Supporting Voters in States with Voter ID Laws
About Nonprofit VOTE

Founded in 2005, Nonprofit VOTE partners with America's nonprofits to help the people they serve participate and vote.

We are a leading source of nonpartisan training, materials and other resources for nonprofits doing voter engagement work.

For more information, visit us online at www.nonprofitvote.org
AGENDA

- Voter ID research
  - Methodology
  - Findings
- Stories from the field
  - Mississippi Votes
- Resources for this work
  - VoteRiders
- Q&A
States of Confusion:
How Nonprofits Can Help People Get What They Need to Vote

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Baruch College, City University of New York
“College students don’t always have their birth certificates on them, something they have at their parents’ home. Not everyone has their driver’s license . . . so there should be more options. Going to the DMV is time consuming and there is a cost, like 22 dollars. I myself don’t currently have that to spare.

It feels like no one cares about me or cares for what I have to say because I can’t get there. I pay taxes and everything yet can’t be heard like everyone else. I feel like that’s why people think their votes don’t matter because it takes so much effort and it’s such a hassle that not everyone can handle to get it done. For places where it is harder for some people, they should have accommodations for everybody.”

—Focus Group Participant, Ohio
Some of our research questions

- How do nonprofits and other community organizations currently assist potential voters with documentation requirements?
- What do citizens in strict voter ID states know about the current documentation requirements in their respective states?
- What are the key incentives and barriers for voters related to documentation requirements?
- What are the most effective interventions, promotional methods, and places for nonprofits and other community organizations to reach potential voters who have documentation challenges?
We used a six-part research methods design to cast a wide net on this issue:

- **Online survey of nonprofits in the 10 strictest voter ID states***: (44 participants)
- **Follow-up phone interviews with nonprofit staff**
- **Audit of county voter registration staff procedures**: (150 election offices contacted)
- **Online survey of community members in the 10 strictest voter ID states**: (218 participants)
- **Snowball sample of interviews with experts, practitioners, and staff in this space**: (38 participants)
- **Focus groups with community members in OH and MS**: (approx. 60 participants)

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If there’s any story here, it’s that many previously registered to vote or eligible citizens have to navigate a confusing morass of barriers to get what they need to vote.

Yet there are many bright spots locally and nationally, highlighting the need to embed and scale contextually-sensitive strategies in strict voter ID states, which can help many people fulfill one of their most basic rights.
How often voter documentation problems arise for nonprofit service recipients (as relayed by nonprofit staff)

- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never
- Not sure
What some engaged nonprofits are doing to help their clients with voter documentation/ID

- Education about voter documentation/ID (e.g. staying on top of changing requirements)
- Connecting with online assistance (including help from organizations such as Spread the Vote and VoteRiders)
- Working in coalitions to meet multiple needs (e.g. arranging cab rides to the DMV, contacting a local political representative in especially difficult cases, etc.)
### Amazon MTurk participants from the 10 strictest voter ID states*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. State</th>
<th>Percentage of prequalified survey participants</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where respondents sought or received help in obtaining identification documents:

- Government agency: 23%
- Family: 19%
- Friends: 7%
- Voter registration workers: 6%
- Religious organization: 3%
- Nonprofit organization: 3%
- Other: 3%
- Political party: 0%
Knowledge of other people who have not been able to vote because of voter documentation requirements

- No: 60%
- Yes, 1 to 2 people: 20%
- Not sure: 10%
- Yes, 3 or more people: 0%
One important point to underscore from responses to voter related issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. The requirement to show identification before voting is important to prevent voter fraud.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The participants’ views are ranked on a 5-point scale with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”
What’s the service experience like for those calling elections offices to find out what they need to vote?

Stark differences between jurisdictions’ websites

Patience and perseverance were often required: some systems were fully or partially automated, and either required leaving a message or being placed on hold for up to 10 minutes

Frequently only one form of ID would be cited (such as a driver’s license)

More than once we found that automated systems didn’t have voter registration as an option, while others did

Election office staff sometimes couldn’t answer basic questions about documentation and surrounding processes

On some county sites we couldn’t find any information on voter registration

We sometimes heard conflicting information, e.g. differences in how long one needed to be a resident of a state in calls to two counties

For those who find the process even harder to navigate (e.g. immigrants, people for whom English is a second language, etc.), a theme emerges even more clearly: standardize these experiences so that all have an equal opportunity to understand and practice all processes relating to voting.
Some barriers highlighted in our interviews and focus groups

- Different registration deadlines
- Variations in state and county laws/requirements (much more of a challenge than federal rules around voting)
- Printing and literacy challenges
- Lost records, particularly among the elderly
- Misperceptions (e.g. that you’ll be called for jury duty, if you were in jail previously that you can never vote, that you will be forced to register for a political party, etc.)
- Some vital records offices require a state photo ID + notarization (and needing an ID and money for that) = “a circular trap”
- Keeping up with the timing for elections and related documentation
- People move a lot and found subsequent processes for registration between different counties and states confusing
- Transportation, time (esp. taking time off work), and money barriers
- Disconnects between states’ policies and the resources available to implement them (i.e. the bandwidth of county elections offices, etc.)
“I was at an event yesterday, working with people who have some sort of disability and they are living in this complex, so they can get full-time assistance and not all of them have a driver’s license or state ID. They don’t drive. The complex didn’t have a birth certificate on file for everyone who was there, so this became a hurdle for those people who wanted to register to vote there, eligible to register to vote, but do not have that proof of citizenship documentation with them; and would have difficulties getting them from the appropriate agency. It’s a problem.”

