



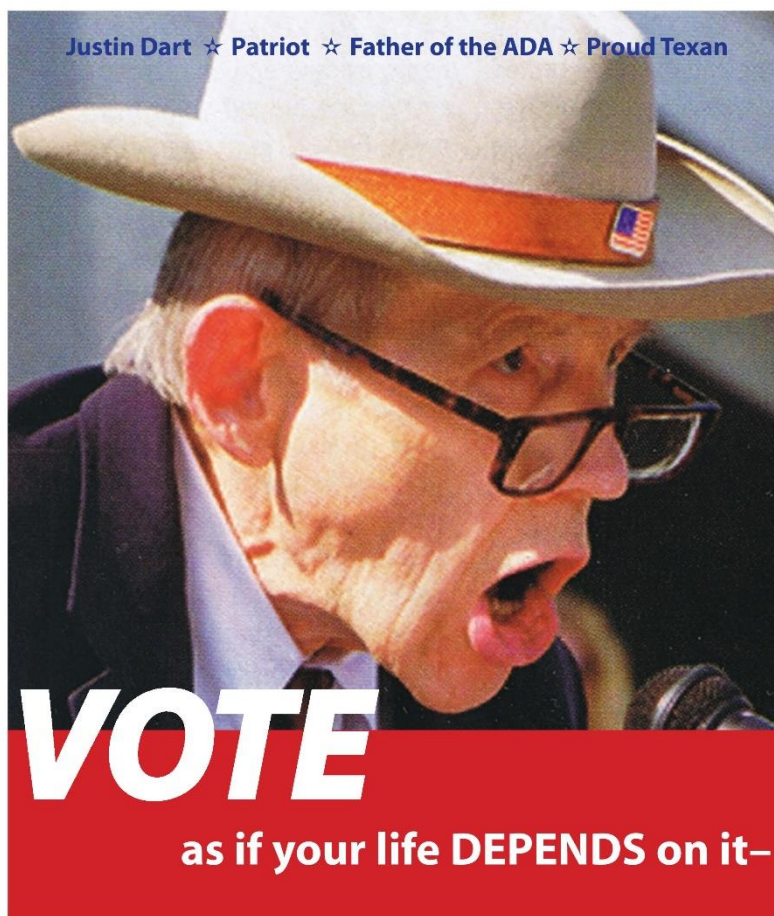
# National Disability Voter Registration Week

TOOLKIT

*July 15-19, 2019*

# Table of Contents

<a href="#">Introduction</a>	2
<a href="#">Organizing Voter Registration Events</a>	3
<a href="#">Other Ways to Engage in NDVRW</a>	7
<a href="#">Data Collection</a>	8
<a href="#">Partnerships</a>	11
<a href="#">Outreach and Promotional Materials</a>	12
<a href="#">Resources</a>	18
<a href="#">Acknowledgements</a>	19



***Because it DOES!***

*Photo of Justin Dart with text: "VOTE as if your life depends on it - Because it DOES!"*

# Introduction

The [REV UP Campaign](#) is coordinating **National Disability Voter Registration Week (NDVRW)** during the week of **July 15-19, 2019** to make a concerted effort to get people with disabilities registered to vote, educated about this year's election, and prepared to cast a ballot in November. With numerous events and activities happening around the country during this time, we also hope to garner attention from media and candidates running for office. Moving forward, we plan to hold NDVRW annually in the third week of July, just before the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The REV UP Campaign, launched by the [American Association of People with Disabilities \(AAPD\)](#) in 2016, is a nonpartisan initiative that coordinates with national, state, and local disability organizations to increase the political participation of the disability community while also engaging candidates and the media on disability issues. The Campaign focuses on voter registration, education, access, and engagement. REV UP stands for *Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!*

People with disabilities accounted for over 35 million eligible voters in 2016, according to [Rutgers University](#). That figure jumps to over 62 million eligible voters when you count family members in the same household. The power of the disability vote has the potential to ensure that all candidates address issues that are important to people with disabilities. NDVRW mobilizes and demonstrates the power of the disability vote!

