



The Associated General Contractors of America

Construction Votes: A Guide to Get Out the Vote.

AGC of America
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA
Quality People. Quality Projects.



A Message from AGC President Al Landes

Dear AGC Member,

Along with ConstructionVotes.com, this guide is designed to promote good government by helping AGC member companies educate their employees about people and policies that impact their jobs and industry, and by providing tools that both you and they can use to shape political and policy outcomes.

Research has revealed three basic facts:

1. Employees **want** to hear from their employers about issues, candidates, and elections.
2. When messages are delivered properly – the employer is found to be a **highly credible** source of political information.
3. Better educated employees become motivated participants in the political and public policy process – increasing voter turnout.

Now, I understand the reservations you may have about discussing candidates, elections and voting issues with your employees. But, rest assured - nothing on the website or in this guide advises employees on how to vote, however, both provide the necessary information to make confident decisions when completing an electoral ballot.

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDEBOOK?

This guidebook is divided into two sections – “GOTV Activities” and “Educating Employees about Candidates & Ballot Initiatives/Referendums.” In the first section, AGC suggests activities that member companies can do to register their employees to vote, and then encourages them to consider early voting or, at the very least, voting on Election Day. The second section includes activities to help employees make informed voting decisions such as publishing a voter guide, distributing a legislator’s voting record, or scheduling jobsite or office tours with candidates.

DO THESE ACTIVITIES WORK?

Absolutely! By Election Day 2014, more than 15,000 individuals visited ConstructionVotes.com and accessed important materials to share with their colleagues, retirees and shareholders about candidates, issues and elections.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We'll be sending out communications regarding elections in the coming year for you to pass on to employees. Please take the time to let employees know about how issues and elections can affect them, and how they can get involved through ConstructionVotes.com.

Together we can make a difference!

Sincerely,

Chuck Greco
2015 AGC President



GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV) ACTIVITIES

Our system of government has served as a model for democracies around the world. Even so, only about half of those eligible in the United States regularly use its most powerful tool: the right to vote. Translation? Only about half of us decide who will represent all of us.

Many fail to understand how critical each vote can be. Consider this: in the 2000 elections, fewer than 10,000 votes determined control of the entire U.S. government. That's only about two votes per elected state or federal official!

Because the cornerstone of our system is a government of the people, increased voter participation can and will improve how that system performs for each of us.

Our nation's businesses are uniquely positioned (and legally allowed) to provide voter education to employees, shareholders, retirees and their families – a large portion of the U.S. population!

Research tells us that **four out of five** workers want information from their employers about candidates, issues and elections. In fact, employees cite their employer as the **single most trusted source** of this information.

Providing voter information to your employees is easy, it's rewarding and, since you talk to your employees every day, it's timely.

We are a nation made up of many voices—and on Election Day, every voice counts.

Remember, there is no limit on the amount of company resources you can devote to the activities described here. There is also no reporting requirement when your efforts are not specific to a candidate or party.

Here are three areas where you can make the most impact:

Conduct a Voter Registration Drive

People fail to vote for a lot of reasons —lack of awareness, apathy, confusion, or the belief that “my vote won’t make a difference.” No matter how well we educate and motivate our employees, it’s important to remember that our work won’t count unless they register to vote. It takes inspiration plus registration to increase voter participation. Because millions of eligible, unregistered voters have jobs, this is an area in which you can have a major impact.

Mobilize your employees by first making sure everyone is registered to vote — and that includes members of their families!

Action items:

- Include a voter registration drive as part of company events: the company picnic, in-house seminars, etc.
- Include voter registration material in employee information packets and in welcome kits for employees relocating to your area.
- Delegate voter registration duties to your managers — ask them to distribute registration materials at staff meetings, and to help employees who may need assistance.
- Use a voicemail tree or send out a broadcast email as critical registration dates near. Do this for both primaries and general elections.

Voter registration drives may be conducted among the general public as long as there is no express advocacy, and opportunities to register are made available to anyone who requests them. Voter registration drives aimed at executives, managers and shareholders can include a recommendation to register in a particular party or on behalf of a particular candidate.





Provide Employees with Early Voting Information

The key to making every vote count is to make every vote easy, no matter what the circumstances.

Personal or business travel, illness, even transportation problems, can prevent people from getting to the polls. It's not difficult to put absentee ballots into the hands of travelers and seniors or others with mobility issues. The rules vary from state to state, but the process is rarely complicated.

One of the easiest ways to get absentee resources is to visit [ConstructionVotes.com](https://www.constructionvotes.com) and follow the instructions for your state. You can also contact your local Board of Elections.

In today's mobile workplace, absentee voting is vitally important — and many people forget they have that option. Let's not lose even one vote!

Action items:

- Remind everyone registering to vote that absentee ballots are available, if needed.
- Send a reminder to anyone traveling on or near Election Day.
- Attach a message to your organization's travel and expense account forms. Include voter information in your company travel policy.
- Send a broadcast email with a link to [ConstructionVotes.com](https://www.constructionvotes.com).
- Add a [ConstructionVotes.com](https://www.constructionvotes.com) button to your company website.

