



Election 2006: Vote for Homes! Voter Education Ideas



There will be many opportunities to educate voters in a non-partisan way this election year. Below is a suggested outline to help spark discussion. If two people are able to lead the education session, one person can facilitate and the other can write responses on a flipchart or blackboard, if available. You can switch roles halfway through the session to give everyone a chance to facilitate.

Please use your creativity to add on to this outline and let us know what works! You can contact the *Vote for Homes! Coalition* office at 215-232-7272, x3042.

1 - INTRODUCTION:

Introduce yourself and tell the group why you're here. You can use this opportunity to tell a little bit about your story or why you've become involved in the coalition.

Hello. My name is _____ and I'm with the *Vote for Homes! Coalition*. How many of you or someone you know has had problems finding affordable housing? Give them an opportunity to raise their hands.

That's why we are raising the issues of affordable housing, jobs and human services this Election. Does anyone know what offices are being voted on Tuesday, November 7? *(Governor and US Senator for Pennsylvania are the big ones! Others elections include U.S. House of Representatives, Lieutenant Governor, State House of Representatives, State Senator, and ballot questions)*

2 - LEARN ABOUT YOUR VOTING RIGHTS:

So, what are your rights as a voter? I'm going to give you a pop quiz on what your rights are when you go to the polls. I'll make a statement about your voting rights, and I want you to tell me if that statement is true or false. Is that clear? *Let people call out answer. After you explain the correct answer, you might want to make sure that what you said is clear. You could ask, "Do you have any questions?"*

Use attached voting rights quiz called Know Your Voting Rights in Philadelphia: A User-Friendly Voter Rights Quiz. Now is also a good time to pass out the Election 2006 Voter Rights Fact Sheet (available at www.projecthome.org/vote)

3 - CONNECTING THE ISSUES:

If it's a small group or if you have a lot of time:

Let's go around the room and have every one say their name and if you could hear the Pennsylvania candidates for Governor or US Senator talk about one issue, what would it be?

If you have a flip chart, blackboard, dry erase board, etc., write down people's responses.

Additional Suggestions:

If it's a big group or if you have very little time: (or you can use the question from above in the same way)
I want to get an idea of what people think about when they hear the word "voting". For example, when I hear the word "voting" I think of _____. Could you all shout out some words you think about when you hear the word "voting".

We've identified the issues we think are important. How can we do something about these issues? Does any one have ideas about steps we can take to get something done? *Let people talk about their ideas. The ideas don't have to be about voting, though it's important to make sure voting is identified as a step that people can take.*

These are great ideas, and one of our ideas is that we can vote. But we all know that a lot of people don't vote, even though voting helps us accomplish our goals.

ASK: Did you know that...

- *82% of people with annual incomes above \$75,000 are registered and 62% actually vote.
- Comparatively, only 57% of people who earn between \$5,000 and \$9,999 annually are registered to vote, and only 23% went to the polls.
- Voter participation among homeowners is twice that of renters (84.7% - 43.8%). **according to U.S. Census data in case anyone asks*

What do you think keeps people from voting today? *Let people list their ideas.*

How does voting impact our communities? *Let people list their ideas. You can follow-up with an example about how a significant number of people voting from one area of the city impacts their access to services (everything from snow removal to educational opportunities)*

(DO THIS SECTION IF TIME ALLOWS)

4 - LEARN TO APPLY YOUR VOTING RIGHTS:

Today we've talked about what issues are important to you, why voting is important, and what your rights are as a voter. Now that you have this information, you are some of the most well educated voters in Philadelphia. You're probably better educated than the people working at the polls. So what are you going to do if you go to vote and an election official doesn't understand or doesn't know about the voting rights we've just talked about?

Some examples you could use:

An official won't let you have assistance in the voting booth.

The official tells you that you can't vote because you don't have ID.

If you have any problems voting, here is what you can do:

- 1. Tell the Election Official what your rights are. The Officials respect a well informed voter.**

For example, you can say, "If I don't have ID, I am allowed to vote by provisional ballot."

