

GOTV 2004

NCCED applauds the work that your organization is currently doing to enhance the lives of people in your community. CDCs have impacted over 25 million people in thousands of communities across the nation.

We know that government is a key partner for our community revitalization efforts. CDCs depend on critical federal programs such as those at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Financial Institutions, Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We also know that community building and organizing is a part of your work. We hope that the enclosed Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Kit will help you educate and mobilize the residents of your community. This Kit is designed to help your nonprofit organization participate in the democratic process, and use it as a vehicle to further empower your community.

The GOTV 2004 Kit Includes:

- ✓ Letter of Commitment (register online or print and fax to NCCED: 202-289-7051)
- ✓ GOTV Flyer (to post in your buildings or flyer your neighborhood)
- ✓ Nonprofits (501c3s) at Election Time: Legal Dos and Don'ts List
- ✓ Sample Candidates' Forum Invitation Letter
- ✓ Sample Press Release
- ✓ Responses to Common Reasons that People Don't Vote
- ✓ Voter Education and Community Empowerment Planning Calendar
- ✓ List of Electronic Links to Additional Voter Education Resources
- ✓ Get Out the Vote/Voter Education Survey (fill out survey online or return fax to NCCED at (202) 289-7051 as soon as possible after Nov. 2nd, 2004)

**GOTV 2004
Commitment Letter**

**G
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2004**

The _____ in _____
(Name of Organization) (Location of Organization)

is very interested in participating in the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED)'s **Get out the Vote 2004 Voter Education and Community Empowerment Campaign (GOTV 2000)**. NCCED is the national trade association for organizations committed to the revitalization of distressed urban and rural communities. The purpose of this campaign is to increase the voting participation of low-income people by encouraging and leveraging the community building activities of the nation's 3,600 community development corporations. Our objective is to assist the community development corporations in encouraging civic participation and promoting a better understanding of public policy and the electoral process in their communities through voter outreach and educational activities. The survey component of this project will be used to produce a manual of "Best Practices" for voter education and community empowerment, which we will make available to participating organizations.

Our organization will:

- Make sure that every member of our staff and Board of Directors votes.
- Fill out the GOTV2004 Starter Kit Request Form
- Put voter guides in our offices and in our buildings
- Host platform issues forums
- Host a Candidate Forum
- Conduct community tours for the candidates
- Arrange transportation for community residents
- Put up fliers urging people to vote
- Work with local employers to encourage voting
- Host Phon-a-thons to remind people to vote
- Alert the media of our activities
- Other (describe): _____
- Report our results to NCCED by filling out and returning the Follow-up Survey.**

Name _____ **Title** _____ **Date** _____

Reason to **VOTE**

With Your Vote, we can elect people who will:

- ✓ build strong community organizations
- ✓ produce affordable housing,
- ✓ create living wage jobs,
- ✓ and revitalize our communities.



With Your Vote, we can protect civil rights,
and strengthen communities and the institutions that serve them.

Reason to **HOPE**

If you need a ride to the polls on Tuesday Nov. 2, 2004, contact:

[Use this space to put poll locations and your organization's contact information.]

Nonprofits at Election Time: Legal and Effective Public Education Campaigns

Nonprofit (501c3) organizations are bound by certain legal limitations regarding political activities such as lobbying and campaigning. Here is a general list of which activities are appropriate which activities are prohibited.

✓ <u>Do</u>	✗ <u>Do Not</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recruit drivers who will be willing to drive people to the polls on Election Day! ✓ Make phone calls to recruit voters who need rides to the polls. Get maps, schedule drivers, and be on time! Get out the vote legally! ✓ Your charity may sell, trade, or rent your membership list to candidates, as long as all candidates are made aware of the opportunity and given the same access. ✓ Host a Public Forum where you invite “all serious candidates” to discuss key issues, giving each candidate equal opportunity to respond to questions. ✓ Inform candidates of your position on particular issues and urge them to go on record in support of these. ✓ Host issues briefings for candidates, as long as these are extended to all candidates running for a particular office. ✓ Testify before a party platform committee as part of a lobbying effort, and report responses to your testimony in your regularly scheduled publication. ✓ Present and disseminate officials’ voting records in a consistent manner year-round. ✓ Publish speeches or remarks made by candidates at the Public Forum as news items in your regular newsletter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Support or oppose any particular political candidate for public office. ✗ Decorate cars used for rides to the polls with candidate stickers, signs, or literature. ✗ Mention candidate or party names, or encourage/discourage a voter based on expressed candidate choice. ✗ State your views or comment on the views of the candidates as expressed at the Public Forum. Don’t display signs or wear buttons or t-shirts relating to candidates’ campaigns. ✗ Publish or distribute statements by candidates (unless they come from a bona fide news report or nonpartisan questionnaire). ✗ Circulate a candidate’s published position paper or statement on an issue to the media, general public, or your charity’s members (until after the election). ✗ Disseminate candidates’ replies from questionnaires that are partisan, biased and/or cover a narrow range of issues. ✗ Wait until a campaign is underway to disseminate a recap of officials’ voting records ✗ Give your membership list to a candidate—this is considered a campaign contribution, and it is illegal. Your charity must be paid fair value in return.

