GOTV: c3 Email Series Case Study & How-To
NWF & Partnership Project Innovation Team

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October 2020

Knowledge Sharing

The following case study and how-to were put together to empower organizations to conduct **c3 GOTV campaigns that can deliver impact while minimizing cost.**

If your organization is **also doing a nonpartisan 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

To be covered

NWF c3 GOTV Case Study

- ● Campaign & Test Background
- ● Email Series Test Results

How-To GOTV for your organization

- ● Why GOTV?
- ● What can your organization do to GOTV?
- ● How do you measure GOTV success?
- ● Additional GOTV case studies & further resources (including messaging recommendations)

Appendix

NWF c3 GOTV Case Study

Introduction

As a part of get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts during the 2020 General Election cycle, the **National Wildlife Federation (NWF) tested an email series** sent to a portion of their list with a call-to-action to request an absentee ballot---an action that could be tracked in real-time with the voter file.

Over a 12 day period in September, **three emails were sent** to half of their constituents in 27 states (176k) while the other half received no emails.

With no media costs and the production of just three emails, **NWF drove a significant lift in absentee ballot requests** in five states. Success was most significant among independents & 3rd parties, right-leaning-moderates, and seniors 75+.

These results demonstrate that **c3 organizations emailing their list with a series of emails can increase voter activity among their list.**

NWF's GOTV email series to their existing list achieved an increase in voter activity at an efficient low cost

3

Emails sent

Emails were sent in a series over a 12 day period

$0

Media Cost

The series was sent to NWF's existing c3 list

+8%

Increase in absentee ballots requested

Average increase among the five states where a statistically significant lift was observed
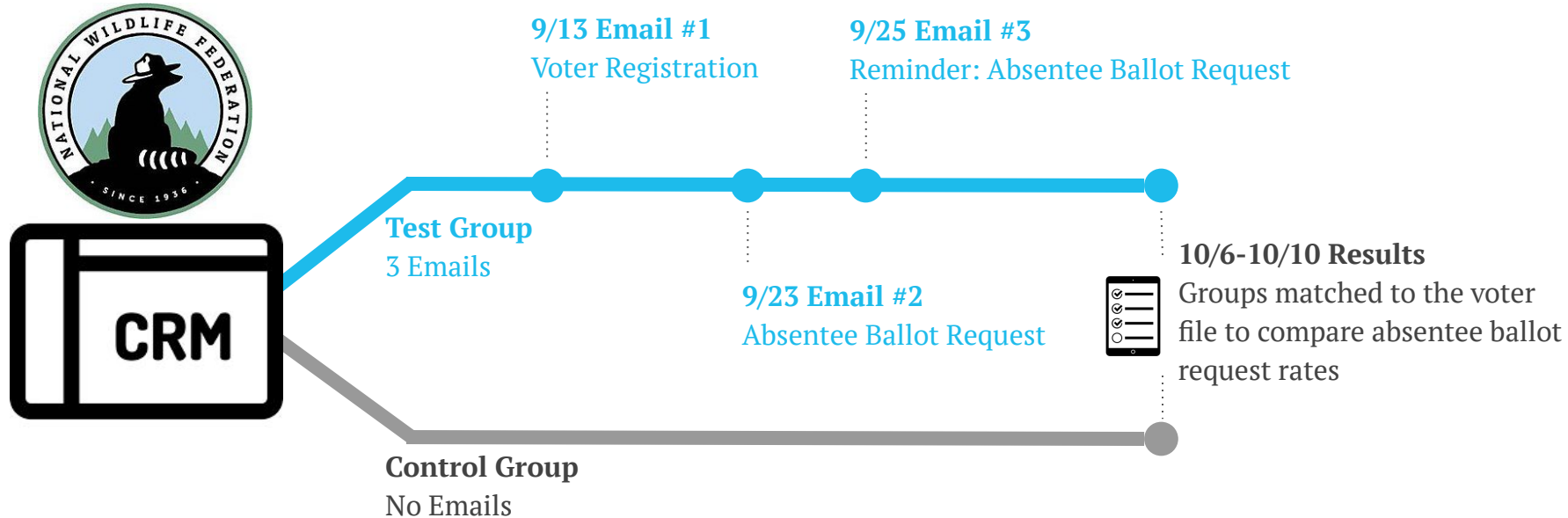
Campaign & Test Background

