

2020 CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered almost every aspect of the way we live and work—and inevitably, it will impact how we vote this November. Participating in the democratic process is a core American Jewish value—a civic and religious duty. This Candidate Engagement Guide offers resources, tools, and best practices for organizing candidate engagement programs and voter education, both for the Jewish community and in conjunction with intergroup partners.

The Jewish community has a rich and proud tradition of civic engagement and voter education. Civic engagement is the bread and butter work of the Jewish community relations field. It ensures that the Jewish community has a voice in shaping our country's policies at every level of government. Jewish community relations councils (JCRCs) play an important role by fostering relationships with elected officials, engaging the local Jewish community, and serving as a bridge between the two.

Important elections at the federal, state, and local levels are just months away, with vital issues at stake, including the economy, health care, civil rights, immigration, gun violence prevention, criminal justice, and Israel. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities and problems we face as a nation. During this unprecedented time, it is more important than ever that we educate ourselves about critical issues, hold elected officials accountable, and most importantly, turn out to vote.

JCPA strongly encourages JCRCs to organize candidate outreach activities in partnership with JCPA member agency local affiliates, local synagogues, and other Jewish organizations and/or local non-Jewish partners. In this guide, you will find resources to help you carry out virtual candidate engagement programming for the Jewish community.

Candidate Election Engagement Programs

- Educating Through Jewish Press and Social Media
- Candidate Forums
- Leadership Meetings with Candidates
- Issue Nights
- Candidate Engagement Timeline

Resources

- JCPA 2020 Public Policy Positions
- Election Guidelines for Nonprofits and Nonprofit Staff
- Resources from JCPA Member Agencies and Partners

Candidate Elections Engagement Programs to Ensure An Informed Jewish Community

The campaign season is the perfect time for JCRCs to engage with incumbents and candidates who may go on to be elected officials. While it is important to reach out to candidates for federal office, it is crucial that JCRCs actively engage state and local candidates, such as state attorneys general, mayors, city council members, and sheriffs, who play a central role in developing the policies that directly impact the community. In addition, local elected officials often go on to seek higher office. Building strong relationships with these officials early in their careers can yield long-term benefits.

The months leading up to Election Day is a critical time for JCRCs to educate voters about candidates and issues, and to provide opportunities for voters to engage directly with those running for office. This resource guide offers information, tips, checklists, and suggested formats for candidate forums, leadership meetings, and issue nights. In addition, it encourages JCRCs to partner with local Jewish press in their voter education efforts and make use of social media to ensure that candidates' positions on priority concerns are known to the community.

EDUCATING THROUGH JEWISH PRESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Ensuring your community understands candidates' positions on priority issues is of great importance and the media is still an excellent way to reach a large audience. Partner with local Jewish newspaper staff to prepare a candidate questionnaire covering five to seven topics. Both your JCRC and the newspaper, and other Jewish organizations, should publish the responses in print and online, as well as on social media. As you know, many people, especially younger generations, get their information primarily through social media, so it is critical to use online platforms as a component of your programming in order to reach your entire community.

VIRTUAL CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

For any of the programs you are organizing, from forums to townhalls to leadership meetings, we suggest using the following best practices:

Virtual Technology

- Explore different virtual platforms and select the one that makes the most sense for each event. For example, a Zoom webinar allows participants to see the candidates and the questions, but it does not allow for personal interaction with participants. Regular Zoom links allow the candidate to see all the participants, but the Q &A and chat box need to be managed. Be sure that your Zoom capacity can handle the amount of people you plan to attend. For larger audiences a webinar may be preferable.
- Assign someone to be responsible for the technology and another person to handle the questions and chat box. The chat box is a good way for participants to engage with each other on the content of the program and share information and thoughts. It is ideal to have someone monitor the box to ensure that people are civil and positive.
- Convene a final check-in call with everyone who has a role in your event. Walk through the event from start to finish to make sure everything is ready, and everyone is clear about their role. Anyone who is speaking or playing a role should be on the call.

