

## Tips on Building Partnerships: Coalition-Building Dos and Don'ts

Efforts to promote the vote can be amplified through partnerships with local and national 501(c)(3) groups who share NCJW's goal of ensuring broad participation in the electoral process. Coalitions unite a group of individuals and/or organizations with a common interest that agree to work together toward a common goal. Elections provide a great opportunity to seek out new partners. The effectiveness of your promote the vote efforts can go hand-in-hand with building trust and working relationships with organizations and individuals with whom you may not typically work.

### Getting Started:

- ▶ Investigate whether there are existing nonpartisan coalitions in your community, city, or state working to promote and protect the vote.
- ▶ Contact interested 501(c)(3) organizations to invite them to participate in your Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote activities.
- ▶ Follow up written or electronic invitations or introductions with personal phone calls.
- ▶ Build on connections you already have with community organizations.
- ▶ Develop a plan with coalition partners and implement, monitor, and adjust the plan together.

### Do:

- ▶ **Use activities to build working relationships with other organizations.** Collaborate through co-sponsored educational events, GOTV efforts, voter registration drives, and other events aimed at promoting and protecting the vote.
- ▶ **Use available resources.** Before creating something from scratch, check out the resources included and/or referenced in this guide or those available from other partners.
- ▶ **Be inclusive and participatory.** Work to make the coalition a group in which anyone in the community will feel welcome. Seek diverse partners.
- ▶ **Acknowledge diversity among your members.** Your coalition may represent a diversity of opinions and individuals. Make sure to take everyone's perspective into account and use that diversity to spur discussion rather than let it become a source of division.
- ▶ **Communicate.** Open communication will assure that no one feels left out of the loop, and that everyone has the information necessary to make coalition efforts successful. Create a listserv for your group. Use social media to organize.
- ▶ **Set concrete, reachable goals.** Achieving attainable goals can help a coalition develop the strength and motivation to pursue and achieve longer-term goals.
- ▶ **Be realistic and keep your promises.** It's important to be viewed as a reliable ally. Make sure you can follow through on everything you say you will do.

### Don't:

- ▶ **Don't work in partnership with parties, candidates, or other political organizations** such as 501(c)(4) advocacy groups. If working with a 501(c)(4) organization, or a 501(c)(3) organization that also has a 501(c)(4) component, be absolutely certain that the activity will be conducted in a nonpartisan fashion.
- ▶ **Don't reinvent the wheel.** One of the benefits of working in coalition is that you can share resources. Save time and money by maximizing your partnerships.
- ▶ **Don't give the impression of partisanship.** Be careful not to allow your efforts to be timed in such a way as to appear to coincide with politically significant events in a particular candidate's campaign.