

HR Insights



Employee Voting Initiatives

Ahead of elections, many employers want to encourage voter participation and are considering if any initiatives may be appropriate for their organization. While voting initiatives allow employers to help increase voter participation—these efforts can also bolster employee relations.

Because partisan political and voting initiatives risk divisiveness in the workplace, employers should focus on simply encouraging voter participation. This article outlines the impact of voting initiatives and various efforts that employers can consider to help educate employees and encourage them to vote.

Employers should be aware that obligations related to voting leave vary by locality. For voting-related guidance, employers should seek legal advice from local legal counsel.

Employer Impact on Voting

To increase employee voter participation, employers can consider various workplace voting initiatives. These initiatives often provide education on the process, as many eligible voters lack necessary knowledge—or in some cases, face voting-related challenges. A survey from Gallup conducted in July 2020 found that one-third of young people, aged 18 to 29, lacked essential voting information. Common information gaps included:

- Whether they can register to vote online—and if so, how
- How to vote absentee

Outside of a lack of voting information, eligible voters—both within this age group and others—face

various obstacles including, but not limited to, work responsibilities and caregiving challenges. However, by offering voting initiatives, organizations can help bridge these gaps.

Benefits of Voting Initiatives

A study conducted by the Harvard Kennedy School in 2018 found that voter mobilization efforts can often have a positive impact on both customer and employee relations. The study found that on the customer-facing side, voter initiatives can meet social impact expectations that customers may have and improve an organization's brand. Likewise, on the employee relations side, voting initiatives can help bolster employee engagement.

There are a variety of voting initiatives that organizations can consider, and leaders can evaluate which initiatives make sense for their organization.

Employee Voting Initiatives

Common employee voting initiatives include:

- **Providing employees with accurate voting information and resources—** Employers can help bridge voter knowledge gaps by providing employees with voting information. These efforts can include providing:

- Voter registration resources
- Voter registration deadlines
- Voter location resources
- **Promoting absentee or early voting**—Employers can choose to encourage employees to vote absentee and offer appropriate resources. These efforts may include:
 - Providing information on how employees can vote absentee
 - If applicable, use of workplace printers for absentee voting and assistance with postage and mailing
- **Sending out communications to employees ahead of election day**—Ahead of election day, employers can send employees reminders via email and employee intranets.
- **Offering flexibility on election day**—On election day, employers can consider:
 - Offering employees paid time off to vote
 - Offering scheduling flexibility and avoiding events, including meetings
 - Closing the workplace for the day
 - Reducing work hours
 - Allowing employees to assist others in their community on election day with rides or caregiving support

This list highlights voting initiatives that many organizations are using, but every organization has a different environment. As such, employers should carefully consider which voting initiatives make sense in their workplace.

Contact JP Griffin Group for additional employee engagement resources.