Get Employees to the Polls

Even if you've done everything in your power to prepare people to vote, there's no guarantee everyone will make it to the polls on Election Day.

But remember, even the simplest voter registration efforts on your part can produce high-yield results.

Basic information such as a reminder on Election Day that says where to go and when the polls close is proven to have a strong impact on voter turnout.

Action items:

- Set up a call bank to remind employees and their families about Election Day.
- Mobilize team members to knock on office doors, stop by workspaces and jobsites.
- Distribute information through paycheck stuffers.
- Leave flyers on desks.
- Hang posters in lunchrooms and other public areas.
- Post a reminder on the front page of your company intranet.
- Use a voicemail tree or send out a broadcast email with a reminder and voting information.





* EDUCATING EMPLOYEES ABOUT CANDIDATES & BALLOT INITIATIVES/REFERENDUMS *

Understanding a candidate's stance on important issues as well as understanding the particulars of a ballot initiative/referendum gives a voter the confidence to make an informed decision. If people choose to vote—then exit the polls feeling good about whom they've voted for—they are more likely to participate in future primaries and elections.

No one wants to go to the polls only vaguely informed about the candidates and issues. That may be why only about half of our eligible citizens exercise their right to vote. Lack of knowledge leads to lack of voting.

So, where do we get good information? How do we sort through the daily deluge from candidates, parties, news organizations and others? Whom do we rely on for an expert opinion?

Research tells us that employees want information from their employers regarding candidates, issues and elections. In fact, employers are the **most trusted source** for this kind of information.

That makes the workplace an ideal setting for voter education.

The case is clear: AGC members and chapters have credibility AND opportunity to educate and motivate employees so they can make informed choices at the polls.

As long as you do not specifically endorse a candidate in communications to all employees, there is no limit on the amount of company resources you can invest to inform them about people, platforms and issues of importance to your business.

You are, however, allowed to endorse candidates to the company's executives, managers and shareholders. By helping your employees make informed choices... you're helping them make a better future for construction and for America.

Here are three areas where you can have an impact:

Create a Voter Guide or Candidate Questionnaire

Telling employees about elections, candidates and the issues that affect them constitutes freedom of speech. That is the constitutional right of every American citizen and organization, and cannot be restricted by the government.

Most companies and organizations realize that it is legal to inform voters about a particular issue, even to the point of taking a stand on that issue. And creating a resource that educates about, but does not advocate for, a candidate is also perfectly legal.

Employees need to know the candidates' positions in order to use their votes wisely.

You may create a questionnaire regarding issues of interest to your organization, ask candidates to respond, and then publish the answers in your newsletter, on your intranet or in a handy booklet. You must provide each candidate with an equal opportunity to respond. If a candidate fails to answer a question, or to return the questionnaire, simply indicate "Did not respond" wherever relevant. Typically, these questionnaires can be directed to candidates through their campaign offices.

Action items:

- Prepare a questionnaire and circulate it to candidates.
- Publish candidate answers in a brochure, newsletter or email in the weeks prior to a primary or general election.
- Post the guide on your company's intranet so employees can download it.
- Distribute the information via a broadcast email.
- Host a Voter Information Day and set up a table in your cafeteria or lobby to distribute copies of the voter guide.
- Consider including a link on your company intranet to a non-partisan group that also provides summaries of candidates' backgrounds and platforms, such as the League of Women Voters or Board of Elections.



Distribute Legislators' Voting Records

It is helpful to provide employees with the voting records of incumbents. Being fully informed means knowing how an elected official votes —as well as how that voting record affects business interests.

Action items:

- Post a link on your organization's website or intranet that directs visitors to ConstructionVotes.com.
- Drive traffic to the website using company email or other communication devices.
- Print the online voting records for distribution via bulletin board or company mail.

Arrange a Jobsite or Office Tour

Meeting candidates face-to-face is a memorable experience that makes a big impact come Election Day.

Businesses are allowed to host candidates and/or elected officials under a variety of circumstances.

A business can:

- Invite a candidate or incumbent to give a presentation to employees on an issue of interest.
- Invite a candidate or incumbent to participate in a ribbon-cutting or special ceremony with employees.
- Present a candidate or incumbent with a "good citizenship" or "community leadership" award that recognizes accomplishments.
- Invite a candidate or incumbent to the office or jobsite for a tour.

When a candidate (who may also be an incumbent) is visiting your employees, it is not permissible for the company to endorse the candidate or to discuss the campaign.

The candidate, however, is free to discuss the campaign in his or her remarks and conversations.

If the campaign is discussed by the company or chapter, an equal opportunity must be provided to the candidate's opponent(s), if requested. (NOTE: During the course of a visit, company leadership may endorse a particular candidate in meetings with executives, managers and shareholders only.)

Action items:

- Call a candidate's campaign office to schedule a visit; carefully plan the agenda ahead of time.
- Announce the visit well in advance through your company intranet or newsletter, or via a broadcast voice mail or email.
- Plan time during a visit to educate the candidate about your business, the market in which you operate, and the challenges you face.
- If you plan a special presentation, ribbon-cutting, or other newsworthy event, consider contacting local media (radio, TV, newspapers, community bulletin boards) and "covering" the event in company communications (newsletter, website, etc).

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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