## Success of Past NDVRWs

- In 2017, over 150 national, state, and local organizations endorsed the REV UP Campaign and NDVRW.
- In 2017, our partners coordinated 106 events across 20 states during NDVRW, versus 22 events across 11 states in 2016.
- In 2016 and 2017, the REV UP Campaign received a joint letter of support from former Senators Bob Dole and Tom Harkin endorsing NDVRW.
- In 2016 and 2017, the US Election Assistance Commission issued a letter of support endorsing NDVRW.
- In 2016 and 2017, over 150 people registered for the annual NDVRW planning call.
- In 2016 and 2017, the REV UP Campaign and NDVRW received a significant amount of social media attention through the use of the #REVUP and #NDVRW hashtags, indicating broad stakeholder support.

## Using this Toolkit and Reporting Back to the REV UP Campaign

Use this Toolkit as a guide to organize your own voter registration events or other activities during National Disability Voter Registration Week 2019.

**Planned Events** – If you plan events for NDVRW (or at other times during the year) please report them back to the REV UP Campaign. You can use this [REV UP Events Form](#) or email [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com).

**Voter Registrations and Pledges** – Please report the number of voters who complete a voter registration form or pledge to vote form during your event. You can use this [NDVRW Reporting Form](#) or email [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com).

# Organizing Voter Registration Events

Getting people with disabilities registered to vote is the first step to increasing our community's voice.

## Best Practices for Hosting Voter Registration Drives

Know your state's voter registration laws. Is there a required training or certification for anyone registering new voters? Are there rules on how soon a registration must be turned in after paperwork is filled out? [Contact your state or local Election Office](#) for more information about the rules and guidelines in your state.

## Getting Ready

- Pick a date/ time, and location  
*(recommended 6 weeks before event)*
  - Successful date/time
    - Keep [election dates](#) in mind – take advantage of deadlines
    - When will you see the most traffic?
    - Are you competing with any conflicting events in your community?
    - Is there a community event/large gathering already happening that you can join?
  - Identify a good location
    - Define your target population
    - High-traffic areas (steady stream, not crowded locations) or door-to-door canvassing
    - Focus on communities with a history of low turnout and registration
    - Get permission to host the drive, if needed
    - Make a list of all logistical needs
- Publicize Event  
*(recommended at least 4 weeks before event)*
  - Begin publicizing the activity through your mail, email, and social media networks
  - Reach out to other organizations in the community and ask them to promote the event
  - Recruit and train volunteers if needed
    - Publicize your drive on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Send an email to a friends, colleagues, or family and encourage them to share your event with their networks
    - Make sure that everyone in your group feels prepared
      - Confirm logistics
      - Know your state's rules on voter registration
  - Start gathering materials you will need

- Gather Supplies  
(Recommended 1 week before the event)
  - Tables and chairs
  - Smartphones, tablets, laptops (if online registration is available in your state)
  - Clipboards
  - Sign-in sheet to track the people you register (can be paper forms or on a computer)
  - Pledge forms for people who are already registered to vote (can be paper forms or on a computer, see below for examples)
  - Black/blue pens
  - Posters, banners, and signs that say "Register to Vote Here"
  - List of election dates and deadlines
  - List of polling places in the community
  - Snacks for staff and volunteers (water bottles, granola bars, etc.)
- Think about Accessibility
  - Wheelchair (or mobility device) access
  - American sign language interpreters
  - Materials available in alternate formats

### During the Drive

- Ensure all volunteers know their assigned roles
- Have all supplies ready
- Table Talk
  - The table is for meeting, training volunteers, registration, and holding supplies. If possible, get out from behind the table when interacting with people. Stay active and energetic – grab a clipboard and engage people directly
  - Non-registered voters will rarely self-identify – instead ask people if they need to “register or UPDATE their registration”
  - Remain nonpartisan – only ask about party affiliation if it is a required part of the registration, and make sure no one is denied registration or treated differently because of their party affiliation.
- Manage Expectations
  - Don’t’ be discouraged if you do not have people approaching your table
  - Take nothing personally
  - Be kind and professional

## After the Drive

- Promptly turn in the forms to the Elections Office for processing
- Evaluate the success of your drive
  - Did you select a good date/time?
  - Was your location successful (high-traffic, visible to passersby, etc.)?
  - Did your table attract attention?
  - Did you have enough volunteers?
  - Did you target the right population?
  - How many voters did you register?
- Tally and report your voter registration and voter pledge numbers
  - Share this information with event partners
  - **Share this data with the national REV UP Campaign** by completing the [NDVRW Reporting Form](#) or by emailing [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com). We are trying to track our overall REV UP impact. Having concrete voter registration and engagement numbers helps us demonstrate the power of the disability community!