- 2. Show the election official your voting rights fact sheet.**
- 3. Ask the election official to call the County Board of Elections to ask about your problem.**
- 4. If the election official is unable or unwilling to call the County Board of Elections, find a telephone, even if you have to find a pay phone, and call the County Board of Elections yourself.**
- 5. Remember, if you have any problems on Election Day, you can also call Project H.O.M.E. for help. The number is 215-232-7272.**

5 - GET OUT THE VOTE SECTION:

What are our next steps?

- 1. We need to register to vote. Today you can register for the General Election that takes place on November 7.**
- 2. We have to go out and vote. The General Election is on Tuesday, November 7, so make sure you get to the polls!**
- 3. We have to spread the word. I hope that any one who isn't registered yet will register today, but I also want to challenge you. I'd like to give every one here 5 voter registration applications, and I want you to talk to your friends and families about the importance of voting and get those people registered. And once they're registered, we need to encourage every one to use their power and go out to vote.**
- 4. Finally, before you go to the polls on Election Day, get educated about the candidates. We've just talked about what issues you think are important. Now we need to find out where the candidates stand on those issues. (Closer to the General Election, we will have voters guides that will give us this information.)**



ELECTION 2006:

VOTE FOR HOMES!



c/o Project H.O.M.E. 1515 Fairmount Ave., Phila., PA 19130 Ph: (215) 232-7272 Fax: (215) 232-7277

KNOW YOUR VOTING RIGHTS IN PHILADELPHIA: A USER-FRIENDLY VOTER RIGHTS QUIZ

True or False: You can be prevented from voting if you are homeless.

FALSE: You cannot be prevented from voting if you are homeless, just register to vote with the address of a shelter or program that will let you receive mail.

True or False: You can only register to vote if you are 18.

False: You can register and vote as long as you turn 18 on or before the Election Day (Tuesday, November 7, 2006).

True or False: People are not allowed to have help inside the voting booth.

FALSE: Anyone can have assistance with voting inside the voting machine, even if you're not disabled. All you have to do is fill out a form called the Declaration of Assistance available at your polling place on Election Day and choose someone to help you.

True or False: Any one you want can assist you inside the voting booth.

FALSE: You can have any one you choose assist you inside the voting booth EXCEPT your employer, your union leader, or the Judge of Elections.

True or False: In Philadelphia, you can only vote in English.

FALSE: In Philadelphia County, Federal law requires that all election material, including ballot, be available in English and Spanish.

True or False: You can bring your kids into the polls with you.

TRUE: Bringing your kids to vote with you helps to teach the next generation that voting is important.

True or False: You can vote while you are in prison if you are convicted of a misdemeanor.

TRUE: You can vote from a penal institution by absentee ballot if you are convicted of a misdemeanor.

True or False: You can't vote if you're a felon.

FALSE: The law that required convicted felons to wait five years before being allowed to vote was eliminated in 2000. Now all convicted felons have the right to vote as long as they are released from prison and not in a halfway house on pre-release status.

True or False: You can't vote if you're on probation, parole, or house arrest.

FALSE: People who are on probation, parole, or house arrest have the right to vote. Also, people who are awaiting trial can vote, even if they're in prison. The only period of time when convicted felons are not able to vote is when they are both in prison and serving their sentence (this includes people on pre-release status).

True or False: You have to have ID to vote.

TRUE and FALSE: THIS IS A TRICKY ONE. If you are a first time voter or if you are voting for the first time at a polling site, you will be asked to present ID. So, it's a good idea to bring ID with you to the polling site. But if you forget your ID or if you don't have ID, you are allowed to vote by a paper ballot called a provisional ballot.

True or False: Your voter ID card can be used as ID when you vote.

TRUE: You can use your voter ID card as ID when you vote. If you haven't received your ID card yet or if you've lost your voter ID card, you can call the City Commissioners office, and they will send you a new card (215-686-1590). Some other acceptable forms of ID include: PA driver's license, any ID issued by PENNDOT, a passport, Armed forces ID, an Employee ID, a utility bill, a bank statement, or a paycheck. Just remember, if you don't have ID, you are still allowed to vote by provisional ballot!

For more information about voter rights in Pennsylvania, visit www.votespa.org or contact Jennine Miller, Project H.O.M.E., at 215-232-7272 or jenninemiller@projecthome.org.