Mobilizing the Civic Sector for Nonpartisan Voter Engagement

March 22-24, 2011
Tarrytown, New York
Pocantico Conference Center
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Introduction

The importance of the nonprofit sector in advancing nonpartisan civic engagement has arguably never been greater. With budget deficits and cuts often affecting our communities first, the nonprofit sector must choose between being “at the table” or “on the table.” As we prepare for the 2012 Presidential elections, nonprofits are well positioned to contact, inform, and motivate voters – and ensure our democracy remains reflective of all communities.

To increase voter engagement among traditionally marginalized communities, Nonprofit VOTE equips and mobilizes the civic sector -- direct service providers and human service agencies, schools, congregations, and government agencies – to empower and engage their clients and constituents to participate.

In March 2011, Nonprofit Vote gathered strategic thinkers at the national, state, and local levels to discuss the opportunities and challenges we face, and begin to build a framework for a 2012 Nonprofit VOTE campaign. Throughout the convening, participants:

- Explored the assets and benefits of the community- and agency-based voter engagement approach, as well as challenges;
- Discussed ways to expand the role of nonprofits and service providers in voter engagement in 2012, including the elements of a Nonprofit VOTE campaign;
- Created the basis for a post-convening “Call to Action” document that calls for an expanded role for nonprofits, foundations and the civic sector in voter engagement and democracy.

This is a record of the gathering in Tarrytown, New York at the Pocantico Retreat Center.

In Appreciation

Thank you to the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation and the Pocantico Retreat Center for hosting Nonprofit VOTE and our participants. A special thanks to Ben Shute, Jr. of the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation for his support and continued efforts to foster healthy democracy and social change for all. We also thank the Pocantico staff – Judy Clark, Regina Creegan, and all others – for their wonderful hospitality.
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Meeting Flow (Agenda)

**Tuesday – March 22nd**

Welcome and Opening
- Michael Weekes, Providers’ Council
- Cristóbal Josh Alex, Open Society Foundations

**Wednesday – March 23rd**

Welcome and Opening
- Kyle Caldwell, Michigan Nonprofit Association

The potential of nonprofits and social service agencies for voter engagement
Moderator: George Pillsbury, Nonprofit VOTE
- Elizabeth Boris, The Urban Institute
- Trish Tchume, Demos-Building Movement Project
- Latonya Slack, The James Irvine Foundation
- Kelly LeRoux, University of Chicago at Illinois

Assets and challenges for agency/community-based voter engagement
Moderators: Ruben Castilla Herrera, Ohio Action Circle and Linda Nyugen, Alliance for Children and Families
- Full group discussion: The potential assets and benefits of this approach
- Small group break-outs: What are barriers and challenges and specific strategies to overcome these barriers?
- Report back from small groups

Stories from the field
Moderator: Lindsey Hodel, Nonprofit VOTE
- ACCESS, Rachid Elabed
- Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Association, Marcony Almeida
- Brett Family Foundation, Michael Brewer

Afternoon small groups
- Best practices of agency/community-based voter engagement: Voter registration, voter and candidate education, getting out the vote/helping people vote
- Defining the new narrative
- Outlining a research agenda
- The non-grant making role of funders
- Responses to anti-voting efforts

Dinner and evening discussion and reflection
Thursday – March 24th

Outlining a Nonprofit Vote 2012 Campaign
- Kyle Caldwell, Michigan Nonprofit Association
- Michael Weekes, Providers’ Council
- Lindsey Hodel, Nonprofit VOTE

Small group sessions
- What would you suggest or add to the elements of a Nonprofit Vote 2012 campaign?
- What partners need to be engaged in your state/your region/your network?
- What resources and assistances will you need from Nonprofit Vote?
- What are first next steps?

Wrap Up/Evaluation
- Next steps and final comments
- Check in on goals
- Wrap up/Adjourn
Welcome and Opening Dinner

Michael Weekes – Providers’ Council and Nonprofit Vote Board Chair

Cristobal Josh Alex – Open Society Foundations

Principles of Cooperation

Respect Ourselves
Respect Others
Respect This Place
Moderator: George Pillsbury
Panelists: Elizabeth Boris, Trish Tchume, Latonya Slack, Kelly LeRoux