The availability of absentee ballot reporting set geography

The test was conducted among NWF's active members in the 27 states where absentee ballot reporting is near real-time in the voter file were included in the test
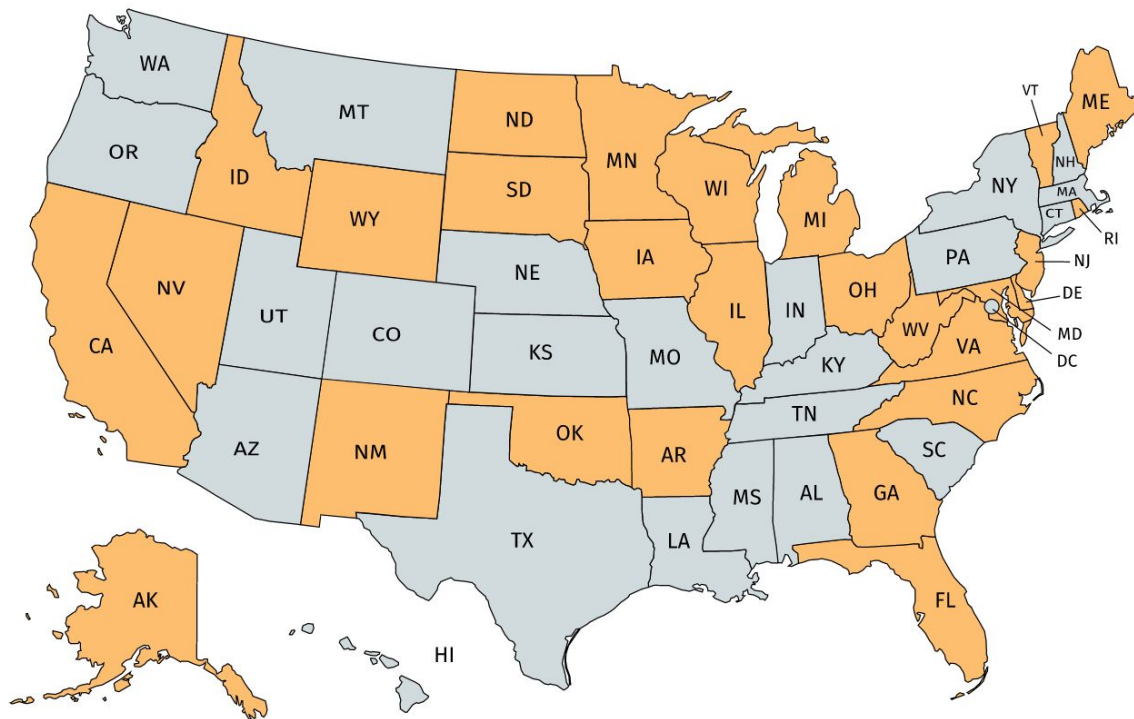
2 groups were created to test an email series vs. no email

NWF's list in each state was split into a **test group (receiving 3 emails)** and a **control group (receiving no emails)**

9/13 Email #1
Voter Registration

9/25 Email #3
Reminder: Absentee Ballot Request

Test Group
3 Emails

9/23 Email #2
Absentee Ballot Request

10/6-10/10 Results
Groups matched to the voter file to compare absentee ballot request rates

Control Group
No Emails

Note: At the conclusion of the match, emails were sent to the control group to maximize GOTV efforts

Three emails were sent to the test group over 12 days

Email #1 - Voter Registration

## Email #2 - Request Absentee

Email #3 - Reminder to Request Absentee

Friend of Wildlife,

You can make a difference for people and the wildlife you care about by voting in 2020. Don't miss your state's deadline to vote-by-mail or vote absentee, if that is how you plan safely to participate in this year's election. _Request your 2020 ballot right now and please vote safely!_ Thank you for taking action today for people and wildlife - Tara
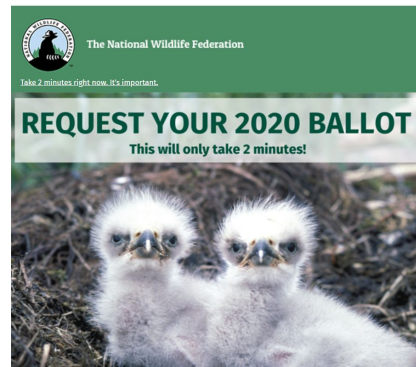
P.S. Not registered to vote yet? Not sure if you're registered? Click here to check your registration status, get registered, and request your 2020 ballot.