—Community Relations Director for a County Record Office and Election department, Arizona
Some potential solutions highlighted in our interviews and focus groups

- Hold monthly birth certificate or other documentation clinics
- Work with county clerks or other local government offices to create and send a mobile ID unit to people’s homes
- Advocate with local government organizations to streamline their processes
- Piggyback off of non-voting related ID challenges and systems (e.g. Medicare enrollment)
- Since there are so many local variables to this issue, adapt strategies to the unique demands of each jurisdiction (e.g. help with new online voter registration sites that don’t have tutorials to navigate the system)

- Let people use nonprofit resources (printing, computers, etc.)
- Work with other trusted nonprofits (e.g. legal clinics) that can help with translations, costs, and fears about voting among immigrant communities
- Use the influence of one person and individualized approaches: rides to offices, expenses offset, etc.
- Provide hierarchies rather than lists of acceptable documentation
- Use more than one-shot efforts to help people; build trust through repetition (many did not know who/what to trust, esp. on the internet—this is a good space for trusted nonprofits to fill)
- Use social media to build trust with communities (e.g. put out useful information via a Facebook group or Whatsapp)
- Do all possible to connect the election to peoples’ personal lives + emphasize close elections
- Work with other trusted nonprofits (e.g. legal clinics) that can help with translations, costs, and fears about voting among immigrant communities
What’s next?

Further interviews and focus groups in another state (e.g. WI, AZ)

Finishing up an executive summary and book that can act as further resources/evidence for those working in this space—and for motivating nonprofits and others to get involved in this work!

A complete, integrated framework of realistic strategies for helping people get what they need to vote (using product, price, place, promotion, partnership, and other social marketing strategies)

During coming elections, further testing of this framework through interventions and effects studies in a sample of strict voter ID states
Chat us your questions.

We're happy to answer your questions on the webinar. If you have requests for specific resources we will try to include those in the webinar round-up email with the recording and slides.
Why We Vote

Mississippi Votes is an organization of intergenerational synergy centering and led by young people invested in the progression of Mississippi. We do this through our programming and outreach strategies that empowers young people, encourages civic engagement, and educates communities on voting rights through place-based grassroots organizing. Learn more about our work at msvotes.org

Our Vision

Our vision is to cultivate a culture of civic engagement throughout the state of Mississippi.

Our Values

We value the place, our people and the context of our sacred work that centers the truth of our past to restoratively and regeneratively create a liveable, sustainable and welcoming state for us and our futures.

#StayVocal #ActLocal

Contact Us:

info@msvotes.org | www.msvotes.org

facebook | instagram | linkedin | twitter | msvotes
Voter Services:

Our Voter Services program is comprised of a number of voter education seminars for returning citizens, pre-trial detainees, as well as for 1st time voters.

1. Suffrage restoration
   - Voter Education for Returning Citizens
   - Voter Education + Registration in Prisons
2. 1st time Voter Education

Policy & Research

- Legislative tracking of voting reform bills which involves legislative advocacy days and briefs on each.
- Voter Empowerment Project is an ongoing research project MS Votes leads that informs our approach to organizing

Youth Civic Engagement and Leadership:

We offer three leadership tracks for young people to engage in our civic engagement and community organizing work:

The Campus Ambassador Program:
- Democracy in Action Fellowship
- Davis Democracy Fellowship - partnership with Common Cause - MS
  This fellowship is offered at Jackson State University, University of Southern Mississippi, and Millsaps College.

The Millennial Fellowship is a 4 month grassroots, leadership, development, organizing program for emerging leaders ages 25-30.

The Youth Advisory Council is geared towards high school students, ages 16-18, as they lead civic engagement opportunities at their perspective high schools.
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VoteRiders: the practical, timely solution to our voter ID crisis
>25 million

Voting-age American citizens do not have current government-issued photo ID.
Voter registration ≠ Voter

9 states have strict voter ID laws; 25 states have non-strict laws; 16 + DC have no state voter ID law.
WHO is most impacted by voter ID?

Voters of color and low-income communities, older & younger adults, people with disabilities. Plus women because most change their name upon marriage.
Raising Voter ID Awareness

The New York Times

Vote Save America

Tweeple! There's a very important election this Fall. Don't Get Left Behind. Head to VoteRiders.org, call or text the @VoteRiders Helpline at 844-338-8743 to make sure you have the ID you need! #voterID
Creating Confident Voters

- Voter ID Information Cards
- Volunteer and Coordinator Outreach
Direct Voter Contact Partnerships

- Building our Voter ID Universe
- Using Existing Infrastructure
- Individual Assistance
Chatbot

- SMS and Facebook
- Peer-to-Peer Network Plan
Thank You!

Dave Griggs
dave@voteriders.org
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