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# **GOTV: A How-To Starter for Your Organization** **Partnership Project Innovation Team**

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August 2020

# Introduction

Organizations can play an integral role in encouraging their constituencies to engage civically in our elections. And in these complicated times, **our reach and voices can be leveraged** to help spread the word about voting resources and processes.

Getting-out-the-vote can be as simple and inexpensive as sending an email to your list, or as complex as embedding tools onto your website. GOTV efforts can also serve your organization's goals by **doubling as an acquisition campaign**.

Pulling together learnings from across our community and external missions, the following GOTV how-to guide is a starting point to demonstrate the logistics of how a program could work for your organization and to **spread the awareness of resources available**. Further resources, including case studies on the best GOTV message frameworks, are included from The Climate Advocacy Lab.

# Knowledge Sharing

3 If your organization is **already doing a GOTV campaign**, please reach out for knowledge sharing or collaboration opportunities as we democratize best practices across the environmental community.

If your organization **needs further assistance in GOTV planning**, please reach out for additional guidance.

**The Partnership Project Innovation Team**

**Peter Fontana, Director**

**[pfontana@partnershipproject.org](mailto:pfontana@partnershipproject.org)**

# Please Note

While 501(c)(3)s may be able to engage in GOTV efforts, keep in mind that they are prohibited from engaging in activities that show or imply bias for or against a candidate or political party. All GOTV activities must be designed solely to educate the public about issues around voting or to encourage them to exercise their right to vote— not to imply or say who the public should vote for.

— Therefore:

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- Avoid any communication or activity that could indicate a partisan purpose, motive, or hoped-for result. GOTV campaign messaging connected to the environment should be nonpartisan and broad (i.e. not overly issue-focused). Avoid messaging around issues that could be perceived as partisan such as climate change, coal, or EPA budget cuts.
- Select the timing, location, and audience of the GOTV communication based on nonpartisan criteria. Avoid targeting voters or specific voting districts because they are likely to support or oppose a particular candidate or party, or where a race is likely to be close. For example, a GOTV campaign that only targets swing states would be partisan.
- Engage your legal team early and often when engaging in GOTV activities to ensure they are nonpartisan.

# To be covered

Why GOTV?

What can your organization do to GOTV?

How do you measure GOTV success?

GOTV case studies & further resources (including messaging recommendations)

Why GOTV?

# Why GOTV?

We can play a vital role in promoting voter and civic education and participation because we are nonpartisan, trusted messengers with a presence across many communities. GOTV campaigns can also:

- Strengthen our relationship with our existing members through relevant content, messaging, and activations.
- Create an additional channel to acquire new members.
- Collect data about our membership re: voting, that can be shared with elected officials after the election to show our members/supporters vote at a high rate.

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**What can your organization do to  
GOTV?**



# What can your organization do to GOTV?

Organizations are running a variety of get-out-the-vote information & resource campaigns, covering several calls-to-action:

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**Voter  
Registration**

**Absentee Ballot  
Requests**

**In-Person Voting  
Resources**

**Early Voting  
Resources**

# What can your organization do to GOTV?

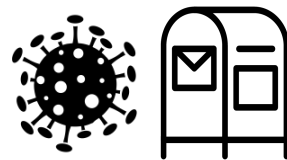
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**In-Person Voting  
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**Early Voting  
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*Especially important  
in this election cycle  
due to the pandemic  
and disruption to  
mail services*

# Who could you message?

Email your CRM for a low investment campaign, or acquire new members as you GOTV

## Message Your Existing CRM

Leverage your organization's existing list to encourage voting

Email, SMS, or Direct Mail require different levels of investment

Message everyone, or target those who do not typically vote (if known)

## Message a Paid Audience

Target new constituents on platforms such as Facebook

Pair GOTV messages & resources with a sign-up journey for your list

Use your target audience, or target specific constituencies

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**2x**

*TIP: Case studies show a person should see at least two GOTV messages for a significant impact (ideally more)*

# How do you make it relevant?

Cater local content to audiences, or let 3rd party organizations do the work for you

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With the variety of voting methods, processes, and deadlines across states (and in some cases counties or cities/towns), general messages may be less effective and catering content by geo can be challenging

Driving your audience to a hub (e.g. Vote.org) enables the user to find the right resources



## Example Vote Resource Hubs



THE VOTING INFORMATION  
PROJECT

# Example: Drive your campaign to an existing hub


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The simplest call-to-action would be to direct traffic to an existing hub such as Vote.org


Link to the homepage or specific tool pages (e.g. vote by mail)



**CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION**→  
Not sure if you're registered to vote? We'll help you check and register if you can.