NWF Email Copy #1

Date: 9/13/2020

Sender: National Wildlife Federation

Subject: Wildlife in Your Community Need Your Vote

Header

Body Copy

Friend of Wildlife,

With less than 60 days until the 2020 election, we want to make sure that every friend of wildlife in every state is registered and ready to vote. <u>Are you registered to vote? It only takes a few minutes to check your registration to make sure your voice and your vote count in 2020.</u>

Wildlife can't vote—but you can.

This is the most consequential election for people and wildlife in our lifetimes. <u>Click here to check your voter registration right now, please, and pledge to vote for wildlife in 2020.</u>

YES, I WILL BE A 2020 WILDLIFE VOTER

No matter where you live, your vote matters. This is our chance to give wildlife a voice at the local, state, federal, and presidential levels. <u>Check your registration now and pledge to vote for wildlife in 2020.</u>

The next election will set the country's path on:

- Addressing climate change
- Stopping the wildlife crisis
- Ensuring access to public lands
- Prioritizing environmental justice
- Protecting frontline communities

<u>Register to vote today. Don't miss your chance to have an impact on the direction of our country and the issues you care about.</u>

You can make a difference for people and wildlife you care about by voting in 2020. <u>Check your registration right now.</u>

Sincerely,
Senior Director of Organizing and Campaigns
Tara Losoff

NWF Email Copy #2

Date: 9/23/2020

Sender: National Wildlife Federation

Subject: Ballots For Bald Eagles: Request Your 2020 Ballot Today

Header

Body Copy

Friend of Wildlife,

Bald eagles are more than just our national bird. They're living proof that conservation laws and regulations are effective at saving treasured wildlife from extinction.

With the wildlife extinction crisis, climate change, and other threats looming, it's more important than ever for friends of wildlife to vote in the 2020 election.

Wildlife like the bald eagle are counting on your vote. You can request your 2020 ballot online today.

REQUEST YOUR 2020 BALLOT

In 1963, the bald eagle population in the lower 48 states had plummeted to 487 breeding pairs. After conservation measures like banning DDT in 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, bald eagle populations began to recover. Today, there are over 15,000 nesting pairs and this symbol of our nation is no longer considered endangered.

If we want to save more species from the brink and protect vulnerable wildlife and wild places, we need every friend of wildlife to vote in 2020. The safest way to vote this year is by mail, so stay safe while doing your civic duty and request a ballot online right now.

We could have lost bald eagles forever without effective conservation laws. With over a million species at risk of extinction around the world right now, the results of the 2020 election will have consequences for conservation across the country.

Don't miss your state's deadline to vote-by-mail or vote absentee to ensure you participate in this year's election as safely as possible during the pandemic. Request your 2020 ballot today.

You can make a difference for people and wildlife you care about by voting in 2020. Request your 2020 ballot right now and vote safely.

Sincerely,

Tara Losoff
Senior Director of Organizing and Campaigns
National Wildlife Federation

P.S. Not registered to vote yet? Not sure whether you're registered? Click here to check your registration status, get registered, and request your 2020 ballot.
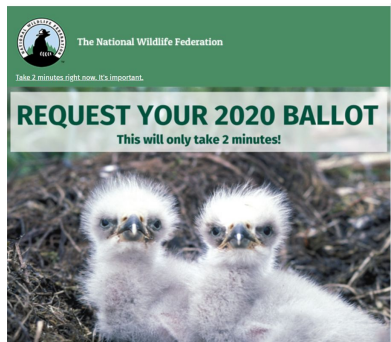
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Subject: REMINDER: Ballots for Bald Eagles

Header

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You can make a difference for people and the wildlife you care about by voting in 2020. Don't miss your state's deadline to vote-by-mail or vote absentee, if that is how you plan safely to participate in this year's election. Request your 2020 ballot right now and please vote safely! Thank you for taking action today for people and wildlife - Tara

P.S. Not registered to vote yet? Not sure if you're registered? Click here to check your registration status, get registered, and request your 2020 ballot.