- It is *critical* to conduct a tech run-through with all your speakers to make sure they have a stable connection and to troubleshoot any potential issues. We recommend scheduling these calls *at least* a few hours before your event to ensure you have enough time to fix any issues that arise. Make sure your speakers are using the same setup they will be using during the event.
- Zoom security has been a concern of late. If you want to make sure your Zoom call is not disrupted, you can use a passcode. However, make sure test it out thoroughly first by doing practice meetings and be sure to include the passcode whenever you send out the Zoom link to participants or speakers.

Promotion

- Create a Facebook event and post social media flyers to attract a variety of attendees. Make sure to share template invites and flyers with any participating partner organizations so they can advertise the event too.
- Write and send out a media advisory to invite members of the press to your event.
- Make sure you candidates know that the program is on the record when you invite them.
- Check in with any local partner organizations before the event to finalize any logistics items and talk through any questions.
- Be sure to send a final reminder email to your event's attendees the evening or morning before your event.

CANDIDATE FORUMS

Hosting a virtual **candidate forum**, where candidates speak directly with voters and answer their questions, is one of the best ways to educate voters and form bonds with aspiring officeholders. Forums demonstrate the Jewish community's strong engagement and voice in public life to local civic leaders and those seeking elected office. Candidate debates tend to be high-profile, public events that unite community members and attract new participants to JCRCs. While nothing can replace the experience of an in-person forum, going virtual has advantages, including making your program more accessible to a wider audience.

General Tips

- Invite all legally qualified candidates, either through their campaign office or political party.
- If you are concerned about inviting a third party, the Internal Revenue Service offers additional guidance at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/eotopici02.pdf.
- Have a skilled moderator, such as a local newscaster or professor in your community or a seasoned Federation/JCRC leader.
- Provide candidates with equal time to speak and interact with voters, either at the same session or through a sequential format.
- Schedule the debate to last between 60 and 90 minutes.
- Hold via a commonly used platform, such as Zoom.
- Consider partnering with local Jewish communal organizations, such as the National Council of Jewish Women, Anti-Defamation League, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and Hadassah, as well as synagogues, JCCs, JVS/JFSs, and Hillels.

Getting Started

Before reaching out to candidates, JCRCs should convene participating sponsors to determine the event's rules and format. Once this is confirmed, it is important to invite all candidates to appear together. If they refuse, you can hold a sequential debate where each candidate appears directly after the other and answers identical questions in the same format.

Prepare five to six questions. Decide ahead of time the lay leaders or community members who will ask the questions. Keep in mind that the questions should reflect a broad range of topics focused on the JCRC's priority issues. We recommend four questions focused on domestic public policy issues and questions and two on international concerns. It is also important to have a moderator who will remain neutral at all times. Successful moderators have included JCRC Chairs, local reporters, and political science professors.

Local Elections

Though often overlooked, in many ways, local elections can have a greater impact on your community than Congressional races. Elected offices beyond Congress to consider for debates include state attorney general, mayor, and city council.

Criminal Justice Implications

The elected officials who have the most influence on, and power to reform, police departments and the criminal justice system are at the state and local levels. These include prosecutors, sheriffs, judges, and district attorneys. And yet, voter turnout in such races is usually low. Given the momentum surrounding the issue of police and criminal justice reform more broadly, JCRCs are well positioned in this moment to elevate the importance of these races to the Jewish community.

