

Public Awareness/Education Plan for November 8 General Obligation Bond Referendum

Overview

The County values effective, meaningful civic engagement regarding critical issues as stated in the Board's adopted strategic plan. The County considers the November 8 General Obligation Bond Referendum as an important opportunity for voters to express their opinion regarding the use of general obligation bond financing for identified school projects and is committed to a robust awareness and education program that meets the requirements established by the Code of Virginia. This awareness and education plan is a joint effort of County school division and County government staff to provide neutral, non advocacy materials as permitted by the Virginia Code and to encourage participation by County voters in the referendum.

Plan Objectives

Encourage maximum participation from County voters

Provide neutral, non advocacy materials that explain the bond referendum process and the specific projects proposed for financing

Communicate potential fiscal impacts to taxpayers

Respond accurately and in a timely fashion to inquiries from the public

Maximize use of existing engagement and communication channels

Ensure consistent message and a broad based and inclusive outreach

Roles and Responsibilities

Elected Officials - approve specific projects to be included in the referendum, approve referendum question, adopt resolution to request special election, encourage voter turnout, share factual information with citizens as requested, may advocate in their individual capacity and not on behalf of the County, the School Division, or the respective public bodies, and not using any public funds or other public resources

County Staff - develop and distribute educational materials about specific projects, respond to inquiries with factual information, prepare voters to understand the referendum process including the approved referendum question, may advocate in their individual capacity and not on behalf of the County, the School Division, or the respective public bodies, and not using any public funds or other public resources

Appointed Officials/Committee members - encourage voter turnout, share factual information with citizens as requested, may advocate in their individual capacity and not on behalf of the County, the School Division, or the respective public bodies, and not using any public funds or other public resources

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Target Audiences

School community - to include pre school, K-12, higher education, parents, etc.

County government/school division - to include staff, elected officials, appointed committees, etc.

Seniors - to include Senior Center, JABA, etc.

Business community - to include Chamber of Commerce, realtors, developers, etc.

Neighborhoods/homeowners associations

Public sector - non-profits, health care, service organizations

Printed Materials

fact sheets on referendum process and individual projects

posters for polling places

sample ballots/handouts for polling places

Presentations

road show for formal meeting opportunities

information nights at schools, Senior Center, other specific locations

Q&A with school and local government staffs

video development/ deployment

Targeted Outreach

website strategy

news media strategy

social media strategy

absentee voters/early voter strategy

referendum mailing to registered voters