



Get Out the Vote Toolkit

Fall 2019

Direct voter contact is key to increasing voter turnout – especially among young people and first-time voters. While state and local Leagues have long invested in critical voter registration efforts in their communities, many have not incorporated direct get out the vote (GOTV), or voter contact, communications into their work. With interest growing across our organization, LWVEF is working to invest in innovative voter contact programs and equip all Leagues with the tools they need to conduct effective get out the vote activities!

Enclosed you will find resources for:

- Incorporating GOTV into your registration activities
- Getting VOTE411 into the hands of voters who need it
- Sending postcard/text reminders/emails to new voters
- Organizing volunteer phonebanks

Multiple studies and registration programs have found that simply helping individuals register to vote is not enough; critical follow-up is needed to help new registrants become active, well-equipped voters. In fact, direct outreach from political candidates, parties and nonpartisan groups like the League has proven to have a direct increase in voter turnout, especially among young people. In 2019, a pilot project between LWVEF and the League of Women Voters of New Jersey showed up to a full percent increase in turnout among primary voters who received contact communications directly from the League – a huge increase in an off-year election!



What's more, investing in direct get out the vote activities helps us leverage our volunteer hours and hard-earned investments in powerful ways. We want our registration activities to be as effective as possible. We want to ensure that the critical information on VOTE411.org, a resource we invest in at all levels of the League, gets into the hands of voters who need it. We want to remain competitive and nimble as new organizations arise and as many of our states' election systems evolve to adopt online and automatic voter

registration. And, we want to provide new volunteers with tangible, timely, and effective opportunities to engage. Direct voter outreach does just that.

By utilizing contact information gathered during League-sponsored voter registration drives, through partnerships, and by utilizing publicly-available voter file data, we can successfully increase voter turnout while also leveraging and building the League brand in our communities. This guide has steps to show you how!

Top Tips for Getting Out The Vote

Regardless of the means of communications used to get out the vote, our aim is to empower newly registered voters so that they can feel connected and excited about the upcoming election! **Contact your new registrants right before the next election by phone, mail, in person or email and share the following information:**

- **Remind them to vote** and invite them to voter education events like debates.
- **Ask them to visit www.VOTE411.org** to find their polling place and learn what will be on their ballot.
- **Ask about their voting plan** for Election Day. Research shows that by asking voters whether they have an Election Day plan (how will they get to the polls? At what time?), you will increase their chances of participating.
- **Keep it brief** and friendly!
- **Be helpful.** Have election dates, polling locations, and other information at your fingertips so that you can help address any questions.
- **Be responsive.** If you list a phone number or email address in your communications to voters, make sure someone is checking messages in the lead-up to Election Day!

Key Questions to ask your League team:

- What are we currently doing to get out the vote?
- How can we directly reach more voters personally ask them to vote?
- How are we measuring our effectiveness?
- What's holding us back?



Incorporating GOTV into your Voter Registration Activities

Adapted from the [Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow](#) training manual

For most Leagues, effective get out the vote efforts start by collecting contact information at voter registration events. Strategic record-keeping will allow you to follow-up directly with the people you help register to vote. Evidence shows that newly registered voters who receive follow-up communications are more likely to turn out to vote. What's more, collecting and tracking basic information will enable you to show the world—including your partners and supporters—that your voter registration drive made a difference and will give your team tangible results!

Consider taking the following steps to ensure you will have the opportunity to remind new registrants to vote as Election Day approaches:

Learn the contact rules for your state and make a plan.

Because voter registration lists are a matter of public record, most states allow independent registration groups to collect specific information from completed voter registration forms before they are turned in to the appropriate elections official.