The National Wildlife Federation

Take 2 minutes right now. It's important.

REQUEST YOUR 2020 BALLOT
This will only take 2 minutes!

Body Copy

Friend of Wildlife,

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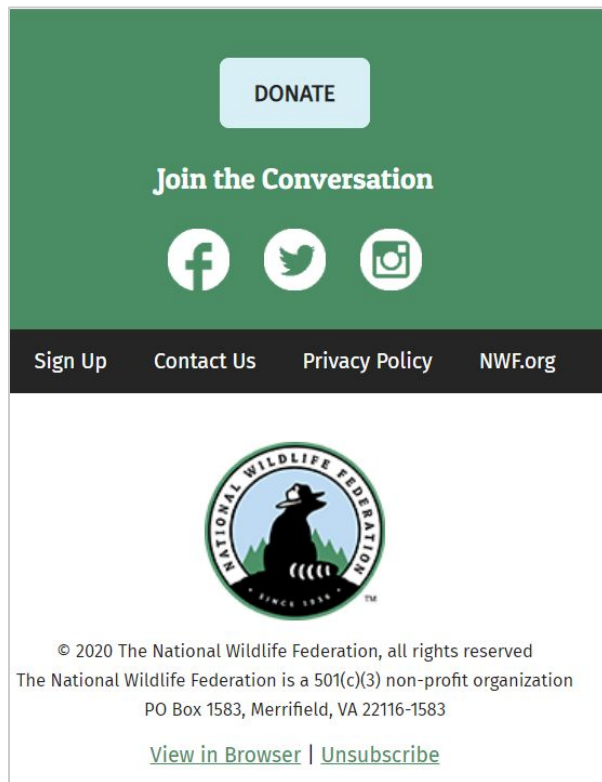
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National Wildlife Federation

P.S. Not registered to vote yet? Not sure whether you're registered? Click here to check your registration status, get registered, and request your 2020 ballot.

Consistent footer across emails with passive donation ask

Emails drove to Vote.org resources

Free hubs like Vote.org are ideal for GOTV campaigns as they cater resources by state

In the simplest setup, emails can drive to Vote.org in the clickthrough URL

Optional branded experience with Vote.org

While not required, the NWF campaign embedded Vote.org's resources onto their website for a branded experience

Also not required, NWF utilized Vote.org's premium offering to acquire any new information submitted to forms; this feature is most effective if running a GOTV campaign with paid media (e.g. Facebook) where you will likely acquire new names to your list

NWF Branded Form Example

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Header

Body Copy

The National Wildlife Federation

nwf.org   Donate ♥

REQUEST YOUR 2020 BALLOT
This will only take 2 minutes!

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.

By entering your phone number, you agree to receive recurring text messages from Vote.org at 22821. Message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to opt out. Text HELP for more info. See privacy policy and terms of service.

Overseas and military voters should visit Overseas Vote Foundation

+ Add this tool to your website   Terms   Privacy   Contact   Security

Powered by Vote.org

Evaluating success

Test and Control groups were matched to the voter file to compare absentee request rates

27 states report the absentee ballot request status for individuals in near real-time, making it a rapid and accessible metric for evaluating success

The rate of absentees requested by the test group were compared to the control group, with the hypothesis that the test group will have a higher rate of requests as a result of receiving emails from NWF's GOTV campaign

Email Series Test Results

NWF's email series drove some voters to take action

The following NWF members receiving the email series saw higher rates of absentee requests compared to the control group receiving no emails:

- NWF members in 5 states: CA, ME, VT, AK, ND

- Constituents aged 75+

- Independents and 3rd party registered voters

- Those scored* for right-leaning-moderate ideology on NWF's list

While the campaign did not drive a lift across all voters in all states, these significant increases among certain states and groups indicates the campaign impacted GOTV with this efficient email series to their existing list and no campaign media spend

