Communications Toolkit

September 2020
What is this toolkit?

This toolkit provides sample email language and communication timelines to accompany Leadership Now’s 5 Actions Guide for Businesses to Support the 2020 Election. The goal of these communications is to help businesses encourage civic participation and election support activities among employees in a non-partisan fashion.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is intended for use by employers and business leaders who are interested in pursuing any of our suggested 5 actions to support the 2020 election. Communications staff can identify which specific messages fit your organization’s needs and tailor them as they see fit.

If your organization would like further guidance on communications related to the 5 Actions Guide, please contact jessie@leadershipnowproject.com.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Encourage employees, clients, and consumers to make a voting plan**
   - 8 weeks until Election Day: Make a Voting Plan
   - 6 weeks until Election Day: Check your voter registration status
   - 4 weeks until Election Day: Early voting and vote-by-mail reminder
   - 5 days until Election Day: Locate your polling station

2. **Give all employees paid time off to vote on or before Election Day**
   - 7 weeks until Election Day: Paid time off to vote announcement

3. **Encourage employees to register as poll workers**
   - 5 weeks until Election Day: Poll worker recruitment

4. **Raise funds for election operations**
   - 8 weeks until Election Day: Raise funds for the election

5. **Publicly support a safe and secure election**
   - 7 weeks until Election Day: Set expectations
   - 3 weeks until Election Day: Declaration of support
   - 3 days until Election Day: Final reminder
5 Actions for Business to Support a Successful 2020 Election: Introduction

Here at [xxx company], we know that our success and growth depends not just on our own business actions but on a free and fair American democracy. At the bedrock of our democracy are our elections. This year, however, COVID-19 has created challenges to a safe and legitimate election unlike any we have experienced in our lifetimes. These difficulties may seem daunting, but they are not unprecedented. Americans have voted during challenging times before, from pandemics to wars, and we at company XXX are committed to ensuring all American are able to do so this year as well.

Free and fair elections depend on all of us, and we are proud to be doing our part to enable civic engagement by employees, customers, and communities. Through Leadership Now’s 5 Actions for Businesses to Support a Successful 2020 Election, we are committing to effective measures to encourage participation and promote a fair election. From now until Election Day on November 3rd we will be sharing tools and reminders on how to register to vote, support election infrastructure, and ensure the security of the election. We look forward to working with each of you and the XXX community more broadly to support a successful 2020 election.

1. Encourage employees, clients, and consumers to make a voting plan

8 weeks until Election Day: Make a Voting Plan:

The first way to ensure a safe and fair election is simple: make a plan to vote. Here at company XXX we are committed to ensuring all employees have access to the information needed to vote in November.

Making a plan to vote means checking your registration, knowing where and how to vote or submit your ballot, and staying on top of relevant deadlines. This Voting Plan Checklist can help:

1. Make sure you’re registered to vote.
2. If you’re not registered, use TurboVote to register to vote.
3. Decide how you will vote, whether by mail, early, or on Election Day. Check your state’s early voting and vote by mail laws to understand your options, and check guidance from your election officials here. Find your polling location here.
4. Make sure you have the forms of voter identification required by your state.
5. Once you’ve registered and made your plan, TurboVote will send you reminders before any upcoming deadlines.
6. **Know your rights**—if you are in line before your polling station closes, you have the right to vote, do not leave the line. Use the ACLU’s Election Protection Hotline with any urgent questions in English, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or Vietnamese.

**6 weeks until Election Day:** Check your voter registration status

Have you checked your voter registration status? With just XX weeks until election day, it is important that you verify that you are 1) registered to vote and 2) that your voter registration details are correct. Check your registration status on TurboVote and sign up to receive reminders on upcoming deadlines in the lead up to the election.

**4 weeks until Election Day:** Early voting and voting by mail

Today marks XXX weeks from election day. Though this election brings challenges unlike any we have experienced in our lifetimes, it is vital that each of us do our part to secure a free and fair election. This starts with voting. XX weeks ago, we sent a Voting Plan Checklist (included below) to provide you with the resources you need to exercise your right to vote. Today, with Election Day getting closer, we are writing to ask you to complete the checklist if you have not already and stay updated on when and how you will cast your ballot. If you plan to vote by mail or absentee, remember to plan for any unexpected delays by the postal service. Be sure to mail back your ballot well in advance of the deadline.

**5 days until Election Day:** Locate your polling station

With just five days left until Election Day, we at XXX company want to send one final reminder to vote. Though every election cycle brings challenges, this year presents difficulties unlike those we have faced in our lifetimes. Each of us bears the responsibility of doing our part to protect a safe and secure election, the bedrock of our democracy.