Structuring the Debate

Set rules governing the length of opening remarks, as well as the amount of time allotted for responses and rebuttals to questions. The organizers must agree to work with the candidates to determine the program format before promoting it. Below is a suggested structure:

- JCRCs open the forum with a brief overview of their mission and the Jewish community's commitment to voter education as the reason for hosting the forum. This is an important step as it frames the discussion for the candidates and the audience and introduces them to your organization.
- Each candidate has three minutes for their opening statement. Remember to set the order in which candidates will speak ahead of time and ensure that each candidate is aware of the schedule.
- Ask the prepared questions. These can be asked by the moderator or by JCRC leaders. Question responses should be no longer than two minutes and candidates should take turns being the first to respond to questions. The opportunity for rebuttal is at your discretion, but should be no more than one minute.
- We encourage audience questions, but it is highly recommended that organizers have audience members submit their questions to a designated person to vet via your online platform.
- Each candidate gets two to three minutes for their closing statement.

LEADERSHIP MEETINGS WITH CANDIDATES

During election campaigns, JCRCs can organize a private meeting between Jewish leaders and candidates running for office to discuss policy priorities. These **leadership meetings** are an excellent opportunity to connect with candidates and future decision-makers in a more intimate setting with fewer legal restrictions than other types of election engagement activities, such as candidate debates. Hosting a leadership meeting is a means of demonstrating the organized Jewish community's civic engagement and power as a voting bloc. If working with community partners, these meetings are also an excellent way to showcase unity on an issue across a diverse range of constituent populations.

With many in-person campaign events canceled due to COVID-19, you may find candidates eager to participate in these types of meetings. Though each meeting will be with an individual candidate, it is imperative that you invite all candidates (Democrat and Republican) running for a given office and that the meetings with them have identical agendas.

Since this may be the candidate's first interaction with the community relations field, it is important to introduce them to the organizations participating beforehand.

Leadership meetings are usually scheduled for an hour, and feature the following components:

- The JCRC or Federation leader provides an overall introduction to the Jewish community or coalition and its priority issues.
- The candidate gives an opening presentation (typically five minutes).
- Community leaders ask candidates five to six policy questions set in advance. Questions should be brief.
- Attendees should also offer to be a resource to candidates and staff should they need any information pertaining to the Jewish community.
- At the end of the meeting, attendees should email the candidate or their staff a short packet offering general information about the JCRC/Federation or coalition, and an overview of the priority issues. Include a list of the meeting participants with titles and contact information. Remind the candidate of the offer to be a resource in the future.

ISSUE NIGHTS

Issue nights or issue townhalls are public meetings designed to raise awareness about specific issues facing the community and provide balanced educational resources about these issues. Issue nights are an effective way to highlight particular topics and engage in election activism without involving candidates and are especially useful for communities that will be voting on ballot measures. With so much at stake in this election, virtual issue nights can be a great, socially-distanced way to educate voters who may not have traditionally attended an in-person forum in the past.

Programs typically feature a panel of experts representing a broad range of views on a particular subject and are often modeled after town hall meetings. JCRCs may wish to cosponsor issue nights with other local Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. This is an effective way to form new relationships and strengthen existing ones, particularly with issue-centric groups.

Issue nights are usually scheduled for 60 to 90 minutes, and feature the following elements:

- JCRC leadership introduce the program and welcome all of the participants.
- State that the event is intended to be educational only and that the JCRC does not endorse any candidate. Nothing at this event should be construed as an endorsement of any candidate in any way. However, JCRCs may take positions on public policy issues.
- After the host's introduction, present the issue topic and panel.
- Each speaker gives roughly 10 minutes of remarks.
- Moderator engages the speakers in 2-3 questions or speakers may pose questions to each other before proceeding to an audience question and answer period.

Suggested speakers include local community members, educators or academics, advocates, activists, and journalists. One benefit of virtual programing is that you have access to more potential speakers. However, it is still important to have local voices represented. Strive for a variety of voices and perspectives.

2020 Suggested Topics

Health care and human needs, especially related to food security; immigration, criminal justice reform and public safety; support for communities hardest hit by COVID-19; two-state solution and the Israel-Palestinian Peace Fund; BDS. For additional topics, see JCPA 2020 Public Policy Positions.

Election Engagement Timeline

Use this timeline to help plan and schedule your programming.

