Locations

Transportation concerns are among the primary reasons low income people vote in lower numbers.

• It is completely legal to offer people rides to the polls
• This is an especially important mobilization aspect for organizations working with people who have disabilities.
• Walk-to-the-polls parties and captains
  • Social reinforcement of voting.

www.nlihc.org
Educating Voters: Their Rights

People Vote When They Know Their Rights

- Prepare Voters for Common Voter Suppression Practices (ballot challenges, voter ID, etc.)
- Provisional Ballots
- Stay in Line!
- Voter Protection Attorneys
Voter Suppression

Best resources:
- Fair Elections Legal Network (www.fairelections.com)
- American Civil Liberties Union (www.aclu.org)

[Map of the United States with state-by-state voter suppression strategies indicated]

- Voter ID
- Documentary proof of citizenship requirement; Dual-registration system
- Voter ID; Early voting cutbacks
- Early Voting Cutbacks
- Elimination of same-day registration; Early voting cutbacks
- Dual-registration system; Restriction on Mail-in Ballots
- Additional Scrutiny of Voters at the Polls
- Voter ID; Early voting cutbacks; Elimination of Same-Day Registration
Track Progress Throughout Election Day

Have a presence at polling locations

- Leaves a fresh list of people who need to be contacted at later parts of the day who have not yet voted.
- Provides a presence to discourage voter caging and voter harassment.
- Can be done through a continuous presence or through periodic check-ins.

Lists must match—If poll watchers are crossing off voters who have come in, this needs to be reflected on a master list.
Host an Election Day Party

Work to associate voting with fun.

• Important reward for voter engagement volunteers.
• Cements the campaign moving into upcoming elections.

No compensation of any kind can be given to voters.

• Election night celebrations with food and drinks are great, but voting cannot be a condition for participation.
• This applies regardless of whether voting rewards are being offered in a non-partisan way.
Questions?

• Any Questions so far? Please post them in the question chat box!
Additional Resources

Bolder Advocacy
- Provides legal guidance for 501(c)3 involvement in advocacy and elections.
- Project of Alliance for Justice.
- [www.bolderadvocacy.org](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org).

Nonprofit Vote
- Resource center for Nonprofits engaging in elections.
- Webinars, fact sheets, and checklists covering various aspects of election engagement.
Become a Member of NLIHC

The influence of NLIHC comes from our more than 900 organizational and individual members nationwide. Join us today!

Benefits of membership include:
• **Memo to Members**—Receive our acclaimed weekly newsletter to your inbox every Monday.

• **Calls to Action**—Follow legislative developments and know when to take action by contacting your Members of Congress.

• **Free or Discounted Publications**

• **Annual Policy Forum**

• **Resource Referrals**—NLIHC members and partners provide one another with great information sharing and collaboration.

• **Staff Assistance**—NLIHC staff are available to help members with research questions, organizing strategy, and policy analysis.

Click here: [http://nlihc.org/membership](http://nlihc.org/membership) to become a member TODAY!
Thank You for Joining!

For more information or to find out how to get involved, please contact NLIHC’s field team!

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