*-Based on the Catalist Ideology Model

The email campaign was most effective in 5 states

CA, ME, VT, AK, and ND saw significantly higher rates of absentee ballot requests compared to control groups; MI and ID also showed a lift but at a lower confidence interval

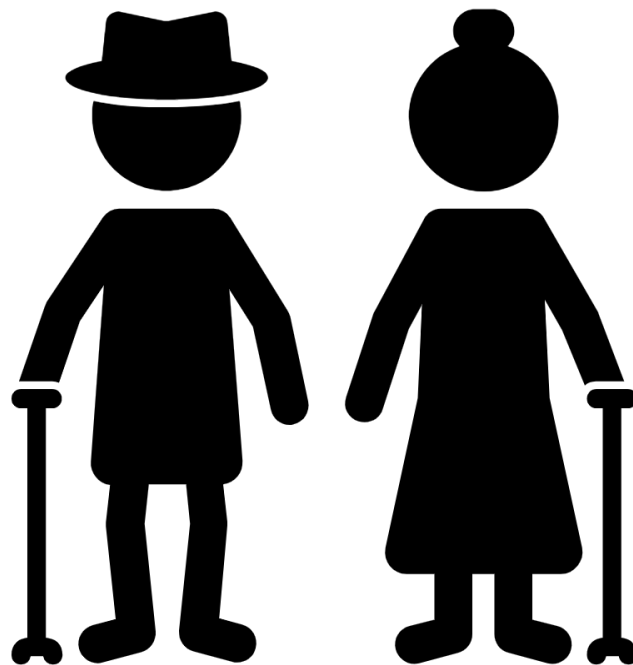Legend:
- Significant lift (90% or >)
- Low significance (85-89%)
- No significant lift
- Not included in test
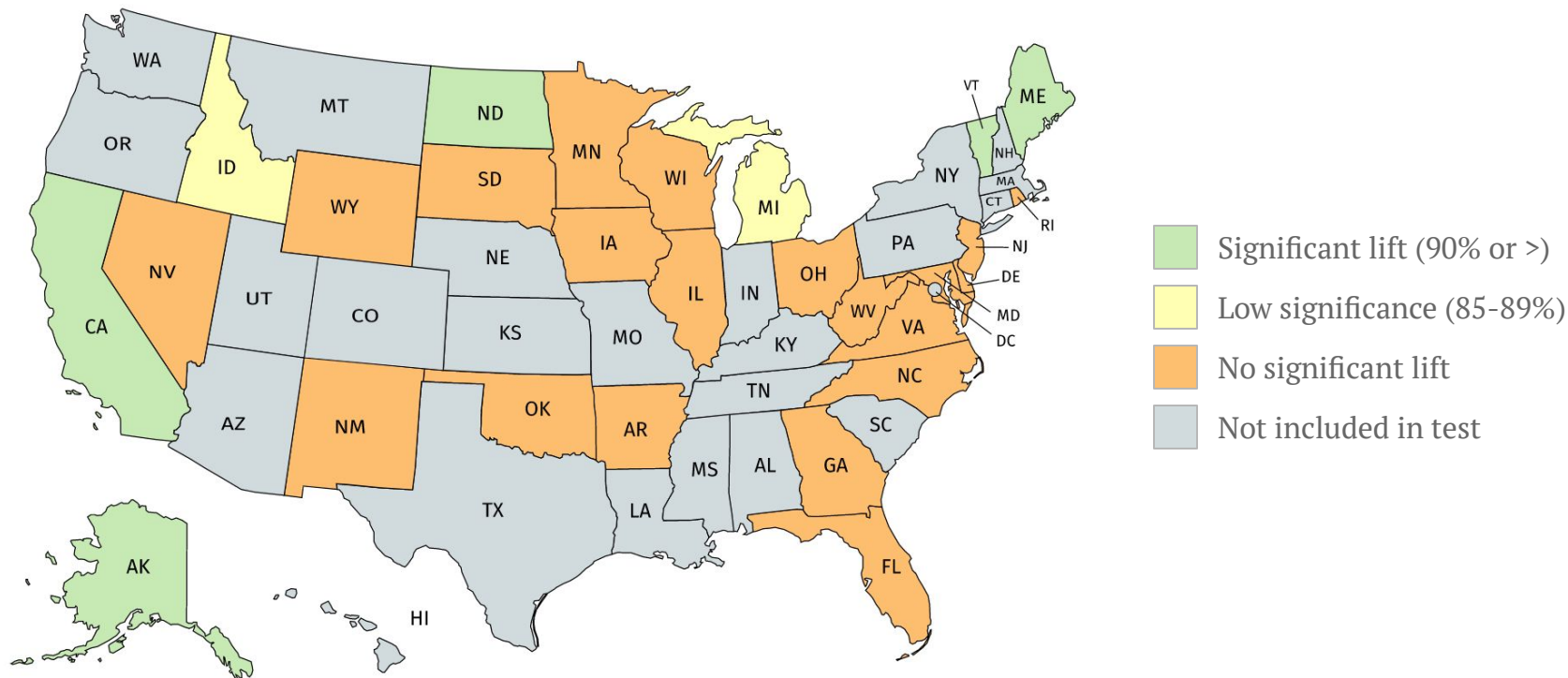
Seniors aged 75+ saw a higher rate of absentee requests after seeing the email series campaign

