

Suggested planning

Planning a GOTV program will vary by state based on deadlines for voter registration, primaries and runoff elections. At the first meeting, set goals and objectives based on your state's deadlines for registration, primaries and Election Day. You are encouraged to:

First Milestone

- Develop a comprehensive plan for the program, including goals and deadlines.
- Create a team of qualified and interested volunteers.
- Organize subcommittees and assign responsibilities.
- Issue voter registration reminders.
- See if your post is needed as a polling location.

Second Milestone

- Continue registration drive.
- Begin issuing news releases on GOTV activities.
- Contact businesses and organizations.

Third Milestone

- Distribute GOTV promotional materials.
- Begin PSA and ad campaign in local media.
- Hold a benefit to raise funds for the program.
- Publicize polling locations near your post.

Fourth Milestone

- Conduct a survey of local issues.
- Hold a public forum or debate for all candidates.
- Identify and publicize handicap access points at polling locations near your post.

Fifth Milestone

- Increase radio and TV public service announcements
- Remind volunteers of the need for assistance.
- Identify those who may need assistance with absentee voting.

Sixth Milestone

- Intensify all public relations efforts.
- Hold a candidates forum/debate.

Election Day

- Wear your Legion cap to the polls. However, do not wear any political campaign items.

After the election

- Report the successful results of your post's GOTV efforts to the media.
- Keep a record of what worked for your post's next GOTV program!

Follow rules of nonpartisanship

The American Legion shall remain nonpolitical and will not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of any candidate. Failure of a post to abide by these rules may endanger its non-profit status. This does not mean that members are forbidden to show partisanship. Legionnaires may express partisan views, but they must do so without wearing the Legion cap or other Legion attire and without a direct connection to an American Legion post.

Do:

Maintain neutrality. Federal laws require registration drives conducted or sponsored by a corporation, labor union or trade association to be nonpartisan. The Internal Revenue Code mandates strict nonpartisanship of all such activities by organizations eligible to receive non-profit, tax-exempt status.

Assist all voters. Nonpartisan registration and GOTV drives may be directed at either the public or a defined population group. Registration and voting information must be offered and available to all voters.

Promote: Work on behalf of germane ballot measures.

Do not:

Favor a candidate. Posts cannot endorse or oppose a candidate; coordinate activities with a candidate; contribute money, time or facilities to candidates; or manage, fund or organize a political action committee.

Wear campaign buttons. Volunteers working on a Legion-sponsored registration and voting drive should not wear campaign buttons or communicate their personal views about candidates, parties and issues.

Visit the Legion's Legislative Action Center at <http://legion.capwiz.com/election/home/>.



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THE AMERICAN LEGION



GET OUT THE VOTE

LEARN HOW YOU AND YOUR
AMERICAN LEGION POST CAN HELP
"GET OUT THE VOTE"

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THE AMERICAN LEGION GET OUT THE VOTE

A Message from the National Americanism Commission Chairman

Fellow Legionnaires:

Elections are important to our republic and each year local, state and national elections dot the landscape. As Americans, it is our duty and responsibility to exercise this right by casting our ballots and encouraging others to do so as well. It was on this premise that The American Legion's "Get Out the Vote" program was initiated shortly after the organization's inception. It remains just as important today as in elections past.

The National Americanism Commission encourages American Legion posts and their members to become involved in their local and state elections as well as the midterm elections. Post involvement may come in the form of voter registration drives, sponsorship of town hall meetings and forums, promoting voter participation and other "Get Out The Vote" activities. Legionnaires may contribute to the electoral process by serving as poll volunteers, poll workers, and by getting potential voters registered and out to the polls to vote.

All Legionnaires should demonstrate commitment for continued service to this country by being politically active as individuals, and most importantly, exercising their own right to vote in all local, state and federal elections.

By working together as an organization we can make a difference by promoting an informed populace, participation in our government and involvement in its electoral process. We cannot forget that our government is "of the people, by the people and for the people" and our democratic republic can only function when we the people participate. With your help, The American Legion will once again clearly cast its vote for democracy.

- Chairman, National Americanism Commission

Richard W. Anderson
Richard W. Anderson



The American Legion recommends that all voting-age Americans to engage in politics and the election process to create an informed citizenry and ensure a strong republic.

Posts are encouraged to sponsor activities to help voters be informed and involved each political season. This stems from the Preamble to the Legion's Constitution, which says, in part, that we exist "... to perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism ... and to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation ..."

A strong, knowledgeable and enthusiastic person must be appointed to coordinate the activity to ensure a successful campaign. This individual should be able to lead a team, motivate others, provide understanding and encourage participation.

There are four key elements necessary to successfully engage the community. The citizens must:

- 1) Understand that what they do will benefit them.
- 2) Know what is expected or required of them.
- 3) Be instructed on how to accomplish the goals.
- 4) Set an example for America's youth.

Where to begin

The first step in organizing a Get Out The Vote (GOTV) program is to get a commitment from post officers. The next step is to organize within the post by forming a committee of interested Legion Family members and then assigning duties and responsibilities. Here are some ideas for running an effective GOTV program:

Canvassing: Participants need to personally contact and motivate potential voters to get to the polls. Ways to contact them include door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, direct mail, or at a booth or registration table at public places or Legion post. It is also to seek permission from election officials to see if the law permits volunteers to act as deputy registrars or to distribute applications for mail registration.

Schools: It's ideal to contact local school(s) or school board(s) to promote GOTV. Ask if you may encourage 18-year-old citizens to register to vote, conduct a school assembly on citizenship responsibilities, or conduct mock elections with students.

Transportation: Committee members should focus on providing free transportation to the polls for those who may lack transportation, such as the elderly or physically handicapped. Volunteers could use their own personal vehicles. The contact number should be publicized through the local media. Also remember to contact nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc., to promote the opportunity.

Outreach: Place newspaper ads or public service announcements in local media that promote registration and voting. Use social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to promote the message.

Forums, debates or information assemblies: Any forum, candidates' debate or assembly sponsored by or held in a Legion post must be open to the public and all candidates must be invited. Candidates should not be asked to speak at or during an official American Legion meeting. The Legion is nonpolitical and cannot engage in partisan politics nor promote any candidate. The Legion can sponsor the event, but it is best to have an agreed upon and experienced moderator.

Care giving: Legion Family members can "sit" with children, the handicapped or the elderly to allow their caregiver to go to the polls.