Locate your polling place and plan how you will get there. It’s important to double check your polling location (also called a vote center in some states), as these locations can change from election to election. Check your updates from TurboVote, or go to the National Association of Secretaries of State’s website to find your polling location. Plan in advance whether you will use public or private transportation to get there. And, if you can, offer to help friends and family get to their polling stations.
2. Give all employees paid time off to vote on or before Election Day

7 weeks until Election Day: Paid time off to vote

Though this election year presents difficult challenges, we are committed to doing our part to ensure a free and fair election. We know that our success and growth depend on a strong American democracy, and we are proud to be doing our part to help facilitate this election. Each election year, surveys find that one of the most commonly reporting barriers to voting is difficulty in getting time off from work, a challenge that disproportionately affects minority workers. To do our part, we will be giving all employees paid time off to vote on or before Election Day. We have signed on to the Day for Democracy pledge and joined companies such as Bank of America, Nordstroms and Staples in committing to giving all employees paid time off to vote.

The democracy on which our business and country depends relies on each of us doing our part. By facilitating our employees voting, we are committing to an effective measure to encourage participation and ensure a fair election.

3. Encourage employees to register as poll workers, health status permitting

5 weeks until Election Day: Poll worker recruitment

We are proud of all that our company contributes to American society, and we know that our success and growth as a company depends on the strength of our country. After speaking to civic leaders and election officials, we are keenly aware of one pressing need for a safe and fair election: poll workers. In 2016, almost six-in-ten poll workers were over the age of 61, a group facing serious risks from the pandemic. As a result there is a serious gap in poll workers needed to support this year’s election.

That is why we are partnering with Power the Polls to support efforts to recruit poll workers. Power the Polls is leading an effort to find 400,000 poll workers for the election, and its partners include companies like Old Navy and Starbucks. Though choosing to serve as a poll worker is a personal decision, we are prepared to support you, and we will [Offer paid time off/etc.] . This unique link [HERE] will enable you to register, and Power the Polls will share clear instructions on how to register and any other information you will need. Though working as a poll worker will not directly contribute to our business, it will help foster a free and fair election, a vital part of the democracy on which our business depends. We hope you consider signing up today!
4. Raise funds for election operations

8 weeks until Election Day: Raise funds for the election

Our success and growth at [XX Company] depends on a strong American democracy, and we are keenly aware that this election cycle presents challenges unlike any that we have faced in our lifetimes. Election officials in particular face unique funding challenges, as they need to supply not only the voting equipment to support expanded mail and early voting options but also personal protective equipment for poll workers and voters. Though the federal government has allocated $400 million to emergency election resourcing, experts estimate that $4 billion is needed. Filling this need falls on us, everyday citizens, and our business is eager to help.

First, we encourage our employees to reach out to their U.S. senators through Issue One Action to advocate for additional funding for election support in the next round of federal aid.

Second, we are proud to match all employee donations made to the National Vote at Home Institute for distribution to high-risk and high-priority counties. All dollars donated to the National Vote at Home Institute will be allocated directly to elections offices with the highest need.

Protecting this election depends on all of us. We are proud to join you in doing our part.

5. Publicly support a safe and secure election

7 weeks until Election Day: Set expectations:

Our success and growth as a company depends on the strength of American democracy, and at the core of our democracy is our election system. This year presents difficulties unlike those any of us have faced in our lifetimes, and it will take all of us doing our part to ensure a free and a fair election.

Though Election Day is still some time away, we want to provide you some important information about what the election will bring and our commitment as a company. We have grown accustomed in the past to victory pronouncements on the evening of Election Day. Because of the time associated with accurately counting mail-in ballots, a result on Election Day is unlikely this year, and you should approach any such victory declaration with caution. We as a company and as American citizens publicly affirm our commitment to the core principle that every vote counts, and we will oppose any efforts to declare victory before all votes are tallied.
Our democracy depends on each of us doing our part. This year, that means helping ensure a safe and legitimate election. We hope you will join us in sharing your commitment to a free and fair election to your friends, family, and colleagues.

3 weeks until Election Day: Declaration of support:

With just a few weeks remaining until Election Day, we write to underscore our principles to the ideals of free and fair elections that have enabled our democracy. Our success and growth relies on our democracy, and it is imperative that we protect it.

Every American citizen must have sufficient and unrestricted access to voting, and all votes must be properly counted. Voters should have ready access to the information they need to vote, including the information that we as a company have shared with you before. Political leaders should not claim victory or defeat until all votes are counted, even if there are delays caused by the pandemic. We expect our leaders and media organizations to act responsibly in supporting these ideals.

We are now publicly sharing our support for free and fair elections and expressing our hope that all our leaders, and those who wish to become our leaders, abide by them.

3 days until Election Day: Final reminder

Election Day is just a few short days away. Though this year brings a pandemic and turmoil to our election, we as a country have voted fairly and freely through difficult times in the past. If each of us does our part, we can ensure that we vote successfully and fairly this year as well. We hope to share some key pieces of information that can help you and your families prepare for Election Day.

First, prepare your expectations. Because of the increase in use of mail-in ballots, election results may not be available on the evening of Election Day. Though we have grown accustomed to victory declarations that night, that may not be possible this year. Every vote must be counted before victory can be declared.

Second, prepare to vote. Follow our earlier communications about voting information, and be prepared when you head to your polling location. Bring a mask, prepare to maintain social distancing, and respect the commitment of the poll workers.

Third, spread the message. Share on social media and with your friends and family that election results may be delayed, and remember to trust only legitimate sources of information.

Together, we can do our part to promote a free and fair election.