Elizabeth Boris

- Barriers include lack of resources, lack of expertise, and fear about this work.
- Building coalitions is key. Recent research shows that funding coalitions is especially effective. Coalitions can lower costs, provide cover and less exposure for individual nonprofits, offer peer learning opportunities and offer materials.
- Creating tools is very important, like voter guides. Also tools for framing, impact.
- Coalitions need to understand the system that they want to change, offer equal partnership and equal stake to members, shared leadership, and collective infrastructure. Collective and decentralized leadership is essential, but with resource hubs for coordination and accountability.
- Funding of coalitions is the most important thing funders can do.
- The Internet is important for young people and for social networking.
- Nonprofits play a critical role in all of this.
- Fee for service income is important for nonprofits to consider.
- We also have to change the perception that “advocacy” is a dirty word. If that’s what people think of advocacy, what do they think of “voter work” “voter engagement” “civic participation”?
- Philanthropy represents just 10 percent of funding for the sector as a whole.
- See Elizabeth’s chapter in The State of Nonprofit America, “Civic Participation and Advocacy”.
- See “Collective Impact” by John Kania & Mark Kramer.
- See “Transformer” by Heather McLeod Grant.

Trish Tchume

- We also have to keep “Social Justice” at the forefront of what we do. Think of what Jeff Bauer of the Family Partnership of Minneapolis showed in Minneapolis, stimulus funds that went to better schools and jobs in wealthy communities went to basic services in poor communities, perpetuating a cycle of need.
- Building Movement Project is doing research on service providing nonprofits, to create a culture shift and build social justice in California.
- BMP helps nonprofits become sites of the democratic process.
- BMP helps build community leaders to move the issues.
- Service providers’ are trusted institutions in marginalized communities.
- Fear exists among nonprofits of losing tax-exempt status.
- Civic role is front and center.
- Civic engagement work magnifies the sector’s power.

**Latonya Slack**

- The Irvine Foundation has been working on a California Votes Initiative, a 4-year project involving 9 community-based organizations, including NALEO.
- This work focused on evaluation and used traditional campaign techniques. Each organization received $250-300K to do the work and evaluate. The grants were multi-year.
- How is this study scalable?
- Key findings from Irvine study:
  - Voter contacts 4 weeks prior to the election were more effective
  - Supervise, monitor, and motivate
  - Follow up with the yes
  - Plan, prepare, and improvise

**Kelly LeRoux**

- Nonprofit VOTE’s study with Kelly was on a much smaller scale but it also demonstrates important findings.
- Cristobal mentioned that every group should do this type of evaluation work.
- New research on the potential to motivate young voters using social media - it works, but only in combination with other tactics.
- Found significant increase in voter turnout among voters who were contacted once by service agencies. Voter turnout increased even further among voters who were contacted more than once by service agencies.
- Groups were new to this type of evaluation, had to design a program that was achievable.
- See report in packets, and at [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org) for full study report.

**Index Card Questions**

1. For Kelly: Why do you think sample ballots weren’t effective? (April Osajima)
2. What role do you see infrastructure organizations playing in conducting voter engagement research? (Kyle Caldwell)
3. How can we replicate the Detroit study in other parts of the county to build a cadre of research to support this work? (Jeannie Fox and Lindsey Hodel)
4. For Latonya: Does the 4-week start make it difficult to register new voters?
5. For Kelly: Were you able to verify the results against the voter records? (Steve Taylor)
6. To what extent does voting reminders include assistance? How important is this? For instance, voter info for felons, how do I find my polling place, etc? (Susie Brown)

7. For Kelly: Were any of the agencies reluctant to use the control group, i.e. have some clients not included in contacts? (Ben Shute)

8. For Elizabeth: Is there research being done on foundations who are collaborating with each other in particular funding areas? (Jaune Evans)

9. For Latonya: How do we get the broader progressive funding community to adopt your model of year-round, multi-year funding of non-profit infrastructure?

10. For all: Have any of the experiments utilized the Voter Activation Network (VAN) for data and tracking? (Terri Bailey)

11. For Elizabeth: Have you studied reasons nonprofits don’t participate in coalitions? How quickly do participant interests break up and divide coalitions? (Steve Taylor)

12. For Latonya and Kelly: Do you have any insights about the value of targeting members of a particular community (e.g. a congregation) vs. a broader approach (e.g. a section of a city) – We assume that targeting a congregation would net greater results. Is this true?
Assets and challenges for agency/community based voter engagement

Moderators: Ruben Castilla Herrera, Ohio Action Circle and Linda Nguyen, Alliance for Children and Families

Assets/benefits of voter engagement work for the Alliance for Children and Families

- Prevents your mission from being dismantled.
- Keeps elected officials accountable.
- It’s fun!
- Stands up for minority groups that are becoming majority groups.

