LWVOTEXAS

Each election, each potential voter, and each get-out-the-vote effort is unique. Thus it is critical to tailor your message. Regardless of the type of GOTV activity and your audience, your efforts will be more effective if guided by these research-based principles.

Evidence-Based Practices for Voter Education

✓ **Understand your voters and personalize provision of information**.

The effectiveness of voter education depends on the message resonating with the voter.

a. *Learning styles*. Different voters prefer learning by different ways—in person, print, website, social media, TV, or radio.[1,p1]
b. *Cultural relevance.* Modify voter education approaches to accommodate the geographic and cultural roots, values, and traditions of the target group.[1,p3;2]
c. *Availability.* When voters look for election and voting information, they want it in their favorite format—print, online, or in person—and in language they can understand.[3,p5]
d. *Accessibility.* Provide information where voters hang out—events, places, and social media. Assign knowledgeable people to interact with voters in person, by telephone, or online.[1,p3]

✓ **Make voter education a conversation.**

Be polite, personable, and positive in all methods of voter education.[3,p9]

a. *Choice of words.* Use informal, everyday language that avoids election jargon and legalese—simple words, short sentences and paragraphs, positive phrases, and personal pronouns.[4,p15;5,p21] For example, "You can ask a poll worker for help in using the voting machine."
b. *Voice*. Write and talk in active voice—the voter performs the activity rather than being acted upon. In instructions the voter, thought of as "you," can be implied.[4,p17] For example, "Find where to vote at…."

✓ **Prioritize the presentation of information.**

a. Address voters' most frequently asked questions before providing additional information.[3p14,15]

> What's on the ballot? When/where/how do I vote? How do I get a sample ballot? What happens at the polling place? What are the deadlines for voter registration and absentee ballots?

b. Eliminate unnecessary details that make voting sound complicated.[6,p14-15]

✓ **Coordinate use of a variety of communication tools**.

a. Use different approaches for different audiences.[1,p3]
   - Social media, texts, and mobile apps tend to reach young voters.
   - Traditional media (newspaper, TV, radio) tend to reach older voters.
   - Presentations target community organizations.
b. Deliver the information in multiple formats, adjusting the level of detail.[1,p4;3,p6-7,27]
   - Provide your voter toolkit and voters guide both in print and online.
   - Deliver reminders via email, Twitter, Facebook, and postal mail.
c. Make it easy for voters to navigate among various resources.[3,p11&23]
   - Provide telephone numbers, website addresses, and social media accounts for more information.
   - Check accuracy of contact information each election cycle and update materials as needed.

✓ **Keep information current.**

Update voter education information early and often.[1,p1;3,p17]

References

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