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Welcome back, longtime partners, and hello to new partners! We all went through a difficult year in 2020, and now that things are looking brighter, it’s time to get back to registering voters. Over 30 of the most populous US cities will elect their mayor this fall, Virginia and New Jersey voters will choose their governors, and countless counties and municipalities will hold elections for school boards, town councils, sheriffs, commissioners, and more. Voters in places that will not hold elections in the fall of 2021 won’t have to wait long to cast a ballot in a 2022 primary ahead of important midterm elections next year.

Last year we broke all records on National Voter Registration Day. Our partners assisted over 1.5 million voters to update their registration or register for the first time, and a record-setting number of partners at all levels joined in the effort. While things looked different last year, the impact of those registrations became clear when the country experienced its highest voter turnout in over a century!

We hope that we see record breaking turnout during 2021 local elections, but that can only happen with your help. Let’s work together to make sure America is #VoteReady all over again this September 28th!
5 TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

1. **Read through all the resources.** You’re already reading this, so good work! Check out training and registration resources or learn more about voter registration in your state here: nationalvoterregistrationday.org/toolkit-for-organizations/.

2. **Get connected.** Get acquainted with NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org. Make sure to like National Voter Registration Day on Facebook. Follow the event on Twitter using the handle @NatlVoterRegDay. Use the hashtags #NationalVoterRegistrationDay and #VoteReady across all platforms.

3. **Start early.** It’s never too soon to start planning. Figure out the stuff you can knock off your list early and get it out of the way. If you have everything ready ahead of time you can focus on promoting your event.

4. **Participate in any trainings you need.** Do you have limited experience with promoting and running a voter registration drive, or is this your group’s first time doing one at all? No worries if so – about a third of our partners every year are completely new to voter registration, so we’ve got your back! Even if you’re experienced, are you looking for tips and refreshers on how to adapt your work to this year’s state and local elections context? Look for announcements of our webinar trainings or review videos of previous ones on our website. Use our training resources. Contact a local partner such as the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, or reach out to your local election board here: www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state

5. **Ask for help.** Contact us if you need something and we’ll do our best to make your organizing life easier. That’s what we’re here for! You can contact us at info@nationalvoterregistrationday.org.

Make sure to factor in turnaround times for things like getting certified by your state election office to do third-party voter registration if necessary in your state. Your state’s guide to voter registration drives should be your first stop!
National Voter Registration Day is about democracy. It’s about doing something, big or small, to help more people in your community participate and vote. We’re helping people find their voice – not telling them what to say. While political parties, campaigns, and political action committees (PACs) are free to celebrate National Voter Registration Day, only nonpartisan organizations that commit to refraining from political messages are eligible to sign up as official holiday partners, receive free stickers and posters, and be listed on our website.

We have three major ways we keep National Voter Registration Day about democracy and not about partisanship:

No “Electioneering”: Candidates and Ballot Measures

We ask that no National Voter Registration Day event be used to advocate on behalf of a particular candidate, party, or ballot measure. You can provide nonpartisan voter education on where and how to register as well as vote – including options for voting by mail or voting early in person, polling station location, any required ID to vote, and more. You can also provide information about something else your group is doing. By keeping National Voter Registration Day strictly about registering people to vote and sharing related information on voting, we keep it a feel-good and positive pro-democracy event that everyone wants to participate in, regardless of where they stand politically.

Avoid

- Asking people who they plan to vote for or who they voted for in the past
- Wearing shirts, buttons, or stickers that support a candidate or convey a political message
- Getting pulled into political debates with people you are registering or bystanders

Messaging

In addition to not advocating for partisan issues, there’s a lot you can do to help National Voter Registration Day stay all about democracy and the importance of turning out the vote in your community. Keep it positive. Encourage a celebratory and unifying atmosphere at your in-person or online event. For more on this, including sample messaging, consult our Communications Toolkit here: https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/documents/2021/07/2021-communications-toolkit.pdf/

Targeting People, Not Parties

No targeting may be done on the basis of party. You are free to target your friends, people you serve, your local community, and areas with historically low turnout or new to voting, such as young voters or new citizens. Do not only ask people to register to vote that you think will vote a certain way, and do not encourage people to register with a particular political party.
Building Your Team

Your National Voter Registration Day event has lots of potential. This is a great opportunity to bring new people into your network and empower citizens to be more engaged in their communities. To make your event as successful as possible, you’re going to need help. The first thing you’ll need is a dedicated crew to help you plan your event, whether it’s in-person or online.

