

# Our Homes, Our Votes: Virtual Voter Engagement Strategies and Tools Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic



**T**he COVID-19 pandemic presents a unique set of challenges to traditional voter registration, education, and mobilization strategies. Voter engagement efforts can and should still take place, but it will be important to consider when to transition to digital tactics while also keeping in mind potential barriers people may face in accessing digital platforms.

This guide considers the voter engagement goals, traditional tactics used, physically distanced tactics, and examples of virtual tools and platforms to achieve similar outcomes. You can learn more about safety considerations and strategies for in-person events [here](#).

The information in this guide was adapted from the Community Catalyst [Addendum to: At a Safe Distance: Grassroots Organizing Strategies that Comply With Physical Distancing Protocols](#). This guide will be particularly helpful to people new to the world of digital organizing or who find they're relying on it much more heavily now.

Here's how it works:



Infographic by Community Catalyst

The key is to avoid becoming fixated on knowing all the ins and outs of every virtual event platform available. Instead, always bring it back to your strategy. Think about the goals of the planned event and how those goals would traditionally be achieved, then find an equivalent digital organizing tactic!

The chart below provides some examples of physically distanced and virtual tactics based on the stage of voter engagement and goal at hand. If you are interested in learning more about digital platforms, you can look to Community Catalyst's toolkit [Let's Talk about Tech: Databases and Platforms to Manage and Engage Your Network](#).

<b>VOTER REGISTRATION</b>				
<b>Campaign Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>In-Person Organizing Tactics</b>	<b>Physical Distancing Organizing Tactics</b>	<b>Example of Digital Platforms</b>
Training staff and volunteers	<p>Goal: Getting staff and volunteers who plan to register voters knowledgeable about the registration process, state-specific requirements, and how voter registration forms must be filled out.</p> <p>Meetings that bring people together, share information, answer questions, role play, and strategize.</p>	<p>Meetings</p> <p>Workshops</p>	<p>Online forum, meeting or workshop</p> <p>Virtual conferencing</p> <p>Video recording of training</p>	<p>Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet</p> <p>Your website or blog</p> <p>Email or other communication channels: (e.g. <a href="#">Mailchimp</a>, Slack, Whatsapp, Signal, Facebook, Google group)</p>
Working with partner organizations or groups	<p>Goal: Demonstrating unity and consistent messaging to build your campaign's legitimacy and power to ultimately mobilize people to register to vote.</p>	<p>Rallies</p> <p>Town halls</p> <p>Social events</p> <p>Public forums</p> <p>Canvassing</p> <p>Tabling</p>	<p>Coordinating social media campaign graphics and messaging</p> <p>Twitterstorm</p> <p>Joint op-eds or letters to the editor</p> <p>Online forums</p> <p>Email campaign</p>	<p>Your website or blog</p> <p>Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet</p> <p>Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul> <p>Email campaigns:</p> <p><a href="#">Mailchimp</a>, <a href="#">Phone2Action</a></p>

List Building	Goal: Identifying a list of people you wish to engage in your voter engagement efforts and tracking when and how you have communicated with them to take action.	Door-to-door canvassing Tabling Canvassing at events In-person one-on-one and/or group meetings	Build a Facebook page and start a list of supporters by getting people to engage. Online story-sharing Share an informational resource that includes an action at the end (e.g. link to registration form).  Use relational organizing techniques to ask your current network to reach out to their network (friends, family, coworkers) with voter registration information and ways to vote in your state.  Create an online space/forum for people to gather and share why they registered to vote.  Purchase a voter list through your local elections office; Our Homes, Our, 2020 might be able to help.	Online Survey or Social Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google forms</li> <li>• Facebook polls and groups</li> <li>• Survey Monkey</li> </ul>
Sharing information	Goal: Informing people how they can register to vote or update their registration, what the state registration deadline is, and addressing voter apathy or frustration.	Rallies Press events Social events and activities Tabling Canvassing	Flyers Online Forums Virtual press conferences Virtual rallies Social Media Email campaigns	Your website or blog Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul> Email campaigns: <a href="#">Mailchimp</a> , <a href="#">Phone2Action</a> Peer-to-Peer Texting: <a href="#">Hustle</a> and <a href="#">GetThru</a> Other communication channels: (e.g. Slack, Whatsapp, Signal, Facebook group, Google group)