Challenges and barriers for the Alliance for Children and Families

- Social workers/staff are disempowered.
- Perception that work is partisan.
- Voter ID and other voting rights challenges.
- Boards or ED can sometimes be against the work and/or disempower staff.
- Danger of polarization.
- Non-citizens are a challenge.
- How do we create a narrative of empowerment?

Small group work – Three questions

| What are the barriers and challenges you have experienced in doing non-partisan voter outreach? |
| What are strategies for overcoming these barriers and addressing challenges? |
| How can we create a creative, new narrative to describe our sector and our work? |
Group One

- Empowering staff! Overcomes challenges of disengagement. We can involve them in advocacy work, etc.
- Barrier: extra fear of federal grantees of involvement in voter engagement work.
  - Solution: Highlight peers and others who have successfully engaged with voter engagement work.
  - Added value of a coalition.
  - Know your partners – lessens anxiety about negative associations to other groups in a coalition.
  - Perception matters.
  - Network model (not “married” in public eye) can be a solution. Loose affiliation.
- Protect services providers’ trust among people – it is their key asset!
- Fear is tremendous barrier. How do we education and overcome it?
  - Critical mass – get the large associations to do this work and others will follow.
  - Grantor training of legal limits of funding.
  - Re-tool to be in the positive (e.g., “you can do this”).
  - Social capital and research – people who are civically engaged are better off (healthier, etc.)
- Constituency is an asset for groups
  - Most effective message vehicle.
  - Inform organizations’ work.
- Management and board training/development.
- Advocacy and engagement historically overlooked needs to be a core component of MPP/MPA and certificate programs.
- Low-impact/high-yield incorporation of voter engagement into existing programming.
- Legal training is deficit-based. How do we flip that?
- Building voter registration question/assistance into intake processes, etc.
- State money requires voter registration support in MN; need research on how that works.
- Continuum of incorporation – benchmarks over several years (e.g. distribute materials, etc.)
- Move from cyclical to systematic incorporation.
Group Two

- Be clear about how you will use your volunteers.
  - Who? Youth
  - Paid/Not Paid
- Pledge cards, email/text reminders work.
- Build relationships with faith-based organizations.
  - Bring information
  - Go during religious holidays
- Build relationships with state organizations.
- Follow contacts with “thank you for voting” and yard signs.
- Set up meetings with local organizations and boards.
- Create material tailored for different service populations.
  - Bilingual educational materials
  - Don’t be specific about the date/year
- Create a culture of voting.
  - Keep community engaged
  - Plan for the long term
- Educate youth.
  - Educate parents
  - They are more likely to be voters
- Use media for outreach.
  - Radio
  - Community leaders
  - Community Events
  - Sports events
  - Flea markets
- Bus rider registration programs.
- Recruit poll workers/poll watchers.
  - If you have a 2011 election, practice for 2012

Group Three

**Overcoming Barriers**

- Education on H election designation.
- Base building.
- Coalition building.
- Technical assistance.
- Inform elected officials of your activity – gain support.
- Build/articulate value properly.
- Involve clients as poll workers.
- Organizations working in isolation/coalition.
- Perception of lack of time and resources.
Organizational fear of political backlash, loss of funding, c3 status.
- Seen as mission drift for some organizations.
- Not enough time to present info in digestible fashion/doable way.
- Sense of urgency.
- State laws discourage effort.

**Group Four**

**Assets**

- Movement.
- Opportunity for leadership development/engagement.
- It’s cool.
- Power – spiritual, meaningful, justice.
- Inclusive.
- People.

**Barriers and Strategies**

- Mental/framing.
- Organizational – our staff, board, our community.
- Perception of our role in society.
- Opposition at work and framing.
- Division between donors and staff, idealistically/philosophically.
- Information and education.
- Peer to peer (board members/CEO’s/Donors).
- Multi-year funding (not only Presidential elections – long-term strategy).
- Value-added and ROI.

**Group Five**

**Barriers**

- Fear of being political.
- Fear of targeting for payback.
- Increase in intimidation tactics.
- Addressing voter barriers.
- Our perception of clients is lacking, we have lowered expectations.
- Notion that immigrants don’t vote.
- Old school poll workers, we can improve this by becoming poll workers/recruiting them.
Overcoming These Barrier

- Big players signal safety and importance.
- Relational communications to claim our right to vote.
- Positive messaging.
- We vote because we live here.
- Companion Legal: Fair Vote strategy, legal support for organizations.
- Having a strong community base.
- Longer-term, not just for one election.
- Nonprofits pushing cities, election offices to do their job.
- Holistic approach, helping new voters participate.