When recruiting your team, here are a few qualities to look for:

★ Diligent and Committed. Look for people you can count on. Be clear and upfront with your volunteers about your expectations and needs before, during, and after the event.

★ Fun and Creative. Look for people who will contribute creative energy.

★ Connected and Networked. The person you work with who has 1,000 followers on social media? Sounds like an asset. The one you see at every event? Definitely good to have on board.

★ Informed and Passionate. People who are knowledgeable and passionate about voting and civic engagement are always good to have around. They will be particularly effective in talking to potential voters at your event and helping other volunteers to do the same.

★ Tech Savvy: Especially if your event is going to be fully virtual – but even if it’s not – make sure that you have at least one person on your core team who is comfortable with the tech tools you choose to build into your plan.

Tackling Logistics

Once you have a team, you can start really planning for a great event. Holding a few team meetings during the planning process will help everyone share a vision of the event and feel invested in the process. Use the agenda on the next page to get your team started:
## Sample Team Meeting Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Discussion items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome and introductions</strong></td>
<td>Icebreaker: What makes you excited about getting people registered to vote?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Select a notetaker and timekeeper to help you capture and get through everything on the agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targeting voters</strong></td>
<td>Who is your audience? Are they your neighbors, classmates, or co-workers, or are you trying to register new or unlikely voters? Consider:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you already in contact with these voters? If you aren’t, who can you partner with to reach them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What kind of event would be appealing to these voters?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing and location</strong></td>
<td>Where should your event be held, and what will the timing be? Consider:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Where (and what time of day) will there be heavy foot traffic from the voters you want to target?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can this space accommodate the type of event you want to host? This is important if you have any audio/visual needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is the space easy to access for voters and volunteers, and do you need permission to host an event there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteers</strong></td>
<td>Will you need volunteers to help you with your event? Consider recruiting volunteers to help with the following tasks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Before the event: promotion/publicity, collecting materials or donations, recruiting volunteers for September 28th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Day of the event: Setting up tables and signage, interacting with voters, taking pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• After the event: Cleaning up, submitting registration forms to the proper elections office, following up with voters who needed more assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
<td>Review major decisions and next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank team members for participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Remind people of any commitments they made (like inquiring about a partnership or looking into securing event space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set a date for the next meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We’ve seen the most success at campuses, transit areas, food stores, at your own agency or business or at local events in your neighborhood. Avoid tourist places with people from out of state or out of country. Festivals and sporting events can have a lot of out-of-state people.
Goal setting

Once your team has determined who the intended audience is and where you will reach them, it’s time to set some goals for your event.

Here are our goals for National Voter Registration Day 2021:

★ Registering 1 million voters on the holiday in 2021-2022.
★ 4,000 organizations signed on as partners across the US!
★ Wide support from election officials, community groups, businesses, schools, libraries, online partners and civic groups.

What are yours?

For example:

★ # of Volunteers 10
★ # of Registrations 40
★ Partners A local high school. A nonprofit organization with volunteers. A local business.
★ # of Social Media Likes, Shares, Etc 50

How can I estimate how many registrations my event will collect?

As many as 1 in 4 eligible voters are not registered to vote according to U.S. Census data from 2020. Unless you will be in an area with a population that has a higher likelihood of people not being registered (such as a freshman college dorm or a naturalization ceremony) you can use this figure to roughly predict the number of registrations you will collect. For instance, if you expect that 100 people will walk by your table and everyone will be asked to register, set a goal of 20 registrations. If you’re organizing an online event, think a little more about your audience and if they’re more or less likely to be registered to vote than the average. Not everyone will say yes to your ask to get registered, and that’s okay!

