



PACP
PORTUGUESE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP PROJECT

A NON-PARTISAN INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

ORGANIZE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A HANDBOOK FOR SUCCESSFUL GET-OUT-THE VOTE CAMPAIGNS

PREPARED BY THE

PORTUGUESE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP PROJECT

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From 1999 to 2009, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project was exclusively funded by the Luso-American Foundation for Development. The Foundation not only directly supported the activities of the Project's Coordinator, but also provided matching grants to community organizations and communities that were engaged in citizenship, voter registration, and non-partisan get-out-the vote campaigns.

In 2010, recognizing the important work of the Project, the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores offered a three-year financial commitment to support the Project's operation.

Without the generous support of the Luso-American Foundation for Development and the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project would not be able continue its civic participation work that has been carried out during the past 12 years in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and California.

INTRODUCTION

It is often stated that the Portuguese do not vote. However, for more than a decade, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project has been working closely with organizations in communities within Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and California. Analyses of the Project's work demonstrate that, within the communities where the Portuguese American Citizenship Project has worked with local organizations, the Portuguese American group often represents the largest collection of registered voters in local jurisdictions and they actually vote at a higher rate than the general population.

So, what is the secret to organizing a local church or club and making the political community take notice of the concerns of the organization's members? There is no secret! It is simply a straightforward process that has been refined over the years and become very effective in maximizing the civic participation of the members of organizations that choose to collaborate with the Portuguese American Citizenship Project.

The process utilized by the Portuguese American Citizenship Project to assist organizations interested in encouraging their members to exercise their political rights is described in this handbook. It is a systematic course that provides measurable results. It is important to emphasize that, to be successful, these efforts cannot be a one-election event, but have to form a long-standing structure to mobilize voters and establish a dialogue with candidates for political office for every election. This process is more like a marathon than a sprint.

The analogy of a recipe book may be appropriate. The main difference is that, if you follow the recipe in this handbook, instead of ending up with a delicious meal, you will end up with an empowered community that is fully aware of its political rights, and consistently exercises those rights.

Although we are convinced the steps described in this document are a recipe for political success, we need to be reminded of the words of Tip O'Neil, "All politics is local." Therefore, what works in one community may have to be adapted to work in another community. It is evident that the members of each organization know what will work best within their community.

In addition to offering the information in this handbook, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project is ready to collaborate with and assist organizations interested in developing and implementing get-out-the-vote campaigns. For more information on how to contact the Project, please visit our website at portugueseamerican.org

WHAT IS THE PORTUGUESE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP PROJECT?

On February 1, 1999, as part of its continuing commitment to strengthening the Portuguese American community, the Luso-American Foundation for Development initiated the Portuguese American Citizenship Project. The purpose of the Project was, and continues to be, to encourage Portuguese Americans to participate fully in the civic activities of their communities, to become U.S. citizens, to register to vote, and finally, to vote.

The Portuguese American Citizenship Project is a non-partisan organization. The Project is based on the assumption that the communities themselves are best able to determine the strategies that will result in greater civic participation. These communities understand their idiosyncrasies and can best judge how to deal with their specific issues. The Portuguese American Citizenship Project has no political agenda. Rather, it serves as an informal forum through which not-for-profit organizations can share ideas with other communities and receive technical support and advice on promoting citizenship and civic participation.

During its first 10 years, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project was funded exclusively by the Luso-American Foundation for Development. However, in 2009, recognizing the value of the Project to the Portuguese communities of the United States, the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores offered a three-year financial commitment to the Project.

Portuguese American communities have a long history of engaging in programs that foster citizenship and civic participation. These efforts to promote responsible citizenship are marked by extraordinary personal commitment of concerned volunteers to improve the community. Nonetheless, the separate projects promoting civic participation are distinguished by the absence of shared strategies. Interaction among interested individuals and organizations within the local community has been limited. Cooperation between communities within a state has been rare and inter-state cooperation among Portuguese American communities across neighboring states has not taken place. Therefore, the Project works diligently to foster collaboration among various individuals and organizations in different communities and states.

During its 12 years of existence, the Project has worked with 52 cultural, fraternal, and religious organizations in 21 communities located across California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. The Project works with and supports participating organizations by:

- promoting voter registration efforts;

- working with non-profit organizations to prepare and mail voter reminder cards to the organizations' members;
- supporting organizations interested in holding Candidates' Nights; and
- measuring the impact and effectiveness of "get-out-the-vote" campaigns.

The information in this handbook is primarily based on the Project's experience during its 12 years of operation. During its existence, the Project has experienced successes and disappointments. It is hoped that other organizations can benefit from what the Portuguese American Citizenship Project has learned during the past decade. The information is offered in 10 straightforward steps that, if followed, can provide an organization and/or community with significant political power.

STEP 1 – DETERMINE THE CAUSE: WHY ORGANIZE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

A political leader in Massachusetts stated the obvious when he said, "Decisions are made by those who show up." In a democratic system of government, there are no prizes for apathy or political weakness. The advantages to any organization and its members of participating in the political process are obvious. The costs of not participating are equally clear. If the organization has any preferences on the rules governing our society, if its members pay taxes, if its senior members depend on government programs, if its members' children attend school, then active participation in the political process is not just desirable, it is critical.

If the leaders of an organization desire to have the interests of their members represented, they must take the necessary steps to encourage their members to exercise their political rights. Yet, there are many leaders of not-for-profit organizations who hesitate to get involved in political matters because not-for-profit organizations, such as religious organizations and social clubs, are prohibited from engaging in any partisan political campaign by virtue of their tax status and often by their own by-laws. This ban broadly includes activities on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Not-for-profit organizations can however conduct non-partisan voter education activities. Some of these activities may include conducting citizenship and voter registration drives, mailing voter reminder cards, and organizing candidates' nights to give their members an opportunity to learn about the candidates' positions on issues important to the community.

In reaching a decision of whether to take an active role in the political process, the individuals responsible for the organization should consider the following:

- ❖ Why should we get involved? Are we satisfied in having others making decisions affecting our future without taking an active role in the process?
- ❖ If we get involved, what will the benefits be for our members?
- ❖ What human capital and financial resources will it take and can we provide those resources?
- ❖ Are there issues important to the members of our organization that are not being addressed by elected officials or candidates for political offices? Our experience is that individuals are more likely to participate in the political process, if there are one or more issues that are important to them.
- ❖ Once the above questions have been answered, if the leaders of the organization decide to take an active role in the political process, the next step is to establish a working committee to develop an action plan and carry out the tasks necessary to achieve the organization's goals.

STEP 2 – ESTABLISH A WORKING COMMITTEE

In many instances, individuals are elected or selected for leadership positions within organizations because they get things done! Unfortunately, sometimes these same individuals have a difficult time delegating tasks or even allowing others to do some of the work that needs doing.

While we need individuals who get things done, in the case of a get-out-the-vote campaign, it is imperative that several individuals be involved in this process. There are simply too many tasks to be performed by one individual. At least five to ten committed individuals are needed; however, twenty people may be too many cooks in the kitchen.

