

Getting Voters Interested in Local Elections



February 23, 2023

Agenda

- Welcome & About Nonprofit VOTE
- Why nonprofits should engage voters around local elections
- Ideas for engaging voters this year
- Guest Speakers:
 - Jane Ruby, League of Women Voters of Chicago
 - Jerome Dillard & Marianne Oleson, EXPO Wisconsin
- Question & Answer session



About Nonprofit VOTE

Founded in 2005, we help nonprofits by:

- Providing resources and building capacity for nonpartisan voter and election engagement
- Developing and evaluating agency-based models for voter engagement
- Encouraging voter participation and active citizenship
- Managing National Voter Registration Day



How we can help

Local/Community-based organizations

- Factsheets and checklists
- Voting in Your State
- Nonprofit Staff Vote
- Printable materials
- Sign up as a community partner for National Voter Registration Day

Regional or National nonprofit networks

- Trainings for your members/affiliates
- Custom toolkits and resources
- Digital infrastructure support
- Technical assistance

WHY?

Why should nonprofits engage voters around local elections?

Local elections matter

Big impact on daily
life

but

Low voter
turnout



COMMUNITY PLANNING

PUBLIC TRANSIT, PARKS, ZONING,
SIDEWALKS, ROADS, SAFETY



EDUCATION

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM, ESL,
UNIVERSITY/COLLEGES, LIBRARIES



HOUSING

SECTION 8, HOMELESS SERVICES,
PUBLIC HOUSING, EVICTION SUPPORT



CHILDCARE

HEAD START, FAMILY PLANNING,
CHILDCARE VOUCHERS



FOOD ACCESS

WIC, FOOD PANTRY, FOOD SAFETY,
LOCAL AGRICULTURE, FOOD STAMPS



ENVIRONMENT

WATER/AIR QUALITY, WASTE
MANAGEMENT, ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Advantages in local years

- You may be the lone voice reaching out to voters who typically miss local elections
- Bigger reputation boost for your organization compared to state/federal races
- Candidates are more accessible due to the smaller nature of the race
- These races can be won by 100s or 10s of votes, so every voter really does matter!
- Early research suggests “nonprofit voter turnout effect” is more potent in local elections

Challenges in local years

- Less funding and fewer resources for voter outreach
- Lack of information about candidates or races can mean more in depth research is needed
- Often happen out of sync with other election dates (especially for races in the spring)

3 IDEAS

Three ideas from our upcoming
“23 Ways to Engage Voters in
2023” list

Idea #1

Add an election reminder flyer to paperwork or other items distributed to clients or available for pick up in your lobby.



Idea #2

Incorporate reminders and messages about voting into your tabling/events.



Tips for voter education materials

Don't reinvent the wheel!

- Find nonprofit partners who have done the research and have readymade materials you can distribute
- Reach out to your local/county elections office if you have questions

Use materials to track your reach

- Keep track of how many materials you receive from partners or print yourself
- At the end of the event or week, count the remaining materials
- Subtract the second number from the first one to get an estimate of how many voters you reached

Idea #3

Host a “Ballot and Brunch” event to help people understand the races on the ballot – just don’t tell them who to vote for (even in nonpartisan races)



Guest Speakers

If you have a question for our guest speakers, please put it in the Q&A box

Making Democracy Work



LWV

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF CHICAGO

Jane Ruby, President LWV Chicago
president@lwwchicago.org

lwwchicago.org
illinoisvoterguide.org



POLICE REFORM CIVILIAN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE

With Adam Gross and Kim Smith

Wednesday, September 14, 6–7 pm
Virtual Event

**Apply
to vote
by mail!**

**CHICAGO,
YOU COULD
BE VOTING
RIGHT NOW**

Early voting and registration
open in all 50 wards

**Call or text the Election
Protection Hotline!**

English

1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683

Spanish

1-888-VE-Y-VOTA / 1-888-839-8682

Arabic

1-844-YALLA-US / 1-844-925-5287

**Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu,
Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or
Vietnamese**

1-888-API-VOTE / 1-888-274-8683



WATCH NOW!

49th Ward Candidate Forum



MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE

IllinoisVoterGuide.org