The foregoing information is for general guidance and is not intended to replace legal counsel.

National Congress for Community Economic Development

1030 15th St. NW Suite 325 Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 289-9020, ext. 112

Sample Candidates' Forum Invitation Letter

[Candidate's Title, Name]
[Candidate's Street Address]
[Candidate's City, State, Zip]

Dear ***[Candidate]:***

You are cordially invited to ***[Your Organization here]***s Candidates' Forum to be held ***[Forum date, place, time here]***.

We at ***[Your organization here]*** believe that it is very important that voters have an accurate understanding of the positions of each candidates running for ***[contested office(s) here.]*** In ***[Name of community or region here]*** we are interested in such issues as affordable housing, creation of durable community institutions, job creation, civil rights and ***[add additional issues here]***. As an independent, nonprofit organization our role is to promote discussion of the issues, and provide an opportunity for all candidates to share their priorities for investments that revitalize our communities.

[Your Organization here] is very active in ***[name of community or region here]***. We assist working families, the elderly, youth, and community businesses and residents to revitalize our community. Our residents are primarily ***[African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, rural, urban]*** low- and moderate-income people.

We hope that you will take the time to demonstrate your commitment to the people of ***[name of community or region here]***. Please RSVP to ***[contact information here]*** by ***[date]***.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Organization]

Sample Press Release

[Your Organization here] Announces First-Time Voter Education and Community Empowerment Efforts

For Immediate Release

[Date here]

For More information contact:

[Contact Information here]

[Your Organization here] is hosting a series of nonpartisan voter education and community empowerment events designed to promote confidence and participation in the democratic process. Included in this series are activities such as **[Select and/or add your own activities: hosting a candidate forum on issues such as affordable housing, job creation, and creating durable community institutions, participating in Get Out the Vote activities, Disseminating Voter Education Literature]**. Our kickoff event will be **[event, date, place, time]**.

[Your Organization here] is very active in **[name of community or region]**. We work with families, the elderly, youth, and community businesses and residents to revitalize our community. According to **[Your Organization's President/Director's name, title]**, the initiative "marks an expanded focus for community development corporations such as ours. We believe all citizens have a responsibility to be engaged in the political process. Our residents are primarily **[African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, rural, urban]** low-income people. Their voting participation has been consistently significantly lower than the national average, and we want to reverse this trend. We want to help them recognize and believe that their voices can make a difference in increasing investments, safety and growth in our communities."

Other Events Include:

[Event, date, place, time]

[Event, date, place, time]

[Your organization here] is one of the nation's 3,600 community development corporations represented by the National Congress for Community Economic Development in Washington, D.C.

Reasons Why People are Not Voting And Our Responses to Them

- 1. My vote has little impact on elections and political issues.**
 - In Michigan, an average of one vote per precinct could have resulted in a different Governor for that state. Therefore, in some elections, one vote may be the deciding vote.
 - Elections are won by less than 5%. For those who vote, it will make a difference.
 - If everyone had the same attitude, then society would be governed by the voices of a few.
- 2. I have to work.**
 - Most polling places are opened early in the morning and remain open until early late in the evening.
 - It is legally required in most states that employers give time off to vote.
- 3. If I register I'll get selected for jury duty.**
 - Serving on a jury is part of the democratic process. The justice system and the foundation of our democratic society are based on participation from all walks of life.
 - In the last few years, the pool that they select from for jury duty is not just from registered voters, but those who are registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles. In other words, if you have a driver's license, you can be selected as well.
- 4. I do not have a high level of English.**
 - Some areas have official bilingual ballots or sample ballots.
 - Discuss with your friends how they are voting and why.
- 5. There are too many candidates and issues out there. I cannot remember all this information.**
 - You can bring a "cheat sheet" to the elections to remind you of the issues and candidates of importance.
- 6. My vote does not really matter because no one really listens.**
 - Your vote does count. Elected officials and challengers have extensive polling data that tells them which of their constituent groups actually vote. The views and issues of those groups get extra attention.
- 7. I am too busy to vote.**
 - It only takes a few minutes to vote.
 - Not voting can result in harmful candidates winning the election or issues being made into law that can be costly to you, your family and your community.
 - In many countries, people have no opportunity to participate in the public policy making process. Voting is an easy way to get involved.
- 8. I forgot to register.**
 - Check with your state officials on the registration deadline date. Some states allow you to register days before the elections.
- 9. I am not informed on the issues.**
 - You may request publications on the pros and cons of each issue. You need not be an expert on each issue. You can vote based on the ones of most importance to you.
 - You are not required to vote for all the candidates and issues.
- 10. I am only a student here. I am actually from another state.**
 - You can register to vote in that state using the universal form, and then request an absentee ballot. Or, if you consider this state to be your new residence, you can register.
- 11. I won't be here in November.**
 - You can request an absentee ballot.
- 12. I have a criminal record.**
 - In most states, only people convicted of a felony who have not had their rights restored can't vote.

