



## YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

### Guide for Nonprofits on Political Activity and Voter Engagement

Primary Election Day is **May 16, 2017**  
General Election Day is **November 7, 2017**

Excerpted from: **NonProfit Vote, “501(c)(3) Permissible Activities Checklist”, [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)**

501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations should refer to the IRS tax code for guidance on allowable political activities. IRS regulations prohibit 501(c)(3) nonprofits “from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office.”

Nonprofits may conduct a wide range of nonpartisan engagement activities to encourage voter participation, educate voters, and talk to candidates about their issues. Examples of permissible activities are:

- Nonpartisan Get Out the Vote activities such as voter registration drives and where and how to vote.
- Candidate Forums – Contact your local League of Women Voters for guidance.
- Distribution of Nonpartisan Sample Ballots.
- Candidate Questionnaires or Voter Guides.
- Issue advocacy, including educating candidates on their issues and supporting or opposing ballot measures.

501(c)(3) organizations and their staff should be thoroughly informed about the importance of remaining nonpartisan while working for or representing a nonprofit. Nonprofits may not endorse a specific candidate or political party, make campaign

contributions to candidates, rate candidates on who is most favorable to their issues, or let candidates use their facilities or resources unless made equally available to all candidates for the fair market values.

Certain types of federal funds such as Community Service Block Grants or AmeriCorps funding cannot be used for voter registration activities.

Certain governmental organizations such as those receiving certain types of federal assistance – like Medicaid, WIC, and food stamps – require the program to offer voter registration.

#### RESOURCES

**Nonprofit VOTE** — [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)  
Nonprofits, Voting and Elections: A 501(c)(3) Guide to Nonpartisan Voter Engagement

**Bolder Advocacy (AFJ)** — [www.bolderadvocacy.org](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org)  
“Election Checklist for 501(c)(3) Public Charities”

**IRS** — [www.stayexempt.irs.gov](http://www.stayexempt.irs.gov)  
“Election Year Activities for Section 501(c)(3) Organizations” (FS-2006-17, February 2006) “Political Campaigns and Charities: A Presentation”

