



BECOME A 100% VOTING FAITH COMMUNITY

100% VOTING BEGINS WITH YOU

Voting is a habit: if you vote once you are more likely to vote in the next primary and the following election each year. Before this habit can form though, we have to begin thinking of ourselves as *voters*. On Election Day, we cast our ballot alone behind a curtain or in a booth, but our identity as a *voter* is formed among our friends, family, and community. We're more likely to act on our shared identity as *voters* if we are encouraged by and accountable to each other.

*Are you registered to vote? If the answer is no, use [TurboVote](#), NETWORK's online voter registration and reminder tool, to register today! **Even if you are already registered, TurboVote will send you text or email alerts reminding you to vote leading up to the election.** You can also request absentee ballots through the tool and learn about your state's rules for early voting. Don't forget to send in your ballot or go to the polls on or before November 8, 2016!*

As November approaches, talk about voting with friends and family, and encourage them to vote this fall. Take someone to the polls with you on Election Day and go to vote together. If you have someone in your life who is not yet able to vote due to age or citizenship status, take them to the polls with you to share with them about how voting works and why being a voter is important to you. If you'd like to get friends, family, your workplace, or your community organizations to join us as voters this year, read this guide for helpful strategies to get your communities to be 100% voting communities!

A 100% VOTING FAITH COMMUNITY

Pledging to set a goal to be a 100% Voting Faith Community means:

- ✓ Every eligible member of your faith community is registered to vote.
- ✓ Every registered voter in your faith community votes early or gets to the polls on Election Day.
- ✓ Every person in your faith community who is ineligible to vote due to age, citizenship status, or criminal record is invited to actively participate in the democratic process.

We recognize that these goals are aspirational, but we hope that this is inspirational not over-whelming – and that this guide helps you feel that way!

GETTING STARTED

MAKING THE DECISION TO BECOME A 100% VOTING FAITH COMMUNITY

Working within your faith community's decision makers, evaluate the challenges and strengths you have to work toward a goal of 100% voting.

IDENTIFY COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

1. Are faith community members aware there is an upcoming election?
2. Are there many unregistered voters in your community?
3. Are there voters who are unable to vote in-person because of age or a medical condition?
4. Is technology a barrier for some to get registered or find out their voting location?
5. Are members of your community disillusioned about whether their vote counts?
6. Do your faith community members think of participation in our democracy as a virtue and responsibility?

IDENTIFY COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

1. Is there a group of members who are dedicated to voting every election that could help motivate non-voters by building a personal connection?
2. Is there a youth group that can be engaged to help others deal with technological hurdles to getting registered or getting an absentee ballot?
3. Can a group that might not be able to vote (such as a youth group or new immigrants group) meet on Election Night to help with childcare or rides to the polls?
4. Does the faith community own a vehicle that could be used to drive groups of people to the polls?
5. Does the faith community own a computer lab where online registration can be done onsite?
6. Does the faith community have a directory that could be used for voter reminder calls before Election Day?

Engage your faith community from the outset in your plans for a "100% voting faith community." Bring this guide to your faith community's decision makers and get their commitment to set a 100% voting goal.

A faith community can be a source of support for voters. Pope Francis says in *Joy of the Gospel* that the local faith community, which for most Catholics is a parish, "possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community" (*Joy of the Gospel*, 28). Your faith community may have untapped resources to support voters that are just waiting to be unleashed.

**Be sure to make it clear the goal is not get a specific party or candidate elected.
The goal is to engage everyone to be active in our democracy.**

When your faith community makes a decision to set a 100% voting goal, there are resources to challenge and support your community in the journey toward becoming 100% voting, including:

- ✓ I AM A VOTER pledge cards for your pews
- ✓ Access to TurboVote, an online voter registration tool
- ✓ Nonpartisan online voter education resources
- ✓ Recognition of your commitment on the NETWORK website and social media

These are just prompts to get you thinking. Each faith community will have its own gifts and challenges as it pursues the 100% voting goal. See a suggested timeline for making your faith community 100% voting below.

If your community makes a decision to become 100% voting, please help us celebrate your commitment. Fill out the web form at www.networklobby.org/Election2016

VOTER INFORMATION

Does your community lack information on the registration, absentee, or vote-by-mail process? The questions below may be valuable to research and answer for your faith community:

1. When is the registration deadline to vote in the upcoming November election?
2. Does your state offer early voting opportunities?
3. Who can receive an absentee ballot? How do you apply?
4. When is the deadline to apply for one and when is the ballot due?

