

ADVOCACY TOOLS

EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY

This section is all about educating your community about gender-based violence. Community members may not be familiar with gender-based violence; one way to introduce them is through sharing the [power and control wheel](#). Others are familiar but may not know where to go to receive services or where to direct others. In this section, you will find resources where survivors can receive help as well as fact sheets that can be shared with community partners or used to table at community events.



An additional way to educate your community is through sharing information through social media and having an online campaign. Use our Week Without Violence [Social Media Tools](#) to find tips and best practices for engagement.

You can also choose to engage and educate your community through hosting an event, such as a panel discussion, presentation, or screening. The last part of this section includes a [guide for putting together a Week Without Violence event](#). If you are planning an event, **make sure to center the voices of survivors** and acknowledge that experiences vary for survivors based on gender, race, socio-economic status, and ability. Especially as we look to solutions for gender-based violence, it's important for us to listen to the wants and needs of survivors.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER BASED VIOLENCE:

- [Power and Control Wheel](#)
- [Barriers to Safety Flyer](#)
- Week Without Violence Fact Sheets – located in the Week Without Violence toolkit
- [Gender-Based Violence Talking Points](#)

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS SEEKING HELP:

- [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 800.799.SAFE (7233) – provides a phone and chat line for survivors of domestic violence
- [The National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline](#) (RAINN): 800.656.HOPE (4673) – provides a toll-free line for survivors of sexual assault

HOST AN EVENT:

Bring members of your community together to learn about gender-based violence and what they can do to support survivors and prevent future violence. Use our [How to host a Week Without Violence event guide](#) to help you plan your event.

VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Voting is one of the strategies used to accomplish YWCA's mission of eliminating racism and empowering women. We know that the people we elect to office will determine public policy on major issues that impact our communities. Together, we can make a difference this election and every election by ensuring our voices are heard.

This section outlines some ways to discuss gender-based violence and promote Week Without Violence while engaging voters this election.



TIE YWCA'S MISSION AND THE ISSUE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TO THE ELECTION:

Week Without Violence provides an opportunity to further your issue advocacy by helping voters understand the connection between voting and YWCA issue priorities.

- Educate voters and candidates about gender-based violence
- Share YWCA USA's fact sheets on gender-based violence
- Hold issue forums: Get Out The Vote initiatives can include a campaign to educate voters about the important issues on which policy is being debated.
 - Invite people to speak about gender-based violence. Presenters may be survivors; nonprofit professionals; academics; local, state, or federal lobbyists; or others with expertise on the issue.
 - Include an introduction by a community leader or survivor to provide context and explain why these issues are important to YWCA without endorsing a policy position or a candidate.
 - **Remain non-partisan. Avoid endorsing or alluding to your assessment of any candidate or policy position.**
 - Pair promotion of Week Without Violence with your voter registration: If your YWCA hosts voter registration drives at events in your community or through tabling, you can use that opportunity to also share information on your work around gender-based violence and resources for survivors.

SOME IMPORTANT RULES AROUND VOTER ENGAGEMENT:

The IRS clearly states that 501(c)(3) organizations may conduct voter engagement or connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis. This includes encouraging voter participation, educating voters, and talking to candidates about issues. Below are guidelines for YWCAs in conducting activities during the 2019 election season.

As 501(c)(3) organizations, **YWCAs can:**

1. Promote or conduct voter registration
2. Educate voters on the where, when, and how of voting
3. Encourage and remind people to vote
4. Encourage staff to serve on Election Day as a poll worker, translator, or other nonpartisan volunteer
5. Distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, or voter guides
6. Host or co-sponsor a candidate forum (the forum must be open to all candidates, conducted in a balanced way, and include a nonpartisan panel of questioners)
7. Hold a voter education event
8. Educate the candidates on your issues
9. Continue issue advocacy during an election
10. Support or oppose ballot measures as a lobbying activity (subject to normal lobbying limits)
11. Conduct nonpartisan training on issues and organizing skills
12. Allow staff to participate as individuals in political campaigns, on their own time and not as representatives of the organization

YWCAs may NOT conduct *partisan* activities to support or oppose any candidate for public office, including:

1. Endorsing a candidate
2. Making a contribution to a candidate or party. This includes “in-kind” contributions such as publicity, staff time, and use of facilities or assets, *unless* those resources are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value
3. Rating candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s)

Have questions about the do’s and don’ts for 501(c)(3)s? Check out [this webinar](#) or [this resource](#) from NonProfit Vote. You can also call the Bolder Advocacy hotline at 866-NP-LOBBY (866-675-6229).

For more information about YWCA’s Voter Engagement and resources for 2019, please join the Voter Engagement Intranet [Community](#) and check out our [webinar](#) on 2019 voter engagement

ADVOCATE TO ELECTED OFFICIALS

This section contains two actions to help you urge your elected officials to take action on gender-based violence, the first are calls to make to federal legislators, the second is a pledge for state and local elected officials. For more resources on engaging elected officials, please see our [Getting to Know Your Policymakers](#), [Contacting and Meeting Your Legislators](#), and [Hosting a Successful Legislator Site Visit](#) guides.

VAWA & FVPSA ACTION ALERTS: URGE CONGRESS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS!

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) provide strong foundational support to address the prevalence of gender-based violence in our communities, including comprehensive resources and support to meet the needs of victims and survivors. [Act now](#) to urge your Members of Congress to support reauthorization of VAWA, FVPSA, and other policies that will help women and girls be safe from violence in your communities.

PLEDGE FOR LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Together we can end gender-based violence, but it will take a commitment from all of us. Use the action below to engage your state and local elected officials and candidates in the movement. With their help we can ensure that the unique challenges women and girls face are put in the forefront of policy efforts and that all survivors have the resources and support they need to thrive. With this pledge we can hold leaders accountable to work with us to end gender-based violence. Urge your state and local elected officials to pledge their support TODAY. Consider simply emailing this pledge to your elected officials and candidates for office or print to use as a call to action after meeting with them. Once they sign on, make their commitment public and hold them accountable to following through.

Steps you can take to ensure that women and girls will be safe from violence in your community:

- Download the [pledge](#).
- Email the pledge to a state or local official (e.g. mayor, member of council, sheriff, state senator, state representative, etc.), or print it out to use as a call to action after an in-person meeting.
- Once the official signs on, make their commitment public and hold them accountable to following through.

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Elected officials often search newspapers from their home districts for mentions of their name. Use

this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the prevalence of gender-based violence in your community, and the importance of their actions to support survivors and prevent future violence. If there has been a recent incident of gender-based violence in your community, use [Sample A](#), otherwise, use [Sample B](#).

GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATOR, THEN MEET THEM OR HOST A LEGISLATOR SITE VISIT

One of the most effective advocacy tactics is to develop a strong relationship with your elected officials, both at the federal and state level. You can use the tips in our [Getting to Know Your Policy Makers](#) guide to learn more about your legislators, then use our [Contacting and Meeting Your Legislators](#) and [Hosting a Successful Legislator Site Visit](#) guides to reach out to your elected officials to arrange meetings and even a site visit!

ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY AND ELECTED OFFICIALS ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

Use our [social media tools](#) for tips, sample tweets, and Facebook status updates to:

- Raise awareness about gender-based violence in your community and the needs of survivors
- Ask your elected officials where they stand and what they will do to support survivors