

GET OUT THE VOTE

Join the national challenge to amplify civic engagement with design. aiga.org/vote

What does it mean to be nonpartisan?

To be nonpartisan means not biased or partisan, especially towards a candidate or political party. In the case of 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, it also includes refraining from “political activities in support of or opposition to a candidate running for public office.” This means that nonprofits can’t endorse or donate to candidates. It also means not using materials that reflect a preference (or distaste) for a specific political party or candidate, they must remain neutral.

Nonprofit VOTE reminds organizations that just because they need to be nonpartisan, it doesn’t mean they can’t participate. Nonprofits may conduct or promote any voter engagement activity – registration, education, get-out-the-vote, candidate forums as long as it’s on a nonpartisan basis. Here is some guidance on how to create materials that are powerful, but not partisan.

Why stay nonpartisan?

In addition to it being required for nonprofits, staying nonpartisan is actually a more effective way to reach people. Have you ever felt burnt out by nonstop political campaign ads? Instead of convincing people to vote one way or another, by staying neutral you can be a trusted messenger and your real message—the importance of voting—will come through loud and clear without ulterior motives.

DON'T

“Telegraph” a preference

Don't try to sneak in anything that indicates who or what you think people should vote for. Take the example below as a cautionary tale. While it is great design and provides equal space to both candidates and includes facts and citations, the language paints one candidate in a more positive light and we get the sense that Clinton was preferred over Trump in terms of environmental issues.

Project “wedge” issues onto candidates

An organization with a history of engagement around an issue, even a hot button “wedge” issue, may continue to engage in the issue-advocacy on that topic even during election season. However, care must be taken not to use that issue advocacy as a way of informally endorsing or opposing a candidate or party, especially when those candidates have clearly distinct positions on the topic.

As artists creating general use content, it's best to simply avoid injecting hot-button issues into nonpartisan, election-related communications. Instead, stick to shared values like an inclusive democracy, healthy communities, or a brighter future.

VOTE

ON

THIS

Clinton
Longtime Supporter Of Renewable Energy And Climate Research, Ambitious Solar Plan, Reduce Oil Consumption, Does Not Favor A Full Fracking Ban. Set national goals to have 500m solar panels installed; generate enough renewable energy to power every home in America; cut energy waste in homes, schools and hospitals by a third; and reduce American oil consumption by a third. Launch a \$60bn Clean Energy Challenge to partner with states, cities and rural communities and a \$30bn plan to revitalise coal communities.

Trump
Doesn't Believe In Climate Change, More Drilling, More Mining, More Fuel Alternatives Only If They Make 'Financial Sense', "Snowing in Texas and Louisiana, record setting freezing temperatures throughout the country and beyond. Global warming is an expensive hoax!" – tweet from 29 January 2014. Aggressively use coal, fracking and oil. Cut funding for the Environmental Protection Agency.

SOURCE: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jun/09/trump-clinton-economy-immigration-gun-control-environment>
<http://slgg.com/2016/trump-hillary-clinton-comparison>

AIGA the professional association for design

GET OUT THE VOTE
AIGA's civic engagement initiative, part of Design for Democracy. Learn more: aiga.org/vote
Poster design by John Hemminger, Cambridge, Massachusetts

VOTE411.ORG
In partnership with the League of Women Voters

DO

Illustrate the importance of voting

Remember: there is power in numbers. When we vote and get our family members to vote, we can impact outcomes and change the debate. Did you know that many elections are decided by less than 100 votes?

Target specific groups

Young people, low-income people, and people of color do not turn out to vote at the same rate as other populations. You can focus your message on reaching these people and it is not considered partisan to do so, even if they have a history of voting in a certain way.

Encourage people to register

If you aren't registered you can't vote! 36% of eligible voters forgot or missed registration deadline. Be the reminder they need so their voice can count.

- Targeting individuals to get registered: <https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/register-to-vote/>
- General info about registration deadlines, ex-offender eligibility, pre-registration of youth: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/>

- Information about third party groups organizing a registration drive, where to get forms, rules on turnaround time: <https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/partner-tools/rules-for-voter-registration-drives/>

