

2008 election guide for rural Latin@s

HANDS-ON DEMOCRACY

VOTE



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Main Street
Project

VOTE!

November 4, 2008

¡VE Y VOTA!

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This November, voters in the U.S. will elect a new president and many state and local representatives. There's a lot at stake for Latin@s who live in small towns and rural communities. Election outcomes will have a real impact on you and your neighbors.

Whether or not you're eligible to vote, there are many ways to get involved.

- Learn about the issues important to many rural Latin@s and their communities, and spread the word to your friends, family, and neighbors.
- Volunteer to register others or to drive people to the polls on Election Day.
- Learn about community organizations that support Latin@ and other community residents.
- And if you're eligible to vote, make sure you're informed so you can make the best choice when you cast your ballot.

You can be part of democracy.
Together, we can make a difference!

ABOUT MAIN STREET PROJECT

We're a grassroots cultural organizing, media justice and economic development initiative working to help rural communities face today's realities with hope. We provide creative and practical tools – like this election guide – to give rural residents of all ages, cultures, economic and immigration status the opportunity to more fully participate in all aspects of community life.

Visit us at www.MainStreetProject.org. Or call 612-879-7578.

WHY VOTE?

If you're a citizen in the U.S., voting is one of your fundamental rights. It gives you a voice in how your government works – and your voice is just as important as every other person.

When you vote, you participate in a democratic process that determines who will represent you, your family, and your neighbors in your community, your state, and your country. Here are just a few examples of the decisions that politicians make – decisions that affect your day-to-day life:

- Set budgets for local law enforcement
- Set priorities for neighborhood schools
- Decide how to reform immigration laws
- Pass wage and labor laws
- Make trade agreements
- Decide what warning labels get placed on products like TVs, CDs and toys

ABOUT THE LATIN@ COMMUNITY

Latin@s are a growing part of the U.S. democracy. At 46 million people, Latin@s make up 15 percent of the total U.S. population and are the nation's largest, fastest growing and youngest population group. Nearly 3.2 million Latin@s live in rural areas of the country – that's 6.3 percent of the nation's non-metro residents.

In the 2008 general elections, Latin@s will account for nine percent of eligible

voters nationwide. That's more than enough people to get the candidates' interest and attention. It's also important to know that since voting requires citizenship, about four of every ten Latin@s are *not* eligible to go to the polls.

What should candidates and our communities know about the Latin@ community? Main Street Project's Program Director, Amalia Anderson, offers this view: *"We are not a homogenous voting block. Latin@s are a mix of citizens and non-citizens, including immigrants, refugees, political asylees, permanent residents, native-born U.S. Latin@s, as well as those who have been naturalized. We are Indigenous, Mestizo, Chicano and Afro-Latin@. We are old and in increasing numbers, young. We speak Spanish, English, Portuguese and Indigenous languages. We are rich and we are poor. And we all deserve to have our voices heard!"*

It's worth saying again: Even if you're not eligible to vote, there are many ways you can get involved in the political process. We all are important members of U.S. society and we all have the right to participate. That's the way democracy is supposed to work.



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

MYTH: Latin@s aren't interested in politics.

FACT: Latin@s are registering to vote at a rate six times greater than the general population. Latin@s vote at a rate five times greater than the general population.

HOW TO REGISTER AND VOTE

in Idaho

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

You can register and vote if you:

- Will be at least 18-years-old on Election Day
- Are a citizen of the United States
- Have lived in Idaho and your county for 30 days

You are **not eligible** to vote if you:

- Have been convicted of a felony and have not had your civil rights restored

OR

- Are confined in prison because you have been convicted of a criminal offense

If you have been convicted of a felony in Idaho or elsewhere, your civil rights for voting purposes are automatically restored when your sentence, including probation or parole is completed.

HOW CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

You must either:

- Register by mail as long as your voter registration form is postmarked no later than 25 days before any election (For the November 4 election, this is October 18)

OR

- Register in person with your County Clerk or official registrar up until 25 days before any election. When you register, you must provide your driver's license number, or if you don't have a driver's license, the last four digits of your Social Security number.