Most of this information can be found on your state's Secretary of State web page. There are additional resources that can help you find the information you are looking for or direct you to your state specific pages.

www.vote411.org

Vote411.org was launched in 2006 by the League of Women Voters as a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. Their polling place locator tool is especially helpful for any voter to find their polling and basic information on the races in their area.

www.ncsl.org

The National Conference of State Legislatures' website has a list of every state with specific information as to when and where early voting begins in that state:

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/early-voting-in-state-elections.aspx>

www.eac.gov

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) provides a number of resources including a calendar, an easy to understand guide to the rights and procedures for voters, and other important information.

MOBILIZING YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY TO VOTE

It is especially important to motivate your members in the final weeks leading up to the election when people are tired and worn thin by constant political ads. It is your role to motivate people to vote and remind them of their personal pledge and your community's pledge to be voters.

During your 100% Voting Faith Community campaign, take every opportunity to foster the shared identity as voters with your members through personal encounters. It is a proven strategy to motivate people to get to the polls by fostering a strong identity as a voter. People have a more positive and profound response to "being a voter" than being told "to go vote." In your community, identity as a voter can be strengthened even more through personal encounters with fellow members by creating a strong sense of being a faith community of voters who support each other's pledge to be voters.

Here are some ideas to build community around voting:

Voter Registration Drive

NETWORK offers an easy to use web-based tool to register to vote, request absentee ballots, and get reminders. NETWORK has partnered with TurboVote to provide this web-based tool for you. TurboVote is a secure platform and has thoroughly researched each state's specific voter registration regulations to best provide their services to get out the vote. You can access NETWORK's voter registration and reminder tool at www.networklobby.org/turbovote.

This voter registration and reminder tool can be used by a faith community in a variety of ways. Here are a few ideas:

- ✓ Send out a link to NETWORK's voter registration and reminder webpage through your faith community's e-newsletter or e-bulletin.
- ✓ Set the home pages on any public computers (or tablets) of your faith community to the voter registration and reminder webpage.
- ✓ Do a voter registration drive after worship in a place that has wireless internet. Get volunteers to bring in laptops and tablets to sign people up to register to vote and get voting reminders.
- ✓ On National Voter Registration Day (September 27) invite people to sign up for TurboVote to receive voter registration assistance and voting reminders either in person or online

As of June 2016 a total of 31 states plus the District of Columbia offer online registration, which means you can complete voter registration through NETWORK's TurboVote tool. [See if your state offers online voter registration.](#)

If you live in a state where you are not able to complete voter registration online, NETWORK's TurboVote tool will provide a PDF of the registration form for you to print and mail into your county's election board. If you plan to hold a large voter registration event, be aware this may create problems for making sure people complete their registration process.

If this is the case in your community, you can always use the National Mail Voter Registration Form through the Election Assistance Commission or your state's paper registration form. If you use paper mail-in registration forms, *it is still important to provide TurboVote to your community* to use to sign up for voting reminders or to request an absentee ballot.

"I Am a Voter" Pledge Cards

One tool for overcoming apathy and isolation is a community pledge. Develop a sense of purpose and commitment with pledge drives using the NETWORK "I Am a Voter" pledge postcards. Pledge cards can be filled out during or after a religious service, or at a community gathering. You can order the postcards at www.networklobby.org/election2016.

Engage in Conversation

Use [NETWORK's Election Discussion Guide](#) to discuss the election with your household and community. Set up a Debate watch party. Encourage dialogue after your faith service over coffee. Do some "lemonade ministry" outside your local grocery store and ask your neighbors about their hope and concerns about the election.

Other groups within the church can also make voting and the election a major part of their own agendas. Be creative and inventive in how to get everyone on board. This isn't just a message for the day you gather to worship; it is a message to share every day of the week and year round. In the final weeks of the campaign season, consider posting suggestions for members to join together to create more accountability among voters.

From the Pulpit

Prayer and reflection leaders of your faith community have great influence. Working in conjunction with your faith leaders, consider including:

1. A prayer to "inspire each member of our faith community to thoughtfully embrace his or her call to participation in our democracy, so that our community may have 100% participation in every election" in your Prayer of the Faithful.
2. Short reminders about voting during announcements at the end of services. (Remember to appeal to the identity of "I am a voter" rather than "to go vote").

For homilies, preaching, or inspirational talks, consider drawing ideas from our [Joy of the Gospel Election Reflection](#) and our ["We the Voters" quote bank](#).

Publications

In the early months during your voter registration drives, use publications to remind people of the upcoming election and advertise your get-out-the vote efforts. This might include a church bulletin, a community newsletter, or a local newspaper that covers community activities.

Bulletin Board

Consider posting a sample ballot on your bulletin board. A sample of what to expect in the polling booth can make the experience less intimidating and stressful. If you are in a state with early voting, post the sample ballot as early as possible. If your faith community made the official commitment to be 100% Voting, your bulletin board is a great public space to invite members of your community to bring in and post their “I Voted” stickers from the polls.

