

Performing arts organizations may participate in the election space as long as the activities are bipartisan and focus on impartial dissemination of information and voter education.

HOW TO GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)!

- Develop consistent GOTV messaging that you can use across all communication channels.
- Have staff include the GOTV message in their emails and share GOTV messages on social media.
- Use the link to vote411.org for important access to voter information and registration.
- Disseminate bipartisan voter guides that cover a broad range of issues.
- Offer space in your building for voter registration events.
- Provide rides to and from polling places. (Never seek to influence how someone votes, however.)
- Organize study groups to hold a balanced review of the ballot measures.
- Remind your board members and staff that as individuals they can participate in political campaigns. When possible, they should state that their political opinions are their own and not that of any organization.

WORRIED ABOUT MISSTEPPING IN THE ELECTION SPACE? HERE IS THE IRS GUIDANCE

Voter guides: Whatever its form, a voter guide must cover a broad range of issues and must refrain from judging the candidates or their positions.

Voting records: A charity that publishes an annual compilation of the voting records of members of Congress on major legislative issues that cover a wide range of subjects is not engaged in political campaign intervention — if the publication contains no editorial opinion and its contents and structure do not imply approval or disapproval of any member or their voting record. However, an organization that publishes a compilation of incumbents’ voting records on selective issues and distributes it widely during an election campaign may have engaged in political campaign intervention, even if the guide contains no statements that support or oppose any candidate.

Candidate questionnaires: To avert the charge of political campaign intervention, a charity should take care in how it phrases the questions so as not to suggest a preferred answer. It should: 1) Send the questionnaire to all candidates for a particular office; 2) Publish all the responses it receives without substantive editing; 3) Avoid comparing those responses to its own positions

Non-candidate appearances are permissible as long as: 1) The charity maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere at the event; 2) None of its representatives mentions the campaign or the invitee’s candidacy; and 3) No campaign activity occurs during the candidate’s appearance.

Candidate appearances: A charity that invites one candidate to speak in the role of candidate is engaging in political campaign intervention unless it gives all qualified candidates an equal opportunity to speak.

Candidate forums: One solution is to have all the candidates appear together on the same stage and answer questions posed by a moderator or by members of the audience. A candidate forum gives its audience a unique opportunity to evaluate and compare the candidates.

Electioneering by charity officials (directors, officers, and even staff): Officials acting in a private capacity may mention their association or position with the charity for the purpose of identifying themselves, but they should disclaim any endorsement of their actions by the charity.

**Source: "IRS Political Campaigns and Charities: The Ban on Political Campaign Intervention."
stayexempt.irs.gov/home/existing-organizations/political-campaigns-and-charities**

OPERA America's advocacy guides were developed in 2024 by Amy Fitterer, consultant, with support from The Music Man Foundation.