

 **Prevent Child Abuse
America®**

Prevent Child Abuse America
2024 Election Resource:

**The Role of
Nonprofits, Voters,
and Candidates in
Elections**

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The upcoming elections provide a crucial opportunity to vote for candidates at various levels of government, including local officials, state legislators, governors, members of the U.S. House and Senate, and the President of the United States. Elections impact policies that affect both current and future generations.

Elections present an opportunity to promote policies supporting children and families and make investments to support these vital initiatives. Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) advocates for policies and practices that strengthen families and communities, promote healthy child development, and prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs. When communities, policymakers, and resources are invested in comprehensive primary prevention, families and children will receive the support they need and the negative outcomes from child abuse and neglect will be prevented.

Ensuring policymakers understand the importance of prevention is significant every day, but election years offer a special opportunity to bring awareness to an organization's cause. For PCA America, this means ensuring all families have the necessary resources and support. This time can be spent getting to know the candidates, introducing candidates to organizations and priorities, and educating them on the importance of supporting families and improving both child and parent well-being. Elections also present a platform for candidates and for constituents to consider their priorities and opportunities to promote family strengthening policies and strategies and investments in funding to support all communities.

The following content provides information and resources to assist non-profit organizations and voters within their networks become informed and active participants during the 2024 election year and beyond.

Join us in making a difference this election season and ensuring all children and families are living a purposeful and happy life with hope for the future.

Note: The information contained in this resource and any websites referenced are provided for informational purposes only. In viewing this resource, we encourage you to independently verify the rules and regulations on non-profit election, voter engagement activities, and state specific voter requirements.

2024 ELECTION RESOURCE

The 2024 United States elections will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. During this election year, voters will decide the next President of the United States, control of both chambers of Congress, and dozens of governorships and state offices. A total of 468 seats in Congress are up for election which includes all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 33 seats in the Senate. There are 11 state gubernatorial elections and numerous other state and local elections on the ballot this year. In the 2024 election day, voters will have an impact across:

- [435 seats in the United States House of Representatives](#)
- [33 seats in the United States Senate](#)
- [11 State Governorships](#)
- [5,793 seats in State Legislatures](#) (78% of legislative seats), which covers 85 state legislative chambers across 44 states
- Multiple municipal elections that include Mayors and City Council positions

PART ONE: NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS & THEIR ROLE IN AN ELECTION YEAR

There are varying degrees in which a Prevent Child Abuse state chapter or a nonprofit organization can engage in advocacy, including during an election year. In fact, an election year offers a unique opportunity to influence the agendas of future policymakers by educating candidates running for public office about upstream policies and strategies that can support families and children and prevent child abuse and neglect. It also provides the chance to educate and raise awareness in communities of why voting matters and the critical opportunity to make individual voices heard.

While advocacy during an election year is permissible for non-profits, it is important to know the legal limitations these organizations must adhere to when conducting this work. Remaining impartial and nonpartisan while focusing on educating the candidates and the public is critical. While 501(c)(3) organizations are prohibited from supporting or opposing a candidate or political party, they can promote issues and policy change to further its mission, connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis to educate on a specific issue(s), and conduct voter engagement or registration activities in an election year.

Helpful Resources:

- [Nonprofit Vote](#)
- [National Council of Nonprofits](#)
- [Bolder Advocacy: Election Checklist for 501\(c\)\(3\)](#)



As non-profits working to prevent child abuse and neglect it is our responsibility to represent children who don't have a voice in politics or elections. It's also important to support communities who would benefit from policies at many levels—including economic, health, education, social, etc. It is critical to ensure the issues important to the work to support families and children are incorporated into candidates' platforms and made a high priority. It is equally important to educate others about where candidates stand, so voters can make an informed decision. A few examples include candidate support for measures serving to prevent child abuse and neglect, increasing economic supports for families, funding for research to help prevent child sexual abuse and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), as well as working to find ways to decrease child poverty.

Elected officials can make important decisions related to families and children. These officials play a significant role in:

- Developing legislative agendas & policy priorities
- Supporting or opposing legislation & adequate funding levels
- Deciding what gets prioritized in budgets
- Creating and shaping laws that can improve, or harm, child and family health and well-being
- Setting priorities for our nation, states, and communities

Candidate Awareness and Education

It's important to become familiar and understand the policy platform of candidates running for elected positions, including their plans to prioritize children and families, before going to the ballot box. Each candidate has their own ideas and issues they hope to advance while in office and understanding how or if they align with your organization's mission are important before casting a vote.

