

DEMOCRACY2025

To: Democracy 2025 Partners
From: Democracy Forward Foundation
Re: Nonprofit Civic Engagement & Voter Registration Activities in 2026
Date: May 1, 2026

I. Overview

Even in a climate marked by heightened political tension and ongoing threats to voting access, nonpartisan voter and civic engagement by nonprofit organizations remains lawful. The core legal framework has not changed: nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations may continue to register, educate, and mobilize voters so long as they do so in a nonpartisan way, that is without favoring or opposing any candidate or party. Although the risk environment feels different in 2026, the substantive legal framework at the federal level has not changed.

However, in addition to nonpartisanship rules, many states have enacted laws that can make voter engagement work more complex from a compliance perspective. For example, while almost all states allow voter registration drives, Wyoming and New Hampshire ban them entirely, and a number of states have implemented restrictions, including registration and training requirements.¹ Other states have introduced restrictive voter assistance bills over the last several months.² As a result, organizations should be attentive to state-specific rules and consult counsel to ensure their programs are designed to comply with local law.

II. Resources for Nonprofits Organizations Conducting Voter and Civic Engagement Activities

- Overarching guidance on voter and civic engagement:
 - The 2024 overarching [Voter Engagement Guide](#) from the National Council of Nonprofits and Nonprofit VOTE contains comprehensive information for nonprofits navigating the space.
 - Nonprofit VOTE has also provided an [update](#) specific to navigating the threat landscape for voter registration in 2026. These resources feature the Fair Elections Center and *provide an overview of evolving state laws affecting voter registration drives, highlighting compliance challenges and strategies for adapting to new legal requirements.*

¹ For example, Texas has implemented particularly onerous [restrictions](#). To register voters in the state, a person has to be appointed as a volunteer deputy registrar and undergo a training program, among other requirements.

² For example, in January 2026, the Kansas state legislature introduced a [bill](#) that would prohibit online voter registration unless a website uses a .gov domain or is explicitly approved by the secretary of state.

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [Webinar Recording](#)
- The 2023 overarching [Nonprofit Voter Engagement Playbook](#) from Independent Sector also provides helpful and practical guidance.
- Alliance for Justice's [Practical Guidance: Nonprofit Voter Assistance Series](#) provides state-by-state guidance on voter assistance and civic engagement.

Below are additional, more in-depth resources regarding conducting nonpartisan voter registration activities, specifically.

- Alliance for Justice
 - [Voter Registration](#) (2/3/26): *A Question & Answer-style resource addressing common legal questions nonprofits face when conducting voter registration activities, with guidance on compliance and risk avoidance.*
 - [State Bills Target Nonprofits Nationwide](#) (2/22/26): *An overview of recent state legislation that may restrict nonprofit civic engagement, including voter registration efforts, and the broader implications for the sector.*
 - [Nonprofits, Elections, & the Fine Art of Remaining Nonpartisan](#) (1/15/26): *A resource with guidance on how nonprofits can engage in election-related work while maintaining strict nonpartisanship, with practical examples and compliance tips.*
- Fair Elections Center
 - [Voter Registration Drive Guides](#) by state (2025): *A collection of state-specific guides detailing rules, deadlines, and best practices for conducting voter registration drives in compliance with local laws.*
- Nonprofit VOTE
 - [State-by-State Fact Sheets](#), click on each state to download a resource on voter registration drive guidelines: *Concise, downloadable summaries of voter registration rules and guidelines for each state, designed as quick-reference tools for nonprofits.*
- Movement Advancement Project:
 - [Restrictions on 3rd Party Voter Registration Drives](#) (2024), click on each state on the map to learn more: *An interactive map outlining state-level restrictions on third-party voter registration drives, allowing users to compare policies across different states.*
- The Center for Public Integrity
 - [Article](#) on state restrictions on voter registration drives (5/16/24): *An investigative piece examining how various states have enacted laws limiting voter registration drives and the impact on organizations conducting them.*