When you list all of the tasks that need to be completed to carry out a get-out-the-vote campaign, it becomes quite evident that you need a dedicated group of individuals to accomplish your goals. Having different individuals responsible for the various tasks that need to be completed makes it that much more likely that those tasks will be done well and in a timely manner. In addition, there is also the issue of ownership. If we want individuals to feel they have a stake in the campaign, they have to be provided with an opportunity to be involved.

As the organization's leaders consider the committee's membership, it is important they encourage and, if necessary, recruit young people to be active participants in these activities. It is often stated that young people are the future of an organization. A more precise way of looking at the role of young people in an organization is to recognize they are the future and the present of the organization and need to be allowed and encouraged to take on responsibilities commensurate with their skills, enthusiasm, and potential. As one young man who has done admirable political work in Rhode Island stated, "I appreciated when the older members of the organization realized that I could do more than stack chairs and gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my leadership skills." Another important aspect of organizing a committee is to make sure the committee is not biased toward a political party.

Finally, although it may seem obvious, it is important to remember that before embarking on a political campaign, it is critical for those interested in carrying out these efforts to seek the support and commitment of the president of the club or the pastor of the parish. We have witnessed instances where well-intentioned individuals begin planning to take an active role in a get-out-the-vote campaign only to realize that the organization's leader does not share their enthusiasm and passion.

STEP 3 – AGREE ON RULES

Notwithstanding the merits of a candidate's position, if a campaign is not efficiently organized to mobilize supporters, the candidate is operating at a great disadvantage and is likely to lose. Organization is no less important for not-for-profit organizations. The effectiveness of a working committee and the ability to achieve its goals depends to a great degree on how it is organized.

Assuming that over the years political candidates have come to adopt the most efficient and practical methods of campaign organization, a not-for-profit organization should imitate these practices as far as possible. The important exception to the strategy of copying a political campaign is that a non-partisan project does not have a candidate to support. A non-partisan organization essentially conducts a “Campaign without a Candidate.”

One of the first items the committee must address is the development of goals and the process to achieve these goals. An effective working committee will likely establish long and short term goals.

The advantage of long term goals is that they provide the organization/committee with a direction of where the organization wants to go and what it wants to achieve.

The advantage of short term goals, such as those of working towards a specific election, is that the demands on volunteer time and energy are centered on specific events rather than spread throughout the year. As such, the rewards, as well as the potential disappointments, are more tangible and measurable.

Focus, focus, focus! While the goals may be as general as increasing the civic participation of the organizations’ members, consideration should be given towards more targeted goals, such as increasing the voting participation rate of young voters. Analyses conducted by the Portuguese American Citizenship Project indicate that, in general, young voters tend to vote less than older voters. Other specific goals may include raising the level of awareness of the registered voters towards issues that are important to the community. As an example, a community may be interested in promoting the inclusion of Portuguese in the curricula of their public schools. It would be appropriate for the committee to make this issue one of the goals for their organization’s civic participation.

As the committee considers the development of its goals, it must also consider its financial and human capabilities. It is important that these limited resources be targeted towards accomplishing the organization’s goals. If the organization does not have resources to reach the entire community, but there is an issue that is important to the organization and is concentrated and relevant to a certain part of the community, the committee should

focus its resources on that area of the community. Cities are divided into precincts. Therefore, once the issue is defined, it is possible and desirable to identify the precincts where this issue will be decided and focus the efforts on those precincts.

The committee must decide in which elections to take an active role. Some organizations choose to participate in every election in a cycle, while others focus only on certain elections. Evaluations conducted by the Portuguese American Citizenship Project show that organizations can have the most impact on off-year and special elections. This follows common sense as Presidential Elections average about fifty percent turnout while in some special elections voter turnout is as low as twenty to thirty percent. It thus follows that it is in the off-year and special elections that the organization's "get-out the vote" campaign can make the most difference.

An advantage of having the organization mobilize its members for each election is that this practice puts into place a "machine" that can quickly be mobilized when local issues need immediate attention. The Portuguese American Citizenship Project has several examples of instances where communities were able to gear up quickly and make a significant impact on a decision that would otherwise have been made by a small percentage of voters.

One specific example of a community mobilizing its members on short notice happened in Bristol, Rhode Island, where the town's political leaders were faced with a decision to close a number of elementary schools to build a consolidated and modern new school. The schools to be closed were largely in the Portuguese American neighborhoods. Because the new construction required financing, a bond issue had to be approved by the voters. According to some sources, the town's officials purposely chose to hold the bond referendum in the summer and not publicize the issue. A low voter turnout would presumably leave the decision only to interested parties who would be in favor of the new school. Portuguese Americans in Bristol choose to mobilize their community to vote.

The local Portuguese American leaders in cooperation with the Project sent voter cards to members of the Portuguese American parish and the local club. The Portuguese American turnout was approximately 40 percent compared to the town-wide turnout of less than 10 percent. In the words of a city councilman after the vote was counted, "as soon as we saw the large turnout, we knew we lost." The Project was neither for nor against the bond issue; the Project simply worked towards encouraging members of the community to exercise their right to vote.

Another important consideration for the committee is to decide on what office or offices to concentrate its efforts. Once again, common sense tells us that the lower the office the more significant the impact the organization can bring to bear. In making this decision,

important consideration must be given to the issues that are important to the community and what office has control over those issues.

If the organization is interested in promoting the inclusion of Portuguese within the curricula of public schools, then it would make sense that the efforts focus on the Board of Education or School Committee. Similarly, if the issues that concern the organization are controlled by the City/Town Council, then that is where the efforts must be focused.

Targeting statewide or federal elections should be considered on a case-by-case basis. There are certain statewide and federal races where it will be very difficult to make a significant impact. On the other hand there are some races that are so close that a small block of voters can make a significant difference. As an example, in 1996, Dennis Cardoza ran for the 26th District of the California State Assembly. Although there were 93,210 votes cast for that election, Mr. Cardoza won the race by only 86 votes. At that time, Mr. Cardoza actively sought the support of the Portuguese community and has stated publicly many times that the Portuguese community elected him to that office. Although he has been in office for many years, he has never forgotten his first victory.

The committee must also consider what efforts to undertake as part of its civic participation campaign. Two of the most successful activities in which the Portuguese American Citizenship Project has worked with other organizations are the creation and mailing of voter reminder cards and organizing candidates' nights. The committee should also seriously consider citizenship and voter registration drives. All of these activities are described in detail later in this handbook.

As the committee is considering its organizational structure, it should establish sub-committees with specific responsibilities and timelines to accomplish those activities. At a minimum, there should be the following sub-committees: event planning, fundraising, and publicity. The committee must also select one person to be its spokesperson. As Brittel (2010) stated, "A campaign without a spokesperson is just a well-intentioned mob" (p. 5). Having more than one spokesperson can be a problem as the group will likely end up with different stories, positions, and opinions. In any campaign, situations change and it is important that only one spokesperson be responsible for communicating the message so that it will remain consistent throughout the campaign.