The following are helpful links that include information about candidates at the state and national levels in the 2024 election

- [US Senate 2024 elections](#)
- [US House 2024 elections](#)
- [State Governorship elections](#)
- [State legislative elections](#)

While partisan activities are prohibited, non-profits can still do a lot on a nonpartisan basis to promote voter and civic engagement as part of their charitable and educational mission during the election season and beyond. Some nonpartisan activities non-profits (and others) can engage in during an election year include:

- Advocate and educate for an organization's issues during an election year
- Candidate education and engagement
- Voter outreach (e.g., register voters, encourage voters to vote, or educate voters on the voting process)
- Distribute sample ballots or nonpartisan voter guides
- Share lists, poll results, and resources
- Participate in ballot measures

See the resource from the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers on [Guidance for Engaging with Candidates](#).

Spotlight on Candidate Education:

A candidate or issue forum is a public event where candidates running for elected office are invited to express their positions or priorities. When a non-profit organization hosts a candidate or an issue forum it is a great way to educate your community and partners on priorities and policies that strengthen families. Conversely, it serves as an opportunity to introduce these partners to the candidates on the ballot and their stance on the issues that matter most to your organization. A candidate or issue forum is also a great way to elevate your organization to the community and to candidates and ask them pointed questions about your advocacy priorities. [Learn more here](#).

There is nothing more important for the future success of our nation than to ensure that children and families in every community have the support they need to thrive. The following resources are available to educate a candidate on what is important to you as a prevention-focused organization and member of their community.

- [Prevent Child Abuse America](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse America's Federal Policy Priorities](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse America's State Policy Priorities](#)
- [Building Better Childhoods](#)
- [Growing Better Together Infographic | Prevent Child Abuse America](#)
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) One-Pager | Prevent Child Abuse America](#)
- [Resource Library | Prevent Child Abuse America](#)



“Get Out The Vote”

Voter turn-out is critical. There is power in numbers. When people vote, and communities vote, outcomes will be impacted. Get out the vote efforts are aimed at increasing voter turnout. When non-profits engage in voter registration or remind people to vote, it demonstrates the importance of voting, encourages active citizenship, and gives voice to the communities each non-profit serves. Below are helpful ideas and steps to increase voter turnout directly in communities.

- Make a concrete plan.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to vote.
- Use your normal internal communication efforts (i.e. email, staff mail, etc.), staff meetings, events, etc. to encourage voting.
- Encourage everyone to call or text five people to encourage them to vote.
- Encourage voters that will be voting by mail to register and mail their ballot immediately.
- Host voter registration and education activities.

Resource Highlights:

- [Social Current](#) partnered with network organizations and [NonprofitVOTE](#) to provide examples from the field, along with resources containing guidance on voter and civic engagement in the [Strategies for Mobilizing Voters: A Toolkit for Nonprofit Community-Based Organizations](#). This toolkit includes network stories, coupled with related tools and tips for executing such practices at your organizations.
- Nonprofit Vote Provides up to date information regarding each state’s voter registration requirements and deadlines. It also has tools for Election Day that allows voters to find their polling place and learn about any Voter ID laws that have been passed in their state.



PART TWO: CONSTITUENTS & THEIR ROLE IN AN ELECTION YEAR

YOU can make a difference in the course of the future for children, families, and the communities in which they live. A powerful way for the voices of families to be heard is to vote.

Voter Considerations and Election Laws

Over the last several years, state lawmakers across the nation have introduced an unprecedented number of election bills. The pace of introductions of election bills has [slowed slightly in 2024](#), with just over 2,000 bills introduced this year related to election administration, with 218 enactments so far. There were 2,917 bills introduced and 327 enacted in 2023.

Each state makes its own voting and election rules. Some of the variations across state voting laws include when and how to register to vote, ID requirements, availability of ballot drop boxes, and options to vote by mail, early in-person, or absentee voting. To learn what voting options are available in your state, click [here](#). Additionally, depending on your state laws, the [voter registration deadline](#) varies and could be as much as a month before an election. Local election official information can be found [here](#).

You can register to vote online at [Vote.gov](#) in 42 states plus the District of Columbia. It's great to have a plan, get out and vote early to avoid crowds, and if possible, cast your ballot before Election Day.

The following are links to more information on voter registration requirements and deadlines, as well as voting and election laws.

