

Navigating Get Out The Vote (GOTV) Programs

Successfully planning and operating a get out the vote (GOTV) program requires advance planning and clear messaging. Use the following guidelines when planning your GOTV work to ensure your members have all the information they need to successfully carry out your program.

Before the Voter Registration Deadline

- **Update voter addresses.** Prior to the end of voter registration, it is essential that you include messaging about voters who have moved in any GOTV communication. Voters often mistakenly believe that a voter registration moves with you to a new address. Voters in most localities have to update their address before the voter registration deadline to ensure they can cast a regular ballot. Make sure any voter you speak with knows that fact and knows the registration deadline date.
- **Begin messaging on voter ID.** The standard for what ID a voter needs to show to vote has changed in many states recently. It is essential to begin educating voters about ID before the registration deadline has passed. Some voters will need to apply to get a free ID or apply to get documents that are necessary to get an acceptable ID. You don't want voters waiting until a week before Election Day to think about what ID they need.
- **First time Voters.** First time voters who registered to vote by mail, have not provided a copy of their ID and are voting in a federal election must present an ID when voting. These voters must present a current and valid photo identification; a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck; or another government document that shows the voter's name and address.

After the Voter Registration Deadline

- **Inform voters of their early voting and vote by mail options.** Some states allow early voting in person while others do not. Some allow all voters to send in a ballot by mail while others require an excuse. Identify what the law is in your state (see FELN's GOTV guide for your state at fairelectionsnetwork.com/resources) and communicate voters' options if they want to vote before Election Day.
- **Help voters locate their polling place.** Through easily accessible online tools, voters can input their current address and find out their correct polling location. Voters who attempt to vote in the wrong location often wait in line for extended periods of time before discovering that they are not able to cast a regular ballot. These voters must either go to their correct polling location or vote a provisional ballot which may or may not be counted depending upon state rules.
- **Remind voters to bring their voter ID!**
- **Assist voters who cast a provisional ballot.** Reasons for casting a provisional ballot could include being in the wrong polling place or voting without the appropriate ID. Provisional ballots are typically counted in the days following Election Day, after voters have an opportunity to present evidence in support of their vote. While conducting GOTV activities on Election Day, make sure you have information on provisional ballot counting rules so voters are equipped to defend their vote if needed.