New Narrative

- New ways of:
  - Listening
  - Training – staff and community.
  - Messaging.
  - Gather/unify the sector.
  - Celebrate.
  - Build resilience – personal, organizational, sector-wide.

Question for Index Cards – What is one thing I will do to move from “old “old story” to “new story?”

- New Narrative: Non-Profit to Civic society that’s about patriotism, faith and justice (Jennifer Jones Bridgett)
- Change guidelines to reflect support for advocacy even if legally prohibited. (Latonya Slack)
- “We vote because we live here.” We are United Way, we vote.” (Steve Taylor)
- Build from the constituencies to the organization to the leadership.
- Recover our sense that we are people (sorry Tea Party). Black, Brown, White, young, old, poor. (Mike Seifert)
- Increased civic engagement for health – frame as public health strategy. (Suzie Brown)
- Lead national constituent meetings to develop and affirm the new narrative. (Rishi Manchanda)
- Constituent strategy in Voter Engagement through non-profits. (Kyle Caldwell)
- This is an American Story, our story, a story of abundance and patriotic passion.
- Let’s do voter registration year round.
- Ongoing Activity (not just election year).
• To articulate the proper role of the sector in building a strong civic society/democracy.
• Get the “H election” (budget on lobbying) – will help when talking to partners and affiliates.
• Voting is critical to building a resilient democracy.
• Making civic engagement part of our daily basis lives – “We are all in this together.” (Marcony Almeida)
• The barrier of fear around voter work, due to funding or legal concerns is actually an opportunity. (Cristobal Josh Alex)
• Enforcement of National Voter Registration Act to create safety net. (Cristobal Josh Alex)
• When we can identify and galvanize the strength and passion of your client’s program participants/staff engaged in this work. (Michael Weeks)
• Ask social service grantees to articulate how they bring their constituents into decision-making roles.
• Increase engagement from the constituent level to become poll workers.
• Get whole group to articulate the new narrative, and raise up civic participation as a core activity and the value of civic society. (Elizabeth Boris)
• More education and trainings with our local organizations with local organizations to help prevent the fear/ignorance the community has when it comes to advocacy and civic engagement. (Rachid Elabed)
• Framing of civic engagement and building your base as a form of protection not as a risky activity. (Trish Tchume)
• Focus on the voting infrastructure – elections officials, etc. – we can help them do their job better. (Ben Shute, Jr.)
• Lead with benefits of voter engagement work; also be clear about risk of not participating. (George Pillsbury)
Stories From the Field

Moderator: Lindsey Hodel
Panelists: Rachid Elabed, Marcony Almeida, Michael Brewer

Rachid Elabed

- ACCESS employs a variety of tactics, using the voter file and doing more community-based work
- Only certain types of targeting are nonpartisan.
- ACCESS sees as many as 300 people everyday for employment training, DHS services, etc. The DHS office is in their bldg. That is an incredible opportunity for quality face-to-face contact in agency.
- ACCESS also does massive registration and recruitment in high schools and colleges and at local events. They leverage the fact that many colleges and high schools have community service requirements.

Marcony Almeida

- MIRA is working on the 300k green card holders in MA and the 17% of our residents born outside the US.
- They have 140 partner orgs.
- Like ACCESS they deliver native language messaging and education. They work local events like church coffee hours.
- The one thing they noticed didn’t work was registering people at supermarkets.

Michael Brewer

- Michael issues caution in befriending program officers at community foundations. They can be conservative. They don’t want to annoy their supporters. But people in our field should be working to get on the boards of community foundations now.
- We can influence that grant making process.
Group One – Best Practices for Voter Engagement

- Pledge cards work!
- Text messaging and email reminders work
- Local events like church coffee hours, flee markets!, sports events, etc. work
- Build relationships with and leverage the power of respected community leaders, like church leaders
- When you attend an event, bring lots of materials with you. This might be your only contact with a particular voter
- Connect to a coalition of partners to do this work
- Create a brand that partners can work under
- Follow up with voters in whatever way you can - text, email, thank you cards to churches, phone calls to community leaders, etc.
- Create a culture of voting
- Create good materials that are appropriate for your community
- Youth are often primary educators of their parents, esp. in immigrant communities
- Ask community leaders to call into local radio, ethnic radio, local TV, etc.
- Partner with local elections officials
- Encourage community members to become poll workers, poll watchers, polling place translators, etc.