August/September

- ☐ Plan your candidate debates or sequential to be held in October. Extend invitations to all legally-qualified candidates as soon as possible. Confirm co-sponsors, venue, and promotional matters.
- ☐ Secure the candidates and agreements on format, structure and media outreach.
- ☐ Ensure that your virtual platform can handle the size of the program and set your tech link and support.

September

- ☐ Plan “issue nights” to educate members in a non-partisan fashion about important policy issues, especially if your state is one with ballot initiatives.
- ☐ Secure cosponsors for the events.
- ☐ Send candidate questionnaires to all candidates for their input and agreement. (JCPA Is available to assist you with questions.)

October

- ☐ Hold a candidate forum or leadership meeting.
- ☐ Publish candidates’ positions in local newspapers and on your website.
- ☐ Place an ad/article in synagogue, community, and organizational bulletins or newsletters reminding people to vote.

November

- ☐ Remind everyone to vote on Tuesday, November 3.
- ☐ **VOTE ON NOVEMBER 3!**
- ☐ Invite speakers to discuss policy implications of the elections soon after Election Day.
- ☐ Plan a virtual “Meet-and-Greet” with newly elected officials for December or January and offer to be a resource.

Resources

To assist you with the content and rules for your candidate engagement work, please see the following resources in the pages below:

- JCPA 2020 Public Policy Positions
- Election Guidelines for Nonprofits
- Election Guidelines for Nonprofit Staff
- Resources from Member Agencies and Partners

Make sure to carefully review the Nonprofit Election Programming Guidelines included in this document that JCRCs must follow as part of their 501(c)(3) status. Remember to refer back throughout your programming to ensure you adhere to all the rules.

DOMESTIC POLICY

Immigration



Rooted in Jewish values and traditions, for over 75 years JCPA has advocated for a compassionate federal immigration, asylum, and refugee system that balances national security concerns with the protection of civil and human rights. Our highest priority is fighting to end family separation and detention, advocating instead for effective and humane alternatives. JCPA continues to advocate for higher refugee admissions and a fair and generous asylum system that upholds due process. We support legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and a permanent solution for those with Temporary Protected Status,

while opposing the rollback of child welfare standards and the criminalization of migrants and asylum seekers. We believe that to be effective, border security and enforcement must be evidence-based, consistent with humanitarian values, and part of a broader reform package that upholds refugee and asylee protection, family reunification, and economic opportunity.

Civil Rights



JCPA is committed to protecting and advancing civil rights for all Americans. We will continue to focus on protecting individuals from discrimination on the basis race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and disability. JCPA will also advocate for new policies to address bullying, including proactive measures to combat future incidents and create a safe environment. We will work with the executive branch to ensure that civil rights statutes—such as the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and updates to the Americans with Disabilities Act—are implemented and enforced.

Criminal Justice Reform



The U.S. currently incarcerates a quarter of the world's prisoners despite comprising only 5% of the population. Beginning in the 1970s, our prison population skyrocketed, disproportionately impacting people of color and contributing to poverty, income inequality, and family instability. The U.S. keeps people behind bars at great social and financial expense. JCPA advocates for bipartisan legislation that would meaningfully reduce mandatory minimums, eliminate racial disparities, and provide greater support for rehabilitation and reentry.

Voting Rights



The cornerstone of democracy is the election process and the right of every eligible citizen to cast a meaningful ballot for a candidate they choose. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down key provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which weakened enforcement, allowing many states to adopt new, restrictive voting laws that disenfranchise segments of the voting population, particularly communities of color. JCPA is committed to ensuring fair and representative elections, advocating for measures that would expand early and absentee voting, protect against voter ID requirements, and restore voting rights

to millions of formerly incarcerated people. We will also work to ensure a fair and accurate 2020 Census, which determines political representation and apportionment.

