

ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY: A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

Exercising the fundamental right to vote begins with the simple step of registering. Non-profit organizations are not only permitted to engage in nonpartisan activities that encourage civic participation, such as registering people to vote, but are the perfect champions to lead the charge.

Because voter registration drives often focus on minorities, low-income individuals, and those newly eligible to vote, our hospitals are ideal venues for voter registration efforts—and hosting a registration drive is easy to do.

Some states have individual requirements, but the basic voter eligibility requirements are that the person be a U.S. citizen and 18 years old by the general election (November 4, 2014). Please refer to your state's specific requirements, if any, in the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Guide listed below.

When Is the Registration Deadline?

Registration deadlines are usually 30 days before the election (in many states it will be October 4, 2014). However, each state sets its own deadline, so check the state-specific information in the EAC Guide for your state's deadline.

Once an application is submitted, the individual should receive a confirmation by mail. Remind people to hold on to the confirmation card or letter, as it likely will specify where they vote. If an applicant does not receive a notification within a few weeks of submitting the application, he or she should call the local board of elections to check on the status.

How Do I Register Someone to Vote?

The National Mail Voter Registration Application makes it easy to register a new voter. Follow these simple steps for your registration drive:

1. Print copies of the national application from the EAC Guide:
 - Use this National Voter Registration Application (English version):
http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/Federal%20Voter%20Registration_1209_English.pdf
 - Use this National Voter Registration Application (Spanish version):
http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/Federal%20Voter%20Registration_1209_Spanish.pdf
2. Have the individual complete the entire application, including any state-specific information.
3. Each application must be signed and mailed to the address listed in your state-specific information in the EAC Guide. There is no cost. Hospital staff can mail the completed voter registration applications.

Can a Public or Non-Profit Hospital Organize a Voter Registration Drive in the Hospital?

Yes. In fact, members of America's Essential Hospitals may generally engage in nonpartisan election activities, including organizing voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives. Similarly, voter education on health care issues is permissible, provided your hospital does not appear to favor or oppose any particular candidate or party.

Partisan activities, including endorsing or ranking candidates, are generally prohibited. But in most cases, hospital employees may engage in such activities in their individual capacities, as long as it is clear they are not acting on behalf of, or using the resources of, the hospital.

Members should consult local counsel before proceeding. State and local tax laws and other regulations may constrain a public or nonprofit hospital's activities, and nonprofit institutions must ensure that all activities are consistent with their stated purposes and within their corporate or statutory powers. See the legal memorandum on page 22.

Setting up a Voter Registration Drive

1. Pick a week for your voter registration drive

- The time period will depend on the registration deadline in your state.
- The best results are achieved by hosting a “voter registration week” (or a voter registration drive throughout a particular month, such as September).

2. Recruit staff and volunteers

- Set up the registration table in a central location (e.g., the hospital lobby or outside the cafeteria).
- Recruit at least one person to staff the registration table at all times.
- Remind your staff and volunteers that this is a nonpartisan registration drive.
- Ensure they are trained by simply reading the voter registration materials and state rules.

3. Publicize the voter registration drive

- Send an email to hospital employees informing them of the drive (e.g., just as you would for a blood drive or other activities within the hospital).
- Post a notice on your website and in hospital and volunteer newsletters, and post signs in common areas.

4. Prepare the voter registration material

- Print copies of the National Voter Registration Application, English and Spanish versions.
- Print copies of the EAC Guide outlining your state's specific application requirements (if applicable).
- Print copies from the EAC Guide of “Frequently Asked Questions.”
- Print the address for mailing applications or provide preprinted labels or envelopes.

5. Encourage *everyone* to register

- As employees or visitors pass by, volunteers should encourage those not registered

to do so.

- Make sure the individual signs the application and mails it to the state address specified in the EAC Guide.
- Hospital personnel can offer to mail the applications.

Additional Information

For more information about registering to vote, visit one of the following websites:

- Election Assistance Commission www.eac.gov
- League of Women Voters www.lwv.org
- Project Vote Smart www.vote-smart.org

2014 ELECTION ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

*Making Your Voice Heard for
Essential Hospitals and Patients*



AMERICA'S
ESSENTIAL
HOSPITALS

Copyright © 2014 by America's Essential Hospitals.
All rights reserved. Published July 2014.

America's Essential Hospitals
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 950
Washington, DC 20004
202-585-0100
info@essentialhospitals.org
www.essentialhospitals.org