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Among 75+, 22% more requested an absentee ballot in the test group than in the control

This was the only age group to increase at a significant rate (90% confidence)

Independents and 3rd party registered voters along with right-leaning-moderates responded to the email series

Among the states where voters register by party (18 out of the 27 states tested), Independents and those registered to a 3rd party requested an absentee ballot 21% more in the test group than the control

Based on the Catalist Ideology Model, those scoring moderate-to-conservative (score 20 to 40) requested an absentee ballot 26% more in the test group than the control

Possible factors to consider for this test

The following may have impacted performance:

State processes and deadlines for absentee ballot requests vary by state, which may impact voter behavior to take GOTV actions during the test time period

4 of the 27 states (CA, NJ, NV, VT) automatically mailed ballots to registered voters without requesting which may have impacted ballot request rates; despite this state process, voters still requested absentees in these states

Voter enthusiasm to vote early can vary state-to-state depending on the number of competitive races or the number of undecided voters

Methodology rationale

The following factors impacted the design of the test:

The test was designed to evaluate the hypothesis that a GOTV email series could significantly increase voter action. The test was conducted in a short period with the metrics available in order to have results in time to inform additional GOTV activities.

The voter action chosen for evaluating success was absentee ballot requests (one of many GOTV actions) due to the fast availability of this metric from the voter file. An ideal test would have measured the impact the campaign had on whether the person ultimately voted, but this metric is not expected until early 2021.

Furthermore, since GOTV goals required reaching as many people as possible, it was pivotal to end the test before Election Day so messages could be sent to the control group at the conclusion of the test. 12 days in September were chosen for the test time period; control groups received GOTV email afterwards.

But it is important to note, not everyone receiving the email series will decide to request an absentee and within the timeframe of the test; the emails may have contributed to GOTV success not captured by the action metric: requests for absentees. For example, the emails may have increased turnout.

Therefore, the results may be under-representing the impact of the GOTV email series. And even with this, significant GOTV success was observed among some groups, which demonstrates value for an email series.

How-To GOTV for your organization

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.

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:
- 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.

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:

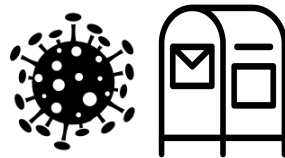|	
Voter Registration	**Absentee Ballot Requests**
In-Person Voting Resources	**Early Voting Resources**

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:

Voter Registration	**Absentee Ballot Requests**
In-Person Voting Resources	**Early Voting Resources**

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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Use your target audience, or target specific constituencies

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

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

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)

