



Registering, Educating and GOTV While Social Distancing

We know that voting is a social behavior. We also know from a study done by the Knight Foundation which involved polling and interviews with over 14,000, that the plurality of voters who did not vote cited a dislike of the candidates (17 percent) and a feeling that their votes do not matter (17% percent) as the main motivators for not voting. With this in mind as well as the fact that NY is in the bottom 10% of voter turnout, LWVNY is working on ways to register, educate and turn out the vote when we are under NYS order to PAUSE, stay at home and social distance when going out.

Voter Registration

Voter Registration Drives as done in the past is eliminated for time being. Our mission remains the same: register, educate, and turn out the vote. We just need to do all three in differently than in the past. Remember, you cannot vote in New York unless you are registered 25 days before the election.

- Voter registration form on state website:
<https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/download/voting/voteregform-eng-fillable.pdf>
- Voter Registration form in Spanish on state website:
<https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/download/voting/voteregform-span-fillable.pdf>
- Absentee Ballot Application on state website:
<https://lwvnyonline.org/advocacy/vote/2019/Absentee-Ballot-English-2019.pdf>
- Absentee Ballot Application in Spanish on state website:
<https://lwvnyonline.org/advocacy/vote/2019/Absentee-Ballot-Spanish-2019.pdf>
- FAQs on completing Absentee Ballot Application on state website:
<https://www.lwvnyonline.org/advocacy/vote/2020/april/FAQs-on-voting-via-absentee-ballot-in-NYS-Apr-13-2020-FINAL.pdf>
- Share links with other organizations, *i.e.*, libraries, religious organizations, YMCAs, community centers
- Put Absentee Ballot Applications in apartment complexes, grocery stores, pharmacies
- Brainstorm on how to reach youth through schools, clubs, YMCAs, etc.
- LWV of Huntington's project, Youth Social Media Video Project, is attached.

Candidate Education and Events

Educating voters about the candidates and having them hear from the candidates themselves has always been cornerstone of LWV efforts.

Vote 411 will be more important than ever this year. It not only gives important individualized information about the election, but allows candidates in each race to answer questions in their own words so voters can compare for themselves the candidates.

- Hang flyers (attached) in apartment complexes, grocery stores, pharmacies, etc

- Share graphics provided on social media sites, both Leagues and encourages members to post personally
- Write letters to editors of local newspapers about importance of being an educated voter and using Vote411.org to find out races and candidate information
- Share press release from LWNYS with local media to promote Vote 411

Candidate events are what many people associate with what LWV does and does so well. Many leagues have already been working on their events before the pandemic. Candidates events can still be held, but now virtually. Empty Chair policy: Two or More Candidates for Each Race Must be Present; policy on videotaping or live streaming and airing; and guidelines for co-sponsoring candidate forums all apply to virtual candidate events and can be found in A Toolkit for Candidate Events revised 2019 on state website: <https://lwvnyonline.org/advocacy/vote/2018/Road-to-the-Voting-Booth-Part-II-July-2018.pdf>

- Westchester ILO is conducting virtual candidate event and will share templates, rules, suggestions, etc soon

Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

Getting out the vote will be more challenging during this time of social distancing. Many of the ideas in toolkit for GOTV need to be adapted to this virtual world. Contacts and networking you have made and planning to use before COVID-19 are still important.

- Encourage members to make face masks with VOTE written on them (do not write with nail polish or permanent markers as inhaling those chemicals is bad). Take a selfie with you wearing the mask and post on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and share with friends.
- Encourage members to take photos of themselves with a handwritten sign saying "I VOTE because...." and post on social media (Facebook, Instagram) and League websites
- Encourage members to make signs and post on their lawns to encourage people to vote and where to get information. If members live in apartments, post in elevators or lobbies.
- Contact Housing Authority to see if they can post flyers to encourage people to vote telling them how and where in their complexes.
- Advertise, make flyers and share new texting service of state League. Have people text VoteNY to 474747 and they will receive up-to-date changing info on the elections, reminders to vote and other key information. See attached graphic to print or customize.
- Ask other organizations, i.e., libraries, religious organizations, YMCAs, disability groups, schools, colleges, etc, to post links on new webpages on state League on 2020 Elections <https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/new-york-state>
- Create flyers, even homemade, to hang in grocery stores, pharmacies and other places people are still frequenting especially in lower income areas where people may not have computers or internet access. Some ideas for flyers are attached.
- Email Staples, other office supply stores, printers or mail houses with a postcard design of voting dates, links to information on voting, etc. Send them also a list of addresses and have them mail them out. This will cost money but could come from mini-grants. Or have them printed, pick up and mail from your home.
- Draft letter to editor telling all that they can vote by absentee ballot and give link to our page with FAQs
- Draft letter to editor on Vote411 and on texting service available soon from state League to get reminders to vote and up-to-date changes on elections

- Share press release or draft for your local League on new links on voting by absentee ballot on state website – and agree to be interviewed by local radio or TV
- Share Youtube on voting by absentee ballot when finalized by state League
- Leave absentee ballot applications (in paper) at apartment complexes, grocery stores, pharmacies and other place people are still frequenting
- Encourage people to sign up for state League's texting service for reminders to vote and up-to-date election changes– use emails, Facebook, Instagram and word of mouth
- Engage young people, eg, SIA students, college students (all are home now), to spread the word – ask children, grandchildren, friends, neighbors, and more to spread the word about new voting processes, including absentee balloting, vote 411, texting service and more
Project of LWV of Huntington has begun using social media to register and get out the vote is attached.
- Use any electronic sign in community to post info on elections and voting by absentee ballot and Vote 411 (ask to see if can be free as a public service announcement or include in grant application if there's a cost)
- Partner with Media. LWV of Broome/Tioga Counties (and other Leagues) has partnered with local PBS or local cable networks for candidate events. LWV of New Rochelle has a one hour time slot once a month on WVOX. Use your existing contacts with media or develop new ones where you can share information on voting this year in NY.
- Contact your county Board of Elections and see what you can do to help encourage people to vote, distribute information about early voting, and what ideas they might have
- Ask organizations in which League people are members (clubs, homeowners associations, book groups, etc) to post links to League information
- **Make sure your local League website is up-to-date with links to LWVNYS website**