**REGISTER TO VOTE**→  
It takes less than 2 minutes to register.

**VOTE BY MAIL**→  
Can't or don't want to vote in person on Election Day? Request an absentee ballot.

**GET ELECTION REMINDERS**→  
We'll remind you when and what you need to vote, so that you never miss an election again.

**PLEDGE TO REGISTER**→  
Too young to vote? Pledge to register and we'll text you a reminder on your 18th birthday.

**POLLING PLACE LOCATOR**→  
Need to find your polling place? View the list of state polling place websites.

# Example: For a fee, your referrals to some tools can grow your list

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Turn your GOTV campaign into an acquisition campaign by collecting the data from the traffic you send to Vote.org

For a price, Vote.org sends a data file with the names your campaign drove to its tools



### Request Your Absentee Ballot

This will take 2 minutes

First name\*

Last name\*

WHERE ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Street address\*

Apartment

City\*

State\*

ZIP code\*

Date of birth\*

Email address\*

Cell phone number

Continue

You will receive occasional emails from Vote.org. You can unsubscribe at any time.

You will receive recurring text messages from Vote.org if you provide your cell phone number. Message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to opt out. Text HELP for more info.

# Example: Embed tools on your website

Cater the user journey by embedding resource tools on your own website for free



## Free civic engagement tools

VOTE.org wants to give you our technology to use — for FREE — on your website.

### Why use Vote.org tools?

- All our of tools work in all 50 states.
- Mobile-optimized for sky-high conversion rates
- They're fast, they're free to use, and they're the best tools on the market.
- Battle tested: these are the exact same tools we use at Vote.org

### Adding the tools to your website takes less than 2 minutes.

- Copy the code for the tool
- Paste the code on your website where you want the tool to appear
- We recommend putting each tool on its own page so you don't overwhelm your visitors!



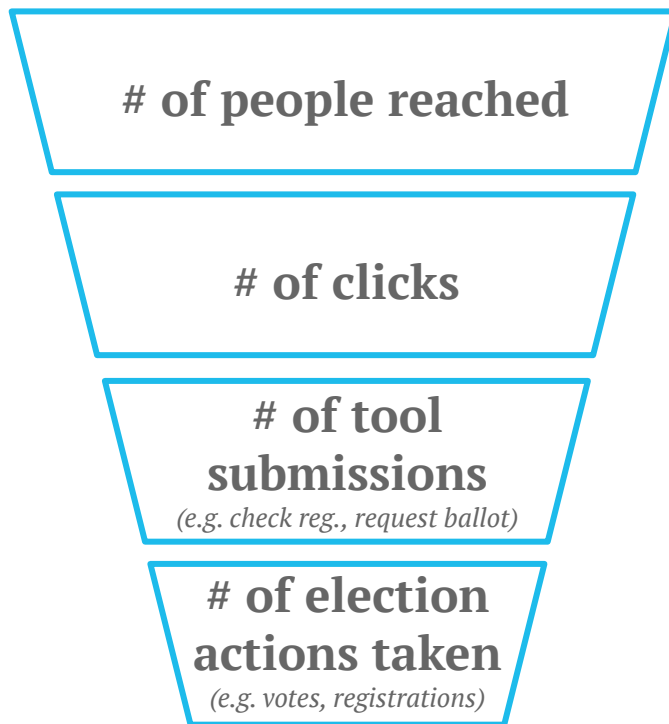
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**How do you measure GOTV success?**

# How do you measure GOTV success?

The further down funnel, the more sophisticated the tracking requirements

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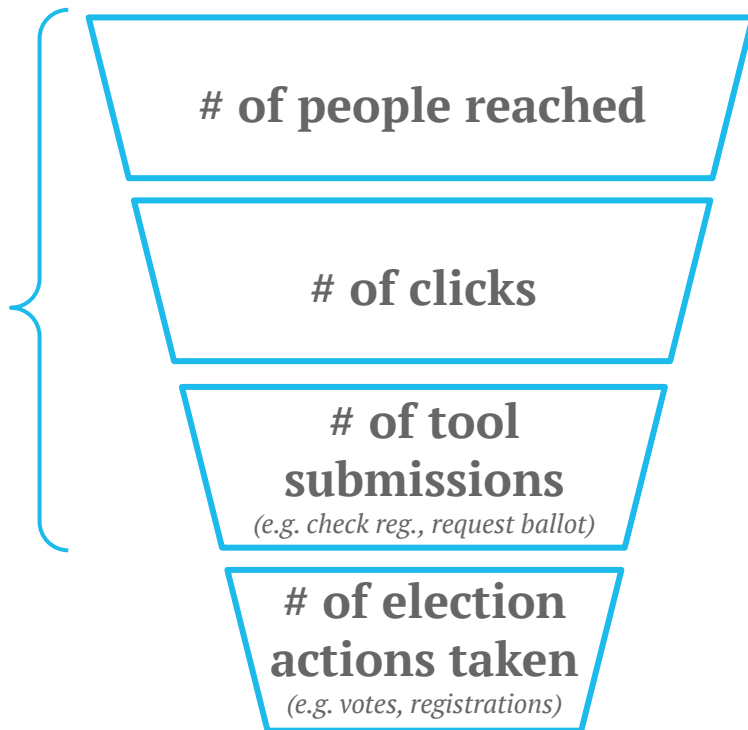
# How do you measure GOTV success?