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

Example: Embed tools on your website

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

Vote.org

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

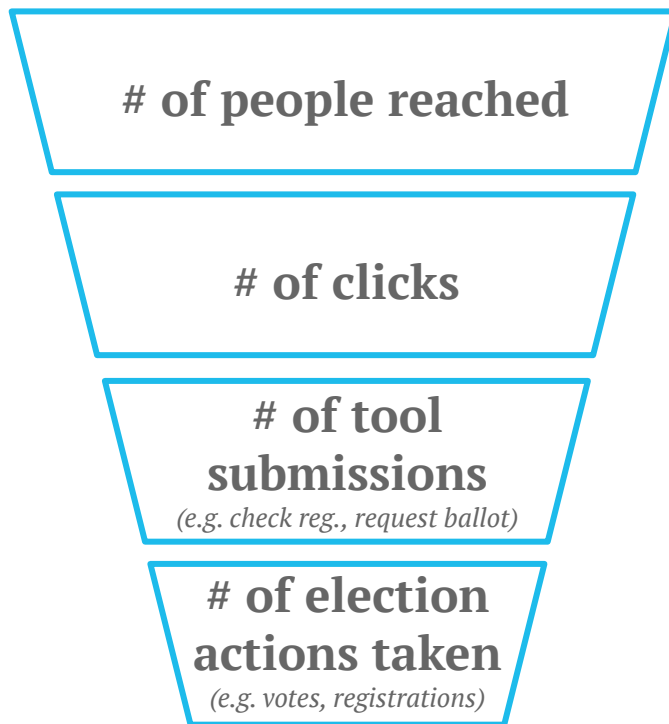**Adding the tools to your website takes less than 2 minutes.**

- 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!

How do you measure GOTV success?

How do you measure GOTV success?

The further down funnel, the more sophisticated the tracking requirements

# of people reached

# of clicks

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

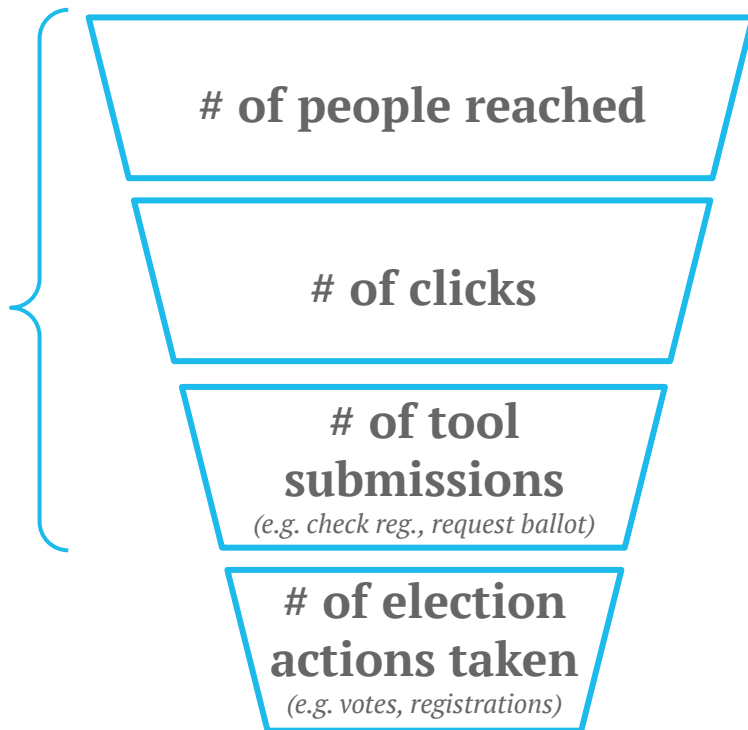# of election actions taken
(e.g. votes, registrations)

How do you measure GOTV success?

The further down funnel, the more sophisticated the tracking requirements

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

# of people reached

# of clicks

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

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

How do you measure GOTV success?

The further down funnel, the more sophisticated the tracking requirements

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

Message a Paid Audience

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

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

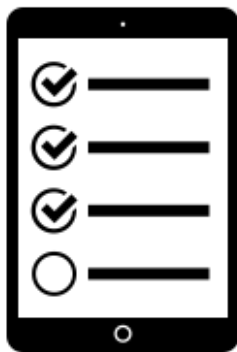Your message may not be the reason someone took an action; to prove it, set up a test

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

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.

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Saw your message
(Test Group)

Did not see your message
(Control Group)

Groups matched
back to the voter file

Difference measured
(statistically significant only)

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

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

Join The Climate Advocacy Lab:

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

Additional GOTV resources

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](#)

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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NWF & Partnership Project Innovation Team

October 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