November 2018 Election Season Support: A Tool for Organizers

Who? People of color. What? Turning out—through a variety of means—as much as possible to impact local, state and federal decision-making that impacts health equity and justice. When and Where? Now through Election Day—November 6th, 2018—all around the country!

Reference tools in this guide to build capacity around voter engagement.

First thing first: We know that funding availability largely determines your capacity to engage with voters around the election. The following are several opportunities—please reach out if we can help you access them!:

- Movement Voter Project has a growing track record of filling the capacity gap of local, POC-driven voter engagement—let us know if you would like us to nominate you to potentially receive donations from in/outside of your state!
- For those (doing work) in the Great Lakes region, The Joyce Foundation has grants around democracy-centered work such as fair elections
- Research potential opportunities using Foundation Maps (scroll down and click ‘Explore the Data’)


**ENERGIZING VOTERS**

**REGISTRATION + EDUCATION**

**If Not Us, Then Who?**

**Preparing and Motivating Voters**

**Challenge:** Voters need to be registered and informed—not just motivated—to turn out in a meaningful way.

**Goal:** Ensure that people take the first step of getting registered, and support them in building their own/others’ knowledge and understanding around voting.

**Strategies and Tactics**

**Voter Registration**

- First, **Know the Rules**—whether you have a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax identification of your organization
- Integrate registration into other **events and activities**
- Get people registered online and track how many use the link (also see a Spanish language link **HERE**); other links include the LWV link and #YallaVote.
- Distribute and collect **forms**, or distribute and let people mail back (again, tracking who you get registered)
- Find and disseminate other ways people can get registered (where, when and how)
- Follow up after registering folks

**Voter Education**—Options to expand access to the voting process include issues-based candidate forums/questionnaires, other analysis that does not rank candidates, etc. Also check out these existing national-level and nonpartisan voter guides which highlight many issues that our communities care about:

- Native Vote has multiple tools and opportunities for collaboration in organizing for turnout and working on crucial related areas
- Black Voters Matter Fund is open to support and collaboration in the South, and has a capacity-building arm
- Voto Latino has an Election Center with helpful info/tools and Mi Familia Vota educates on voting rights
- APIA Vote has great resources
- ACLU Voter mobilizes and educates voters through a user-friendly platform
- League of Conservation Voters has an endorsement list and a scorecard to help voters learn more about candidates and issues
- People’s Action—the member list references state-by-state civic engagement information and tools around local and state organizing on important issues

**Messaging** for events and other community engagement and/or paced-out through social media posting—

- People gave their lives for the right to vote
- Demonstrates our strength in numbers and solidarity on crucial health equity issues
- Leaders need to be held accountable to us, their constituents
- Consider what happens when they do/don’t (exemplify with easy to understand situations)
- Models to policy makers that we demand reciprocity through co-producing the outcomes we need and want
- Maximizes getting who we want, into office—to lead to increased access to funding and other capacity/infrastructure-builders; which in turn helps enact the change we are fighting for
- Voting also expands access to basic needs including benefits, employment, etc.
- Consistent voting by our communities fights suppression e.g. by purging, a recently even-more-dangerous tool of oppression

**Engage youth** to push adult turnout and address apathy

- Explore Rock the Vote resources and ways to engage
- Access support for youth organizers, including DoSomething
- Look up college Student Power Networks and the Campus Vote Project as well as Vote Everywhere
- Integrate music and culture

**Learn from others** on tried-and-true practices and ways to plan, measure and analyze your voter impact

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**Challenge:** Mistrust feeds into disengagement/’Why does my vote even matter?’

**Goal:** Create a shift in the balance of power at the state and federal governmental levels (building off of local-level initiatives that we dedicate limited capacity to). Voting is, for many, a low-hanging fruit among the entry points to come together to achieve that shift.

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**Strategies and Tactics**

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GOTV: FIGHT SUPPRESSION

Best Practices and Resources to Build Urgency

Challenge: Voters of color are targeted by increasingly aggressive (legal and other, more insidious) suppression tactics to decrease or undermine voting.

Goal: Share and coordinate efforts to engage in facilitating, protecting and expanding turnout of people of color and addressing public safety/elections officials’ suppressing or abusing new voters’ registration.

Strategies and Tactics

Leading up to Election Day

⇒ Stay informed and inform others
⇒ Understand the different tactics that suppress voters
⇒ Check out an array of resources and opportunities on registration, education, election management and access by Election Protection
⇒ Research new and potential partner organizations that are seeking volunteers for phone banking and door knocking/other forms of canvassing
⇒ Target low propensity voters who are registered but don’t vote (happy medium)
⇒ As possible, facilitate early voting to support turnout
⇒ Share absentee ballot/vote by mail resources
⇒ Communications:
  * Check out these tips by Nonprofit VOTE
  * Use social media engagement to educate people on how to vote and share reminders e.g. deadlines, countdowns or build-ups, hotlines for support on Election Day, etc.
⇒ Work with your local elections/elected officials to streamline voting access in your community
⇒ Learn about and support secure voting machines and post-election audits
⇒ Learn about and fight against gerrymandering
⇒ Educate on ballot measures (as well as on candidates or as a special focus, if limited capacity): in a nonpartisan way to help voters understand individual issues that matter
⇒ Share resources on becoming a U.S. citizen

On Election Day

⇒ Ensure that people are aware of Election Day Registration if that is available in your state
⇒ Host a polling locator hotline
⇒ Research and coordinate transportation options
⇒ Share the Election Protection hotline 866-OUR-VOTE, 888-VE-Y-VOTA and 888-API-VOTE and information on language and other assistance rights (also HERE)

NEXT STEPS

Working Together to Gradually Expand Capacity

RESOURCE-SHARE

Have other information, best practices, or resources from any existing voter engagement efforts you’d like to share with others in the Praxis family? Email Aliza@thepraxisproject.org to join a small communications circle where we can stay in touch on strategies and updates.

BUILD POWER TO DRIVE CHANGE IN VOTING AND ELECTIONS

With this as a first round of capacity-building in voter engagement and turnout, we can build a more concerted effort for the next big cycle: 2020. Thank you in advance for doing what you can in any of the above areas, to take part in building a longer-term infrastructure for our network and the people that we fight to build power among every day.

Together, we can send a clear message: we will not accept the status quo of people of color being marginalized from the political process when it counts. We can and will raise our voices to effect policy change towards health equity and health justice, building democracy from the ground up.