Planning a virtual event

Build your lists for greater virtual “foot traffic”

★ Whereas an in-person event venue should be planned around foot traffic in a given area, a virtual event should be planned around as big of a list as possible in order to position your event to register as many voters as possible.
★ Assess the size of your organization’s contact database (email distribution list and phone numbers if you’re planning on using texting or phone banking as part of your event) and social media following. Try and grow your contact lists continuously ahead of National Voter Registration Day through asking individuals on it to encourage their friends, families, and communities to subscribe or follow your social media accounts.
★ Register your event – even if it’s a virtual one – on our Events Tool on our website.
★ Consult our Communications Toolkit and resources page on our website for ways to publicize and promote your event.

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1 https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-585.html
Select your tools

★ Check out our digital tools guide on the partner resources page on our website. Find an online resource such as Vote.Gov, or a third-party tool that works well for your organization and will help you achieve your goals.

★ Evaluate other tools to facilitate communication that is not face-to-face, such as email newsletter tools and texting programs, and decide if these would be useful to your group in the leadup to and during your event.

Equip your staff and volunteers

★ Make one of your volunteers or staff members a go-to for technical support and troubleshooting.

★ Make sure your staff and volunteers have what they need to succeed in your virtual event. This could include computers, tablets, cell phones with sufficient credit, chargers, high-speed internet, applications such as Zoom, and more.

★ Encourage staff and volunteers to download any necessary applications ahead of time and test out their ability to navigate them well in advance of the day.

★ If your virtual event involves something such as a Zoom call to demonstrate how to fill out your state’s voter registration form, consider a practice call the day before to avoid any last-minute challenges on the big day.

Develop your content

★ Draft emails to send out ahead of and on the day of your virtual registration drive. Ask a few individuals to review and give feedback on any parts of it that may be particularly effective and compelling, or anything that could be confusing.

★ Prepare social media content, including language and images, so that it’s ready to go. Decide what hashtags you will encourage your community to use (don’t forget #NationalVoterRegistrationDay and #VoteReady, for example!). Consult our Communications Toolkit and our website for lots of ready-made social media content and graphics.

Working with volunteers

It takes lots of time and effort to find and train volunteers, but it can be worth the investment when you help more voters than you could without them.

Every organization is different, but you normally want to start volunteer outreach at least two weeks to a month before an event. That way you have plenty of time to make initial outreach calls, and then send follow-up reminders to each person who said they’d attend.

Our experience gives us the following assumptions:

★ For most organizations, about half of the volunteers who say they will show up actually do. It’s a good idea to recruit twice as many volunteers as your goal. It will never hurt to have extra volunteers on the day of your event!

★ Mix online outreach with calls and texts. A typical caller can make around 25 calls per hour.

★ Most organizations we’ve worked with talk to about four people and get one or two people to sign up as volunteers per hour.

How does your organization utilize partnerships?

“In NYC, we have taken the approach of working with partners and volunteers to host a broad scale of events designed to bring awareness of NVRD as a day of pride. We have accomplished this by co-hosting large and small opportunities for voter registration and engagement. The events have ranged from celebrity-hosted student rallies to workplace and subway drives to new-citizen swearing-in ceremonies.”

– Onida Coward Mayers, NYC Votes
Are there other organizations in your community that could have a volunteer base your organization might tap into? Maybe a local nonprofit, school group, or business? Talk to them and coordinate! If you’re in a larger city, there might even be other groups also planning an event on National Voter Registration Day.

**Training Everyone Who Will Help Register Voters**

For your National Voter Registration Day event to be a success, you first need to train your staff and volunteers and prepare them to confidently and capably register voters, whether that’s in person or online. Make sure people assisting with registration have all the materials they need before training starts.

Ahead of your training, have all the clipboards assembled in advance with the script, who within your organization can answer questions, blank voter-registration cards or forms, pens, and a “Register to Vote” sign taped on the back of the clipboard. If your state allows online voter registration and you plan to collect some/all of your registrations online, provide volunteers with the necessary equipment (laptop, chargers, etc.) and make sure that internet access is available at your training and the site of the event.

Good trainings are fun, informative, quick, and engaging. Keep things short, and leave time for questions and answers. Most important, give people a chance to partner up and practice. Role-play helps. Before you deploy staff and volunteers to sites, announce what time they should return, make sure they know to turn their materials in when they get back, and have contact info from each person. Try and hold your training immediately before the event, or no more than one week prior to the event so that information is fresh and no one forgets anything important between the training and your event.