- Some states have restrictions against copying or retaining certain information (for example, private data such as a birth date, driver's license number or social security number). To find out the rules for your state, visit your Secretary of State's website. Additional guidance for most states is available at [Fair Elections Legal Network](#).
- If you are unable to photocopy or otherwise collect information directly from the voter registration form, consider utilizing a pledge card* or sign-in sheet (see below) at your registration drives to collect students' email and cell phone information or direct them to use the voter registration tool at www.VOTE411.org, after which they'll receive election reminders.¹
- Designate an organized person or small team to take the lead on collecting all completed registration forms, copying the legally-allowed information and/or retaining information from pledge cards and sign in sheets, and promptly turning the original forms in to the appropriate elections official, keeping in mind that there might be a time requirement for turning in registration forms in your state.
- Please note: IRS rules stipulate that it is allowable to contact new registrants with election-related information such as what has been outlined here. However, it is illegal to use information from a

Keys to making a plan:

- Know the rules of your state!
- Designate person(s) to collect information
- Anticipate barriers to collecting information
- Stay committed to GOTV efforts

¹According to [Nonprofit Vote's](#) 2019 report, nonprofit voters who signed a pledge-to-vote card turned out to vote at a rate 14.1 percentage points higher than comparable registered voters. You may also choose to use the [federal voter registration form](#) if restrictions associated with your state or local form hamper your efforts

Printable Voter Pledge Cards

Print and cut out these cards to collect student information and remind them to vote.

I will vote this Election Day to stand up for what matters most to me, my family and my community.

I, _____pledge to vote this year.

Please send me reminders about upcoming elections:

Email: _____

Cell: _____



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Sample Get Out The Vote Postcards

Mailed reminders to vote are shown to be among the most effective get out the vote methods. Order these and other LWV brand items at: <https://lwv.ordercompanion.com/>

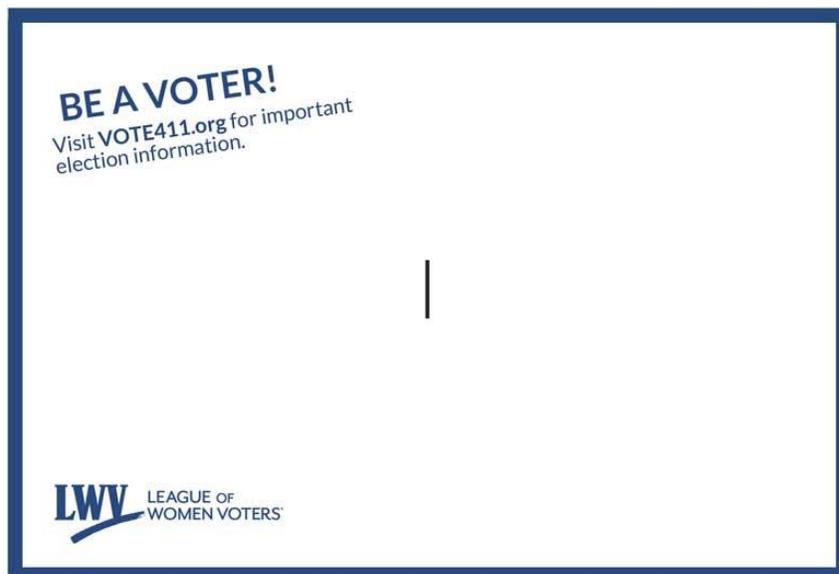
[FRONT]



- Nationwide candidate info
- Polling place locations
- Online voter registration tool
- ID requirements
- Absentee ballot info
- Ballot measure info
- Early voting options
- Election dates



[BACK]



Live Phone Calls to Voters

We highly recommend calling voters, either one on one or via a phonebanking platform, to remind them to vote. Try using this sample script:

Sample GOTV Phone Script

(Best if made starting a few days before or up until the night before the Election)

Hello, is [VOTER NAME] there?

Hi! This is [CALLER NAME] calling from the League of Women Voters of [CITY/STATE].

You might remember we helped you register to vote at [venue/your school] back in [September/October].

We wanted to thank you again for registering and wanted to remind you about the election on [DATE].

Can we count on you to go vote on [DATE]?

IF YES:

Great! We've been calling other voters and it sounds like a lot of people in [COMMUNITY] will be voting this year. It's an important election, and we're so excited that you'll have the chance to stand up for our community by casting a vote.

Do you know when you might go to vote on Tuesday? In the morning, afternoon, evening? Do you have a plan for getting there?