Group Two – Defining our New Narrative

- Articulate central role of social service sector in building strong civic societies.
- Power to sustain the sector lies within the constituency.
- New narrative as a function as opposed to a static statement.
- Unlikely partners are important.
Nonprofit VOTE

• Resilient democracy.
• Taking back the narrative.
• Building a strong civil society.
• History of civic society responses.

• New way of talking about politics.
• Strategic message testing.
• Self-interest of civic engagement – healthy communities.
• Directly impacts your service delivery.
• Civic engagement is essential to well-being of clients.
• Commonwealth – we are here – stand up and be counted.
• Cover your ass narrative (we need one of these as well).
• We are United Way, we vote.
• Fun/joy/aspects of meaning, substantive and deep.
• Abundance-model.
• Self-esteem.
• Leadership development.
• Empowering workers and community.
• Political power.
• Clear role in society.
• Tailored message.
  • To audience
  • Listening to community and acknowledgement
• Strategic.
• Rapid Response (e.g. lessons from ACORN).
• Media-savvy.
• Support each other/defend each other.
• Civic society/patriotic/faith/justice.
• Opportunity to tell “our story:” American story.
• Resilient/strong democracy.

Group Three – Outlining a Research Agenda

• How to disseminate the research that has already been done?
• How to make it accessible?
• How to attract funding to increase number of studies, data, etc.
• Use of electronic communications – some benefits of face-to-face participation – how do these two tactics fit together?
• Additional research questions – e.g., why are young people voting?
• Can we prove that voting improves health?
• Putnam, Seligman, related studies on activity and participation.
• Pew Center project on civic engagement.
• CIRCLE at Tufts University.
• “Nature of associational behavior” is a field of study relevant to voting and healthy communities.
• Cell phones replacing land lines as a means to reach people, especially for a transient population.
• Or, emails vs. a physical address.
Nonprofit VOTE

- Implications for the ability to survey people to collect data?
- Proof? Is there a political, partisan benefit to engaging new or low-income voters?
- Myth busting: our work does not only benefit the Democratic Party.
  - Organizations across the spectrum are already doing this work
  - We know people don’t always vote their self-interest
- C3/c4 affiliations – c4/527 organizations make it hard to follow the affiliations, lack of transparency.
- Center for Community Change is promoting development of c4’s, is this successful?
- How to protect those who want to remain purely c3, and how to attract progressive funders to these efforts.
- Role of coalitions and networks to expand voice.
- Emphasis on performance outcomes.
- How to measure secondary effects (e.g. voters telling their family members to vote).
- Making structure of experiments do-able for groups.
- Studies with volunteers of organizations.
- Proof?
  - Does voter engagement work actively lead to better public policy? How can we prove this?
  - Better services to communities?
  - More diverse members elected to bodies?
- Ability to document concrete examples of success.
- Various categories of impact.
- Conducting interviews, case studies.
- Compiling nonprofits historical and rightful role of advocacy, this is not new.
- Themes
  - Topics for future research
  - Importance of dissemination
    - Making research usable
    - Case making this it’s goof for us
  - Financial and other support for continued research
- How to employ this particular group (Pocantico participants) to pilot some research.

Group Four – The Non-Grant Making Role of Funders

- Conveners for funders, hosting funders’ briefings.
- Training and legal counsel (retainer) for assistance.
- Communications training and continuum.
- Report briefings to elected officials.
- Research and funding for research.
- Hosting meetings with elected officials about election laws.
- Funders have a birds-eye view.
- Expand the group of service providers/funders.
- Technical Assistance with own professional and personal assistance.
- Convener of organizations.
- Make individual connections.
- Edit proposals.
- Include questions in grant applications: do you do civic engagement work?
- Produce reports of the work.
- Buy and share tools like the VAN, Maptitude, SMS Short code, etc.
- Promote coalition building instead of competition.

