Voter Engagement in the Age of Covid-19

Navigating the new urgency and tactics around voter registration
Founded in 2005, Nonprofit VOTE partners with America’s nonprofits to help the people they serve participate and vote. We are the leading source of nonpartisan resources to help nonprofits integrate voter engagement into their ongoing activities and services.
Voter registration stalled in the pandemic, but that won’t stop us
Lauren Kunis
Program Director, National Voter Registration Day

A primer on states’ voter registration policies
Caroline Mak
Research & Field Coordinator, Nonprofit VOTE

Championing equity & solidarity in voter engagement, even in crisis
Jennifer Lumpkin
Civic Engagement Strategy Manager, Cleveland VOTES

The DIY approach to online voter registration
Amara Reese-Hansell
Program Director, Forward Montana Foundation
How Do Americans Register to Vote?

Almost 75% of Registrations Are via In-Person Methods

Average New Registrations per Month by Method

- DMVs (48%)
- in person at local election office (10%)
- other (15%)
- Mail/email/fax (12%)
- online (15%)

Source: Election Assistance Commission, 2018 EAVS
## Potential Impact of COVID-19 on Registration

### 2 Million Registrations per Month Could Be Lost

Average New Registrations per Month by Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th># per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DMVs</td>
<td>1,472,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (In-Person Drives)</td>
<td>449,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person at local election office</td>
<td>291,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,213,372</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Nonprofit VOTE • Source: EAC • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Source: Election Assistance Commission, 2018 EAVS
Initial Data: Voter Registration in March 2020

New Registrations per Month Have Sharply Declined

Source: TargetSmart, Represents 13 States
...And Potential Impact Over Time

Projected New Voter Registration Losses per Month

Source: TargetSmart, Represents 13 States
Opportunities for New Voter Registration

- High enthusiasm for voting
- Presidential cycles bring out new and infrequent voters
- Pandemic highlights the importance of elected leaders
- Growing awareness of voter registration backlog and groups stepping in to fill the void
Large-scale national voter registration drives can help address the growing backlog in registrations

No one-size fits all solution for highly variable contexts
COVID-Proofing Natl Voter Reg Day

- Partner-powered effort: seeking 5,000+ in 2020!
- Free organizing kit and training support
- Share best practices from local leaders
- Adapt webinars and toolkits
- Grant-making focus responds to COVID
- Strategic partnerships
- Expanded activation focus: vote by mail and early voting
Voter Registration Policies 101
A Brief Primer

Automatic Voter Registration
Online Voter Registration
Same Day Registration
4 Week Registration Deadlines
Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)

- Motor Voter vs AVR
- Not necessarily “Automatic” Registration
- What it is: Customers may be automatically registered at participating state agencies like DMVs with varying opt-out options
States with Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)

Source: NCSL, Automatic Voter Registration
Online Voter Registration (OVR)

- With a state-issued ID (DMV, etc), you can register or update registrations online.

- In two counties in Missouri, voters can register online and electronically provide a signature.
Same Day Registration (SDR)

- Variations on Registering “Same Day”:
  - When: Only On Election Day, Only During Early Voting Periods, Up until Election Day
  - Where: Only County Election Offices, All Polling Places, City hall, etc
- Almost all need a proof of residency like ID (some states allow documents like paycheck or utility bill)
- Allows voters to fix any errors or issues in their registration
- Evidence that SDR increases turnout by 3-7%
States with Same Day and Election Day Registration

Legend:
- States that have enacted same day registration, including on election day.
- States that have allowed same day registration only during the early voting period.
- States that have passed election day registration but have not implemented it.

Source: NCSL, Same Day Registration
4-Week VR Deadlines

- Deadline for Voter Registration by Mail, 4-weeks before Election
- Typically 24-30 days before the election either to receive VR or postmarked

Source: *America Goes to the Polls*
Cleveland VOTES is a nonpartisan democracy building and mobilization entity that aims to strengthen civic muscle and power to ensure we have a more informed, participatory and cohesive community.

Learn more: [www.clevotes.com](http://www.clevotes.com)
Voter Mobilization Grantor

Technical Assistance to Develop Voter Mobilization Strategies

Conduct Nonpartisan Advocacy Training
Organize and coordinate events for National Voter Registration Day (NVRD)

Support specific Ballot Initiatives
Increase awareness of voter engagement (i.e. film series)

Partner in the Get Out the VOTE (GOTV)

Partner in the 2020 Census (City and County level) & GOTC

And More...
National Voter Registration Day

Strengths

Strong Cuyahoga County Board of Elections Partnership

Broad Partnership Spectrum

Partner Planning & Orientation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Category</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter Registrations</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>2,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Events</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote-by-Mail Application</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past to Present

“We are committed to a transparent democratic process. We believe an increase of equitable access to voting builds political power and confirms public policy priorities that benefit and impact us all.”