Religious Liberty



As a religious minority, Jews have a special stake in ensuring the U.S. remains committed to both freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Since its founding, JCPA has worked to find an appropriate balance between religious liberty and other civil rights when they clash. JCPA will continue to fight efforts to repeal or weaken the Johnson Amendment, which would bring partisan politics into nonprofits and houses of worship. While we are sensitive to questions of individual conscience, we are equally concerned about governmental policies that may lead to discrimination. JCPA will closely monitor legislation and

regulations regarding government funding for social services by religiously-affiliated organizations. Where such funding is authorized, it must have appropriate safeguards to prevent First Amendment violations and protect employees' religious freedom without leading to discrimination or infringing on program beneficiaries' rights

Poverty and Food Insecurity



JCPA works to build a more just and equitable society. We strongly support raising the minimum wage, ensuring access to affordable health care and housing, and expanding eligibility for the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits. We remain committed to ensuring broad eligibility and robust funding for critical social safety net programs, such as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or "food stamps"), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). To lift the next generation out of poverty, we also support full funding for child nutrition programs. JCPA will also continue to advocate for

policies that help empower older adults to live healthier, more independent lives free from poverty.

Climate Change

Climate change is an international security threat and one of the defining issues of our time. Climate change is already increasing the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, exacerbating armed conflict and unprecedented global migration, and threatening the biodiversity on which humans depend. JCPA will continue to advocate for policy that promotes energy independence and reflects our values of protecting Creation. By supporting policies that promote renewable energy and other clean energy innovations, we can reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil while protecting the environment and mitigating the impacts of climate change.



Education

Education is one of the most important determinants of lifetime earnings, social mobility, and health outcomes. Yet our nation's public schools are chronically underfunded and underperforming, especially within low-income and rural communities. The problems that afflict our education system begin early, starting with the inaccessibility of affordable, high-quality preschools. Increasing the availability and affordability of early childhood education is one of the surest ways to close the achievement gap.



Economic Growth

JCPA believes that Congress and the Administration can boost the economy by creating pathways to sustainable, long-term employment. The government should invest in infrastructure, schools, hospitals, renewable energy, and technological innovation in order to ensure long-term economic and employment growth. JCPA supports targeted employment and job retraining assistance to specific geographic regions and populations that may be struggling economically, including low-income individuals, women, people of color, people with disabilities, seniors, veterans, youth, and the long-term unemployed.



INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Israeli-Palestinian Peace

JCPA works to promote a strong, vibrant Israel that is committed to peace, and continues to encourage the U.S. government to pursue a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict through diplomacy. Our organization strongly advocates for two independent, democratic, and economically-viable states: the Jewish state of Israel and a Palestinian state, coexisting in peace and security. This vision can only be achieved through direct negotiations. Unilateral attempts to achieve Palestinian statehood through United Nations action are counterproductive. JCPA's network unanimously endorsed efforts to promote Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, and we will continue to urge Congress to fund such initiatives.



International Humanitarian and Refugee Crises

JCPA supports the vigorous protection of human rights as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy, especially in situations involving genocide, mass atrocities, and sweeping population shifts due to displacement by violence and persecution. We will continue to raise awareness and advocate for the U.S. government and international community to hold the Burmese military accountable for perpetrating a genocide against the Rohingya people. JCPA also believes that the U.S. and the international community must respond to today's unprecedented refugee crisis, which has displaced over 68.5 million people. With the most sophisticated resettlement program in the world, the U.S. should increase annual admissions of refugees, while maintaining the rigorous security screenings that are integral to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.



International Terrorism

JCPA encourages Congress and the Administration to implement strong U.S. policies to counter international terrorism, including state-sponsored terrorism. The U.S. government must work with our allies to implement comprehensive strategies to prevent and respond to terrorism, including freezing the assets of groups and individuals that have been linked to terrorism, strengthening international cooperation on weapons control, and halting nuclear proliferation.





Staying Nonpartisan: Permissible Election Activities Checklist

For 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations

The federal tax code contains a single sentence that defines the prohibition of partisan political activities by 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. It states 501(c)(3) organizations are “prohibited 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.”

