

Know the Rules: What Non-Profits Can and Can't Do in Elections

Non-profit organizations can legally participate in a number of election related activities, as long as those activities are non-partisan. The key is to know what is and isn't allowed by the law. Follow these tips to help ensure your election activities are on the right side of the law during the 2024 election.

THE DO'S AND SHOULD'S



As a non-profit organization you can (and should!) do the following activities to increase community participation in local, state, and federal elections:

- > Help register people to vote at your agency, events, meetings, and other venues
- > Educate staff, clients, board members, and volunteers about the issues at stake in the upcoming elections
- > Organize non-partisan, Get-Out-The-Vote & voter registration drives.
- > Inform your community about candidates' stances on important issues like health care reform, housing, funding HIV programs, and more through newsletters and voting records
- > Educate candidates about the HIV community's needs through one-on-one meetings and town halls
- > Fight voter suppression through community education and monitoring polling places
- > Provide transportation to the polls
- > Use media to raise the visibility of HIV issues during the election season by writing op-eds and letters to the editor and reaching out reporters about candidates' stances on HIV issues and how the outcomes of the elections could impact people living with and at risk of HIV

THE DON'TS AND CAN'TS



While non-profits can engage in a number of election related activities, some actions are absolutely prohibited by law. As a non-profit, you CANNOT legally do any of the following:

- > Endorse a candidate
- > Tell people who and what to vote for
- > Make campaign contributions or expenditures on behalf of candidates
- > Coordinate voter mobilization efforts with a political campaign
- > Lend support to a candidate or political campaign on work time. *Non-profit employees can only support political campaigns on their own time and dime*
- > Refuse to register a person to vote based on party affiliation
- > Promote a candidate while at work with buttons, t-shirts, stickers, signs, or posters
- > Provide free office space or contact lists to candidates or political campaigns
- > Ask candidates to sign pledges on any issue