Organizing New Yorkers for Fair and Inclusive Redistricting

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NALEO Educational Fund

The nation’s leading 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

Established in 1981, NALEO Educational Fund is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors.

CHAIR
Hon. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Indiana State Representative
NALEO Educational Fund’s redistricting principles and priorities:

- Maps must provide Latinos with a fair opportunity to choose their elected representatives – compliance with U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) are top criteria; respecting COI’s are also high priority.

- Process must be transparent; provide the public a meaningful opportunity to participate and be heard.

- Membership of the entity doing the redistricting should reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, gender, and age diversity of the jurisdiction.
NALEO Educational Fund’s activities:

- Working with MALDEF or LatinoJustice, mobilize Latinos to participate in redistricting process.

- Advocacy with Commissions or legislatures – primarily in California – but in other states, where strategic.

- Work with coalitions and unity mapping effort.
Critical Value of Educating Community Members About Why Redistricting is Important

- Participating in redistricting is a relatively complicated form of civic participation.

- Making several connections:
  - Ability to choose accountable elected officials will have an impact on your family, neighborhood, community
  - How redistricting affects your ability to choose accountable elected officials
  - How you can affect fair redistricting

- “Democracy burnout”: Redistricting follows Census and voter engagement efforts
Components of Basic Community Education About Redistricting

- What redistricting is, and why is it important
- Which entity does redistricting, and if relevant, how are the persons serving on that entity chosen – particularly important in light of new New York Independent Redistricting Commission
- Redistricting criteria
- Redistricting process and timeline
- Opportunities to engage in redistricting process
Considerations for Planning Community Engagement Strategy

- What level of engagement do you anticipate your target community will have?
  - Basic understanding of redistricting
  - Advocacy with Commission on how it conducts the redistricting process
  - Development of and submission of testimony on COIs
  - Development and review of draft maps; submission of maps

- What level(s) of government will you focus on?

- Will you work locally, regionally or statewide?

- Will you work with a particular under-represented community or with several communities?
Best Practices for Redistricting
Community Engagement

- Use “plain language” in materials and presentations – redistricting concepts and terms are complicated and using “jargon” will create barriers to engaging community members.

- Ensure that linguistically and culturally competent organizations work in the communities that are being engaged; ensure that engagement events are accessible to under-represented communities and persons with disabilities.

- Assess potential impact of public health environment on how you reach community members and efficacy of “virtual” engagement events.
  - Which communities will be the most difficult to reach virtually?
Building on the Foundation of Other Community Engagement Efforts

- Census and non-partisan voter engagement networks are valuable, particularly if you have developed a relationship of trust with community members.

- **But** there are important differences between Census/voter engagement campaign and redistricting mobilization:
  - Complexity of redistricting process
  - Potential complexity of action community members will take (filling out a Census form or voting, compared to drawing a community of interest and testifying before a Commission)
  - Continued mobilization of community members throughout the redistricting process – building a longer-term relationship with community members
Building Collaborative and Coordinated Community Engagement Efforts

- Coordination is useful to help use scarce resources effectively, avoid duplication of effort.

- But, there is no “one size fits all” approach for community mobilization in redistricting.

- Because of complex demographics of New York, redistricting involves tough choices about how to ensure that maps are fair to all under-represented communities.

- You cannot escape influence of partisan politics and political factions in collaborative redistricting work!

- Transparency about tough choices, agreement on respectful engagement is critical for collaboratives that work.
Thank you

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