If you’re doing an online event this September 28, we recommend holding training one week or more before the big day in order to make sure that everyone understands their role and has the necessary equipment and tech savvy to get the job done.

**Training should include the following:**

- **Who can register to vote in your state? This includes knowing:**
  - that any U.S. citizen who turns 18 by Election Day (November 2, 2021) can register and vote
  - your state-specific rule – if any – for allowing 16 and/or 17 year olds to pre-register to vote so that they’re automatically added to the rolls once they turn 18. Find out here: https://thecivicscenter.org/resources/#vrages

- **How to fill out a registration form (paper and/or online) and which fields are required.**

- **Where to look for common mistakes, such as forgetting to sign the form.**

- **Staying nonpartisan. We’re not here to tell you who to vote for, just to help you register.**

- **Myth-busting: Discuss common misconceptions, such as jury duty being decided by voter registration forms. Getting called for jury duty most often comes from getting a driver’s license or being on other lists.**

- **Who to call if a volunteer has questions when registering someone.**

- **Where to turn in all completed registration forms and other materials.**

- **Quick script training and roleplay.**

- **Time for Q & A.**
In-person events

Event Components

National Voter Registration Day Event Materials Checklist:

★ Plenty of blank registration forms and/or a tablet for registering voters online (if applicable)
★ National Voter Registration Day posters* and additional posters or swag from your organization. If you need more National Voter Registration Day posters and/or stickers, you can download the files and print more on our website, or order them from our online store.
★ National Voter Registration Day stickers to identify volunteers and to give away*
★ A clipboard and multiple pens for every volunteer
★ A volunteer sign-in sheet and name tags for volunteers
★ A training script for all of your trainers, and sample scripts for volunteers asking individuals to register to vote
★ Envelopes or boxes for completed registration forms
★ A table and chairs
★ A source of shade (umbrella or tent)
★ A way to play music
★ Handmade posters and banners with your organization’s name
★ A camera or a volunteer willing to take photos or video using his/her smartphone (even better if this person can post updates on social media throughout the day!)
★ Water and snacks for volunteers
★ Other supplies (balloons, signs, individually wrapped snacks, etc.) to draw attention to your event, make it feel inviting, and encourage passers-by to stop and check it out

* All partners who sign up on our website before the deadline of September 15, 2021 are sent free posters and stickers.
### Event staff and volunteer arrival

- Have volunteers show up well before you actually plan on having the event take place so that they can be trained. Factor in time in case volunteers show up late.
- Have volunteers sign in through a sign-in sheet (if in-person) or, if your event is virtual, devise another way to keep track of who participated. This will help you keep track of who volunteered and make it easier to re-engage (and thank!) them later.

### Pre-event training

- One person can train approximately 5 – 10 others. Make sure you have enough trainers for all of your volunteers!
- Each trainer should be familiar with voter registration rules in your state (see here: https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/toolkit-for-individuals/rules-for-voter-registration-drives/), as well as tips for talking to prospective voters.

### Registering voters

- Smooth deployment from training to actually registering is critical. Make sure you have transportation figured out beforehand if you’ll be driving somewhere.
- Make your event fun. Announcements, cheering, and music will attract a lot more positive attention than people just sitting at a table.

### Finishing up

- Collect all clipboards and registration forms.
- Allow your volunteers to chat about how registering went. Ask volunteers about their favorite registration or memory from the day.
- Have someone count all of the registrations to show how each individual added together made a big impact.

### Running the Event

One of the secrets to running a great event is to have a run sheet: a chart or timeline that breaks down what needs to happen minute by minute and identifies who’s in charge. See sample on next page.

Make one person the stage manager for the event. This person is in charge of following the run sheet word by word, making sure that everything that needs to happen happens. Of course, it’s impossible to predict everything that will happen, so be ready to improvise.