**Group Five – Challenges to Voting and How to Combat These**

- April 4th: We Are One, Respect Our Rights.
- American Legislative Exchange Council pushes voter ID bills and other legislation into states.
- Emphasize relatedness (voters/public unions/women).
- Legal strategies
  - Challenge of money/what are funders’ roles?
- How do we re-frame the understanding about voter IDs and voter fraud?
  - Problem:
    - Facts/reason/data vs. emotional/culture/bias/prejudice/wrong perceptions
    - What’s our negative message?
    - Expose the bad actors
    - What’s our negative message? How do we expose these bad actors?
- The Practical response: cost
- Can we stoop to “ACORN” ALEC?
Kyle Caldwell, Michael Weekes, Lindsey Hodel

Elements of a 2012 Nonprofit Vote Campaign

2012 Goals

1. Develop a nationally branded, sector-wide voter engagement campaign that provides entry points for a diverse group of nonprofits.
2. Provide tools, training, and technical assistance for nonprofits that make it easier to do voter engagement work, and ensure best practices are implemented.
3. Continue to foster a culture shift within the nonprofit and civic sector to embrace ongoing voter engagement work.

2012 Objectives

1. Mobilize 50,000 nonprofits to do voter engagement work at their agencies, congregations, schools, and other places communities gather
2. Partner with at least 30 state nonprofit partners and 100 national partners who promote voter engagement and Nonprofit Vote’s resources to their networks
3. Double the number of local United Ways, community foundations and grant maker networks who promote nonprofit voter engagement resources and trainings to their grantees and partners
4. With our partners, host nonprofit voter engagement kick-off events in at least 25 cities and states.

The Elements of a 2012 Campaign

1. Engage state and national partners and be visible at their events
2. State voter engagement roundtables for nonprofits and service providers
3. State kick-off events
4. Communications and Marketing
5. Resources
6. Research
Small Group Work – Four Questions

What would you suggest or add to the elements of a Nonprofit Vote 2012 campaign?

- An end user number – How many individuals can be reached?
- Systematic change measure?
  - The turnout increases by number
  - Registration, etc.
- Documentation goal
  - Modeling case study
  - 200 flip cams?
  - Capture the stories/images
  - Be able to tell the story later
- Surveys, evaluation tools
  - Is there my benefit to having unbranded materials? (some orgs may not want to be associated with a particular campaign perception of a liberal bias)
  - To what extent national branding
  - Value of local flavor
  - Tiers: branding, co-branding, no branding
- Network aide. SMS short code (social media), reminders to cell phones and constituents
- Text messages to remind to vote
- Varying images (ages, etc.) in poster materials not just youth
- Issues of reframing “nonprofit vote”
- Call the campaign something else?
- Partner recruitment tool kit
- Customizing materials to specific constituencies and create an online depository of this
- Software tool for agencies to do online voter registration with clients at intake
- Communication tool –
  - In progress meeting of benchmarks
  - Dashboard
  - Strategy?
  - Laser focus on human service providers?
  - Broader non-profit sector?
Quantitative data
  • Break it down regionally/state by state
  • What’s our part in reaching overall goal?
  • Regional (multi-state) organizers on Nonprofit VOTE staff
    • Increase staffing at national level to support local partners
    • Consider targeting strategically
• How is this effort coordinating with other models (3-legged stool)
  • Be aware of C3 – C4 activity
  • Where does it complement?
• Research project
  • Map the C3 – C4 universe
• What other voter engagement effort? How do we connect
  • Rock the Vote
  • Bus Project
  • VotoLatino
  • Mi Familia Vota
  • Other
• Research
  • How to tie civic engagement to health indicators
  • Mine existing research
  • Do more research
  • Disseminate it in accessible terms
• Strategic about there to place pieces
  • Professional journals, etc.
• Roll for volunteers is important
  • Points of Light
• Is there a legislative advocacy agenda?
• Think long-term (civic engagement vs. GOTV, and 2012 and beyond)
• Use of text messages for reminders
  • Use new ways of outreach
  • Gather the numbers
• Use of a hotline number for technical assistance
• Need funding early, plan early
  • Conduct trainings starting in January
  • Don’t wait till last minute
  • Competition for resources
• Needs a year round approach
• How to leverage resources
  • e.g. if United Way helps in one state, how about mine?
• How do state/regional/national networks work together?
• National branding provides cover for orgs who are fearful
• Have options for engagement – different tiers
• What is the crisis response team?
• Who do we go to in an emergency? e.g. (some bad actor is exposed or bad media? Or if there is an attack on the project externally.)
What resources and assistance will you need from Nonprofit VOTE?