- Samira Malone of MidTown Cleveland
Rides to the Polls 2019

Highlights

Partnership with the COOHIO and Ohio Vote to combat transportation barriers in NE OH and Statewide

Cleveland VOTES served as a Regional Lead & Coordinator for Ride to the Polls

Successfully completed 100% of requests (20 rides) delivering 18 rides throughout the City of Cleveland and surrounding suburbs

Cleveland VOTES recruited 9 volunteer drivers

Reported challenges & barriers for ADA community to SOS

Lessons from Inaugural Year

Educate volunteers on the importance of the election and what is on the ballot

Acknowledge the misinformation and miseducation found in communities (some residents believe the November election was the 2020 Presidential Election)

Established a more rigid schedule for recruitment to avoid volunteer shrinkage
Ride to the Polls 2020 Transition

Management of Volunteer Communication & Precinct Destinations

Provide Education Materials to volunteers and/or create social media messaging to reach volunteers as Phase I.

Mutual Multi-modal Communication Loop for Equitable Access to Nonpartisan Voter Messaging
Ride to the Polls 2020 Transition

Equitable Civic Engagement Bilingual Hotline: Text or Provide a Voicemail to Request VBM Delivery or Pick Up

Voter Contacts & Voter File Matches

Story Collection for Traditional Media Strategy

Provide Education Materials to volunteers and/or create social media messaging to reach volunteers as Phase I.
Vote-by-Mail Rapid Response Program Partners
March 27th - April 28th

Cleveland Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Young Latino Network

Tremont Development Corporation

Metro West Community Development Organization

League of Women Voters

The Ohio Environmental Council
EQUITABLE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Peer-to-Peer & F2F Text Campaign

Paid Digital ads on FB

Bilingual Communications VBM Hotline*

Traditional Media/Television, Radio & Online Magazines & Trusted Messengers

TeleTown Hall & FB/Instalive Gatherings

Essential Distribution & VBM Delivery*
Inspired by Puerto Rican Action & Caravan

VBM Application & Voter Registration
Text & Call Request Line w/ Delivery

Caravan PSA w/ Music

La Mega Radio Station

Hispanic Officers Alliance

Hispanic Filmmakers Association

¡La Caravana de la Democracia!
Physically Distant & Civically Connected

Local evening news coverage provided an alternative vehicle reach communities living within the digital divide. This event was directly located within a low voter turnout area with Metro West as a direct service provider. ¡La Caravana de la Democracia! directly put delivery in the hands of the community.
Saturday, April 25, 2020

#Masks4Community Vote-by-Mail Application Drive

Dru Christine Fabrics & Design

Ortiz Art Drafts Designs LLC

Pearl Flower Catering

Trust for Public Land

ThirdSpace Action Lab

*Local News Coverage*
Physically Distant & Civically Connected

Drive-thru mask distribution w/ vote-by-mail applications & delivery

Essential services like food banks & educational institutions are helpful partnerships

Personal Protective Equipment
Things you can do to stay engaged for every election:

1. Update Voter Registration & VBM Status
2. Share nonpartisan voter messaging year round
3. Understand local ballot issues & how they affect your community
4. Diversify & integrate essential services distribution channels
The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry in partnership with the North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center is providing walk up and drive-thru supply distribution for those directly impacted by incarceration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Vouchers for birth certificates
- 2 bus tickets with new modified bus routes
- Dave’s gift card
- Non-perishable food items
- Soap
- Hand sanitizer
- List of open resources
- North Star admission to work with their team remotely

Beginning April 28th and occurring every Tuesday and Thursday until the end of June from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center
1834 E. 55th St., Cleveland, 44103

All supplies are available in limited quantities and only while supplies last.

For more information, please contact: Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry at Crystal.bryant@jfs.ohio.gov or call Marcus Bell of NRRC at (216) 881-5440.
Stay in touch with us!

Contact Us
info@clevotes.com

Instagram & Facebook
@ClevelandVOTES

Thank you!
Amara Reese-Hansell
Program Director
Forward Montana Foundation
Bozeman, MT
amara@forwardmontana.org
Forward Montana Foundation began in 2004 by a group of University of Montana students who knew it wasn’t apathy that held students back from voting or engaging in our democracy, but instead institutional and cultural barriers that could be changed
Montana **does not** have online or automatic voter registration

You can register to vote in-person until 8:00pm on Election Day

Our June 2nd Primary has moved to an all mail-in election -- every registered voter will receive an absentee ballot at their mailing address
Montana Voter Registration Portal

Note: Not An Official Elections Website

Instructions:
Fill out this form to request that a pre-filled voter registration application be mailed to you along with a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope. All you have to do is sign it and put it in your mailbox!

First Name *

Middle Name

Last Name *

Suffix (Jr, Sr, III, etc.)

Phone Number * ☑

Email (optional)
Montana Voter Registration Portal

Date of Birth

Are you a citizen of the United States?
- Yes
- No

Will you be at least 18 years of age on or before the next election?
- Yes
- No

Will you be a Montana resident for at least 30 days before the next election?
- Yes
- No

Street Address / Residence Address
123 Main St

City
Missoula

State
Montana

Zip Code
59801

County
Missoula

I got mail at the same address as where I live?
- Yes
- No

I request an absentee ballot for ALL elections?
- Yes
- No

I have a temporary or seasonal mailing address where I'd like my ballot sent?
- Yes
- No

MTVR.ORG/FMF

HEY EVERYBODY, CHECK ME OUT.
Hey all you cool cats and kittens.
Use the Q&A box to send us your questions
The recording, slides, and FAQs will be sent out next week