OR

- Register at the polls on Election Day (see below)

WHERE CAN I GET A VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION?

- Online at www.idahovotes.gov/vinfo.htm
- At your County Clerk's office. Find the location at www.idahovotes.gov/Clerk.htm

ONCE I REGISTER, DO I NEED TO REGISTER AGAIN FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

Registration is permanent as long as you vote at least once every four years in a primary or general election, and do not move. You need to re-register if you change your address or name.

HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?

Go to the polling place for the precinct in which you maintain residence and:

- Complete a registration card
- Make an oath in the form prescribed by the Secretary of State
- Provide any document that shows a valid address in the precinct
- Provide a photo ID card

Students may also use a current valid student ID card from a post-secondary educational institution in Idaho, along with a current student fee statement that shows the student's valid address in the precinct, and a photo ID card.

WHERE DO I VOTE?

To find your polling place,

- Call your County Clerk

OR

- Check online at www.idahovotes.gov/YourPollingPlace

Absentee Ballot: If you know ahead of time that you will be out of your voting precinct on Election Day, you can apply for Absentee Registration and/or an Application for Absentee Ballot to the County Clerk in the county where your Idaho residence is located.

You must be registered to vote in Idaho to request an absentee ballot. You can get an absentee registration and/or ballot application:

- At your County Clerk's office

OR

- Online at www.idahovotes.gov/VoterReg/ABSENTEE.HTM

OR

- By submitting a signed, written request that includes your name, Idaho residence address and mailing address of where you'd like the application sent

Requests to have an absentee ballot mailed to you must be received in the County Clerk's office by the sixth day before the election. You may cast an absentee ballot in person at your polling place (usually the County Clerk's office) up until 5 p.m. the day before the election.



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

MYTH: Beyond providing a labor force, Latin@s contribute very little to society.

FACT: Latin@s are creating new businesses at a rate three times faster than the general population, generating over 200 billion dollars per year in revenue.



Know your voting rights

If you are properly registered, you have the right to vote — it's the law, and you have the proof in your hands! You'll notice letters and numbers after each of your rights listed below. Those codes tell lawyers and poll workers where to find the actual state statute or law that protects your right to vote! Take this with you when you vote.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

1. VOTE WITHOUT SHOWING IDENTIFICATION unless you registered by mail and you have not previously voted in an election for federal office in Idaho. [Idaho Code § 34-410]
2. REGISTER ON ELECTION DAY if you submit both a photo identification and proof of residence. [§ 34-408A]
3. CAST A BALLOT if you are in line at the polling place between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. [§ 34-1101]
4. VOTE OUTSIDE THE POLLING PLACE if you are physically disabled and unable to enter the polling place. [§ 34-1101]
5. VOTE IN SECRET without being asked to reveal the name of any candidates you voted for or against. [§ 34-1110]

6. VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT if you are eligible to vote in Idaho. [§ 34-1001]
7. RECEIVE A REPLACEMENT BALLOT prior to casting your ballot if you believe you have made a mistake. [§ 34-1109]
8. VOTE FREE FROM INTERFERENCE from any outside persons. [§§ 18-2319, 18-2320]
9. VOTE AFTER MOVING TO A NEW COUNTY if you re-register in the new county or if you request an absentee ballot from your old county. [§ 34-413]
10. VOTE AFTER BEING CHALLENGED if you have subscribed to the elector's oath. [§ 34-1111]
11. VOTE WITHOUT ANY DISQUALIFICATIONS if you have already served your sentence for a felony conviction. [§ 34-403]
12. VOTE WITHOUT DISRUPTION FROM ELECTIONEERS if you are within 100 feet of a polling place on private property or within 300 feet of a polling place on public property. [§ 18-2318(1)]

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE THIS LIST OF RIGHTS INTO THE VOTING BOOTH WITH YOU.



If you feel your rights have been violated, call the Election Protection hotline toll free:

1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683).

En español:

1-888-Ve-Y-Vota (1-888-839-8682).