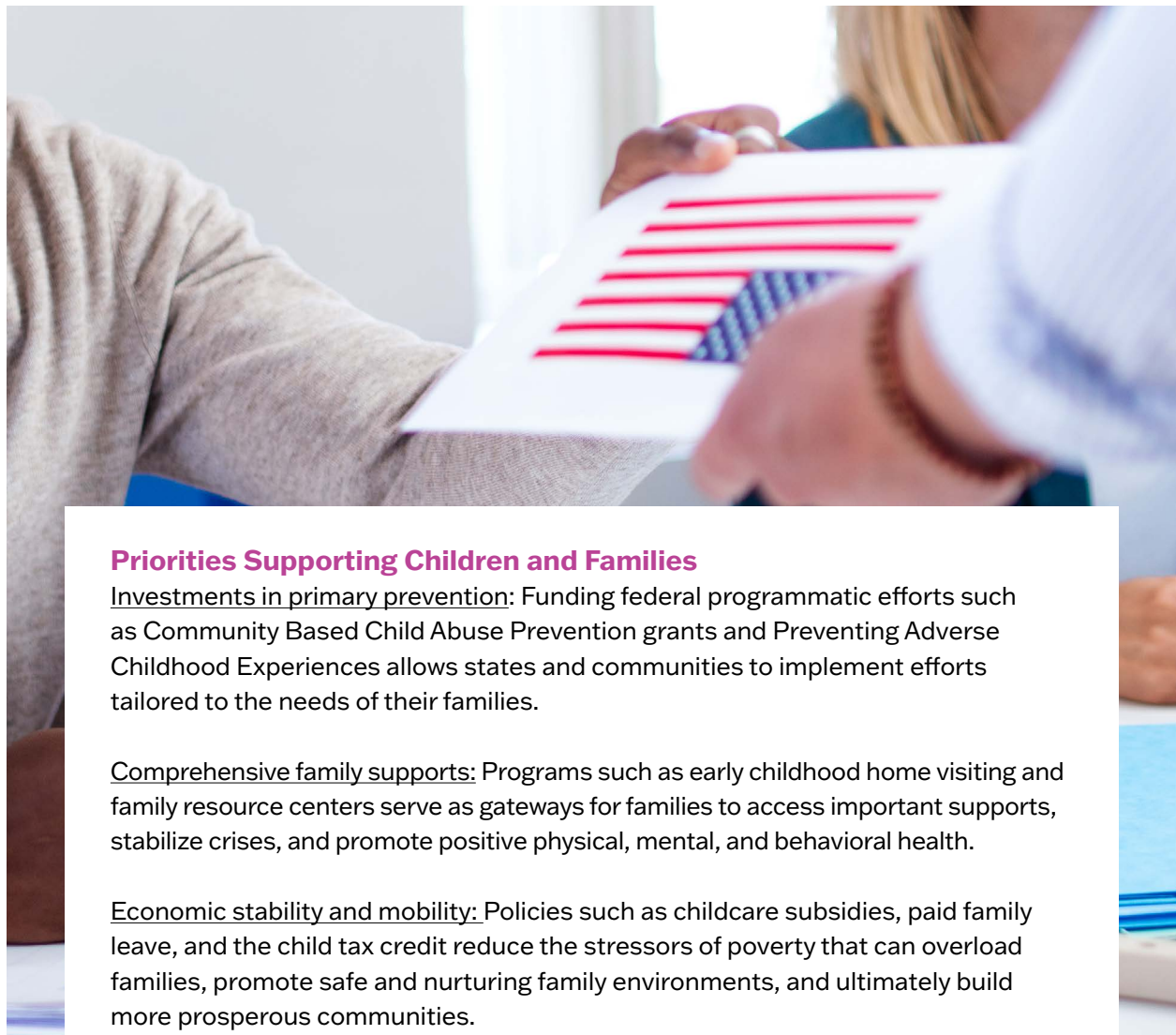
- [USAGOV](#) - Voting and Election Laws: This is an online guide to government services and information with a section specific to voting and election law. Among a plethora of voting related issues, the site provides Voter ID requirement details, information for first time voters, as well as voter registration and contact information to speak with election officials.
- [USAGOV - Voter Registration](#): Learn how to register to vote and get a voter registration card. Find your state's registration deadline and how to confirm or change your registration
- [Rock The Vote](#): Learn more about your state's registration deadlines, primary dates, and other special considerations such as checking your voter registration status, requesting an absentee ballot, and signing up for election reminders in your state.