• What would you need as far as research?
• Materials to pass out at meetings (keep it simple)
• To know what groups are doing what in an effort to support them and connect with them.
• Continued guidance around how foundations can systematically integrate civic engagement (models foundations)
• Continued conversations with groups there
  • Webinars
  • Modified TEDTalks
  • Ways to engage general audiences
• Capture the story/philosophy of a foundation that operates with the ethic/norm of civic engagement (share w/COF)
• Language translation of materials
• Translation partners
• Tracking mechanism
  • Central way of figuring out who is doing what in specific states
• Harassment!
  • Someone to call to say “what's going on?”
• Storyboard catalogue
  • PICO example
• Blog with quick bites
• Material on website
• Clearing house for material in different languages
• Faith communities
• Who is credentialing this?
• Research on relative contribution of the sector.
• Something to capture innovations.
• Innovative trainings.
  • Are there games that teach youth how to and the importance of voting?
• Hotline to protect/warn organizations
• Legal guidance
• Training resources fro national staff and member orgs
  • Train the trainer
• Introduction to partners
• Letter from IRS that concisely says nonprofit C3’s can do this
  • 25 slides from IRS in 2010
  • Put a link on the website on this
• Money
• VAN to share with members
• Toolkit/templates
  • Co-brand
• Making VAN more accessible (putting pressures on them)
• Cost-sharing for swag
  • Print runs
Nonprofit VOTE

- Associate voter registration with a holiday like July 4th or September or Constitution Day
- Connecting people doing this work
- Sharing social media tools
- Regional community organizers employed by Nonprofit VOTE
- Timeline from Nonprofit VOTE to partners
  - When should we be thinking about x, doing x, year-round
- Communication/media assistance
- Contend of contacts with voters
  - As in Kelly’s study – do we have these details?
- Have the current studies
  - What are the useful/successful messages to voters/reminders?
- Info on early voting
- Continued support of voting rights initiatives and organizations
  - Publicizing hotlines

What partners need to be engaged in your state/your region/your network?

- National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
- National Association of Black Social Workers
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- Asian Pacific American Legal Center
- National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
- Asian American Legal Defense Fund
- Children’s Defense Fund
- Legal Defense Fund
- Mexican American Legal Defense Fund
- ASPIRA Association
- Latino Justice
- National Network of Arab American Community
- United Ways – Michael S.
- Catholic Charities
- U.S. Conference of Bishops
- PICO – J.J. Bridgette
- Industrial Area Foundation
- Arab American Institute
- Gamaliel Foundation
- State c3 Tables
- State Voices
- National Community Tax Coalition
- Board of Philanthropic Partners
- Conference of Mayors
- National Conference of State Legislation
- Earned Income Tax Credit Funders Network
- Community Foundation Association
- National Assembly
- National Association of Black Legislators
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus
- Human Rights Campaign
- LAMBDA Legal
- GLAAD
- National Organization of Women
- National Physicians Alliance
- Association of American Medical Colleges
- Boy/Girl Scouts
- 4H
- Circle – Tufts
- National Latin@ fraternities and sororities
- American Humane Society
- Campus Compact
- U.S. PIRG
- Cuyahoga County Employment and Family Services
- United Methodist
- Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement
- Association for Research on Nonprofit Organization and Volunteer Action
- Points of Light Fund
- Board Source
- Council of Foundations
- Independent Sector
- CLPI – Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest
- Right to the City
- Center for Community Change
- League of Women Voters
- Community Voicemail
- United Council of Churches
- Domestic Abuse Resistance Team (DART)
- Boards of Elections – Cuyahoga County
- Universities
  - Omega Psi Phi
  - Delta Sigma Theta
  - Alpha Kappa Alpha
  - Sigma PiPhi
- League of Young Voters Education Fund
- National Baptist USA
- Environmental Organizations
What are the First Next Steps? – Individual Organizations

- Integrate voter engagement work into your specific model (e.g. PICO)
- Understand/know the resources available from Nonprofit VOTE
- Research local civic engagement partners and collectives
- Work your personal network to start these ideas to partners and funders
- Lindsey should connect Elizabeth Boris to David Nickerson
- All groups: send Julian list of dates, conferences, etc that Nonprofit VOTE may appear/speak/train at
- Specifically, Jackie Lynn would like to invite Nonprofit VOTE to her summer convening
- Nonprofit VOTE could present at ACCESS’ fall conference (October)
- Nonprofit VOTE needs to create an internal calendar tool to track this information
- Terri/Lindsey should connect to Colorado Health Foundation together
- Think about how to replicate this convening for professional specific parts of this sector – this may be unrealistic, so how do we go TO their conferences/gatherings?
- Affordable housing groups
- Community foundation associations
- Medical Associations
- Medical education
- Education Associations
- RAGS (?? – tend to be very conservative)
- Human Services Assembly – Irv Katz
- Health Foundations (Rishi)
- Grassroots grant makers (specifically Patrick Corvath)
- Educate/Infect our funders