Another important consideration is to determine what financial and human resources the organization is willing or able to contribute to this activity? We have witnessed organizations that have participated in civic participation campaigns when all of the expenses for the campaign were borne by another entity. However, when the funds by the outside entity were no longer available, these organizations abandoned their efforts. Therefore, if the organization is not willing to make a financial commitment, its

participation in the civic participation campaign will likely be short lived. Although, political organizing can be done somewhat inexpensively, it cannot be accomplished for free. It is critical that the organization's commitment include a financial contribution to this important effort.

As social clubs and churches establish "the rules of engagement," it is important to be reminded that they are classified as not-for-profit organizations and, as such, are prohibited from engaging in any partisan political campaigning. This ban broadly includes activities on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office or political parties. These organizations can, however, conduct non-partisan voter education activities. Notwithstanding the abovementioned restriction, it is in the best interest of any organization not to choose sides—which can lead to divisiveness—but rather make the organization an important spot for any and all candidates' efforts for soliciting votes.

It is equally important, however, not to use the abovementioned restrictions as an excuse to not engage the organization in a campaign to promote civic involvement. There will be voices both within and outside the organization who will warn against "getting involved." Organizations should encourage their members to exercise their civil rights to the maximum extent possible.

STEP 4 – ANNOUNCE THE ORGANIZATION’S CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Once the organization has established the goals and “rules of engagement” for its civic participation campaign, the next step should be to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to communicate with the organization’s members and the community.

A communication plan is essential, yet it is often overlooked. We have witnessed several examples of organizations that have participated in a civic involvement campaign without properly informing their members and the community at large. This oversight is a huge lost opportunity. If not well and actively informed of the efforts of their organization, members are less likely to participate, and the organization will also be missing valuable opportunities to allow and encourage their members to be more than bystanders. Informed members are much more likely to become supporters of the cause by volunteering their time, and in some cases, financial resources.

There are a variety of effective ways to inform the organization’s members about the organization’s efforts to increase its members’ civic involvement. Some organizations choose to send individual letters to their members. Other organizations use their own newsletters, the local media, or a combination of the above. An inexpensive and effective way to utilize the local media is by offering to grant interviews and provide Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

If the committee chooses to send a letter to the organization’s members, it may use this opportunity to send a voter registration card to each household to encourage non-registered members to register, and in the event that all household members are registered to vote, pass the card to a member of the extended family or a friend who is not registered. It is the beginning of a wholesale (as opposed to retail) scope of the initiative. The inclusion of the registration cards serves two purposes – it makes every household a potential activist in the campaign and it serves notice to the political establishment that the initiative is serious. A request for several hundred, or in the case of a parish several thousand voter registration cards, does not go unnoticed by the political establishment.

STEP 5 – DEFINE THE PROBLEM

When voter turn-out is low, it is not uncommon to make assumptions that may or may not be based on reality. Often low turnout at the polls is referred to as an indication of voter apathy. Yet, the causes for such low turnout may go much deeper than voter apathy and merit close examination. An organization interested in maximizing the civic participation of its members must not determine only their level of participation, but also the reasons why some members do not participate in the political process.

Most not-for-profit organizations have limited volunteer and financial resources. Therefore, it is essential to determine the membership's current civic involvement and define the problem and strength areas. Only after this is accomplished can a campaign plan proceed with any degree of confidence.

The process of assessing an organization's civic participation strengths and weaknesses includes determining how many of the organization's members are U.S. citizens, how many are registered to vote, and whether or not they vote? This information measures the political strength and potential of the organization.

The Portuguese American Citizenship Project has developed extensive experience in assisting organizations in assessing the civic involvement of their members. The organization's membership list is linked with the voter registration data provided by the local government. This process yields information about the number and percentage of the organization's members who are registered to vote. It also provides a mailing list of registered voters that can be used by the organization to encourage these individuals to exercise their right to vote.

Additional analysis of the data will yield information about the percentage of the organization's members who have voted in specific elections, as well as show which age groups have the highest percentage of voting as well as the lowest. If the organization is interested in determining the citizen/non-citizen ratio among non-registered members, surveys can also be conducted to provide this information.

If the organization wishes to go beyond looking at the numbers, it can choose to administer a survey to its members that will provide additional information about the reasons they have not voted. A sample survey is included as Appendix G.

Once the above information has been gathered, the leaders of the organization have the information needed to decide where to focus their resources to maximize the civic participation of their members.

STEP 6 - ESTABLISH A CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Once the organization has decided to participate in a campaign to increase the civic participation of its members, it is important to establish a calendar of events so that the agreed upon tasks will be accomplished by the election date. The calendar of events should not only specify the task to be completed and by when, but also who is responsible for completing the specific task.

The Portuguese American Citizenship Project has been working with organizations in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and California to prepare and mail voter reminder cards to various organizations’ members. Below is a timeline to complete and mail the voter reminder cards.

**Timeline for Completing Voter Reminder Cards
 (working backwards from the date of the election)**

Event	Action	Person Responsible
Election Date	Voter cards in the hands of each registered voter	Organization’s Representative
1 week before election	Voter cards sent to each registered voter	Organization’s Representative
3 weeks before election	Voter cards sent to printer	Organization’s Representative
4 weeks before election	CD with formatted voter cards sent to community by coordinator	PACP Coordinator
10 weeks before election	Voter registration information and updated organization membership information sent to PACP Coordinator	PACP Board Members

In addition to including tasks targeted toward specific elections, the calendar of events should also include a timetable for strategies to promote citizenship and register new voters. Once again, if these tasks are not included on a calendar of events, it is much less likely that they will ever take place.

STEP 6A – CONDUCT CITIZENSHIP DRIVES

Before moving on to Step 7, which describes how to conduct a non-partisan get-out-the-vote campaign, it is important to address briefly citizenship and voter registration drives. Your organization's efforts to get-out-the-vote will be more effective if you have effectively conducted citizenship and voter registration drives.

We have been unable to find much information on how to conduct citizenship drives. There is, however, an excellent resource *The U.S. Citizenship Application Guide* that is available for purchase at www.usimmigrationsupport.org – even though it is not a U.S. Government publication. It is highly recommended that anyone organizing a citizenship drive acquire this or any similar publications.

Becoming a United States citizen can be an overwhelming process for many immigrants. Therefore, providing assistance to these individuals is a very noble cause. There are many reasons/benefits for becoming a United States citizen. Among them are the following:

- ❖ You can vote in elections;
- ❖ You will not be deported;
- ❖ You do not have to worry about immigration laws;
- ❖ You can run for public office;
- ❖ You can apply for government jobs;
- ❖ You can help your family members come to the United States;
- ❖ Your unmarried children can move to the United States;
- ❖ You will be able to get Social Security benefits even if you do not live in the United States;
- ❖ You do not have to renew your green card; and
- ❖ You do not have to file a form when you change your address.

It is especially important to highlight the critical issue of deportation. With the current laws, there are individuals who came to the United States very young, only speak English, who had never left the country, and were deported because of unfortunate circumstances.

It should also be noted that several countries, including Portugal, provide dual citizenship so that individuals can become U.S. citizens without losing their original citizenship.