Getting to know the Candidates

Every election serves as an excellent opportunity to learn about those seeking re-election or new candidates running in their first election cycle. To be an informed voter and effectively engage in the democratic process, there are many ways to learn about each candidate's positions and also find opportunities to engage with them during their campaign.

You can:

- Review each candidate's website where they often post their policy platforms and schedule of upcoming events.
- Review their social media accounts for more information on the focus and interests of each candidate, individuals or organizations they engage with, and events they have attended.
- Look to your local newspaper as an excellent source to find general information on a local candidate including upcoming events.
- Ask questions to learn more about candidates' positions on supporting children and families during in-person or even virtual events where questions can be asked.



Priorities Supporting Children and Families

Investments in primary prevention: Funding federal programmatic efforts such as Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grants and Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences allows states and communities to implement efforts tailored to the needs of their families.

Comprehensive family supports: Programs such as early childhood home visiting and family resource centers serve as gateways for families to access important supports, stabilize crises, and promote positive physical, mental, and behavioral health.

Economic stability and mobility: Policies such as childcare subsidies, paid family leave, and the child tax credit reduce the stressors of poverty that can overload families, promote safe and nurturing family environments, and ultimately build more prosperous communities.

PART THREE: CANDIDATES & THEIR ROLE IN AN ELECTION YEAR

Candidates spend a significant period of time during an election year talking to constituents to share their priorities. Conversely, hearing directly from constituents on their concerns and hopes is also an important role of a candidate during their campaign. Election Years provide a direct opportunity for citizens to get to know the candidates and to raise awareness and educate the candidates running for public office on policies and services that strengthen families and communities, promote healthy child development, and prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs.

Messaging

As is the case for education, outreach, or advocacy efforts, any messaging strategy to help build awareness are critical. Issues such as preventing child abuse and neglect and child poverty are important to voters, and we can help amplify these issues during this election year. Following are examples of messages to use in your own voting and election and education efforts.

Sample social media language to be coupled with images:

- Now is the time to invest in our children's future. **#Vote** and make **#GreatChildhoods** happen all year long! **@PCAAmerica**
- Leverage your voice and vote on November 5th! Make **#GreatChildhoods** happen all year long! **@PCAAmerica**
- Vote for candidates that are invested in prevention and supporting families! Make **#GreatChildhoods** happen all year long! **@PCAAmerica**

Sample Talking Points:

- Child abuse and neglect occurs across the country regardless of income and education, race and region.
- Prevention is possible. Home visiting programs, such as Healthy Families America, educate parents and caregivers and provide them with valuable resources.
- Kids raised in safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments are more likely to enjoy good physical and mental health and succeed academically and socially. Children who grow up happy and healthy also go on to contribute to economic prosperity for everyone. We can save billions of dollars in social services and after-the-fact costs every year.
- All parents and caregivers want to be good parents and caregivers, sometimes we just need a little extra help to be the best parents and caregivers we can be. Evidence-based home visiting, such as Healthy Families America, educates parents and caregivers and gives them the skills they need to develop nurturing relationships with their children for lifelong health and success.
- Ensuring families have adequate income is basic to creating an environment in which young children thrive. Families need a range of equitable policies that ensure they can support their young children and access safe and stable housing, health and mental health care, healthy food, and high-quality early care and education for their young children.



Sample Candidate Questions:

Becoming an educated voter includes getting to know the candidates on the ballot and understanding their top priorities. The questions below can help citizens understand the views of candidates and can also help candidates think about the broad range of issues that are needed to build strong families and communities.

- There are a range of programs and policies that strengthen families, lessening the stressors that overload families while promoting safe and stable family environments and while increasing access to resources and ultimately building more prosperous communities. How would you increase access and adequate funding for programs and policies that support the upstream prevention of child abuse and neglect?
- All families can benefit from support during pregnancy and throughout early childhood. Many evidence-based home visiting programs and parenting education programs have a proven track record of preventing child maltreatment. What plans do you have to ensure that there is funding for evidence-based home visiting that serves all children and families in need?
- Access to concrete and economic supports can be instrumental in lowering familial stress which is linked to child abuse and neglect. How will you be engaged in promoting and strengthening the economic supports for families, such as tax credits, child care subsidies, or paid family and medical leave programs?
- Programs that help children learn and grow in their earliest years can change the trajectories of their lives. What will you do to make sure that all families have access to affordable, high-quality child care and early education?