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*Can be measured during the campaign to track and optimizing performance*

*Can be used at the end of the campaign to show top-level impact*



# How do you measure GOTV success?

The further down funnel, the more sophisticated the tracking requirements

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*Requires matching your audience back to the voter file to determine who took action (see next slide for guidance)*

*Most metrics available after Election Day, and therefore these metrics show impact after the campaign*

*One exception is absentee ballot requests, which is the only near real-time metric (in about half of states), and can be used during the campaign to track and optimize performance*

**# of people reached**

**# of clicks**

**# of tool submissions**  
*(e.g. check reg., request ballot)*

**# of election actions taken**  
*(e.g. votes, registrations)*

# How do I match my audience to the voter file?

Matching who you messaged with the actions they take is key to demonstrating impact

## Message Your Existing CRM

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If you are messaging your CRM, a match of your list to the voter file can show the actions they took (e.g. voted or requested an absentee)

Service providers such as Catalist or TargetSmart can provide this match for a fee

## Message a Paid Audience

There are requirements to match back to the voter file when messaging a new audience

If you create your audience on an ad platform (e.g. Facebook), it will not be possible to match to the voter file

But if you create your audience from the voter file and upload it to an ad platform (e.g. Facebook), a match is possible

Service providers such as Catalist or TargetSmart can provide these services for a fee

# Setting up a test to demonstrate impact

Your message may not be the reason someone took an action; to prove it, set up a test

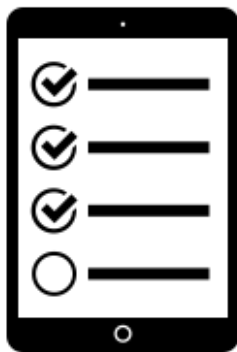
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**Saw your message  
(Test Group)**



**Did not see your message  
(Control Group)**



**Groups matched  
back to the voter file**



**Difference in GOTV  
actions taken measured**  
(statistically significant only)

**The hypothesis:** people seeing the  
GOTV message will have taken  
actions at a higher rate

# Setting up a test to demonstrate impact

Your message may not be the reason someone took an action; to prove it, set up a test

**Note: Creating a control group can be counterproductive to exhaustive GOTV efforts.**

**Consider conducting a test for a short period of time with absentee ballot request as the call-to-action since it is available in near real-time in the voter file.**

**Alternatively, conduct a test in an off-year election or in a single state to minimize the impact.**

Did not see your message  
(Control Group)

The hypothesis: people seeing the GOTV message will have taken actions at a higher rate

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**GOTV case studies & further resources  
(including messaging recommendations)**



## Join the Climate Advocacy Lab for add'l GOTV resources

In order to access these additional resources and (an optional) weekly newsletter of best practices and research, you must first apply to join via the link below

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Join The Climate Advocacy Lab:

<https://climateadvocacylab.org/become-a-member>

The Lab recently aggregated their get-out-the-vote resources into this newsletter, covering best practices such as which messages work best and demonstrating successful campaigns in case studies

[Link to newsletter resources](#)

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## Best Practices:

What's the best GOTV message?

How best to contact voters?

How to turn out voters and embed environmental issues into your message?

## Case studies:

Virginia Peer-To-Peer Text Messaging Experiment (2017)

NextGen 2014 Social Pressure GOTV

**thanks.**

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August 2020

# --- Appendix

*This case study was prepared by:*

## The Partnership Project Innovation Team

As a collaborative workspace and the home of coalition campaigns for the environmental community, The Partnership Project has launched an Innovation team charged with **supporting collective data opportunities across groups**. The team's overarching mission is to unlock the power of collaborative data learning by assessing and addressing the common needs of the community.

This aggregated learning lens will be applied to areas such as best practice knowledge sharing, piloting new methods, cross-organizational analysis, and experimenting with new technology. As a centralized resource, the Innovation team will **broadcast learnings and implications via actionable case studies and highlight ongoing data efforts across the community**.

For more information on this team or case study reach out to:

Peter Fontana, Director  
pfontana@partnershipproject.org