## Other Voter Registration Guides

- [Voter Registration Resource Library](#)

Nonprofit VOTE offers a host of resources on a variety of topics relating to voter engagement. Their section on voter registration includes:

  - A Voter Registration Toolkit
  - Seven Reasons for a Nonprofit to Do Voter Registration
  - A Voter Registration Checklist
  - Voter Registration Training Video
  - Sample Script for Voter Registration
- [Voter Registration Drive Kit](#)

ElectionTools.org is a collection of guidelines and tools to assist community organizations with planning and holding successful voter registration events.
- [Voter Engagement Toolkit](#)

United Way offers a comprehensive voter engagement toolkit that includes a guide for planning and conducting a voter registration event. The guide also addresses voter education, connecting with candidates, ballot measures, utilizing social media, and more.

## Video Resources

- Voter Education Series ([English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [American Sign Language](#))  
*This video series from Indiana Disability Rights explores why you should vote, how to register to vote, knowing your rights at the polls, and how to be an informed voter.*
- [Registering to Vote](#) – South Carolina Protection & Advocacy
- [Voting in Iowa: Registering to Vote](#) – ID Action
- [Getting Registered to Vote](#) – SignVote (American Sign Language)
- [Voting Requirements](#) – SignVote (American Sign Language)

## Pledge to Vote

What if someone is already registered to vote? That's great! You can still have a meaningful interaction with the voter by asking them to complete a Pledge to Vote form. Completing this form allows you to keep a tally of voter engagement while also gathering information so you can follow-up with a reminder to vote in advance of Election Day.

- **REV UP Campaign Pledge to Vote** ([Online Form](#) | [Microsoft Word document](#))  
*Feel free to use the REV UP form or modify it for your own organization.*

## Voter ID Requirements

Many states have voter identification (ID) requirements that voters must meet in order to cast a ballot. It is important to be aware of these laws and secure the proper ID in advance of Election Day.

- [Electionary](#)  
Electionary provides an online guide to state election laws in the US.
- [VoteRiders](#)  
VoteRiders offers wallet-sized Voter ID Info Cards (in English and Spanish) for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each card provides a breakdown of the voter ID requirements in that specific state. VoteRiders provides voter ID assistance, including pro bono lawyers to citizens in every state. They also host a Voter ID Hotline: 1-844-338-8743.
- [Spread The Vote](#)  
Spread The Vote provides direct assistance to help voters obtain the proper identification to vote in their state. They are currently active in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

## Submit Information About Your NDVRW Events

The national REV UP Campaign wants to know about any events or activities you plan for NDVRW (and throughout the year) so we can update our [REV UP State Resources and Events page](#) to promote your event and keep a record of voting activities.

- [Submit information about your planned event\(s\) here](#) or by emailing [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com).

# Other Ways to Engage with NDVRW

## Activate Your Social Media

One of the best ways you can engage in NDVRW is to use your social media to raise awareness and encourage others to register to vote. You can find samples posts, a press release, and images in the Outreach Materials section of this toolkit. Be sure to use **#REVUP** and **#DisabilityVote19** when you post!

## Promote Online Registration

Online registration is an important innovation that can greatly improve the ease of registering to vote. **Rock the Vote's [Online Voter Registration \(OVR\) platform](#)** provides a simple solution for modern voter registration. Nonprofits can customize the platform for their organization and add links or widgets to their website. The tool makes it easy to track the number of voters you register. It also includes voter contact information that allows organizations to follow up with a reminder to vote in advance of Election Day.

- [REV UP Campaign Online Voter Registration](#)

### How it works:

- Nonprofits can embed a customized widget on their website or link to a customized OVR platform web page
- Individuals enter their information (name, address, email, and phone number) into the tool
- If a voter is from a state that allows online voter registration, the OVR tool will automatically complete the registration process for that voter
- If a voter is from a state that does not allow online voter registration, the OVR tool will prepare the necessary voter registration form that that voter will need to print out and mail (or deliver in person) to their state/local Elections Office.

