2013 Professional Practices Program

Have A Voice Make A Choice
Outreach for Minority Populations

Martin County, Florida

Submitted by:
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Have A Voice, Make a Choice!
A Community Outreach Program for Minority Populations

RESEARCH: The 2010 census showed Martin County’s population of 146,318; of that population 101,996 are registered voters. Therefore, the Elections Center looked at the numbers to identify the eligible voters, who were not voting. After carefully reviewing elections data, it was clear that voter turnout among minority populations (homeless, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Disability) was traditionally low. Additionally, through partnerships with the NAACP and local organizations that provides services to disabled citizens, focus groups were created. These groups identified voter obstacles and needs of their consumers. With the ballot for the Presidential Election being two pages, a first for all Martin County voters, the Martin County Supervisor of Elections not wanting to disenfranchise this group of voters who already were not actively participating, initiated a voter education and registration outreach program for minority voters.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES: In order to increase voter education, registration, and Election Day turnout, in minority communities, three objectives were created: (1) To increase minority voter registration and/or update current voter records by a minimum of 10% based on comparisons of the 2008 Presidential Elections; (2) Increase minority outreach educations and activities by 20% as compared to the previous like election year (5 events); (3) Establish/increase community partnerships/relations with local minority organizations.

IMPLEMENTATION: The first phase of the voter registration outreach program was to assemble civic leaders, local sheriff’s office, and lead staff for local minority organizations in order to develop program strategies and gain support. Churches, community events, afterschool programs, and neighborhood grocery stores were selected for voter registration drives and voting machine demonstrations. Radio PSA’s were recorded by the Supervisor of Elections encouraging voter registration and participation. The radio PSA’s were placed on minority radio stations during prime time hours. In addition, the Outreach Coordinator and Supervisor of Elections were guests on live radio broadcasts eight times leading up to the elections explaining the two-page ballot with 11 state constitutional amendments, polling locations, early voting, and voter registration deadlines. In an effort to engage visually and hearing impaired voters, staff produced sample ballots and the voting instructions in Braille and ADA voting machines (voting machines for sight and hearing impaired) were set-up for demonstration in the Elections Center for voters prior to the election. Clients from agencies that included Coalition of Independent Living, ARC of Martin County, and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast were excited the Elections Center provided this service for their consumers. Through the course of the campaign, over 2,500 chip clip packets (voter registration
forms, voter guide of elected officials, polling locations, vote by mail ballot request, and early voting dates and hours) were created and distributed to targeted churches, businesses, agencies, and individuals; the outreach team participated in 45 community events demonstrating voting machines, registering voters, and checking voters’ status. Over 20 press releases were posted in the local newspaper and Elections Center’s website with voter drive dates and locations. Also, ads with election dates, hours, locations, and early voting sites flooded local newspaper leading up to Election Day. The next phase of the program focused on meeting the needs of our Spanish-speaking voters. At this time, Martin County is not required to provide bilingual voter materials; however, the Supervisor of Elections was concerned about the lack of Hispanic/Latino voter turnout with the 2-page ballot. Taking a pro-active approach, staff (including a Hispanic staff member) met with leaders in the Hispanic community. As a result, door-to-door voter registration with trusted sheriff’s deputies, volunteer high school students and church leaders took place. Voter drives were also conducted at a Hispanic Catholic Church and local community fair. The Elections Centers website was also translated into Spanish, to ensure these voters were able to receive all necessary voter information for the Presidential Election.

**EVALUATION:** Comparing minority voter registration for the 2008 Presidential Election from elections software, there was an 80% increase. Using the same demographics, voter turnout also increased 30% in the targeted minority communities. Participation in outreach activities increased from 10 events in 2008 to 45 events in 2012. The outreach efforts inspired a member of the Coalition for Independent Living Options, a little person, to serve as a first time Election Day poll worker and donate earned funds to her organization. Representatives from the NAACP, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, and Coalition for Independent Living Options are active members of the Supervisor of Elections Advisory Committee. Partnerships with local minority leaders, churches, sororities, and residents expanded. Many churches drove voters to early voting sites, on the Sunday of early voting. At completion these minority voters were educated on the process, updated their voter information and finally felt they “Had a voice, to make a choice.”

**Budget:** The program successfully remained below budget. The budget set for the campaign was $5,000. Radio broadcast & airtime ($1,000), Chip Clip ($1,500) Printing in house-newsletters, voter guides, and early voting flyers ($600) website translation (Staff member working 40hrs. a week for 2 weeks). Door hangers - $300; Outreach campaign (full time Outreach Coordinator working full time on campaign for 40hrs. a week for 5 months). Total cost of campaign: $3,900.
IT'S YOUR RIGHT, VOTE 2012

Check Your Voter Status!

- Has your address changed?
- Would you like to change your party?
- Has your name changed?
- Do you need to update your signature?

3 Ways to VOTE

☆ Vote By Mail
☆ Vote Election Day 7am-7pm
☆ Vote Early

Saturday, October 27th - Saturday, November 3rd
by visiting any of our six locations
7am-7pm with the exception of Indiantown 10-6pm

- Elections Center
- Jensen Beach Hobe Library
- Palm City Cummings Library
- Robert Morgade Library
- Hobe Sound Library
- Indiantown Elisabeth Lahti Library (10-6pm)

For More Information, call the Martin County Elections Center at 772-288-5637 or visit MartinVotes.com

Web site in Spanish

Door Hanger Used for Door-to-Door Voter Registration Campaign

Utility Bill Insert used in the 2012 Campaign