You can go to our website, VOTE411.org, to see who is on your ballot and all the other information about the election.

IF NO/MAYBE:

OK, what other information can I provide to you to help make voting a little easier? I'd be happy to tell you a little more about what to expect at the polls [have polling place hours, required ID info handy].

Can I answer any questions about voting?

Great! Again, thank you for your promise to vote this year.

Things to Consider When Launching a Phonebank

Some Leagues work with partners and/or through the VAN (Voter Activation Network) to phonebank voters utilizing available voter file data. LWVEF has also engaged in some phonebanking pilot projects in partnership with state and local Leagues. *If your state League already has VAN access and wants ideas about how to use it effectively, contact Maggie Bush (mbush@lwv.org).* Whether you're interested in launching a phonebank or making phone calls to voters you've registered, consider these tips:

Who should we call?

We recommend calling likely underrepresented voters in your community. For example, in the 2019 primary election in New Jersey, LWVEF and LWVNJ called registered voters under the age of 45 who had previously voted in an off-year election. We do not recommend targeting voters by political party.

When should we call voters?

We recommend running phonebanks only in the few days/over the weekend leading up to Election Day, when the election is most likely to be in voters' minds. We recommend asking volunteers to spend at least one hour making calls during the evening (5-8pm) or over the weekend just before the election.

What do I say to voters on the phone?

We've provided a script for your phone calls (see above)! The key is to keep it simple, encourage the voter to turn out to vote, and refer them to VOTE411 to find more information about the candidates and the process of voting.

Sample Text Messaging Script

Many organizations are utilizing mass text messaging platforms to get out the vote, though research does not yet definitely indicate that texting increases voter turnout.

If you launch a mass texting campaign, please be sure to check any state and federal rules related to such communications.

Here is a sample script adapted from an LWVEF texting pilot run in 2018:



Hello from the League of Women Voters. Election Day is coming, and we hope we can count on you to vote on [DATE]! Please go to VOTE411.org to find the election info you need.

[If additional capability exists]:

What time would you like a text reminder to vote on Tuesday? (for example 7am est, 6pm pst)

User texts: 8am est

Response: Perfect, your reminder text is set.

Response: SEND TEXT AT SPECIFIED TIME: Happy Election Day! This is an important election. Find your personalized voting info here: <http://www.vote411.org> Now it's time to get to the polls!

Sample Get out the Vote Email Script:

While email is not shown to be an effective method of boosting turnout, it does provide a cheap and easy way to communicate with voters. Thus, we do recommend sending election reminder emails to new registrants and/or community members who have joined your email list. Here's a sample:

Subject Line: Important Information before you Vote

Hi [NAME],

Election Day is almost here! Are you ready to vote?

You may remember that we helped you register to vote at [venue/your school] back in [September/October]. Now we're reaching out to share some important tips for Election Day.

This may be the most important election of our lifetime. Election Day, [November X], is your chance to take control for your community and weigh in on the issues that matter most to you and your family. As voters, we all have an equal say in determining our future. That's why it is so important to go cast a vote!

Here are a few important tips:

- If you need to find information about how, when and where to vote, please visit www.VOTE411.org and enter your address.
- On Election Day, polling places are open in from XX am to XX pm.
- [IF required in your state] At the polls, you'll be required to show [an ID/utility bill/etc.].

The leaders we elect will make decisions that affect your everyday life — your job, health care, the economy and more. So please join your friends and neighbors by being a voter on [DATE]!

If we can help answer any questions you have about the election process, please feel free to contact us at [LEAGUE CONTACT INFO]

Thank you for voting!

YOUR NAME

Additional LWVEF Resources

Sign up for the biweekly League Update email to receive the latest announcements, resources and grant opportunities! http://participate.lwv.org/signup_page/league-update

Training resources available at www.lwv.org include:

- [*Empowering The Voters Of Tomorrow*](#) (High schools)
- [Naturalization ceremonies toolkit](#)
- www.VOTE411.org
- [Guide to LWVUS Services for Leagues](#)