While online voter registration is a convenient option, it is not available in every state. Thirty-eight states, plus the District of Columbia, currently or will soon [offer online voter registration](#):

- |                |                   |                    |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Alabama     | 14. Iowa          | 27. Oklahoma       |
| 2. Alaska      | 15. Kansas        | 28. Oregon         |
| 3. Arizona     | 16. Kentucky      | 29. Pennsylvania   |
| 4. California  | 17. Louisiana     | 30. Rhode Island   |
| 5. Colorado    | 18. Maryland      | 31. South Carolina |
| 6. Connecticut | 19. Massachusetts | 32. Tennessee      |
| 7. Delaware    | 20. Minnesota     | 33. Utah           |
| 8. Florida     | 21. Missouri      | 34. Vermont        |
| 9. Georgia     | 22. Nebraska      | 35. Virginia       |
| 10. Hawaii     | 23. Nevada        | 36. Washington     |
| 11. Idaho      | 24. New Mexico    | 37. West Virginia  |
| 12. Illinois   | 25. New York      | 38. Wisconsin      |
| 13. Indiana    | 26. Ohio          |                    |



## Host a Training

### Voter Rights Training

Another way that your organization can get involved is to work with your state's protection and advocacy system (P&A) to host a voter training. The P&A system is a federally-funded network of advocacy agencies dedicated to disability rights, including the right to vote. [Find your state P&A here.](#)

As you consider hosting a training, keep the following topics in mind:

- Why it is important to vote
- How and when to register to vote
- How to become an informed voter
- Ways to vote in your state
- Voters' rights at the polls

### Voting Machine Demonstration

You can also consider working with your [local Elections Office](#) to host a training about your state's voting laws and how to use voting machines. Providing an opportunity for voters to practice using the machines may increase their confidence and follow-through. This type of event can easily be paired with a registration drive.

## Develop and Distribute a Candidate Questionnaire

A candidate questionnaire is a great tool to help the disability community learn more about candidates, and specifically how those candidates would address issues that impact people with disabilities. They also educate the candidates and make them more aware of the issues that are important to the disability community.

- [Access the REV UP Candidate Questionnaire Template](#)

## Organize and/or Attend Candidate Forums

A candidate forum is a great tool to help the disability community learn more about the candidates in a race while providing an opportunity to interact with them directly. Forums are a space where candidates can directly address issues that affect the disability community. They also educate the candidates and make them more aware of the issues that are important to the disability community.

- [Access the REV UP Candidate Forum Guide](#)

## Request a Proclamation

A great way to raise awareness about NDVRW is to advocate for your state, city, town, etc. to recognize it. You can reach out to your Governor, Mayor, City Council, County Commissioner, State Representative, etc. to request that they issue a proclamation declaring the week in question National Disability Voter Registration Week ([a draft Proclamation is available here](#)). This is a great way to develop or leverage a relationship with your local and state government. Please send any Proclamations you get to [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com) so we can show the power and support of REV UP across the country!

## Measuring Our Success

An important part of building our political power is collecting data and building lists to show that millions of people with disabilities are registered and plan to vote. In 2016, [Rutgers University estimated that 35.4 million people with disabilities are eligible to vote](#) – and this number increases to 62.7 million eligible voters, or 25% of the total electorate, when we include family members of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, only 16 million people with disabilities voted in the November 2016 elections, a turnout rate 6% lower than that of people without disabilities ([Lisa Schur and Douglas Kruse, Rutgers University](#)). The Rutgers study also found that the voter registration rate of people with disabilities was 2% lower than that of people without disabilities.

### Share Information about Your Event

[Use this online form](#) or email [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com) to share information about any REV UP or voting events you are planning. These will be added to the [State Resources and Events](#) page on AAPD's website.

### Counting Voter Registrations

There are several strategies outlined below to keep track of the number of voters you register during NDVRW and throughout the year.

#### Use Rock the Vote's Online Voter Registration Platform

Rock the Vote's [Online Voter Registration \(OVR\) platform](#) provides a simple solution for modern voter registration. Nonprofits can customize the platform for their organization and add links or widgets to their website. The tool makes it easy to track the number of voters you register. It also includes voters' contact information so organizations can follow up with a reminder to vote in advance of Election Day.