Voter Education and Community Empowerment Planning Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
October 2000						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Host Meeting w/ Staff to discuss GOTV/VE	18	19 Prioritize/Schedule Events/Activities Assign Staff Check with Board of Directors	20 Take first steps for GOTV/Forum Or VE activity	21
22	23 Procure maps to the poll sites, tape, Signs; Find location for Forum	24	25 <i>Send Invitations to Candidates</i>	26 Copy flyers, pick up refreshments for volunteers/event	27 1 st Literature Drop: distribute flyers	28 Distribute flyers
29 Distribute Flyers	30 Get phone center set-up. Check licenses for drivers.	31 <i>Prepare questions for Candidate Forum</i>				

Voter Education and Community Empowerment Planning Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 2000						
			1 <i>Fax press release to newspapers, TV and radio stations</i> <i>Pick up refreshments for tomorrow!</i>	2 <i>Host Forum or →</i>	3 <i>Host Forum</i>	4 <i>2nd Literature Drop; flyer buildings</i> <i>Send thank you notes to candidates</i>
5 Call residents Flier buildings and community	6 Call residents and ask if they need rides to polls. Don't forget Refreshments!	7 Involve All Staff Election Day! Pass out fliers, drive people to the polls Host a Volunteer Thank You Party!!	8 Obtain election results. Think about your GOTV efforts. What worked best?	9 Return survey to NCCED via mail or fax (contact info on survey).	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

These Links on the World Wide Web offer Excellent Voter Education Resources:

Elections- Link to almost all the resources listed below.

<http://www.govspot.com/categories/elections.htm>

Election 2000- Spotlight on November.

<http://www.govspot.com/election/electionsection.htm>

Vote Smart- Get the facts on candidates, officials.

www.vote-smart.org

Vote Net- Offers broad base of election information.

www.votenet.com

Rock the Vote- Election information with an attitude.

www.rockthevote.org

Voter.com- Connect with the candidates.

www.voter.com

Center for Responsive Politics

<http://www.opensecrets.org/home/index.htm>

Election Notes- Daily international election news.

<http://www.klipsan.com/elecnews.htm>

Find Your Representative

<http://www.lwv.org/cgi-bin/congress.pl?cf=lwv/cong.cf>

Voter Information- Purchase Resources

<http://www.lwv.org/voter/read.html>

Voter Information- Get out and vote, here's how to do it.

<http://www.lwv.org/voter/getout.html>

Federal Election Commission

www.fec.gov

Independent Sector

Includes candidate's statements, questionnaires, voting records, public forums, issue briefings, etc. Check out this link to learn about the opportunities and limitations of voter education activities during political campaigns.

<http://www.independentsector.org/clpi/VoterEducation.pdf>

Get Out The Vote/Voter Education Follow-up Survey

(This survey can be completed online at www.ncced.org/policy/gotv/survey.html)

Please tell us about your Get Out the Vote Activities by answering the following questions.

Organization Name: _____
Contact Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____

1. What voter education activities did you undertake?

- Put voter guides in our offices
- Put voter guides in our buildings (community centers, incubators, apartments, etc.)
- Put out voter registration forms
- Reference voter education materials (city guides, websites, League of Women Voters, etc.)
- Host candidate forums
- Host platform issues forums
- Conduct community tours for the candidates
- Other (describe): _____

2. Please describe your community's response to these voter education activities:

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

3. What GOTV activities did you undertake?

- Arrange transportation for community residents
- Put up fliers urging people to vote
- Distribute buttons, fliers, etc. that encourage people to vote
- Work with local employers to encourage voting (e.g., liberal leave on Election Day)
- Host phone-a-thons to remind people to vote
- Encourage GOTV activities of community volunteers (please explain): _____

- Other: _____

4. Please describe your community's response to these GOTV activities:

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

5. Please give us some details about the Voter Education/GOTV activities your organization undertook:

6. Please list any candidates you worked with:

Candidate's Name	Nat'l/State/Local	What type of activities involved this candidate?

7. Please take a moment to share what practices were most helpful/successful in your Voter Education/GOTV efforts. Thank You.

Please fax back to: (202) 289-7051 // Attn: Policy Department.
You can complete the survey online at: www.nccd.org/policy/gotv/survey.html