



ELECTION 2020: EDELMAN POV

PREPARING EMPLOYEES FOR ELECTION DAY

This year, it's possible that we may see significantly decreased in-person voter turnout, due to ongoing concerns about safety and health concerns related to Covid-19. States are changing their policies to adapt to the pandemic, and it is critically important that information and resources are shared from all decision-makers and leaders, and all citizens have accurate information on this upcoming election.

As we saw in the [2020 Edelman Trust Barometer](#), 92 percent of employees surveyed say that they expect their employer's CEO to speak up on one or more issues—ranging from income inequality to diversity to training for jobs of the future. And while 71 percent of employees state “my employer” is the most trusted institution in the response to issues such as systemic racism, there is still a gap between expectations and delivery, with 44 percent stating that they believe the business community has “done very little” to address these issues.

The bottom line? Employees are looking towards their employers to act on issues that impact them, and it's therefore imperative that businesses demonstrate their commitment to engaging their employees in opportunities for civic engagement.

There are many ways that companies can get involved and promote civic engagement amongst employees, including:

Offering Employees Paid Time Off

- **Offer paid time off for early voting or in-person voting on Election Day.** This can be a few hours or the whole day off—providing a dedicated amount of paid time off to vote demonstrates to employees that the organization fully supports the exercise of the democratic process. Additionally, given how much of an emotional toll this election could have on your workforce, consider offering additional paid time off post-election to allow employees to take a moment to reflect.
- **Adjust as needed.** While not all employees will be able to take time off to go to the polls on Election Day, employers need to make sure all employees have equitable access to information and materials on early voting or absentee ballots, so that their voices can still be heard.

Partner with Non-Partisan Organizations to Encourage Employees to Vote

- **Partner with an organization** like [Time to Vote](#) or [When We All Vote](#) to commit to providing employees with dedicated time off to vote and information about the upcoming election.

Provide Employees with Important Civic Engagement Information

- **Share leader communications** to all employees encouraging people to register to vote, take time off to vote, and educate employees on the latest voting guidelines (state, county) during Covid-19. [For example, the CEO of Levi Strauss](#), Chip Bergh, wrote an open letter encouraging companies to give their employees time off to vote.
- **Help employees understand** issues around voter suppression and provide resources that educate employees on their voting rights. Make voting more accessible through safe transportation. ([Lyft and Uber are offering free rides to the polls on election day](#)).
- **Highlight the importance** of down-ballot races by sharing information on local candidates with your employees and providing materials on local races as well.

- **Encourage employees to get involved locally and volunteer.** Voter initiatives like [Power to the Polls](#) and [Civic Alliance](#) partner with corporations to encourage non-partisan volunteering and combating voter suppression.
- **Make sure all employees feel included.** [Although non-US citizens](#) who are green-card holders/lawful permanent residents are not allowed to vote, they can still contribute by donating to political campaigns or [volunteer as poll workers](#) (varies on a state-by-state basis).
- **Consider donating to grassroots organizations** and creating an employer-match during a designated time period (e.g. 3 weeks) prior to the election day (1:1 match).

Foster an Inclusive Environment and Provide Employees with a Dedicated Resource Center

- **Companies cannot and should not mitigate conversations around politics in the workplace.** This includes if, and how, employees choose to campaign for candidates on their personal time through their personal social media channels.
 - Organizations and leaders should create inclusive spaces for employees to share information, provide resources to one another, and engage in productive conversations. This can include bringing in non-partisan speakers to discuss the importance of voting and the implications if you do not.
- **Another way to foster an inclusive environment** for employees is to create a hub on your organization’s intranet with resources and share information around voting—how to vote, how to register, participate in volunteer opportunities, etc.
- **Use other internal communications vehicles to spread the word** and avoid email overload—Slack channels, newsletters, team meetings, etc. to reinforce your commitment on this topic with your employees. Make sure to leverage your company’s ERGs and host voting informational sessions to inform different employee groups about the importance of voting.

The current landscape is compounded with many different factors that can affect employees, from health concerns, to issues around social justice, and employers are tasked with the responsibility and moral obligation to educate, inform and support employees through this tumultuous time.