- [REV UP Campaign Online Voter Registration](#)

#### *How it works:*

- Nonprofits can embed a customized widget on their website or link to a customized OVR platform web page
- Individuals enter their information (name, address, email, and phone number) into the tool
- If a voter is from a state that allows online voter registration, the OVR tool will automatically complete the registration process for that voter (see page 8 of this packet for a list of states that currently or will soon offer online voter registration)
- If a voter is from a state that does not allow online voter registration, the OVR tool will prepare the necessary voter registration form that the voter will need to print out and mail (or deliver in person) to their state/local Elections Office.

#### Track Voter Registrations in a Separate Document

A simple Microsoft Excel spreadsheet can be used to keep a tally of the number of voters you register.

## Keep a Copy of the Voter Registration Form

If you are collecting physical (paper) voter registration forms to bring to the local Elections Office, you may be able to make a copy of those forms for your records. NOTE: Since state laws on copying voter registration forms vary, be sure to check in with your local Elections Office on the proper procedure and whether any training, certification, or other qualification are required to register voters in your state.

## Pledge to Vote

What if someone is already registered to vote? That's great! You can still have a meaningful interaction with the voter by asking them to complete a Pledge to Vote form. Completing this allows you to keep a tally of your voter engagement while also gathering the necessary information to follow up with a reminder to vote in advance of Election Day.

- **REV UP Campaign Pledge to Vote** ([Online Form](#) | [Microsoft Word Document](#))  
*Feel free to use the REV UP form or modify it for your own organization.*



## Reporting Voter Registrations and Pledges to Vote

At the end of NDVRW, please report the number of voters who complete a voter registration form or Pledge to Vote form to the national REV UP Campaign. You can do this by completing the online [National Disability Voter Registration Week Reporting Form](#) or by emailing [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com).

## Partnerships

You don't have to go it alone with your voter registration efforts. The REV UP Campaign encourages area disability organizations to work collaboratively on voter engagement. Similarly, many national, state, and local civic organizations that already work on voter registration may be interested in partnering with disability organizations.

### Engaging Other Disability Organizations

The REV UP Campaign is a coalition of national, state, and local disability organizations as well as individuals and some non-disability organizations. There are no restrictions on who can or cannot be a part of the REV UP Campaign. Common partners include representatives from the following types of disability organizations:

- [State Protection and Advocacy Agencies](#)
- [Local Centers for Independent Living](#)
- [State Independent Living Councils](#)
- [State Developmental Disabilities Councils](#)
- [State and local chapters of The Arc](#)

Check the list of [REV UP State Resources and Events](#) to see if events are already being organized in your area. You can also reach out to [programs@aapd.com](mailto:programs@aapd.com) for assistance connecting with other REV UP advocates in your state.

### Engaging State and Local Libraries

The REV UP Campaign is proud to collaborate with [EveryLibrary](#) to bring NDVRW to state and local libraries all across the country. In 2017, over 150 libraries participated in NDVRW. These libraries promoted the week and participated through programming, outreach, public education, and voter registration partnerships or on-site services.

- [If you are a library interested in participating in NDVRW, please sign-up with EveryLibrary.](#)  
*The REV UP Campaign and EveryLibrary have developed a NDVRW Toolkit specifically for libraries.*

### Engaging the State and Local League of Women Voters

The [League of Women Voters](#) has been working to register, educate, and engage voters since 1920. They have a strong infrastructure in place and support their members working with the REV UP Campaign. Several state REV UP Campaigns already partner with their state or local League. The League of Women Voters is active in all 50 states with over 700 state and local chapters.

- [Find your Local League](#)

### Engaging the State and Local Elections Office

Your state Elections Office can provide statewide voting guidance on voter registration and may be interested in partnering on voter registration or education events. It is a good idea to check in with your state Elections Office to make sure you understand the voter registration rules in your state.

- [Find your state Elections Office](#)

# Outreach and Promotional Materials

## Press Release Template

The press release template linked below is open for REV UP partners to use and modify as they see fit to promote their involvement with National Disability Voter Registration Week.