Whether activities are considered partisan political activity depends on the “facts and circumstances” in each situation. What is clear is that there’s still a lot a 501(c)(3) can do on a nonpartisan basis to promote voter and civic engagement as part of its charitable and educational mission during the election season.

Permissible Nonpartisan Activities - with common examples

The IRS affirmatively states that 501(c)(3) organizations may conduct voter engagement or connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis. This includes encouraging voter participation, educating voters, and talking to candidates about issues. 501(c)(3) organizations may:

1. Conduct or Promote Voter Registration

- ☐ Conduct a voter registration drive at your nonprofit or in your community.
- ☐ Encourage people to register to vote in your communications, on your website or at events.

2. Educate Voters on the Voting Process

- ☐ Provide information on when and where to vote - such as finding their poll location, getting an absentee ballot or contacting their local election office for help.
- ☐ Remind people of registration or election deadlines and dates.

3. Host a Candidate Forum

- ☐ Sponsor a candidate forum with other community partners for all the candidates.
- ☐ Encourage your community to attend your forum or another candidate forum sponsored by a trusted partner.

4. Create a Candidate Questionnaire

- ☐ Submit questions to all the candidates in a race on issues of interest to your nonprofit.
- ☐ Publish the candidate’s full answers on your website or in a nonpartisan voter guide.

5. Distribute Sample Ballots or Nonpartisan Voter Guides

- ☐ Display or provide an official sample ballot that highlights state elections common to all voters in your state
- ☐ Distribute a nonpartisan voter guide from a trusted partner about what is on the ballot.

6. Continue Issue Advocacy during an Election

- ☐ Continue your regular advocacy or lobbying activities during the election period, as long as it is related to pending legislation on issues you have a history of working on and not timed or structured to influence how people vote.

7. Support, Oppose or Host a Community Conversation on a Ballot Measure

Unlike candidates for office, nonprofits may take sides on a ballot measure. IRS rules treat this as a lobbying activity, not electioneering.

- ☐ Educate the public on your position within your normal lobbying limits.
- ☐ Have your board take a position for or against a question on the ballot.
- ☐ Engage your community leaders and residents in a conversation about the issues at the county and state level.

Note: If you make a significant investment of staff and funds on ballot measure advocacy, you must track spending as lobbying expenses and check your state’s campaign spending disclosure laws for ballot questions.

8. Encourage People to Vote

- ☐ Send reminders to your staff, clients and constituents about voting in the next election and why voting is important.
- ☐ Nonprofits may conduct any type of get out the vote activity to encourage people to vote as long as it is about participating as a voter and not suggesting who to vote for.



Staying Nonpartisan: Permissible Election Activities Checklist

For 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations

The partisan prohibition means a 501(c)(3) organization or a staff member speaking or acting on behalf of the nonprofit may not:

- Endorse a candidate.
- Make a campaign contribution or expenditure for or against a candidate.
- Rate or rank candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s).
- Let candidates use your facilities or resources, unless they are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value - such as a room commonly used for public events.

What does it mean to rank or rate a candidate?

Anything that indicates which candidates you think are better or worse on your issues could be seen as a partisan endorsement. This would include things like giving candidates letter grades (A, B, C, etc.), but even commentary that compares candidates' views to yours is a problem. Take, for example, a voter guide you create to publicize where candidates stand on an issue that also includes your organization's position on the issue. This would tell the voter which candidates you believe gave the "correct" answer. When you circulate or publicize a nonpartisan guide giving candidate positions, keep your opinion out of it. Let voters use the information presented to make their own decisions.

The main principle for being nonpartisan is to conduct voter engagement and education in the context of your educational and civic mission and not in a way intended to support or oppose a specific candidate. So if you hold a candidate forum or offer to brief the candidates on issues of importance to your organization, make sure you treat the candidates equally. When you do voter registration or remind people to vote, do it in the context of the importance of voting – encouraging active citizenship and giving voice to the communities you serve.

