

MESSAGING TIPS, TRICKS, AND TACTICS

Talking about voter registration and related topics can be tricky, particularly in today's environment. As a reminder, National Voter Registration Day Partners are asked to remain strictly nonpartisan in all communications related to their participation in the holiday. But nonpartisan doesn't mean non-participation, and we depend on Partners to help us get the word out, help every eligible voter get registered, and make their voice heard!

The following are some key takeaways from research and lessons learned about the type of communication, messaging, and language that inspire action around voter registration and beyond.

- ♦ ***Sometimes, boring is best.*** Funny memes go a long way on the internet. Still, people respond best to voting information that feels official/governmental and gives unambiguous details about election-related information and issues.

Keep it nonpartisan. As a National Voter Registration Day Partner, your commitment to maintaining nonpartisan messaging around this holiday is highly beneficial! Nonpartisan messaging is generally more effective in building trust than messaging that has a partisan angle. We recommend that you frequently consult and share information from [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) or your state and local election officials to ensure that the details you provide to your community are accurate and up to date. This will help ensure that voters receive clear and reliable information.



- ◆ **Keep it positive.** In keeping with the celebratory, unifying, and nonpartisan tone we try to cultivate around National Voter Registration Day, we recommend keeping your communications uplifting and positive. Lead with statements that focus on the values we share, such as the freedom to vote, ensuring every voice is heard, and building a strong democracy in which voters are empowered to pick our leaders. Stress that voting is a superpower we all possess, and we can create positive change by exercising it! Thank the local superheroes in your community—election officials—who register voters and administer trusted and smooth elections year after year.
- ◆ **Consider your message framing.** Messages about voting tend to fall into the following categories:
 - ▷ **Identity** (e.g., “Are you a voter?”; “Be a voter”; etc.)
 - ▷ **Issue-based** (focusing on the tangible impacts of voting on issues of importance such as healthcare, education, public transportation, crime and justice, etc.)
 - ▷ **Empowerment** (focusing on how the voter has the ability to make change)
 - ▷ **Process-oriented** (specific, detailed information on the voting process)

Research conducted by the Ad Council in partnership with Democracy Works shows that different age groups respond differently to the different types of voting message frames described above. **Know your audience:**

- ▷ **All generations:** Social pressure messaging (humorous, not shameful) is effective for all generations
- ▷ **Boomers/Gen X:** Identity messaging is the most impactful
- ▷ **Millennials/Gen Z:** Empowerment messaging is the most impactful
- ▷ **Additionally, Gen Z is most likely to encourage others to vote and share political views.** Celebrity voices have been shown to boost Gen Z turnout but have little or no effect on other age groups.

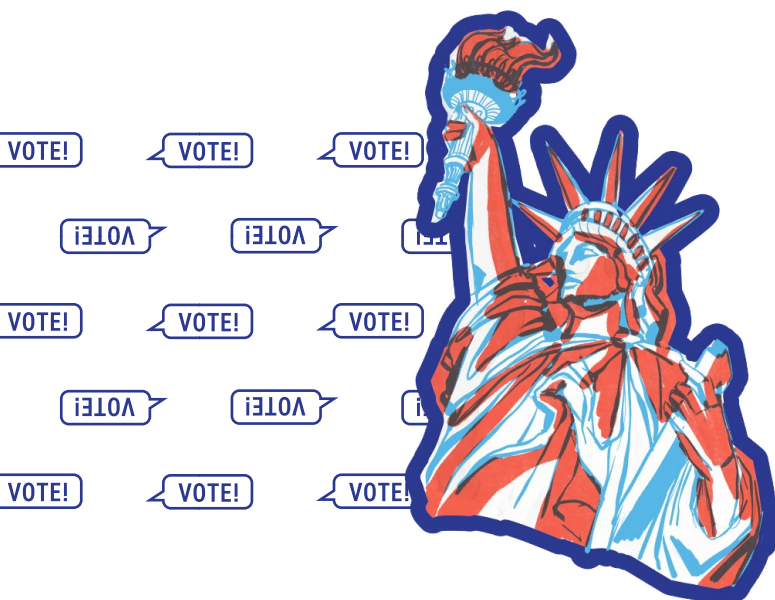


Choose trusted messengers. Across these different types of messages, a key finding is that *messages that feel personal, conversational, and timely are most effective.* Regardless of the message frame around voting, *people respond best to trusted messengers* in the workplace, in their communities, and in their personal networks of friends and family.

Furthermore, the exact words you use to craft a message can be equally or more critical to the substance of your message itself. As detailed in [PACE's Civic Language Perceptions Project 2024](#), word choice can have an outsized influence on how receptive and included a general audience will feel in response to a given message. For example, the project found that words like “freedom,” “liberty,” “community,” and “service” had a positive impact on an overwhelmingly large majority of people. Additionally, the same project found that words like “freedom,” “American,” and “citizen” were among the most effective terms when it comes to motivating people to vote.

Recognizing that the goal of National Voter Registration Day is to bring all Americans together for a bipartisan celebration of democracy, here are the top ten strongest terms that the Civic Language Perceptions Project found to signal broader values that bring the most people together:

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|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| ① COMMUNITY | ② UNITY | ③ BELONGING | ④ SERVICE | ⑤ FREEDOM |
| ⑥ LIBERTY | ⑦ AMERICAN | ⑧ CIVILITY | ⑨ CITIZEN | ⑩ EQUALITY |



In a nutshell, this is exactly why National Voter Registration Day is so effective! **We depend on a network of thousands of Partners (this means YOU!) who all leverage their trusted messenger status and effectively tailored communication to share information about voter registration in their communities.**

Deliberately crafted, interpersonal communication is highly effective, much more so than mass emails or generic social media posts.