- [Press Release Template – REV UP National Disability Voter Registration Week 2018](#)

Some considerations for your press release:

- Please use “National Disability Voter Registration Week” and mention the REV UP Campaign in your release. This helps us build brand awareness around NDVRW and identifies the REV UP Campaign as a national effort to increase the political power and participation of people with disabilities.
- Clearly indicate the details about your voter registration events (date, time, location, and organizer contact information).
- Send the release to state and local media in advance of your event.

## Sample Social Media Posts

Be sure to use **#REVUP** and **#DisabilityVote18** when you post! You can also tag [@AAPD](#) on Twitter and [@DisabilityPowered](#) on Facebook.

National Disability Voter Registration Week 2019 is July 15-19 – Get registered!

[www.aapd.com/NDVRW](http://www.aapd.com/NDVRW)

#REVUP #DisabilityVote19

"VOTE as if your life depends on it—Because it DOES!" - Justin Dart

#REVUP #DisabilityVote19

[www.aapd.com/REVUP](http://www.aapd.com/REVUP)

*[post with the Justin Dart graphic]*

Not registered to vote? The #REVUP Campaign has got you covered! Check out their online voter registration tool powered by @RockTheVote: [www.aapd.com/NDVRW](http://www.aapd.com/NDVRW)

#DisabilityVote18

Are you ready to #REVUP for National Disability Voter Registration Week 2019? Learn how you can get involved this July. #DisabilityVote19

[www.aapd.com/NDVRW](http://www.aapd.com/NDVRW)

Ask your state and local elected officials to declare the week of July 15-19, 2019 as National Disability Voter Registration Week! Find a sample proclamation at [www.aapd.com/NDVRW](http://www.aapd.com/NDVRW).

#REVUP #DisabilityVote19

[insert your organization’s name] is proud to be a part of the REV UP Campaign to increase the political power of the disability community! #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

Learn more at [www.aapd.com/REVUP](http://www.aapd.com/REVUP)

[insert your organization's name] is participating in National Disability Voter Registration Week this year! Visit [link to organizational website with event information] to learn more about our upcoming voter registration events! #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

In 2016, over 35 million people with disabilities were eligible to vote, but only 16 million did. Help us make sure our community is registered, educated, and engaged to exercise their civil right to vote! #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

[www.aapd.com/REVUP](http://www.aapd.com/REVUP)

Want to #REVUP your state? Check out this list of state resources and events to see who is already organizing and where you can get involved. #DisabilityVote19

<https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/state-resources-and-events/>

Voting policies vary by state - know the rules before going to the ballot box. Use this tool from @RockTheVote to learn about the voting policies in your state. #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

<https://www.rockthevote.org/voting-information/>

Verify your voter registration status and find your polling place with this tool from @HeadCountOrg:

<https://www.headcount.org/verify-voter-registration/>

#REVUP #DisabilityVote19

VOTE. It's your right. A Guide to the Voting Rights of People with Mental Disabilities from @BazonCenter, @autselfadvocacy, @NDRNadvocates, & @SRZLawFirm. #REVUP #DisabilityVote18

<http://www.bazon.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/voting-rights-guide-2016.pdf>

.@SpreadTheVoteUS provides direct assistance to help voters obtain the proper identification to vote in their state. They are currently active in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

<https://www.spreadthevote.org/>

.@VoteRiders has wallet-sized Voter ID Info Cards (in English & Spanish) for all 50 states & DC. They also provide voter ID assistance to citizens in every state and host a Voter ID Hotline: 1-844-338-8743. #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

<http://www.voteriders.org/voter-id-info-cards/>

Young people and people with disabilities are underrepresented at the polls – that means that young people with disabilities have got to get out the vote! @rootedinrights #REVUP #DisabilityVote18

<http://www.rootedinrights.org/videos/voting/youth-vote/>

.@NpVOTE provides tools and resources to expand the role of America's nonprofits in promoting active civic participation and democracy. #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

<http://www.nonprofitvote.org/>

I vote to support #DisabilityRights! #REVUP #DisabilityVote19

The #REVUP Campaign aims to increase the political power of people with disabilities through voter registration, education, and engagement. Learn more at [www.aapd.com/REVUP](http://www.aapd.com/REVUP). #DisabilityVote19

## Social Media Photo Campaign

This year, we are encouraging advocates and voters to post a selfie or photo of themselves holding a sign to express their commitment to voting in the upcoming election.

