



What Nonprofit Staff Can Say About the Election:

Talking to clients, constituents, and the public

Staff working for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations should be nonpartisan when representing their nonprofit on site, at events or doing voter engagement activities. You cannot suggest which candidate to vote for or political party to support.

What is ok to talk about on a nonpartisan basis?

It's fine to provide information about the voting process like dates and deadlines, early voting hours, getting a mail-in or absentee ballot, or help registering to vote. You can let people know about a candidate forum or debate.

What if someone asks me who I support or who they should vote for?

Remind them that as a 501c3 nonprofit employee, you must be nonpartisan. Your options are:

- Encourage the person to talk to a friend or family member they trust and share values with.
- Direct the person to a sample ballot or nonpartisan voter guide if available.
- Closer to the election, you can link them to online tools that let voters know what's on their ballot. Vote411.org and BallotReady.org both provide nonpartisan voting information.

Can I say anything about specific candidates?

You can only answer simple facts like what party they are in, if they're an incumbent or challenger or where they live. Don't state your preferences.

What do I say when asked about the difference between Republicans and Democrats?

There is no good answer or any accurate source that doesn't have a bias outside of the party websites. You could mention the names of the current nominees for president and their party, but go no further. Do the same as you would do with candidates and tell them to ask a friend or go to the political party official websites.

What if I'm asked about a ballot measure?

Ballot measures are about laws not candidates. You may discuss the pros and cons of a ballot measure unless it is an organizational policy not to. You can also tell them that the organization doesn't have an official position on ballot questions.



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Can I support candidates in my personal time?

Yes. You may support candidates when not “on the clock” working for your nonprofit.

Can I use social media to post or share information about the candidates?

Not if you’re using the nonprofit account. It’s ok to say what you want on your personal accounts. (Nonprofit CEOs/EDs who are identified directly with the nonprofit may wish to be more careful.)

What about talking to other staff about the elections?

It’s normal and acceptable to exchange views on candidates and the election with other staff around the “water cooler” or on breaks. But don’t conduct political activities during work hours with staff like handing out literature or signing up other staff to support a candidate.

Resources

Vote411, Vote411.org

BallotReady, BallotReady.org

Ballotpedia, Ballotpedia.org