V is for Voters and VITA

December 5, 2019
3-4:30pm ET; 12pm-1:30pm PT
Welcome

Justin Chu  
Senior Program Associate, Field Engagement  
Prosperity Now
Housekeeping

- All webinar attendees are muted to ensure sound quality.
- This webinar is being recorded and will be released within one week.
- **Ask a question any time** by typing the question into the text box of the GoToWebinar Control Panel.
- If you experience any technical issues, email gotomeeting@prosperitynow.org.

Trouble dialing in? Just listen through your computer with speakers or headphones!
Keys to Success on Today’s Webinar

- Join from a **quiet space**
- Grab a **coffee** or snack and settle in
- **Engage!** Share your **questions** with us!
- Create a **watch party** with your team to **debrief** and **discuss** together
Prosperity Now’s mission is to ensure everyone in our country has a clear path to financial stability, wealth and prosperity.
To **connect, strengthen** and **inspire** community tax programs so that they can ...

✓ More effectively & efficiently **deliver critical tax assistance**

✓ Couple that assistance with other **financial capability services**

✓ **Advocate for fairer tax policy**
Taxpayer Opportunity Network Members...

- Participate in learning and advocacy opportunities
- Learn about the latest developments in the field
- Access valuable resources for volunteers, program managers and site coordinators
- Get discounts to Prosperity Now and Taxpayer Opportunity Network events

To join or learn more, go to: prosperitynow.org/get-involved/taxpayer-opportunity-network
What’s in store for today?

- Voter Filer Registration Overview
- Voter Filer Set Up and Walkthrough
- Q&A Session
- Close
Today’s Speakers

Justin Chu  
Senior Program Associate  
Taxpayer Opportunity Network

Rebecca Thompson  
Project Director  
Taxpayer Opportunity Network
Today’s Speakers

Jackson Gode
Research Analyst
Brookings Institution

Caitlin Donnelly
Education Director
Nonprofit Vote
Welcome from TON

Rebecca Thompson
Project Director, Taxpayer Opportunity Network
Prosperity Now
Voter Filer Registration Overview

Jackson Gode
Research Analyst, Governance Studies program
Brookings Institution
2018 Pilot Program Results
Program Doubled New Registrations

Voter registration did not slow down tax preparation services

Increase in Voter Registration among Initially Unregistered, Control and Treatment Groups
Filer Voter 2020

What will VITA sites do?

- Encourage Civic Engagement during Intake or Wait
  - Offer voter registration to clients
- Submit paperwork
  - Mail or deliver completed forms to County BOE
What will VITA sites receive?

- Free training in voter registration rules and best practices (webinar)
- Sharable “toolkit” on how to conduct a voter registration and turnout drive.
- Virtual logistics assistance from Brookings throughout tax season

Contact us at: filervoter@brookings.edu
How-to: Voter Filer Registration

Caitlin Donnelly
Education Director
Nonprofit Vote
Founded in 2005, Nonprofit VOTE partners with America's nonprofits to help the people they serve participate and vote. We are the leading source of nonpartisan resources to help nonprofits integrate voter engagement into their ongoing activities and services.
Campaigns and candidates are not focused on promoting equity in our democracy, they are simply trying to win an election.

As such, they focus their limited time and resources on voters with a history of voting. This fuels a negative feedback loop.
Nonprofits have a fundamentally different goal that transcends any one election cycle – to ensure the communities they serve are heard.

Nonprofits have trust, cultural competency, and deep, long-term roots with the communities served.

Our research shows, it works!
501(c)(3) organizations **may conduct nonpartisan voter engagement activities** designed to help the public participate in elections:

- Voter Registration
- Voter Education
- Candidate Engagement
- Get Out The Vote (GOTV)
Five steps for voter registration at a VITA site

1. Learn the rules
2. Get forms
3. Practice making the ask/training
4. Register voters!
5. Quality control and submit forms
Know the Rules

Registration Drives
- Training requirements
- Where/how to obtain forms
- Assisting voters and incomplete forms

Eligibility
- Pre-registration for 16- and 17-year olds
- Voting as an ex-felon
- Voter ID needed
- Absentee/Vote-by-Mail

https://www.fairelectionscenter.org/voter-registration-drive-guides

https://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/
Reach out to explain that you want to start engaging voters
Provide forms & resources, including trainings, sample ballots, and voter guides
Valuable information on website
Develop this relationship so you have a place to go when questions come up

Connect with elections offices to get forms
Recruit and train staff and volunteers

Include the following in any trainings you provide:

- Why voter registration is important
- How to answer FAQs about voting in your state
- How to answer FAQs about the voter registration form
- Making the ask
- Filling out the form
Making the ask

Best practices for talking to voters

DON’T ASK  “Are you registered to vote?”

DO ASK:
• “Did you know you have to update your voter registration every time you move? If you haven’t voted since you last moved you can update your registration by filling out this form.”
• “Our community needs more voters. Can you help out by updating your registration today?”
• “The deadline for voter registration is approaching. Do you have 2 minutes to make sure you’re registered?”
Making the ask

Common responses/questions

IF THEY SAY…
• “Do I need to register if I want tax preparation assistance?”
• “I’m not sure if I’m eligible.”*
• “Which party should I register for?”

RESPOND…
• “No, it is not necessary to register, this is simply an additional service we are offering.”
• “You are eligible to vote if you are over 18, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of this state.”*
• “You can select either party or choose unenrolled. You can change your party later if you want.”

*Some states revoke the voting rights of individuals convicted of felonies. Check the laws in your state and direct filers with a felony conviction to restoreyourvote.org
Filling out the form/Quality control

MOST COMMON MISTAKES

- Forgetting to check the citizenship and age boxes at the top
- Putting a PO box instead of home address
- Putting the day’s date instead of their DOB
- Forgetting to sign and date the form
Quality control and submitting the form

- A visual review of all applications collected – ensure forms are complete before the voter leaves.
- A system for identifying which staff or volunteer collected each application.
- Maintain a separate and secure space for applications you collect.
- Make efforts to prevent duplicate applications.

Be sure to send forms to the correct office promptly (your state will have a law about this, but best practice is within 5 days)
Thank You!

www.NonprofitVOTE.org
Discussion

What questions do you have?

Share them in the Questions box!
Thanks to Today’s Speakers

Jackson Gode
Research Analyst
Brookings Institution

Caitlin Donnelly
Education Director
Nonprofit Vote
Engage with Us!

- Join the Tax Roundtable listserv
  - Go to www.groups.io/g/taxroundtable

- Join the Taxpayer Opportunity Network to receive the latest updates from the field

- Email us with any questions, future learning suggestions, and other feedback at taxpayeropportunity@prosperitynow.org

To join or learn more, go to: prosperitynow.org/get-involved/taxpayer-opportunity-network
Thank you!