Planning

The first step in organizing a citizenship drive is to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses all aspects of the citizenship process. The following items should be considered:

- ❖ Are there classes available for individuals interested in preparing for the citizenship test? If classes are not available in your community, it is recommended that your organization consider offering classes or working with other organizations, such as adult schools, community colleges, or literacy centers to offer these classes.
- ❖ Will your citizenship drive be a group or individual effort? In other words, will you be scheduling one day when you will have a group of volunteers to help those interested in applying for citizenship or will you be providing assistance on an individual basis?
- ❖ Will your organization be conducting the citizenship drive or contracting with another organization to help individuals complete the paperwork? There are organizations, such as Catholic Charities, that, for a minimal fee, will help individuals complete the paperwork necessary to apply for citizenship. The obvious advantage of having such organizations conduct the process of citizenship is that they are experienced and are less likely to commit mistakes that can cause serious problems for individuals who are attempting to become U.S. citizens.

The answers to the above questions will dictate some of the steps you will have to take to carry out your citizenship drive.

Training

It is critical that volunteers who will be assisting individuals in applying for citizenship be well informed about the process and applicable regulations. Although there is less information on how to conduct citizenship drives than voter registration drives, as mentioned previously, there is an excellent resource, *The U.S. Citizenship Application Guide*, available for purchase at www.usimmigrationsupport.org. Again, this publication is not a United States Government publication. *The U.S. Citizenship Application Guide* includes the following information:

- ❖ Benefits of United States Citizenship;
- ❖ Responsibilities of a United States Citizen;
- ❖ Understanding the U.S. Naturalization Process;
- ❖ Application Waivers, Exceptions, and Special Cases;
- ❖ The Oath of Allegiance;
- ❖ Sample Citizenship Test;
- ❖ Eligibility Information;
- ❖ List of Required Documents;
- ❖ Information on Filing Fees;
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions;
- ❖ List of USCIS Offices Nationwide;
- ❖ Directory of U.S. Embassies and Consulates; and,

- ❖ All Required Application Forms.

It is strongly recommended that anyone considering conducting a citizenship drive consult this (or a similar) publication to assure that the proper guidance is provided to volunteers who will be assisting individuals applying for citizenship.

STEP 6B – CONDUCT VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

There is much information available on how to conduct voter registration drives. Therefore, the information presented below is not intended to be comprehensive. It is provided as a reminder that voter registration drives are important efforts that should be addressed by not-for-profit organizations as a precursor for get-out-the-vote campaigns.

Non-partisan voter registration drives are excellent opportunities to educate members of your organization about the importance of civic responsibility and active citizenship. Not only will you register new voters, but you will also communicate the importance of voting to all other individuals at the meeting/event where the drive is conducted.

Given the limited financial and human resources available to promote civic involvement, it is vitally important to be as effective as possible in any voter registration campaign. It makes little sense to have a volunteer sit in the hot sun during a summer festival if only a small number of members take the time to register. A voter registration drive should be linked to a general campaign to get-out-the-vote and should be a wholesale rather than a retail effort.

For example, when an organization decides to embark on a campaign to promote citizenship and civic involvement, it should announce this campaign to each member within the community by letter. As part of this communication, a voter registration form should be included to encourage family members, who are not registered, to register. A voter registration form on every kitchen table is an effective method of registering greater numbers of voters rather than sitting under the hot sun. It is also a political statement which will not be lost on the government leaders and candidates for political office.

As you think about organizing a voter registration drive, consider that your organization may be one of the few institutions in your community that can reach groups notably under-registered or under-represented in the political process, such as:

- ❖ **Low-Income People:** According to the U. S. Census Bureau, in 2006 only 34 percent of eligible voters whose families made under \$25,000 per year actually voted, compared to 64 percent of all eligible voters.
- ❖ **Ethnic Minorities:** Several ethnic minorities have voter participation rates significantly below the national average.
- ❖ **New Citizens and Immigrants:** New citizens are often anxious to exercise their voting rights and are confused about the process itself. A voter registration campaign can help educate them about when and where they can vote. It can also present an opportunity to identify those who wish to become citizens.

- ❖ **Youth:** Young people vote at an alarmingly low rate compared to the rest of the adult population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2006 only 24 percent of all young people between the ages of 18 and 24 voted. If your organization has an active youth group, this may be an excellent opportunity for them to get involved.

Important Steps for Organizing a Non-partisan Voter Registration Drive

- ❖ Meet with the organization leaders and thoroughly discuss the plans for the non-partisan drive. Solicit ideas from them on how to make it successful.
- ❖ Form a committee, if you need help conducting the drive. Committee members can help research voter registration laws, recruit volunteers, and publicize the event. To avoid the appearance of partisanship be sure to include members of all major political parties.
- ❖ Learn the voter registration procedures: requirements vary by state and county. Contact your local election office to determine what methods are permitted in your area. In some areas, only official registrars are allowed to register voters. In this case, your election office will have to send someone to help with the voter registration. In other areas, volunteers can be deputized as registrars, if they attend a training session. Some election offices will even arrange a special training for your group.
- ❖ Choose an opportune time to conduct the drive. Take advantage of an event held by your organization that will attract many people. With permission from the event organizers, you may be able to have a very successful voter registration drive.
- ❖ Send a voter registration form to every member of the organization. A voter registration form on every kitchen table is an effective method of encouraging individuals to register to vote.
- ❖ Timing is very important. In some areas, registration closes as much as two months before the election. Check with your local election office and be sure to plan ahead.
- ❖ Recruit volunteers to help with voter registration. Be clear about how many volunteers you need. To avoid the appearance of partisanship, make sure your volunteers include members of all major political parties.
- ❖ Train your volunteers. If your volunteers give out incorrect information, they and you, as the drive organizer, may deny someone the ability to register to vote or register a person who is not qualified to vote. There are criminal penalties for intentionally denying qualified citizens the opportunity to register to vote or for registering someone who does not meet the requirements. Make sure your volunteers are well informed about the following items:
 - ❖ When and where they will be needed and for how long;
 - ❖ What they need to do to be deputized as registrars;
 - ❖ Where they will find registration materials on the day of the drive;
 - ❖ What to do with the registrations when they are finished (some states require the registrar who received the completed registration form to return it to the election

office; others allow forms from many registrars to be collected and returned by one person); and

- ❖ What to do if they get a question they cannot answer.
- ❖ Keep the voter registration drive non-partisan! It has to be stressed that absolutely no suggestions can be made about what party affiliation people should register. No materials relating to candidates, political parties, or issues involved in the campaign should be distributed as part of the voter registration process.
- ❖ Follow up! Ensure that all completed registration forms are returned to the election office.
- ❖ Thank your volunteers and the leaders of your organization for their cooperation.
- ❖ There are specific regulations related to paying people to help register citizens to vote. If your organization plans to do so, make sure to check any applicable laws.

STEP 7 - CONDUCT A NON-PARTISAN GET-OUT-THE-VOTE CAMPAIGN

Any organization interested in exercising its political influence must do everything possible to maximize the number of its members who become American citizens, register to vote, and lastly, vote. This section discusses get-out-the-vote campaigns. Citizenship and voter registration drives have been discussed previously and should be an important component of the civic participation process.

