



HOW TO

RUN A SUCCESSFUL
**EARLY VOTE AND ABSENTEE
VOTE PROGRAM**



Nearly 40 states offer some form of early voting. The rules and time period varies from state to state, so be sure to check your state's policy.

EARLY VOTING

WHAT IS IT?

Early voting is defined as casting a ballot in person prior to Election Day at a location designated by the local election authority. Different states call it different things, including early voting, absentee in person and one-stop voting.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Most states offer some form of early voting. The rules and time periods are different for every state. In many states, multiple location options are available for voters. Even in states that don't officially recognize "early voting", voters may be able to vote absentee in person at their local election authority headquarters – although they may need an excuse like expecting to be out of town on Election Day.

LET'S TALK STRATEGY...

1. Nail Down the Specifics

Obtain a list of early voting locations from the local election authority 30 days prior to the election or as soon as the list is available and complete.

2. Create a Mail Plan

Include three mailings to the list of identified supporters of your candidate in your voter contact mail plan and include the list of early vote locations on the pieces. At a minimum, mail Republicans with inconsistent vote history to inform them of their opportunity to vote early.

3. Make Phone Calls

Either volunteer or paid phone calls should be made to the identified supporters of your candidate and urge them to participate in early voting. This should be done daily until they vote early or until Election Day.

4. Launch a Mobile Campaign

Utilizing mobile advertising technology would allow you to target the list of identified supporters of your candidate and urge them to cast their ballot at an early voting location.



ABSENTEE VOTING

WHAT IS IT?

Absentee voting refers to voting a ballot received by mail or picked up by or for a voter who chooses not to go or is unable to go to the polls to vote during early voting or on Election Day.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

All states will mail an absentee ballot to voters who request one. In many states, an excuse is required, so be sure to find out if your state is one of them. Also check your state's policy to determine the deadline to request an absentee ballot.

A request for an absentee ballot may be made in one of the following ways:

- Online application on your county election authority website;
- In writing (e.g., by e-mail, fax, mail) to your election authority;
- In person at your election authority office; or
- By telephone call to your election authority.

If the voter is making the request, the following information is usually required:

- The name of the voter for whom the ballot is being requested;
- The voter's address;
- The voter's date of birth; and
- The voter's signature (if the request is written).

LET'S TALK STRATEGY...

1. Get to Know Your Absentee Voters

In general, there are two types of potential absentee voters: (1) those who are requesting an absentee ballot on their own; and (2) those you want to push to request an absentee ballot because they'll likely be voting for you. For the first group, you'll want to make sure your campaign's persuasion efforts deliver messaging to absentee voters before they cast their ballots. They include military and overseas voters, as well as permanent absentee voters (see below). For the second group, you'll want to mail them an absentee ballot application to make it easy for them to request an absentee ballot.

Military/Overseas Personnel

County election authorities will mail absentee ballots to military and overseas voters before mailing ballots to domestic absentee voters. Your local election authority will make this list available to you.



Permanent Absentee Voters

Some states keep a list of voters who prefer to automatically have their local election authority mail an absentee ballot to them for every election. Your local election authority will make this list available to you.

2. Create a Mail Plan

If a significant number of voters will vote absentee, you should have one mail piece called an “absentee chase” that is timed in order to hit mailboxes of absentee voters about the same time they’ll receive their absentee ballots. For the rest of your mail plan, you may want to break each mail piece into two drop dates – one drop date for voters likely to vote on Election Day and another drop date about 7-10 days earlier for voters likely to be voting absentee. The goal is to get as much of your mail as possible in the hands of absentee voters before they cast their ballots.

3. Make Phone Calls

Starting the week absentee ballots arrive in voters’ homes, either volunteer or paid phone calls should be made to these voters to gauge their support for your candidate and urge them to turn in their absentee ballot. This should continue daily until they turn in their ballot or until Election Day.

4. Launch a Mobile Campaign

Utilizing mobile advertising technology would allow you to target the list of identified supporters of your candidate and urge them to cast their ballot. Additionally, those voters on this list who are not identified as supporters but are still persuadable could get that kind of messaging as well as urging them to return their absentee ballot.

5. Provide Daily Updates

In addition to getting the list of new requests for absentee ballots on a daily basis, you should also get the list of people who have turned in their ballots via absentee voting or early voting and remove those people from lists for future mailings, phone calls, or personal visits. This will save the campaign resources.

A well-organized and well-run early vote and absentee vote program is essential to victory. No campaign can afford to ignore early or absentee voters and hope to win in November. Make sure you focus on this key segment of the electorate.



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