

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.^{3,p14,15}

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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