As mentioned previously, not-for-profit organizations are prohibited from engaging in any partisan political campaign. These organizations can however conduct non-partisan voter education and civic participation activities. During the past decade, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project has been very effective in working with not-for-profit organizations to increase significantly the civic participation of their members. At the core of this work is the use of databases to provide information necessary to mount an effective get-out-the-vote campaign.

The Use of Databases in Campaigns

The leaders of not-for-profit organizations must have accurate information to carry out effective get-out-the-vote campaigns. To be effective, these campaigns must be repeated year after year. To be repeatable, the method cannot be exhausting to the organization and its members. Otherwise, the effort will collapse and the problem of political participation will quickly lapse back into the status quo. The use of databases provides accurate and inexpensive information that can be a valuable resource for an organization to conduct get-out-the-vote campaigns which are well within its financial and volunteer capabilities.

The first step in the use of databases is to link the organization's membership list to the list of registered voters provided by the local government. Our experience indicates that in some jurisdictions the lists of registered voters are easily accessible while in other jurisdictions it takes persistence to acquire this information.

Although the laws in most states provide certain limitations on who can acquire the voter registration lists as well as the purposes of their use, the Portuguese American Citizenship Project has always been successful in acquiring such lists. In most cases, one can go to the local jurisdiction's website and find the regulations guiding the release of these lists.

The cost of acquiring voter registration lists also varies greatly among the various jurisdictions. When requesting this information, you will have to decide if you need just the list of registered voters or also the history of who has voted in past elections. We have found that it is best to request the list of registered voters as well as the voting history,

since the voting history can be used to prepare evaluation reports (described later) that analyze the effectiveness of the get-out-the-vote efforts.

The process of comparing an organization's membership list with the list of registered voters provides critical information that allows the organization to carry out an effective get-out-the-vote campaign. The first piece of information that is created is an accurate list of the organization's members who are registered to vote. Further analyses also allow one to find out who, among the organization's registered voters, has actually voted (but never for whom they voted). Reports by age group can also be prepared to determine the percentage of voters in each age group who have voted in past elections.

The information gathered from linking the organization's membership list to the voter registration list can be used in a variety of ways to help maximize the civic participation of the organization's members.

- ❖ **Correspondence** - If an organization has decided to promote citizenship and civic participation, it can send a letter to unregistered members encouraging them to become U.S. citizens or register to vote as appropriate. Because the database has separated the membership into registered and unregistered individuals, the letters can be addressed to only those who need it: those who are not registered.
- ❖ **Voter Reminder Cards** - The database can also be utilized to send out voter cards reminding registered voters of an upcoming election. The cards can be constructed to also inform the registered member of his/her polling location. These cards have a significant effect on voter turnout, especially in local elections and primary elections, where there is little media interest. Included below is a sample voter reminder card.

SAMPLE VOTER REMINDER CARD-FRONT

DUARTE VICENTE
693 MAPLE AVE

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
TERÇA-FEIRA, 4 DE NOVEMBRO TUESDAY, NOVEMBER
4
6 :00AM - 8:00PM

VOCÊ VAI VOTAR NA: YOU VOTE AT:

FRED ERXLEBEN RECREATIONAL CENTER
RICHMOND ST. (POOL ENTRANCE)

MAIS INFORMAÇÃO/QUESTIONS? TELEPHONE:
THE UNION COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 908-527-4123

INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 **NJ/PISC-**

SAMPLE VOTER REMINDER CARD-BACK

DUARTE VICENTE
693 MAPLE AVE

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
TERÇA-FEIRA, 4 DE NOVEMBRO TUESDAY, NOVEMBER
4
6 :00AM - 8:00PM

VOCÊ VAI VOTAR NA: YOU VOTE AT:

FRED ERXLEBEN RECREATIONAL CENTER
RICHMOND ST. (POOL ENTRANCE)

MAIS INFORMAÇÃO/QUESTIONS? TELEPHONE:
THE UNION COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 908-527-4123

INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 **NJ/PISC-**

STEP 8 – MEASURE THE RESULTS – ELECTION STATISTICS

As important as it is for organizations to implement campaigns to encourage their members to exercise their right to vote, it is also essential for these organizations to measure the effectiveness of their hard work. Have the efforts undertaken by the organization made a difference in the percentage of its members who voted? Do the results justify the resources spent on these efforts?

To answer these and other questions, the analysis of election results must go beyond determining the percentage of individuals who voted. It should include information necessary to determine the effectiveness of the organization's efforts in the past election, as well as provide information the organization needs to carry out a more effective campaign during the next election. Therefore, the evaluation analysis should include reports by age, gender, heads of household, and precincts. The analysis should also compare the results of organizations that carried out a get-out-the-vote campaign with similar organizations that did not sponsor such efforts.

An additional report that may be undertaken is the determination of the percentage of the organization's members who utilize absentee ballots. This information may be helpful in assisting the organization's leaders in focusing their efforts in the next election.

The Portuguese American Citizenship Project has been preparing many of these reports for years. These reports are posted on the Project's website at portugueseamerican.org

STEP 9 – CANDIDATES’ NIGHTS

If after conducting a get-out-the-vote campaign, an organization determines that it represents a large number of voters and that its members vote at a greater turnout rate than the general population, an important issue becomes establishing the agenda for what is important for the community instead of allowing the political candidates to establish their own agenda.

Candidates’ Nights (forums) are an important component in the process of establishing the agenda for the community. These forums provide the organization’s members with an opportunity to inform candidates of the members’ concerns and, at the same time, to learn about the candidates’ positions that are important to the community. In other words, these forums allow the members to set the agenda (issues important to them) rather than the candidates choosing issues which are often irrelevant to the community and the organization’s members.

Candidates’ nights also allow the organization to develop a record of the position of the candidates on issues, providing an opportunity to hold candidates accountable for their actions, once they are elected. Finally, these forums and follow-up actions remind elected officials of the important presence of the Portuguese-American community and ensure that a dialogue continues after the election so that promises made to the community are not forgotten by elected officials.

Conducting a Candidates’ Night



While a candidates' night can be an excellent opportunity for the organization and its members to demonstrate a strong Portuguese presence in the community, if not organized properly, it can reflect negatively on the organization and the community. Therefore, a candidates' forum requires careful and comprehensive planning.

Since not-for-profit organizations are prohibited from conducting political partisan efforts, when organizing a Candidates' Night, care must be taken not to violate IRS standards that can jeopardize the organization's not-for-profit status. The IRS looks at the following factors in determining whether a candidates' forum is considered non-partisan:

- ❖ All legally qualified candidates are invited to participate;
- ❖ The questions are prepared and presented by an independent non-partisan panel/moderator;
- ❖ The topics discussed cover a broad range of issues of interest to the public;
- ❖ Each candidate has an equal opportunity to present his or her views on the issues discussed; and,
- ❖ The moderator does not comment on the questions or otherwise make comments that imply approval or disapproval of any of the candidates.

