

NAAP-NY 2004

Campus Voter Registration Guide



The **Network of Arab-American Professionals of NY** is here to help your Arab student organization conduct successful Voter Registration Drives on your campus. The NAAP-NY Voter Registration Campaign has aligned with a wide array of Arab-American organizations to prepare for the 2004 Presidential Elections and position our community as a strong voting block. NAAP-NY's objective is to organize a visible community effort that lets political leaders know that Arab-Americans are serious about their civic participation and represent an important constituency with interests that must be recognized.

How can I organize a Voter Registration Drive on campus?

Organizing a voter registration drive on your campus is easy! Choose the date and time for the event - make sure that the timing is convenient, and fits into the normal schedule of the campus community. Then, all you need are the appropriate materials, a table positioned in a high-traffic area, and volunteers to staff that table. The drive can last anywhere from two hours to an entire day depending on the willingness and availability of volunteers; you can always divide the day into 1-2 hour shifts.

What happens at a Voter Registration Drive?

You and your fellow volunteers will encourage people passing by your table to register to vote. Ask them to fill out the voter registration forms, answer questions they might have, and invite them to learn more about your organization. Let them know that that you will deliver their form for them (unless they prefer to take the form with them) and that they will receive a voting card in the mail soon with specific polling place information. *These drives serve not only to register fellow Arab-Americans, but also to show the larger public that we are actively engaged in the US political system.*


★TIP: You might want to brush up on some voting information so that you are prepared to answer questions. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions: <http://vote.nyc.ny.us/voterfaq.jsp>

How many volunteers should staff the table?


The more volunteers you have, the more fun the Voter Registration Drive will be! We recommend that at least 2-3 people staff the table at all times. This may also depend on how much room you have available. Additionally, if there is an abundance of volunteers, it is great to have them stand a block or two away in order to distribute flyers and drive those that are interested to the table.

What materials should be available at the Voter Registration table?

1) Voter Registration Forms for NY and NJ. These forms can be obtained in several ways:

-  Download the form from NAAP-NY's website and print away:
 - New York: www.naaponline.org/ny/vote/NYvoterReg.pdf
 - New Jersey: www.naaponline.org/ny/vote/NJvoterReg.pdf
- Order postage-paid registration forms in bulk from the Board of Elections by calling (212) VOTE-NYC [212-868-3692]. Explain that you are a student organization and will be holding a voter registration drive on campus. They are usually willing to send about 250-500 forms at a time, and you will receive the forms within a week.
- E-mail NAAP-NY at naap_ny@naaponline.org and we can provide you with mail certified forms at the next NAAP-NY Alumni Relations Committee Meeting or have them mailed directly to you.

2) NAAP-NY Materials. NAAP-NY has developed "Why Vote?" informational fliers in both English & Arabic.

-  Download the fliers from NAAP-NY's website and print away:
 - English version: www.naaponline.org/ny/vote/whyvoteEng.pdf
 - Arabic version: www.naaponline.org/ny/voter/whyvoteArab.pdf


3) Materials about your Arab student organization. This is a great opportunity to raise awareness about your student group and even recruit some new members. If you don't have any materials, simply put together a one page document with the name of your organization, contact information, website information (if applicable), your mission statement, and maybe information about an upcoming event.

4) Arab American Institute (AAI) Materials. AAI has several publications about Arab-Americans available on their website [www.aaiusa.org]. You might want to print out a few copies for the table. We recommend that you order the specific publications listed below. These materials are very professional and colorful, and make great additions to the table. E-mail aai@aaiusa.org for the following publications and include the number of copies you need of each publication.

- "Arab-Americans: Making a Difference" Brochure
- "Arab-Americans: A Century of Civic achievement" Brochure
- "Vote 2004" Newsletter
- "Yalla Vote!" Stickers
- "Yalla Vote!" Signs (limited availability)
- "Yalla Vote!" T-shirts (limited availability)

Note: If you don't receive a response within a few a days, please let us know and we will make sure you get the materials as soon as possible.

Other Materials

- Table.
- 4-6 blue or black pens.
- Tape to keep signs in place.
- Mailing list sign-up sheet for your organization.
- Radio/boom box (if permissible).
- Clipboards
- Decorations (like *Kuffiyas*, flags, etc).
- "Know your rights" documents.  Download from NAAP-NY's website: www.naaponline.org/ny/hatecrimes/kyr_poster.pdf

What happens after the Voter Registration Drive is over?

Keep track of how many voters you have registered. Completed voter registration forms should be mailed to or dropped off at the NY or NJ state election office (addresses are on the forms). Although one may register any time during the year, forms must be delivered or mailed at least 25 days before the next election for it to be effective for that election.

NAAP-NY's Advice and Tips

When conducting a Voter Registration Drive, keep in mind the following:

- ☞ Both NAAP and AAI are non-partisan organizations, which means we cannot endorse any particular candidates. The philosophy of your Arab student group may be different. If this is the case, please make sure that your endorsement is CLEARLY not affiliated with other organizations. This is important as legal consequences may apply. If dialogue is persisted about a specific candidate, feel free to give your 'personal' opinion, but make sure to state it as such.
- ☞ If someone is registered already, there is no need to renew registration. Registration only needs to happen once and lasts for life.
- ☞ College students are often registered in another state. They can re-register in New York by filling out a voter registration form, but would then only be eligible to vote in NY.
- ☞ Do not be surprised if people have NO IDEA what the voting process is. That's why we're here. Common questions include, "What are we voting for?" or "Why should I register to vote?" An appropriate answer could be, "To empower the Arab-American community and be a strong voice" or "Politicians will ONLY listen to registered voters." Be prepared to address these concerns.
- ☞ Do not get argumentative about the voting issue with anyone. If someone is reluctant, than thank them for stopping by and send them on their way. You might want to make campus security aware of your voter registration drive as an extra precaution.
- ☞ If you do not feel comfortable answering certain questions, direct to someone on the team who is.
- ☞ Asking people to register to vote is often a tough sell, especially in the times we live in. Don't feel discouraged! Prepare yourself for negative reactions and don't be afraid of rejection.
- ☞ Some people consider any political process to be taboo (effects from back home and current climate facing Arab-Americans). Be sensitive to this and work around these issues.
- ☞ No one can turn down a pleasant smile or hello 😊
- ☞ Be prepared to use your Arabic skills!
- ☞ Make sure that everyone SIGNS their voter registration form.
- ☞ Last but not least, **Thank you for your efforts and HAVE FUN!!**