



Civic Engagement

Increasing Access to The Polls

May, 2024

CEO Action for Racial Equity (CEOARE) brings together top talent to advance public policies and corporate engagement strategies that will address systemic racism, social injustice and improve societal well-being. CEOARE is a first-of-its-kind, business-led initiative that uses the power and speed of corporate signatory organizations to help forge equitable pathways for the 47+ million Black Americans.

The Current State

Many Americans do not have equal access to the ballot – with Black American voters being disproportionately affected by this issue. Laws, policies, and practices in the US have historically diminished Black civic engagement and have impacted participation in key democratic processes such as voting.

46% of Black Americans say limitations on voting is among the myriad of problems they face daily³.



Ways the Corporate Community Can Play a Role in Civic Engagement

The business community can and should play a significant role in enabling equal access to the ballot. Corporations can leverage their knowledge, power, network, and resources to inform and empower employees in the processes of voter registration and participation. **The business community is uniquely positioned to lead a nonpartisan dialogue on voting and civic engagement as research has shown that Americans admire and want to work for businesses that stand up for voting rights and other social justice reforms.**

Currently, the federal government gives its employees four hours of administrative leave to vote.⁷ Thirty states and the District of Columbia require employers to provide time off to vote.⁴ While states determine their own parameters, they have all committed to making it easier for individuals such as hourly workers, parents, and caregivers to vote.

Taking Action

We encourage our CEOARE signatories to take an active, nonpartisan role in civic engagement through activities that align with organizational values, corporate agendas, and areas of experience. Consider how your organization can support and help increase voting participation through some of these practices:

- **Providing time off to vote⁵, along with resources for voter registration and and the process of voting⁶**
- **Supporting employee volunteering (i.e., poll working, voter registration)**
- **Collaborating with nonpartisan groups for voting education**
- **Advocating with state and federal government on voting rights legislation**

Key Facts

Six-in-10 (63%) Black adults say voting is an extremely or very effective strategy for moving Black people toward equality in the U.S.¹

*An academic study identified **raising brand awareness, increasing employee satisfaction, and meeting consumer expectations** as positive impacts to businesses supporting civic engagement.²*



Contact us to learn more about CEOARE
<https://ceoactionracialequity.com/>

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1 Cox, Kiana, and Khadijah Edwards. "Black Americans Have a Clear Vision for Reducing Racism but Little Hope It Will Happen." Pew Research Center, August 30, 2022. <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2022/08/30/black-americans-have-a-clear-vision-for-reducing-racism-but-little-hope-it-will-happen/>.
2 Gross, Sofia, and Ashley Spillane. "Civic Responsibility: The Power of Companies to Increase Voter Turnout." Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School: Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2019. https://ash.harvard.edu/files/ash/files/harvard-casestudy-report-digital_copy.pdf
3 Cox, Kiana, and Khadijah Edwards. "Black Americans Have a Clear Vision for Reducing Racism but Little Hope It Will Happen." Pew Research Center, August 30, 2022. <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2022/08/30/black-americans-have-a-clear-vision-for-reducing-racism-but-little-hope-it-will-happen/>.
4 DeRose, Adam. "Time off for voting: What HR needs to know" HR Brew, February 12, 2024 <https://www.hr-brew.com/stories/2024/02/12/time-off-for-voting-what-hr-needs-to-know>
5 Gross, Sofia, and Ashley Spillane. "Civic Responsibility: The Power of Companies to Increase Voter Turnout." Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School: Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2019. https://ash.harvard.edu/files/ash/files/harvard-casestudy-report-digital_copy.pdf
6 "Business Guide to Civic Engagement." The Policy Circle. Accessed February 5, 2024. <https://www.thepolicycircle.org/minibrief/business-owners-guide-to-civic-engagement/>.
7 "Opm.Gov." U.S. Office of Personnel Management, March 24, 2022. <https://www.opm.gov/news/releases/2022/03/release-opm-announces-paid-time-off-for-federal-employees-to-vote/>.

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