It is strongly recommended that all candidates be invited to participate in the forum. However, if the organization decides not to invite all candidates, it must have well-established criteria to do so. The IRS has identified the following criteria for determining whether a section 501(c)(3) organization that fails to invite all legally qualified candidates to its debate has violated the political campaign activity prohibition:

- ❖ Whether inviting all legally qualified candidates was impractical;
- ❖ Whether the organization adopted reasonable, objective criteria for determining which candidates to invite;
- ❖ Whether the criteria were applied consistently and non-arbitrarily to all candidates; and,
- ❖ Whether other relevant factors indicate the debate was conducted in a neutral, non-partisan manner.

If the candidates' forum is being held and sponsored by a church, it is strongly recommended that the organizers review the document "*Tips for Conducting Candidate Forums*" from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Additionally, the organizers should also consult with the diocese where the forum is taking place to make sure that they comply with diocesan policies.

In addition to the legal requirements and diocesan policies, organizers should consider the following suggestions when organizing candidates' nights:

Planning

A successful candidates' forum requires careful planning. Below are some important points to consider:

- ❖ The organizers must first determine which political office or offices they wish to focus upon, such as the school committee/board of education, the city council, the mayor's office, state, or federal positions. Generally the lower the political office, the greater the impact of a candidates' forum. It makes sense that school committee candidates would be more responsive to a community's invitation than congressional candidates. While you may be tempted to focus on more than one office, you should consider the following:
 - ❖ How many candidates are running for each office?
 - ❖ If you invite candidates to more than one office, will you have enough time to address the issues adequately? Our experience shows that a candidates' forum should not exceed two hours;
 - ❖ Will the audience stay for the entire proceedings or will they leave half-way through the forum, making some candidates feel short-changed?
- ❖ Once a determination has been made about what office or offices will be the focus of the candidates' forum, the next step is to invite the candidates running for those offices. It is suggested that you call the candidate's office, provide information about the forum, and confirm the candidate's participation. Be sure to note the name and contact information of the person with whom you have spoken. Follow up with a letter to the candidate. It is important that you have confirmation that a significant number of candidates will attend the forum before you start publicizing the event. It is also a good practice to call a couple of days before the event to confirm the candidate's participation;
- ❖ It is critical to keep a record of all correspondence and telephone contacts with invited participants. If a candidate does not wish to participate for any number of reasons, he or she could complain that he or she was not invited or not informed. A transparent record of communication with a candidate and his or her campaign staff answers this potential complaint before it gets started;
- ❖ To assure that all candidates receive equal treatment, as they are invited to the event, it is important that:
 - ❖ The invitations to the candidates be made at the same time;

- ❖ The same medium is used to invite the candidates. In other words, if you call one candidate, then call all of them. If you send a letter to one, then send a letter to all of them;
- ❖ Provide the same information to all candidates, such as guidelines for the event, information about topics to be discussed, etc.; and,
- ❖ Decide whether you will accept alternates to the candidate. We are familiar with organizers who have discontinued the practice of allowing alternates because an alternate does not provide the same information as the candidate. We strongly recommend that alternates not be permitted. It diminishes the candidates' right itself, allows the candidate to disassociate him or herself from the alternates' remarks, and creates a precedent for the other candidates to follow. If you allow for alternates, you will get alternates. Some organizers choose to have a chair for each candidate and, if one candidate does not attend, the chair is left empty with the candidate's name placed on the table in front of the candidate's chair.

Timing

Deciding when to hold the candidates' forum is a critical aspect of the event. In some areas, a candidates' forum, after the first primary, eliminates casual candidates and leaves only serious contenders. In other areas with one dominant political party, a forum should be staged before the primary election, since after the primary election there would likely be no meaningful contest.

Once the organizers decide whether the forum will be held before or after the primary elections, the exact time of the event needs to be given serious consideration. If scheduled too early, community members may not be motivated to attend, as it may seem that the elections are too distant. If scheduled too late, many absentee voters may have already cast their ballots, rendering the candidates' forum of no use to this group of voters. It is also important that other community events be taken into consideration so that the forum does not conflict with other scheduled events.

Questions

It is evident that the questions to be put before the candidates play a critical role in getting the position of the candidates on different issues, as well as framing issues that are important to the community. Experience has shown that focusing on four or five key points leaves the candidates with a clear understanding of the community's concerns. Questions addressing the issues most critical to the community should be prepared in advance by a non-partisan panel. If you decide to take questions from the audience, the questions should be written on index cards and screened before being read by the moderator. Of course, each candidate must have the same amount of time to respond to each question.

Candidates' Nights Guidelines

Clear and specific guidelines are essential to avoid misunderstandings and possible allegations of biased behavior. Clearly, the guidelines should be in writing and provided to all candidates. The following information should be covered by the guidelines:

- ❖ **Speaking Order** – The order in which the candidates will speak needs to be established so that it is as equitable as possible for all candidates. Some organizers choose alphabetical order, while others decide to use straws or numbered balls that are drawn randomly and match a number previously assigned to each candidate.
- ❖ **Time Frame** – You must determine how long candidates will have for opening and concluding statements as well as the amount of time to respond to each question? You must also decide whether candidates will be allowed to respond to other candidates' responses/statements.
- ❖ **Campaign Materials** – Will candidates be allowed to distribute campaign literature? One option is to have a table in the back of the room where the candidates are allowed to place their campaign literature to be retrieved by the attendees.

Publicity

The community members' attendance at a candidates' forum is critical. If the event is not well attended, it will reflect negatively on the organization and the community sponsoring the event. Therefore, it is important to put into action a strong publicity campaign by utilizing radio programs, newspapers, the organization's newsletters and any other means available to the organizers. Some organizations have chosen to advertise candidates' forums on the "voter reminder cards" sent home to each registered voter. Additionally, other organizations have mounted very effective telephone campaigns where they have been able to contact the majority of their members. The telephone campaign may be done by live individuals or computerized systems that contact each household.

To ensure that publicity receives adequate attention, it is a good practice to designate individuals whose sole responsibility is publicity. This will assure that this important area is given the attention it deserves and must receive for the candidates' forum to be successful.

Another way to increase participation at the candidates' forum is to bring together several organizations to collaborate in organizing the forum. One word of caution! Watch out for big egos! The objective of the candidates' forum is to inform the community about candidates' positions and to help frame the issues; it is not about promoting the egos of the individuals involved in organizing the event.

Logistics

Sometimes, it is the small things that make a difference. Whether we admit it or not, most of us form opinions about others by analyzing the interior of the individual's car, an individual's front yard, or the way that someone dresses. The candidates and the audience will form a definite impression of your organization and community by the physical arrangement of the event. Organizers should take the following items into consideration:

- ❖ **Location** – Organizers should select a location with which community members are familiar. Individuals are less likely to attend an event that may be unfamiliar to them, if the event is taking place at a location not well-known to them. The size of the venue is also significant to the success of the forum. While you want to have enough room for all attendees, if the room is too large, it will give the impression that the event is not well attended.
- ❖ **Room Environment** – While it may seem inconsequential, the room appearance will have an impact on the perception of the candidates and the attendees. The old saying, “You only get one chance to make a first impression” has particular significance in the case of a candidates’ forum. Therefore, organizers must give serious consideration to the image they want to project to the candidates and the audience.
- ❖ **Refreshments** – Some organizations choose to provide refreshments to allow the candidates and audience to socialize with each other at the end of the forum. This adds a pleasant touch to the evening and may be an added incentive for some individuals to participate.
- ❖ **Equipment** – Most of us have experienced the frustration of attending an event where equipment malfunctioned. There was microphone feedback or you could not hear the speaker. The only thing worse than experiencing this type of equipment malfunction is for it to happen when you are in charge of the event. Therefore, it is critical the equipment be checked and re-checked to assure its proper functioning. It is also critical to have enough microphones so that the flow of the event is not disrupted by candidates having to wait for a microphone.