Volunteers

In mobilizing your faith community, it is important to involve everyone in this important work. This is a great way to involve voters and people who are unable to vote alike. Below are a few ways you can incorporate everyone into the 100% Voting Faith Community.

Phone Bankers

Whether you gather contact information from an already existing directory or sign-in sheets, creating a phone bank can be an important tool in motivating people to own their identity as voters. Even just one phone call from a fellow member of your faith community can create a stronger bond of accountability to get a new voter or infrequent voter to the polls. The list of people to contact could be divided among volunteers to call individually. Better yet, this could be an opportunity for community building if you get together to make calls prior to the election to remind people to be voters.

Drivers / “Souls to the Polls”

Does your faith community already offer driving assistance to members of the congregation who are unable to get to worship services? Then if your state has early voting, you already have something in place to get those same members to the polls. If not, organize a group of volunteers who would be willing to drive members of your faith community to the polls, either in their own vehicles, or — even better — in the church vans. When you have a dedicated driver, post a sign-up sheet after Sunday services for anyone who will need transportation to the polls for early voting or on Election Day. Some faith communities call this program “Souls to the Polls.”

Babysitters

On Election Day, can your faith community organize a group of volunteers to assist with childcare so parents can go to the polls? This will look different in each community, but you can gather a group of volunteers to babysit or provide childcare in your space on Election Day to help parents get to the polls. You could also organize childcare on days when you encourage members of your community to vote early in person.

ENGAGING NON-VOTERS

Due to age, citizenship status, or felony history, not everyone in our community can go to the polls and cast their vote. It is important to be sensitive to these realities in any 100% Voting campaign. Involve these members of your community in any wider conversations about voting; they bring a perspective to the table that is often not heard.

Despite non-citizen immigrants' ineligibility to vote, most non-citizen immigrants' stories, resilient spirits, and faith witness can be a key source of motivation to help your community or organization to achieve the 100% voting commitment. When engaging the immigrant population in your community, consider the following:

1. As you make plans to invite a group to take the "I Am a Voter" pledge, approach members of your immigrant community to see if they would be willing to publicly share testimony about the devastating impacts of politicians' failure to create public policies that welcome immigrants.
2. If possible, recruit immigrant community leaders to have a public role in election conversations. Immigrants can write op-eds and letters to the editor. Immigrants can also play key roles in town hall meetings and candidate forums. Immigrant voices will influence public conversations and votes.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR A “100% VOTING FAITH COMMUNITY”

- ✓ Consider making an official community commitment to become 100% voting through your decision-making body. Wide-spread, official buy-in will help achieve your goal.
 - ✓ Research local deadlines and rules for voter registration, absentee ballots, and early voting. On behalf of your faith community, sift through information and take note of the key things your community must know.
 - ✓ Form a group of volunteers to assist in planning and executing the “100% Voting” goal
 - ✓ Determine specific voter needs in your congregation.
 - ✓ Order “I Am a Voter” pledge cards from NETWORK at www.networklobby.org/pledge.
 - ✓ Organize strategy meetings with “100% Voting” team.
 - ✓ Present major local voting deadlines and rules to strategy team.
 - ✓ Plan and execute voter registration drives in tandem with and/or in addition to “I Am a Voter” pledge drives.
 - ✓ Plan pulpit announcements, prayer cards, bulletin publications (print or electronic), social media, or person-to-person outreach strategies to engage and inform members
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- ✓ Devise plans to assist faith community members with early voting and on Election Day with things like transportation (some call this “Souls to the Polls”) or childcare
 - ✓ Execute voter registration drives and “I Am a Voter” pledge drives. These can take place at more than just Sunday services depending on your state’s laws for voter registration
 - ✓ Begin “Souls to the Polls” after mass/worship if there are early voting opportunities available in your municipality.
 - ✓ Begin to include a prayer intention for a 100% voting community during your service. Also include short voting reminders during announcements at the end of services.
 - ✓ Work with the priest or pastor (if you are not that person) to encourage reflection on civic engagement themes appropriate to your faith tradition. For Catholics, this might include reflecting on “voting as a civic sacrament”, and Catholic Social Teaching themes of “rights and responsibilities” as well as “family, community, and participation.”
 - ✓ Engage non-voters to take part in the process however they can to support the 100% voting pledge.

**ELECTION DAY:
November 8, 2016**

- ✓ ***VOTE, and equip others to vote.***
- ✓ ***Invite volunteers to evaluate their work and consider mobilizing again in 2018.***
- ✓ ***Thank everyone and celebrate!***