Resources

Nonprofits, Voting and Elections: A 501(c)(3) Online Guide to Nonpartisan Voter Engagement, www.nonprofitvote.org/nonprofits-voting-elections-online

Federal Funds and Voter Registration: for organizations receiving Community Service Block Grants or AmeriCorps/National Service programs, www.nonprofitvote.org/all-resources/

If you have a question, contact Nonprofit VOTE at info@nonprofitvote.org or Bolder Advocacy at advocacy@afj.org. Or visit online:

- Nonprofit VOTE – www.nonprofitvote.org
- Bolder Advocacy – www.bolderadvocacy.org



What Nonprofit Staff Can Say About the Election

Talking to their clients, constituents, and the public

Staff working for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations should be nonpartisan when representing their nonprofit on site, at events or doing voter engagement activities. You cannot suggest which candidate to vote for or political party to support.

What is ok to talk about on a nonpartisan basis?

It's fine to provide information about the voting process like dates and deadlines, early voting hours, getting a mail ballot, or help registering to vote. You can let people know about a candidate forum or debate.

What if someone asks me who I support or who they should vote for?

Remind them that as a health center employee, you must be nonpartisan. Your options are:

- Encourage the person to talk to a friend or family member they trust and share values with.
- Direct the person to a sample ballot or nonpartisan voter guide if available.
- Closer to the election, you can link them to online tools that let voters know what's on their ballot. Google "What's on (my state) ballot? Or use Nonprofit VOTE's [Voting In Your State: 50 State Guide](#).

Can I say anything about specific candidates?

You can only answer simple facts like what party they are in, if they're an incumbent or challenger or where they live. Don't state your preferences.

What do I say when asked about the difference between Republicans and Democrats?

There is no good answer or any accurate source that doesn't have a bias outside of the party websites. You

could mention the names of the current nominees for president and their party, but go no further. Do the same as you would do with candidates and tell them to ask a friend or go to the political party official websites.

What if I'm asked about a ballot measure?

Ballot measures are about laws not candidates. You may discuss the pros and cons of a ballot measure unless it is health center policy not to. You can also tell them that the health center doesn't have an official position on ballot questions.

Can I support candidates in my personal time?

Yes. You may support candidates when not "on the clock" working for your nonprofit

Can I use social media to post or share information about the candidates?

Not if you're using the nonprofit account. It's ok to say what you want on your personal accounts. (Nonprofit CEOs/EDs who personify their nonprofit may wish to be more careful.)

What about talking to other staff about the elections?

It's normal and acceptable to exchange views on candidates and the election with other staff around the "water cooler" or on breaks. But don't conduct political activities during work hours with staff like handing out literature or signing up other staff to support a candidate.

Resources

Engaging Your Staff in Elections, www.nonprofitvote.org/engaging-your-staff-2/

Resources from Member Agencies and Partners

JCPA and its member agencies and coalition partners across the faith and secular communities have developed valuable voter and candidate engagement materials.

- **Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)**
Elections Website: www.fcnl.org/updates/elections-2020-2562
- **National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)**
2020 Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Resource Guide: www.ncjw.org/act/action-resources/promote-the-vote-protect-the-vote.
Participating NCJW Sections: www.ncjw.org/act/action-resources/participating-sections.
- **Religious Action Center (RAC) of Reform Judaism**
You must fill out a form to access the resources so that they can keep track of where materials are going. All information is available at rac.org/rac-civic-engagement-campaign-2020-1, where you can find guides to voter engagement, candidate engagement, and ballot initiatives in select states.
- **United Church of Christ**
Our Faith Our Vote Toolkit: www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote.

For more information or assistance with organizing your program please contact JCPA staff.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the umbrella body of the Jewish community relations field, representing 125 local Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs) and 16 national Jewish agencies, including the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist movements. We advocate for a just and pluralistic America, global human rights, and peace in Israel.