Forum Roles

Organizing a candidates’ forum is like putting together a puzzle. Every piece of the puzzle is important. So is the case with candidates’ nights. You may have done an excellent job in planning the forum, but if you do not have the right people in the right place, the forum may be a disaster. Below are some critical roles that will determine the success of the forum. It is important to select individuals for these roles who are more interested in the success of the forum than in their own visibility or ego.

- ❖ **Moderator** – The moderator plays a critical role in the forum. This individual must be unbiased, assertive, and articulate. Most individuals have strong political views and

some are better at keeping their views to themselves than others. A candidates' forum is not a time for a moderator to share his/her political views. The moderator may not indicate his or her views on the issues being discussed, comment on candidates' responses, or in any other way indicate bias for or against a particular candidate, party, or position. The moderator must be assertive to enforce consistently and fairly the guidelines previously established and communicated to the candidates. One common characteristic of candidates for political office is that they like to talk. Therefore, the moderator will likely have to enforce the time limits established for the forum. It is also essential that the moderator be articulate to ask the questions clearly so that they can be easily understood by the candidates and the audience.

- ❖ **Timekeeper** – Time limits should have been established when the guidelines for the forum were developed. These time limits must be kept accurately and consistently. The timekeeper must let the candidates know when their speaking time is up so that the moderator will consistently enforce the time limits agreed upon prior to the event.
- ❖ **Greeters** – It is a good practice to have greeters to welcome the candidates, thank them for participating, and lead them to their seats. This practice shows that you respect them and appreciate their participation.

The Portuguese American Citizenship Project provides a template for candidates' nights and follow-up actions to be carried out by interested organizations. For more information, please visit portugueseamerican.org. A detailed workbook with complete videos of Candidates' Nights is available upon request.

STEP 10 – FOLLOW-UP

The old adage “*you get what you measure*” may very well apply to candidates’ forums. Although holding a candidates’ night provides immediate benefits to the community because it allows the audience to be informed about the candidates’ positions and helps to frame the issues, there is an additional benefit to be gained when there is proper follow-up to the candidates’ forum.

Our experience suggests that the proceedings of the Candidates’ Nights should be recorded for later review. This allows committee members to document each promise made by candidates and, at some future date, perhaps midway in the candidates’ term of office, send a follow-up letter from the organization asking about progress made toward fulfilling these promises. The process described below has been effective in several communities:

- ❖ After reviewing the list of promises made by candidates, members of the organization contact the offices of the elected officials and ask for the current status of projects and policies the candidates had promised to undertake. See Appendix F for a sample letter.
- ❖ After a reply from the candidates’ office, the list of promises and their current status is compiled into a brief report to be shared with the community.
- ❖ Before making the report available to the community, members of the organization make the report available to the elected officials to assure the accuracy of the report. This will further demonstrate to the elected officials that the organization is serious about the promises it was made.

When the process described above is used consistently, word quickly spreads among elected officials that this organization/community is serious about its commitment to political action and that it is a force that must not be taken lightly.

Additional Resources for Candidates’ Nights

The Portuguese American Citizenship Project has compiled a workbook with material from participating organizations. You may contact the Project Coordinator at portugueseamerican.org for a copy of this workbook. The workbook includes:

- ❖ **Santa Clara Background Material** – from The Portuguese American forum of Santa Clara, California. This section provides sample letters of invitation, rules for conducting a candidates’ night, and pictures from one of their candidates’ night events.
- ❖ **Fall River Background Material** – from the Social Justice Committee of St. Michael’s Parish in Fall River, Massachusetts. This section provides invitation letters, press

releases, questions posed to the candidates, a video recording of the candidates' night, and a compilation of promises made by candidates during the event.

- ❖ **New Bedford Background Material** – from the Immigrants' Assistance Center and Mount Carmel Parish, both in New Bedford. This section provides invitation letters, press releases, questions posed to the candidates, a video recording of the candidates' night, and a compilation of promises made by candidates during the event.

Final Thoughts

We began this handbook by stating that it is often said that the Portuguese don't vote! Yet, our experience is that when organizations participate in get-out-the-vote campaigns, their members end up voting at a higher rate than the general population. Therefore, one can assume that, if the Portuguese do not vote, it is not because of apathy. It may be simply because they need the organizations to which they belong to provide the leadership and assistance necessary to help them exercise their well-earned political rights.

The steps and strategies described in this handbook have been proven to work. The Portuguese American Citizenship Project stands ready and willing to work with interested organizations in providing the support needed to conduct effective get-out-the-vote campaigns.

SEM VOTO ... SEM VOZ!

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Sample Letter to Candidates

Appendix B – Sample Poster Announcing Candidates’ Night – English

Appendix C – Sample Poster Announcing Candidates’ Night – Portuguese

Appendix D – Sample Format and Guidelines for Candidates’ Nights

Appendix E – Sample Forum Questions

Appendix F – Sample Follow-up Letter to Elected Officials about Promises

Appendix G -- Voting Survey



The Portuguese-American Forum of Santa Clara

The Portuguese-American Forum of Santa Clara is non-partisan grass roots committee that seeks to encourage our local Portuguese-American Community toward informed involvement in the electoral process. The Committee does not endorse candidates, our mission is to ensure that the audience receives information objectively and without bias.

**SPONSORING
ORGANIZATIONS**

S.E.S. Corporation

Supreme Council of S.E.S.

Brotherhood of S. Anthony

Our Lady of Fatima Society

Santa Clara Sporting Club

*Sociedade Filarmónica
União Portuguesa de
Santa Clara*

*Saint Clare's Parish
Portuguese Council*

Maritimo Sport Club

*Luso-American
Foundation*

*The Portuguese-American
Citizenship Project*

September 18, 2008

Dear Candidate:

Thank you for your desire to serve Santa Clara as an elected official. We appreciate your commitment to ensure a better City today and in the future.

We are pleased to invite you to participate in our "Candidates' Night" Forum. The purpose of the Forum is twofold. First, we seek to encourage informed involvement by our local Portuguese-Americans in the electoral process. Second, we want to promote in our electoral officials, an informed awareness of issues impacting our community.

The Forum is an important tool in moving us towards these goals.

This year's Forum will take place on **October 15, at 7:00 PM**. The event will be held at the SES Corp., located at 1375 Lafayette St. Santa Clara.