What are the First Next Steps – Pocantico Group

- Synthesize conference findings into a Call to Action document
- Infect the sector by outreaching collectively
- Pursue new avenues of funding
- Social media messaging/drop in content
- Provide funders and partners with some mapping of who is doing what and where in each state/region
- Think about how to replicate this convening for professional
- Find money for accountability and messaging research
- How does coordination happen between Center for Community Change, Pew, Nonprofit Vote, Frameworks, etc?
- Sector is diverse – this is a challenge to consider
- Coordinate to pursue cost-savings
- Begin having visibility at funder gatherings – often you need to be “sponsored” by a funder
- Build and send out the list of attendees
- Begin to contact our partners or potential partners/networks to prep for 2012
Utilize opportunity and urgency of budget crisis to promote voter engagement – accountability and specifically Human Services sector

We need to SAY, it’s who’s in office is the problem

Check Out

What Went Well?  +

- Ruben’s birthday game
- Diverse participation
- Diverse opinions, expertise
- Learning
- Well-planned
- Honest feedback
- Invigorating conversations
- Honorable/supporter goal
- Re-energizing
- Fellowship
- Fully engaged
- Enthusiastic

- Mutual respect – integrated environment
- Possibilities
- New connections
- Informative and useful case studies
- Great hosts
- Big visions
- Gift of unexpected insights
- Beautiful and welcoming location, staff/food was great
- Importance of place (Pocantico and it’s history

What Could Have Been Better?  △

- No API representation
- No youth representation
- Stated individual commitment via a postcard
- Need more time - 9
- More concrete plans - 6

- Action steps
- Some people left without goodbye
- Didn’t get to talk to everyone
- More players
- Prep better info to send out before convening
• Better before planning
• No one leaves early
• Know when people are leaving
• Church closed
• Better intro on state of what has been done and where we are at
• Debrief while it’s fresh

• Need conversation on finances – what we need for money, etc. II
• Shorter days, more days, offer childcare
• Annual Convening each year

World Café Principles: Art of Hosting

Clariﬁy the Context
Pay attention early to the four “P’s” – your purpose for bring people together, the participants whose voices are important to include, the parameters you have to work with (time, money, venue, and so on), and the best possibilities for this Café in terms of outcome and impact.

Create Hospitable Space
Create a welcoming environment that feels safe and comfortable, including an invitation and physical set up that signal a different kind of meeting. Name your Café to reﬂect your purpose, for example, Knowledge Café, Strategy Café, Discovery Café or Latino Democrats Café. If possible, give the Café an authentic feeling by adorning the tables with flowers, colorful tablecloths, covered with paper, and markers. You may want to provide music, water and/or snacks.

Explore Questions That Matter
Café conversations are as much about discovering and exploring powerful questions as they are about ﬁnding immediate solutions. To have the greatest impact identity and frame one or a few simple, clear questions that don’t have preconceived “yes” or “no” answers and that address issues that really matter to Café participants.

Encourage Everyone’s Perspectives
Most people want not only to participate, but to actively contribute and make a difference. Encourage everyone to offer her or his best thinking, while also allowing those who prefer to contribute through attentive listening to do so.

Cross-Pollinate Diverse Perspectives
The opportunity to move between tables, meet new people and actively link the essence of discoveries in ever widening circles of thought is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the World Café. Set up progressive rounds of conversation that allow knowledge to “travel” as people link, connect, and build on each other’s thinking.

Listen Together for Insights and Deeper Questions
Through shared listening to the deeper patterns of meaning in what initially appears to be chaotic exchange of ideas, surprising insights and the wisdom of the larger group emerge. As people listen to each other, encourage them to doodle and drew key ideas and connections on the tablecloths.

Harvest and Share Collective Discoveries
After several rounds of exploration, bring together a “town meeting-style’ conversation to enable the entire group to share their learning’s. If time allows, first encourage a brief silence and personal note-taking to allow “sparks of deeper insight” to reveal themselves. People can also make
knowledge visible by creating a “gallery walk” with their paper tablecloths, recording key ideas on a wall mural, or posting individual insights on large Post-its®.

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