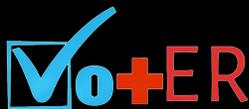


# 2021 Elections Toolkit

Making the Case,  
Timeline, Tools, and  
Messaging



**civic  
alliance**

This toolkit was developed collaboratively by Vot-ER and the Civic Alliance to help organizations understand, speak to and champion local and state elections as part of, and beyond, Civic Health Month.

## Every Election Matters: Keep 2020's Momentum Going

Every year is an election year. Democracy never sleeps. 2020 was a historic year for Americans taking ownership of their civic agency and realizing that voting and engaging on election day impacts their lives every other day of the year. That is equally if not more true for local elections. 2021 will be the year of ensuring people realize the power and necessity of staying engaged, tuning in, and turning out in local elections.

### MAKING THE CASE

#### Local Elections Impact Your Daily Life

Do you put the trash out with the expectation it'll be collected? Do you drive to work and expect the roads to be safe and smooth? Do you send your children to school and expect them to have textbooks? If yes, then your daily life is shaped by local government and politicians.

#### Decisions Are Made By Those Who Show Up

It is often the case that voters in local government elections have the most power and the greatest influence. Yet, most local elections (from school board to state-wide races) see both low and less representative turnout. Across the U.S., only 15-27% of eligible voters cast a ballot in their local election. The result of low participation is that an extraordinarily unrepresentative set of residents determine local government leadership, services and policy. This means that a small subset of a community are making decisions that impact the daily lives of their neighbors, and if those neighbors don't vote and engage then they have no voice in shaping the path of policy.

# General Timeline and Tools

State and local election dates vary widely across the nation. While most election dates are scheduled, the dates for primaries or general elections can still change. Below we have provided a very general timeline for considering communications but we highly recommend you identify the elections you will be championing to confirm the timeline.

TIMELINE	TOPIC	TOOL
<b>Now - May</b> Voter Registration	Confirm your registration Register to vote	<a href="https://www.howto.vote">howto.vote</a> <a href="https://www.turbovote.org">turbovote.org</a>
<b>June - October</b> Primary Elections	Find your polling place Preview your ballot	<a href="https://www.gettothepolls.com">gettothepolls.com</a> <a href="https://www.ballotready.org">Ballotready.org</a> , <a href="https://www.vote411.org">vote411.org</a>
<b>September</b> <b>September 28</b>	Register to vote National Voter Registration Day	<a href="https://www.turbovote.org">turbovote.org</a> <a href="https://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org">nationalvoterregistrationday.org</a>
<b>October 23</b>	Vote Early Day	<a href="https://www.voteearly.org">voteearly.org</a>
<b>October - November</b> General Elections November 2 for many	Find your polling place Preview your ballot Check your voter ID laws	<a href="https://www.gettothepolls.com">gettothepolls.com</a> <a href="https://www.ballotready.org">Ballotready.org</a> , <a href="https://www.vote411.org">vote411.org</a> <a href="https://www.voteriders.org">voteriders.org</a>

## Tools to Know

- **TurboVote:** TurboVote is an online platform that helps users register to vote, request a ballot in the mail, and sign up for election reminders. It's easy to use, can help individuals from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and will be a great way for employees/consumers to check for local details and sign up for
- **Power the Polls (Poll Working):** Power the Polls is a clearinghouse of information on serving as a poll worker nationwide. Share a link to Power the Polls and your internal/external audiences can look up information on how to apply to be a poll worker in their local jurisdiction. 2021 will

reminders. Turbovote is free to use, so share widely to empower your audience. The platform can also be customized for brand partnership.

- **[VOTE411](#)**: Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, [Vote411.org](#) is a one-stop-shop for election related information, focused on providing nonpartisan information and education on ones' ballot. Share [Vote411.org](#) for an overview of ballots, including factual data on candidates in state and local races, ballot measure information, and more.
- **[BallotReady](#)**: Helping voters across the U.S. exercise their right to vote and vote informed on every race and measure on their ballot, [BallotReady](#) provides personalized nonpartisan information to voters in all 50 states. [BallotReady](#) will help voters make a plan to vote, and ensure they know when to vote and what is on their ballot with digital ballot guides.

continue to face challenges on poll worker staffing due to the pandemic.

- **[VoteRiders \(Voter ID\)](#)**: Helping ensure employees and customers know what they need in order to vote is crucial in ensuring that votes can be cast. [VoteRiders](#) is a database on state-by-state voter ID laws and an easy reference for anyone with questions or concerns. They also offer a hotline to support voters with ID questions or issues that arise at the polls.
- **[Pizza to the Polls](#)**: [Pizza to the Polls](#) takes reports of long lines to vote from folks around the country and then delivers pizza from a local restaurant. Sending pizza to the polls not only fortifies voters, it cheers up poll workers and provides ways for people to give back.

# KEY MESSAGING AND ACTION

## Talking points

To both raise awareness and understanding, we recommend the following talking points for internal and external audiences:

- 1,000s of local elections will take place across the country this year. Make sure you know where and when you can participate.
- Local elections allow voters to have a direct impact on the leaders and policies that affect their day to day lives.
- Getting engaged locally is fun! Candidates are your neighbors and campaigns are rooted in the community, so it's all about connection!
- It is often the case that voters in local government elections have the most power and the greatest influence.
- Last year saw historic participation, let's make participation a habit.
- Voting in State races gives you a direct voice in your state's budget, state higher education, and revenue collection and distribution.
- Voting in local races gives you a direct voice in public transit, bike trails, zoning, and more.

Note on framing: The goal of communicating about local elections is to inspire participation, encourage behavior change, and excite audiences to make a difference by voting. It is important to lead with empowering messages and steer clear from language that leans into low participation or why people do not participate. Instead of pointing out those negatives, it's about creating the case for why local elections matter and how much more power people have on a local level as a way of positively exciting folks to own that power!

## Action

**Join the Civic Alliance:** The [Civic Alliance](#) is a nonpartisan business coalition that strengthens our democracy by supporting safe, accessible and trusted elections and inspiring every American to participate in shaping our country's future. Founded by the [CAA Foundation](#) and [Democracy Works](#), the Civic Alliance cultivates a community of companies united by a shared belief that an active democracy is good for business, and an engaged business community is good for democracy. Membership is free and provides companies and businesses with the tools, resources, guidance and networking to build and grow their civic programming. Join [here](#).