Candidates for each Council seat or other elected position are requested to make an opening statement of no more than three minutes. Following questions, you will have the opportunity to make a two minutes closing statement. We then hope you will join us informally for refreshments and hors d'oeuvres.

Please bring with you any campaign materials that would enlighten members of our community about your candidacy.

Finally, please be advised that the Committee will not endorse or participate, in any manner, in the campaign of any candidate. This is consistent with our non-partisan mission to ensure that the audience receives your information objectively and without bias.

We welcome you and look forward to seeing you on October 15. Please RSVP to Maria F. Ricardo at 408-772-8779 to confirm your attendance.

Very Truly Yours,

Maria Fernanda Ricardo (*Coordinator*)



"Candidates' Night"

You are invited to attend our Forum to meet the Santa Clara Unified School District Board Candidates and the City of Santa Clara's electoral officials Candidates. Come and learn where they stand on issues affecting the future of our Community. Be prepared to make an informed decision, when it's time to cast your vote!

When: October 20, 2010

Time: 6:30 PM

Place: S.E.S. Corp., 1375 Lafayette St. Santa Clara

**Your Vote is
Your Voice!**



Sponsoring Organizations:

- ★ S.E.S Corporation
- ★ Supreme Council of S.E.S
- ★ Brotherhood of S. Anthony
- ★ Our Lady of Fatima Society
- ★ The Portuguese-American
Citizenship Project
- ★ Santa Clara Sporting Club
- ★ Sociedade Filarmónica União P. de Sta. Clara
- ★ Saint Clare Parish Portuguese Council
- ★ Club Sport Marítimo
- ★ Irmandade Familiar do Espírito Santo de Santa Clara
- ★ Luso-American Foundation

The Portuguese-American Forum of Santa Clara is a non-partisan committee that seeks to encourage informed involvement by our local Portuguese-American community in the electoral process.

The Committee doesn't endorse candidates. Our mission is to ensure that the audience receives information objectively and without bias.

For more information please contact: 408-772-8779



"Noite de Candidatos"

Fórum Político com a presença dos Candidatos concorrentes a posições públicas nas Escolas e na Câmara Municipal de Santa Clara.
Marque presença, venha conhecer e ouvir os nossos candidatos.
Informe-se para melhor decidir a quem dar o seu voto.

Dia 20 de Outubro de 2010

6:30 da tarde

S.E.S. Corp., 1375 Lafayette St. Santa Clara

**O seu voto
é a sua voz!**

Vote!

ORGANIZAÇÕES PARTICIPANTES:

- ★ S.E.S Corporation
- ★ Portuguese Fraternal Society of America
- ★ Irmandade de Santo António
- ★ Sociedade de N. S. de Fátima
- ★ The Portuguese-American Citizenship Project
- ★ Santa Clara Sporting Club
- ★ Sociedade Filarmónica União P. de Sta. Clara
- ★ Conselho Paróquial Português (Saint Clare)
- ★ Club Sport Marítimo
- ★ Irmandade Familiar do Espírito Santo de Santa Clara
- ★ Fundação Luso Americana

The Portuguese-American Forum of Santa Clara é um grupo sem afiliação política, cujo objectivo é incentivar e informar a comunidade Luso-Americana, para que participe no processo político eleitoral. A Comissão não apoia candidatos e deseja assegurar que a audiência seja informada sem ser influenciada.

Para mais informação por favor contacte: 408-772-8779

**FORMAT AND GUIDELINES
FOR THE
CANDIDATES' NIGHT**

November 3, 2006

Each Candidate will be invited to make a two (2) minute opening presentation

Each Candidate will be asked three (3) questions respectively.

The response time for each question will be disclosed by the moderator.

If time permits the candidates will be asked questions from the audience, via the moderator

Each Candidate will be invited to make a two (2) minute closing statement

Guidelines:

Candidates are to address the audience and respond to the questions in English only.

Candidates are requested not to rebut to the response of another candidate or to ask another candidate a question.

SAMPLE FORUM QUESTIONS

1. Well lit streets are known to discourage loitering, vandalism and other crimes. What are you planning on doing to address the lack of street lightning in many areas of the south end in order to ensure safety in our neighborhood?
2. How will you encourage the strengthening and enforcement of city regulations to make businesses, tenants and home owners keep their property clean?
3. How will you encourage the strengthening and enforcement of city regulations to make pet owners to clean after their pets?
4. What can the city government do to improve the removal of snow from our streets?
5. What will you do to make sure that there is more police presence in our neighborhoods to ensure our safety?
6. What steps will you take to address an alternative education program (Vocational or skilled trade) for High School drop outs with the school committee?
7. The influx of low income residents from outside of New Bedford has caused our already overworked school system and social welfare organizations to reach the breaking point. In your opinion, do the state of Massachusetts and the Federal government provide the necessary financial resources to properly meet the need of these newcomers to our city? What can the City Council do to improve this situation?
8. We all know that there are drug markets in our neighborhoods. Why do they still exist and what can the city government do to close them down?
9. As we know, combating crime requires the effective cooperation between the police and the local residents. As a candidate what do you believe is the responsibility of the local residents to combat drugs and violence in their neighborhoods?
10. We have heard and read of several breakdowns in the police department's "No Snitch" policy. Why is the confidentiality policy not being fully enforced in the "No Snitch" policy?

Dear Mayor Mahan,

Once again, thank you for participating in Portuguese American Forum's October 2006 Candidates' Night.

Our community appreciated learning your positions on important issues and how you planned to address these problems.

Our civic involvement is not limited to one evening's debate between candidates but rather an on-going exchange between our elected officials and the community. In that light, we wish to know what action has been taken regarding the important points you raised during your presentation.

Specifically:

- Restoration of reserve funds: You stated that the biggest challenge of the next 4 years is to restore the reserve funds. To accomplish this, you indicated that the city must preserve budget surpluses and resist the temptation to spend these funds on new programs.
- Land use decisions: You stated that the second biggest challenge is on land use decisions adding that growth must be compatible with existing development.
- Economic growth: You stated that there is a need to increase economic growth.
- Translation of city publications and services into Portuguese: You stated that the city needs to include Portuguese translations of materials especially in Senior Centers. You added that you will start on this immediately.
- Development near Santa Clara University: You stated that the city's only role in development near Santa Clara University should be land, not money or infrastructure.

A brief answer to these questions would be appreciated. Please reply at your earliest convenience to the following

Maria Ricardo
Coordinator
Portuguese American Forum of Santa Clara
Post Office Box 1349
Santa Clara, California 95052-1349

APPENDIX G

Voting Survey

During the last election:

I voted _____ If you voted, do not complete the rest of the survey

I did not vote _____ If you did not vote, please check the reason/reasons below:

Reason for Not Voting	Put a Check in This Column for All Items That Apply
Not an American Citizen	
Not registered to vote	
I forgot	
Not interested	
Too busy	
Didn't like the candidates	
Out of town	
Sick/Disabled	
Did not have transportation	
Did not understand the issues	
Did not know the candidates' positions on the issues	
Bad weather	
Long lines at the polls	
Requested, but did not receive absentee ballot	
Did not know where to vote	
Other, please specify reason	