### Virtual events

#### Make a day-of schedule

- Just because your event isn’t in person this year doesn’t mean that you don’t need a schedule! Develop a timeline of when you will send out communication and to whom, when you’ll post on social media, and when you’ll ask your volunteers and community to amplify your calls to action.
- Consider a check-in call or videoconference during your event for volunteers to chat about how things are going, discuss what’s working well, and to celebrate their efforts and success.
### Sample Day of Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Who leads</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:15AM</td>
<td>Leave office to get to venue</td>
<td>HQ</td>
<td></td>
<td>Make sure to bring all materials needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM</td>
<td>Set up, prepare tables, snacks, check-in, music</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Music player, snacks, tables, check-in materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45AM</td>
<td>Check-in arriving volunteers</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome! Explain day’s process and hand out clipboards/materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00AM</td>
<td>Icebreaker for volunteer</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Favorite childhood book/first memory of civic participation/etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20AM</td>
<td>Group voter registration training</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Answer any questions. Do a demonstration. Go through materials that everybody should have. Have them split into pairs and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40AM</td>
<td>Team Cheer</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Yeah, democracy!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40AM</td>
<td>Spread everybody out through square.</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Check in with each departing volunteer to make sure they have everything they need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15PM</td>
<td>Set up lunch for volunteers</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Have them take 15 minute, incremental breaks so there are still volunteers registering at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM</td>
<td>Check in with each volunteer team</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask them if they have any questions, and collect any filled out registration forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00PM</td>
<td>Check in with each volunteer team</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask them if they have any questions, and collect any filled out registration forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00PM</td>
<td>Regroup team</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collect all materials and count completed forms. Encourage volunteers to take water and snacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15PM</td>
<td>Check-outs, Celebration</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>Announce how many registrations we accomplished, Check-in with volunteers to get feedback on event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00PM</td>
<td>Break down tables, clean up, go to office</td>
<td>At Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Make sure not to forget anything. Keep registration forms within reach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00PM</td>
<td>Debrief, Did Good / Do Betters</td>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>Add up numbers of voters registered and volunteers engaged. Report results to NVRD via online survey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Overall:**

- Confirm that your volunteers have their own cell phones, laptops, and internet connection if needed. Headphones can also be useful.
- Always know what you want to ask – have specific times, dates, and places; or specific websites to register to vote.
- If possible, have a caller who knows the prospective volunteer or voter call or text them.
- If you’re recruiting volunteers, call through your active ones first.
- Make sure people who are calling are having fun, and are enthusiastic about what they’re asking people to do. If texting, make sure texts are concise and upbeat. If your callers/texters are in the same room, consider ways to keep up momentum and make it an engaging event. Celebrate individual “victories” such as recruiting volunteers, or consider tracking the collective achievements of the group.
- Try to avoid distractions of all types and keep callers/texters on task.
- Think about different roles for different volunteers, especially if some volunteers are not able to join you for an in-person event. Can they support you virtually?
- Have a way of rewarding volunteers who finish their list or get positive results – even just a shout-out. Many organizations find it helpful to have a way to celebrate each new volunteer commitment or every new voter that your volunteers register.
- When you find someone who is excited about the cause, try to get them to do more! Depending on the purpose of your calls or text, this could be bringing friends along to volunteer at an event, or getting additional friends to register to vote on the holiday.

**When to call:**

- Best time to call is 5:30pm – 9:00pm on a weekday. These days, with more people still working from home, you may have good luck during “off” hours as well.
- Always schedule time for training before calls or texting efforts actually start.

**How to call or text:**

- Give your callers or texters a suggested script. Ask them to practice it and make it their own.
- Consider having volunteers do a few pretend “practice calls” to other volunteers or do some role-play exercises beforehand to work out the kinks in their ask.
- Have a stated expectation for the number of calls or texts made per person. Give folks a list with a specific number of calls or texts, and encourage them to finish the list.
- Have volunteers record the responses somewhere so you can call or text back through unanswered numbers; you can save time by not calling people who have already been talked to.
- Make it fun! Especially you’re having a virtual volunteer phonebanking or texting session where people won’t be together in person during their outreach, get creative around how to make people feel like part of a bigger effort. Consider playing music, having breaks for volunteers to chat, or sending food or goodies to volunteers to keep them going.