Registration Events and Activities	<p>Goal:</p> <p>1) Increase awareness about voter registration options, deadlines, and the importance of voting; and</p> <p>2) Increase registration numbers within your target communities.</p>	<p>Rallies</p> <p>Door-to-door canvassing</p> <p>Phone banking</p> <p>High density canvassing</p> <p>Tabling</p> <p>Social events</p>	<p>Digital day of action</p> <p>Online story-sharing</p> <p>Digital advertisements</p> <p>Social media campaign or live event</p> <p>Virtual event or forum</p> <p>Text message campaign</p> <p>Phone-banking</p> <p>Radio/TV Ads</p> <p>Chalk outdoor spaces</p> <p>Online form to add your name to an "I registered to vote" campaign</p>	<p>Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> <li>• Twitterstorm</li> <li>• Story sharing (e.g. why I'm voting)</li> </ul> <p>Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet</p> <p>Email campaigns: <a href="#">Mailchimp</a>, <a href="#">Phone2Action</a></p> <p>Peer-to-Peer Texting: <a href="#">Hustle</a> and <a href="#">GetThru</a></p> <p>Other communication channels: (e.g. Slack, Whatsapp, Signal, Facebook group, Google group)</p> <p>Google forms and Survey Monkey</p>
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## VOTER EDUCATION

Campaign Activity	Purpose	In-Person Organizing Tactics	Physical Distancing Organizing Tactics	Example of Digital Platforms
List Building	Goal: Identifying a list of people you wish to engage in your voter engagement efforts and tracking when and how you have communicated with them about the voting process.	Door-to-door canvassing Tabling Canvassing at events In-person one-on-one and/or group meetings	Build a Facebook page and start a list of supporters by getting people to engage. Online story-sharing Share an informational resource that includes an action at the end (e.g. link to registration form). Use <a href="#">relational organizing</a> techniques to ask your current network to reach out to their network (friends, family, coworkers) with voter registration information and ways to vote in your state. Create an online space/forum for people to gather and share why they registered to vote. Purchase a voter list through your local elections office; Our Homes, Our, 2020 might be able to help.	Online Survey or Social Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google forms</li> <li>• Facebook polls and groups</li> <li>• Survey Monkey</li> </ul>
Working with partner organizations or groups	Goal: Demonstrating unity and consistent messaging to build your campaign's legitimacy and power to ultimately mobilize people to make a plan to vote.	Rallies Town halls Social events Public forums Panels	Coordinating social media graphics and messaging Twitterstorm Joint op-eds Online forums Email campaigns	Your website or blog Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul> Email campaigns: <a href="#">Mailchimp</a> , <a href="#">Phone2Action</a>

Sharing information	<p>Goal: Educate voters on the basics for casting their ballots.</p> <p>Gathering information about voting options and deadlines, what's on the ballot, and voters' rights are all basic elements to voting successfully. Sharing this information with voters also provides an opportunity for advocates to both better understand how people in a given community think about voting and answer questions voters might have.</p>	<p>Door-to-door canvassing</p> <p>Tabling</p> <p>Canvassing at events</p> <p>Forums</p> <p>Meetings</p> <p>Social events</p>	<p>Mail (e.g. Postcard campaign)</p> <p>Phone banking</p> <p>Flyers</p> <p>Virtual Conferencing</p> <p>Online platforms (e.g. blogs, newsletters, webinars, forums)</p> <p>Social Media</p> <p>Text Messaging</p> <p>Use <a href="#">relational organizing</a> techniques to ask your current network to reach out to their network (friends, family, coworkers) to make a plan to vote</p>	<p>Public Google Drive folder</p> <p>Google docs</p> <p>Blog posts</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>Peer-to-Peer texting: <a href="#">Hustle</a> and <a href="#">GetThru</a></p> <p>Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul>
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## VOTER MOBILIZATION