### Instructions

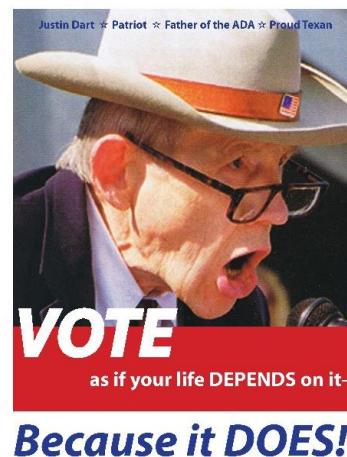
- 1) Print out a sign (templates are linked below)
- 2) Write something on your sign (if applicable)
- 3) Take a selfie of yourself and the sign or ask a friend to take a photo of you holding it
- 4) Post the photo to Facebook or Twitter
- 5) Be sure to tag your post with **#REVUP** and **#DisabilityVote19**
- 6) Please also tag AAPD – we are on Facebook at [@DisabilityPowered](https://www.facebook.com/DisabilityPowered) and Twitter at [@AAPD](https://twitter.com/AAPD)

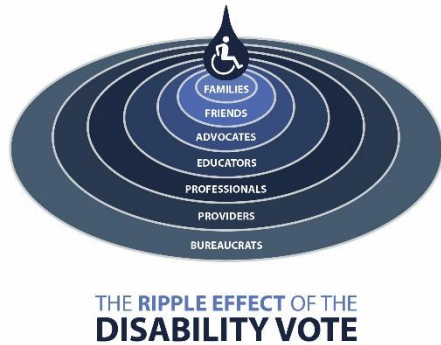
### Logos, Images, Graphics, and Signs

The REV UP Campaign has several logos, graphics, images, and signs available for partners to use in promotional materials. We also welcome our partners to make modifications to existing materials to include promotion of their own organization.

[Access the REV UP Dropbox to view and download materials](#)

Below are some examples of available logos and graphics:





## Tips and Strategies for Engaging Media

When creating your story, it is important to note the [“Seven Qualities of a Good News Story.”](#) These principles will help you define why your event and story are newsworthy. The Seven Characteristics of a News Story are:

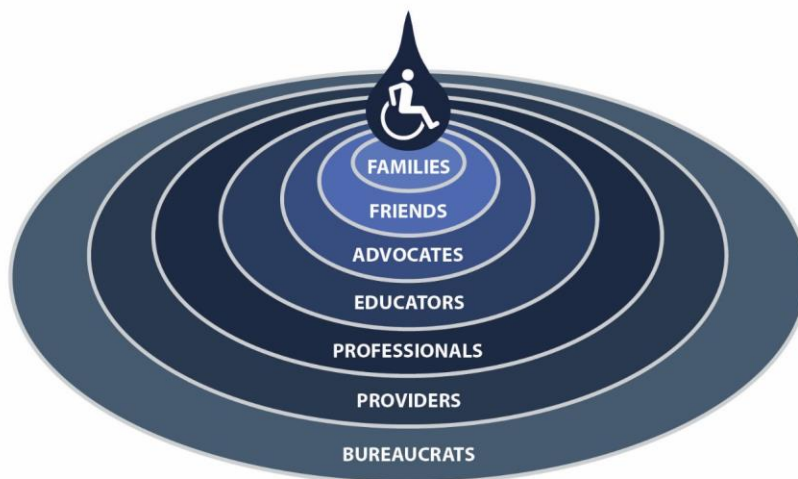
- 1) **Information:** You need to have concrete details about the who, what, when, where, and why. When reporters ignore your pitches, it is often because they lack substance. Think about the facts and details before you pitch a story, and be sure to also consider the logistics. If you want an outlet to cover a resident’s birthday, for example, make sure you check with the resident first and confirm they would even want to speak to a reporter!
- 2) **Significance:** Your story pitch may be of utmost importance to you, but what about the outlet’s readers, listeners, or viewers? If you are not thinking of the audience, it is likely you will strike out. Keep in mind, however, that even if your pitch isn’t particularly newsworthy (i.e. what a newspaper would, for example, want to run on their first page), editors still want ideas for feature stories that they think their readers will care about.
- 3) **Focus:** A good story is limited and focused. In public relations, we often want a reporter to get all the details, but if you give them too much to work with, you will be disappointed in the result. Remember what your core story idea is and stay focused in your pitch. You ultimately can’t control how a reporter decides to report, but you can help them determine the story angle.
- 4) **Context:** Good news stories offer readers perspective. Again, your story idea might be of great interest to your own community, but reporters are often responsive to a pitch that has wider implications beyond the local community you represent. Is there a larger trend or issue you could tie your pitch back to? For example, if you wanted to pitch a story idea about a new art program, is there a local or national trend you could reference in your pitch to attract a reader?
- 5) **Faces:** Good stories include characters. Think about who will be the face of the story you pitch. Whomever you put forward – and you should offer up different sources to enhance your success – should understand and be passionate about the story. They should also be responsive and willing to get back to a reporter in a timely manner.
- 6) **Form:** Good news stories take shape and give the reader a sense of completion. As a public relations practitioner, you can help reporters generate form by offering a well-rounded set of facts and sources for a story. This list of facts and sources does not have to be formal, but should be comprehensive, focused and carefully coordinated.



