

“Voter Awareness & Engagement during a National Pandemic – A Field Education Activity”*

*Author: Katharina Werner, LCSW
Director of Field Education/
Clinical Assistant Professor
University of Montana School of Social Work*

*Suggested: Students completing this assignment will receive 50-75 hours of field credit

Students in field placements are responsible for the development and implementation of an individualized action plan within the context of their state, community, agency and target population. Sample activities for each phase of this project are highlighted below but students are encouraged to develop activities specific to their community of practice and need. Students should develop goals and activities following the **SMART** model, i.e. activities should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

Consider how your activities and action steps align with the core competencies & include them in your individualized learning agreement:

- C1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
- C2: Engage diversity and difference in practice
- C3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
- C4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
- C5: Engage in policy practice
- C6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- C7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- C8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- C9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Project Phase	Proposed Activities	Competencies
1) Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review information provided on the “Voting is Social Work” website • Research voter registration guidelines for your state, including mail in/ absentee ballot guidelines & deadlines • Research impacts of COVID-19 on voting in your state: https://www.vote.org/covid-19/ • Research allowable nonpartisan voter activities for 501(c)(3) organizations and/or requirements for nonprofits in the 1993 National Voter Registration Act; this factsheet will help • Research the 2020 Census and how to get counted 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to local/ state election officials, advocacy agencies and grassroots organizations to learn about ongoing voter registration and mobilization efforts • Determine who can register people to vote and what guidelines have to be met • Complete “Worksheet for Integrating Nonpartisan Voter Engagement into SW Practice and Organizational Culture” and review with AFI • Research and draft best practices for voter engagement in your community • Identify barriers to voting in your community, including potential voter suppression policies/ efforts and populations that are underrepresented at the polls • Assess political power of community through voter turnout statistics by district • Use supervision to discuss and determine what policies may deter voter turnout • Use supervision to discuss and determine strategies to engage organizations and communities in voting 	
2) Outreach & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present research findings to agency staff, board, volunteers and other relevant community stakeholders • Invite elected officials to agency for meetings or forum focused on advancing human rights issues • Promote the importance of Census 2020 in your agency and/or community • Present the “Voting is Social Work” training at an agency’s staff meeting • Train clients/staff on advocacy, government systems, and the importance of voting • Reach out to local organizations for information, speakers and resources • Use your agency’s social media accounts to share accurate voter/ election information 	
3) Engagement & Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate voter registration drive at your agency • Register 5 new people to vote • Review agency forms/ policies and advocate to integrate questions/ assessment about active voter registration and education • Develop a plan to actively integrate voter registration, education and outreach into practicum agency policies, service delivery, and culture 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate and assist staff and clients in getting counted for the 2020 Census (deadline is 9/30) • Consider working at the polls on election day. Check the law for your state here and contact your local election office to sign up • Create and share candidate guides and/or host a candidate forum at your practicum agency • Ask clients whether they are registered to vote through the intake process and offer assistance registering them • Provide links and information on where to find local polling locations • Make sample ballots available at your agency • Find volunteers who help drive people to the polls on election day • Use your agency's social media accounts to turn out the vote 	

Resources:

- Rock the Vote: <https://www.rockthevote.org/>
- American Civil Liberties Union: <https://www.aclu.org/>
- Voting is Social Work: <http://www.votingissocialwork.org/>
- Brennan Center for Justice: <https://www.brennancenter.org/>
- U.S. Election Assistance Commission: <https://www.eac.gov/voters/voter-resources-helpful-links>
- NASW Voting Resources: <https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Social-Justice/Increasing-Voter-Participation>
- Young Invincibles: <https://younginvincibles.org/>
- Vote 411: <https://www.vote411.org/>
- Examples of Student Voter Engagement Activities on an Agency Level: <https://votingissocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2468/2018/08/Twenty-Ways-to-Make-Voting-Matter.pdf>
- Voter Engagement Activities & Core Competencies: <https://votingissocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2468/2019/09/Example-Practice-Activities-for-Voter-Engagement-Field-Ed.pdf>
- Voter Registration Drive Checklist: <https://votingissocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2468/2019/09/Voter-Registration-Drive-Checklist-2019.pdf>
- Agency Fact Sheet: <https://votingissocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2468/2019/09/AGENCIES-VotingIsSocialWork-July-2019-1.pdf>