Campaign Activity	Purpose	In-Person Organizing Tactics	Physical Distancing Organizing Tactics	Example of Digital Platforms
List Building	Goal: Identifying a list of people you wish to engage in your voter engagement efforts and tracking when and how you have communicated with them about casting their ballot.	Door-to-door canvassing Tabling Canvassing at events In-person one-on-one and/or group meetings	Build a Facebook page and start a list of supporters by getting people to engage. Online story-sharing Share an informational resource that includes an action at the end (e.g. link to registration form). Use <a href="#">relational organizing</a> techniques to ask your current network to reach out to their network (friends, family, coworkers) to make a plan to vote. Create an online space/forum for people to gather and share why they plan to vote. Purchase a voter list through your local elections office; Our Homes, Our, 2020 might be able to help.	Online Survey or Social Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google forms</li> <li>• Facebook polls and groups</li> <li>• Survey Monkey</li> </ul>
Working with partner organizations or groups	Goal: Demonstrating unity and consistent messaging to build your campaign's legitimacy and power to ultimately mobilize people to make a plan to vote.	Rallies Town halls Social events Public forums Panels	Coordinating social media graphics and messaging Twitterstorm Joint op-eds Online forums Email campaigns	Your website or blog Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul> Email campaigns: <a href="#">Mailchimp</a> , <a href="#">Phone2Action</a>

Voter Mobilization	<p>Goal: Getting registered voters to cast their ballot successfully and with confidence.</p> <p>People in low-income communities, particularly communities of color, often face barriers in getting to the polls or casting their ballot (i.e. language barriers, transportation, identification laws, intimidation practices, time constraints, long lines at polls, etc.)</p>	<p>Make a plan to vote</p> <p>Rides to and from polling locations</p> <p>Organizing group voting</p> <p>Providing childcare</p> <p>Social events</p>	<p>Encourage vote-by-mail and early voting options where available.</p> <p>Make a plan to vote online forms.</p> <p>Online forums</p> <p>Email campaign</p> <p>Use <a href="#">relational organizing</a> techniques to organize virtual group voting by having your current network to reach out to their network (friends, family, coworkers).</p> <p>Digital day of action</p> <p>Virtual event or forum</p> <p>Text message campaign</p> <p>Phone-banking</p> <p>Radio/TV Ads</p> <p>Chalk outdoor spaces</p>	<p>Your website or blog</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul> <p>Email or other communication channels: (e.g. <a href="#">Mailchimp</a>, Slack, Whatsapp, Signal, Facebook, Google group)</p> <p>Online Survey or Social Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google forms</li> <li>• Facebook polls and groups</li> <li>• Survey Monkey</li> </ul> <p>Peer-to-Peer Texting: <a href="#">Hustle</a> and <a href="#">GetThru</a></p> <p>Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet</p>
Generating earned media about voter engagement efforts	<p>Goal: Generating earned media to be sure that voters know about the upcoming election and how they can successfully cast a ballot.</p>	<p>Drafting and submitting op-eds</p> <p>Drafting and submitting letters to the editor</p> <p>Cultivate reporters over time</p> <p>Use story bank to get media attention</p>	<p>Drafting and submitting op-eds</p> <p>Drafting and submitting LTEs</p> <p>Connect grassroots stories with journalists</p> <p>Cultivate reporters over time</p> <p>Virtual press conference or call</p>	<p>Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts or Tweets</li> <li>• Graphics</li> <li>• Live video</li> <li>• Hashtags</li> </ul> <p>Virtual conferencing platforms: Zoom, Google meet</p>