**When someone says “no:”**

- If you’re calling volunteers: If they’re interested but unavailable for your event, try to get them to volunteer for a different event with your organization. Don’t waste the phone call!
- If you’re calling to get people to register, if someone doesn’t want to, in most cases it’s best to thank them and move on. But depending on the tone of their voice, you may want to remind them that it typically takes two minutes or less to check your voter registration status online. And whether or not they think they want to vote, getting registered is the only way to make sure they have that option.
How to Ask Someone to Register In Person or Online

Even though asking someone “Are you registered to vote?” or “Can I help you register to vote?” seems straightforward, we’ve learned that those questions aren’t the best ones. Try these alternatives instead as part of your in-person event or as part of your virtual calls to action:

Are you registered to vote at your current address? Let’s take two minutes to check your registration to make sure it’s up to date.”

★ Why it works: Some people may think their registration is current because they got a driver’s license in their new state or only moved across town. Even if you move down the street, you have to update your voter registration or you might be turned away at the polls.

★ Use the Voting In Your State guide to find the right link for people to check their registration: https://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/. You can have a laptop set up for people to check (bookmark the appropriate page), or encourage them to visit that link on their smartphone.

“Our community needs more voters. Can you help out by updating your registration today?”

★ Why it works: Some people aren’t motivated by politics but care deeply about their community. You can explain that elected officials who represent them are more responsive to communities with higher numbers of registered voters.

★ Remember to use the word “update” since many people don’t realize they need to update their registration when they move, change their name, or if they haven’t voted in several years.

“The deadline for voter registration is approaching. Do you have 2 minutes to make sure you’re registered?”

★ Why it works: Use that sense of urgency (the looming deadline) and highlight the ease of registering to get people to do it on the spot rather than waiting for another day or time.

★ Get even more specific by inserting your state’s registration deadline in your ask. You can find your state’s deadline by checking your Secretary of State’s website or visiting the Voting In Your State guide here: https://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/.

“Did you know that in order to be able to vote by mail, you need to register well in advance of Election Day?”

★ Why it works: Many voters cast a ballot by mail last year for the first time due to the pandemic – and many of them are likely to want do so again given how simple and convenient it was! Voters need to be reminded that they need to plan ahead to be able to vote by mail, and need to be registered at their current addresses with enough lead time to request and receive a mail-in ballot.

“Did you know that our (state/city) will be electing (XXXX) this year, and how important that is?“

★ Why it works: During years with higher-profile federal elections, communities, the airwaves, and the internet are saturated with calls to action that raise public awareness of what’s on the ballot. This year, critical state and local elections are taking place across the country that have immediate and tangible impacts on service delivery and quality of life issues for millions of voters. Remind your community what’s at stake for them this year, and why it’s important that they get out there and vote.
Always look like you’re having fun, including with virtual events.

★ Get out from behind that table and invite people to talk to you!

★ Celebrate every newly-registered voter! Ring a cowbell, have them add their name or message to a “wall of fame,” give them a shout-out on social media, or find other ways to make it fun. If you make somebody feel special for participating, you can bet they’ll want to keep doing it!

★ Act up a little. Move or say something while you’re standing around, and have a good time. This can help make the whole process much less intimidating for new voters.

★ Make sure you’re an approachable group. Standing or walking in pairs is encouraged, but not at the expense of talking to voters instead.

★ No need to make your online communications such as emails and Tweets overly serious! Use graphics and language that get people engaged and smiling. We have lots of sample graphics on our website for you to freely download and share.

Be the kind of person you’d want to talk to.

★ Be friendly if you’re running an in-person event.

★ If your event is virtual, make sample text messages, email language, and social media calls to action positive in tone and ones that invite engagement by your target community.

★ Talk (or type) like a regular person. Don’t be a robot and read directly off the script.

★ Be up front about what you’re doing in a positive way. Identify yourself as a volunteer immediately when you start talking to them.

★ Take nothing personally and don’t get discouraged. If somebody is rude to you, shake it off and move on.

Have a conversation, rather than talking at people.

★ Ask questions and listen to the answer. Tailor your message to the individual.

★ Find your own pitch. Experiment and figure out what works best for you.

