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Nonprofits Take Note: The Elections Are Coming! The Elections Are Coming!

No, it's not the 2024 Presidential Elections (thankfully), or even the 2022 "Mid-Term Elections" for Congress and most state legislatures. Rather, in the coming weeks voters will cast ballots for governors, lieutenant governors, and state legislators (**New Jersey** and **Virginia**) and other statewide positions like judgeships and school superintendent (**Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Washington** and **Wisconsin**), mayors in more than 40 cities, city councilmembers in more than 20 states, and school boards in more than 463 school districts across the country, plus open congressional seats in **Florida** and **Ohio**. Twenty-eight statewide ballot measures have been certified for November elections in seven states. In short, Election Day is only 15 days away for many citizens. And as readers of this section of the newsletter know, elections can be times for charitable nonprofits to strengthen their communities and advance their missions – in strictly nonpartisan ways that are tried and true.

Public policies at all levels of government affect nonprofits wherever they operate. Accordingly, nonprofits share the responsibility to promote greater engagement of the citizenry, civic dialogue, fair and open elections, and open government. With so many seats and issues up for grabs, nonprofit organizations are called to get

engaged to encourage their boards, staff, volunteers, and those they serve to register and vote. For example, Nonprofit VOTE led this year's immensely successful [National Voter Registration Day](#) during which more than 87 Premier Partners and 3,000 community partners together registered approximately 250,000 voters.

Nonprofits aren't stopping there. [CT Community Nonprofit Alliance](#) is reaching out to nonprofits and to candidates to take full advantage of the elections. The state association of nonprofits in **Connecticut** is providing its members tips on changes to voting requirements for this year's elections, such as sharing steps for delivering an application for an absentee ballot via official drop box, mail, or hand delivery. The CT Alliance is also helping to educate those on the ballot. In a recent [Candidate Bulletin](#), the CT Alliance explains that "Candidates for municipal office can help community nonprofits recover from the operational and financial challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic" by calling for the proper allocation of local ARPA funds. The flyer provides background on the legitimate uses of the funds, makes key recommendations, and offers "a list of examples of programs for which local governments can contract with community nonprofits."

The [North Carolina Center for Nonprofits](#) also alerted its members that "early voting began in many of the cities and towns around North Carolina holding municipal elections this fall." The state association of nonprofits explained, "One highly effective way to help ensure that your staff, volunteers, and the people you serve participate in these elections is to publicize the early voting hours and locations in the counties you serve." The organization shared helpful links to North Carolina's [You Can Vote webpage](#), which provides information on how to register, and the [NC State Board of Elections' One Stop Early Voting Site List](#). It also urged organizations to "push out the relevant information via your emails, social media, and flyers," because some counties have changed voting sites due to COVID-19, so "the few minutes you put in to look up this information and push it out to everyone your nonprofit can reach has the potential to help hundreds of voters cast their ballots more easily."

And state associations of nonprofits aren't the only ones engaging members in nonpartisan voter education efforts. The [Association of Art Museum Directors](#) shared examples of voter registration and civic engagement by member museums. Most of the examples integrated the projects with the museum's artistic mission like the [I Approve This Message: Decoding Political Ads](#) from the Toledo Museum of Art in **Ohio** and the [Connected by Glass: Election Transparency](#) event by the Corning

Museum of Glass in **New York**. The [We Count: First-Time Voters](#) exhibition at the Frist Art Museum in **Tennessee** highlighted the history of voting and the first-time voting experiences of a diverse group of Nashvillians. Other museums actively engage in voter registration activities. Beginning in 2008, the Hammer Museum at the University of **California** Los Angeles began placing voter registration cards at prominent locations around the museum, and in 2018 became an official polling place in Los Angeles. The Oakland Museum partners with the League of Women Voters to register voters during its Friday evening family events.

The message is clear: nonprofits can and should engage in get-out-the-vote activities. It's time to get [#VoteReady](#) and encourage your communities to make their voices heard.