- 7) **Voice:** Good stories also include good conversations. The reporter has a job to provide a narrative of facts and details; good, concise quotes will add color and accentuate points in the story. While reporters will likely want to obtain their own quotes for a story, including them in a pitch or news release, when relevant, can help to show a person’s personality and provide key insight that further inspires a reporter to pursue your story.

### When Contacting the Media

- Before you call or email a reporter, make sure you have listed the top three reasons why the reporter should be interested in your story. Remember the Seven Characteristics of a News Story.
- Select the local newspapers, television stations, or radio stations that would be most interested in your story.
- When calling a reporter, it is polite to ask if they are “on deadline.” This means they are currently writing a story and their deadline is approaching. If the reporter is on deadline, ask them when you can contact them again, and do so when they are available.
- KISS! - Keep It Short and Simple. Include your three main points, highlight why your story is newsworthy, and provide statistics. You have 15 seconds to catch the attention of a reporter.
- Don’t “sell” the story; “tell” the story! Reporters are always turned off by callers that become sales people. Remember reporters are human beings and are interested in “real” stories. So be short and concise, but be sure to tell the story.



## THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF THE DISABILITY VOTE

*The Ripple Effect of the Disability Vote – A raindrop ripples outward in concentric circles with the icon of a disabled person in the middle. The words Families, Friends, Advocates, Educators, Professionals, Providers, Bureaucrats fill each ripple going from the center to the outside ring.*

# Resources

Check [www.aapd.com/NDVRW](http://www.aapd.com/NDVRW) for updated information and resources.

## Additional REV UP Resources

- [Voter Resources Center](#)
- [State Resources and Events](#)
- [Voting Statistics](#)
- [Logos and Graphics](#)
- [Candidate Questionnaire Template](#)
- [Candidate Forum Guide](#)
- [Issues Guide](#)
- [Election Accessibility Toolkit](#)

## Other Useful Resources

- [Voting and Elections – USA.gov](#)  
Official voting and elections website of the United States.
- [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#)  
The U.S. Election Assistance Commission is an independent agency of the United States government charged with developing guidance to meet the Help America Vote Act of 2002.
- **Political Campaigns and Charities**  
The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has a guide to help nonprofit organizations determine how to legally participate in voter education and engagement activities. [Watch the webinar](#) or [read the PDF course](#).
- [SignVote](#)  
SignVote is a Deaf and Hard of Hearing community-based GOTV mobilization effort. They have resources and instructional videos in American Sign Language.
- [National Voter Registration Day \(September 25, 2018\)](#)  
National Voter Registration Day is a national holiday celebrating our democracy. It is a day of action across the country to encourage voter registration in advance of Election Day.
- [Nonprofit VOTE](#)  
Nonprofit VOTE provides tools and resources to expand the role of America's nonprofits in promoting active civic participation and democracy.

## Acknowledgements

AAPD would like to thank and acknowledge the following individuals for helping us develop the 2018 National Disability Voter Registration Week Toolkit:

- Michelle Bishop, National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
- John Chrastka, EveryLibrary
- Kristin Dulaney, Indiana Disability Rights
- Carole Tonks, Alliance Center for Independence