★ Talk to everyone you see. The next person could be amazing!

★ For both in-person and online events, try to connect voting to people’s daily lives and the issues they care about.

★ For online content, rather than simply sharing information, try and start a conversation and engage potential voters. Ask questions, take a poll, and ask people to share their thoughts – and then share your call to action to register to vote!

Stay on message and remind them of the big picture.

★ You’re not telling them who to vote for, just helping them register! No matter who someone plans to vote for or how they plan to vote – or even if they’re not sure they want to vote at all – getting registered is the first step.

★ National Voter Registration Day is a national holiday and a positive way to celebrate democracy. At the same exact time, thousands of volunteers across the country and online are reaching out to their friends, families, and community members to encourage them to register to vote.

Close the deal.

★ Always make the ask. If you can, put the clipboard and pen in their hand while you’re talking to them. You’ll be amazed at how many people start filling it out.

★ Don’t backtrack. Once you ask, wait for their response.

★ If you have handouts, give them out at the end of your conversation. They can be distracting if you hand them to voters right away.

★ For online events, don’t bury the lead: make sure the call to register to vote is clear and up front in all emails, tweets, posts, and more.
Turn in your completed voter registration forms.
★ All states have rules on when completed forms need to be turned in. It’s always best to turn in forms as soon as possible to avoid any issues.
★ If you don’t know when or where to turn them in, ask a partner or local election office. Visit https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/partner-tools/rules-for-voter-registration-drives/ to download your state’s registration drive rules and make sure you comply.

Report your numbers and tell us how it went.
★ We’ll send you a couple emails right after National Voter Registration Day with a link to report the number of volunteers you engaged and the number of voters you registered. These numbers are important for us to be able to know how big our impact is nationally, as they’re some of the only numbers we are able to track year to year. We’ll also ask you for your feedback on how we were able to support your event and how we can improve our support for partners like you in future years.

Thank your volunteers.
★ This is a big one. People love to be appreciated. If you want to email them, that’s great. But make sure that it’s personal to them, and try to follow it up with a phone call. Actively appreciating the people who help you accomplish your goals is the easiest way to make sure they keep helping you.

Follow up with the voters you registered and help them get #VoteReady.
★ If your event was in-person and you used paper forms, IF it’s okay in your state, make a copy of each of the completed voter registration forms for your own records. Some states like Texas and New Mexico don’t allow copying so check on our website or with your local election office to verify state-specific rules. Redacting personal information (date of birth, signature, SSN, or driver’s license number) is always a good idea.
★ You can use the copies you made to follow up with folks to make sure they have all the information they need to actually vote.
★ Check out the resources on our website to help voters get #VoteReady, and share them widely with your volunteers, new voters you registered, and more. If your event was virtual, use the same online or text/phone methods you used to engage voters to share these complementary resources.
★ Every time you contact a voter, you increase their likelihood of voting. Follow up with them right after the event to thank them for registering and answer any questions they might have, then again during your get-out-the-vote process!
With your help on September 28, hundreds of thousands of Americans will become newly-eligible to vote in upcoming elections.

But, first things first – make sure to practice what you preach and make sure YOUR registration is up to date too! Whether you help three or 300 hundred voters on this year’s holiday, you are making a difference. We can’t do this without you, and your events are what makes National Voter Registration Day great!

Here are some final reminders as you begin the planning process.

1 National Voter Registration Day is about democracy, not political parties or candidates. Use this as an opportunity to come together, celebrate our shared values, and bridge differences in your community.

2 It’s better with friends. Join forces with other groups in your area to maximize the number of voters you will reach and build local relationships. Maybe you can start a tradition and team up every year!

3 Have fun, but take it seriously. Make sure you’re following state rules around voter registration, that voters are filling out the form legibly, and that all forms make it back to the proper elections office. Missing any of these steps could mean that a voter that registered with you won’t be on the rolls when they go to vote. This is why training is so important.

4 We want to make this easy for you. Read the emails from the National Voter Registration Day team so you don’t miss a thing - we’ve got trainings, tools, and tips to make your event run smoothly, so don’t reinvent the wheel.

We just have one more question: Are you ready to reg?! Let’s go get America #VoteReady together.