VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

There's more to voting than just registration and turnout. Educating students as voters is critical to make them feel confident when casting a ballot. This can include everything from information on the process for registering and voting, what the ballot looks like, information about the candidates (from local to national), and any initiatives or referendums.

Candidate Education

It is important students are informed of the issues and policy positions of different candidates when they prepare to vote. Below are some ways you can gather and share information on candidates.

• **Contact local political parties to get literature on candidates running for office to help students make informed decisions—especially in local elections.**

• **Reach out to all political parties to remain politically neutral.**

  • A few ways to educate students on the candidates on the ballot include events like lunches, debates, presentations by local election officials (LEOs), and activities like distributing flyers in a student center.

• **Teach students how to identify biased information.**

  • Encourage students to consult multiple news sources for information on important issues and check their sources.

  • Give examples of types of websites that post reliable information, specifically, when it comes to local elections.

  • Show where to find trustworthy information about candidates' policy ideas.

  • Additional information and resources can be found at www.TheLamp.org and www.newseumed.org/collection/media-literacy-booster-pack.

• **Provide students with nonpartisan ballot guides such as www.vote411.org from the League of Women Voters or www.ballotready.com.**

  • Make sure materials include information and personal statements about each candidate for a particular office.

  • Explain the role and duties of each position up for election. When it comes to local offices, people are often unfamiliar of what decisions these offices make and how they impact their lives.

• **Promote educational programming in the classroom and at events.**

  • Encourage professors to provide a platform and invite candidates or representatives from political parties to inform students of policy positions and the election.

  • Encourage the College Democrats, College Republicans, College Libertarians, Young Greens and other student political groups to host similar forums to discuss their positions and candidates.

- Host "Common Ground" events on important ballot issues – these are events inviting advocates (i.e. candidates, party representatives, policy experts, campaign managers, etc.) on both sides of an issue (usually both political parties) to discuss chosen topics.
  - Invite candidates, campaign workers, professors, policy experts, journalists.
- Write articles, letters to the editor, or cartoons for student publications to reach student voters.
- If your institution receives a National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) report (see Sustaining Your Student Engagement Efforts) ask for access to the voter registration and turnout data for your campus.
  - Find out if certain demographics of the student population are registering or voting at lower rates.
  - Make sure to consider how to reach these under-represented segments of the student population in your outreach efforts and with the topics and issues you focus on. A national trend identified in the NSLVE data shows that students in the STEM fields have the lowest registration and voting rates. See https://idhe.tufts.edu/nslve/2016

Election Administration Information

Research shows that young people who are unfamiliar with the voting process, how to operate voting machines, or what the ballot looks like are less likely to vote.
See https://civicyouth.org/knowledge-about-voter-laws-still-lacking

- Sample ballots show students the format they will see when they vote. States are required to have sample ballots available prior to the election.
  - Go to your state's Secretary of State or State Board of Elections website or contact your Local Elections Office to find out when yours will be available.
- Send communications detailing locations of voting sites (www.vote.org/polling-place-locator), where students can look up their voting sites, whether early voting or Election Day, hours, etc.
  - Many states also have a specific platform people can use to look up their polling place and sample ballot prior to the election.
  - Include information on public or campus transportation options to reach voting sites not convenient to campus.
- CVP state student guides (www.campusvoteproject.org/studentguides)
  - For information for registration deadlines, to voter ID, to early, absentee, by-mail, to Election Day voting and everything in-between.
- Provide the Election Protection hotlines and website in case students encounter problems with the voting process and need assistance.
  - www.866ourvote.org and 1-866-OUR-VOTE (English)
  - 888-VE-Y-Vota (Spanish/English)
  - 888-API-Vote (Multiple Asian Languages/English)
  - 844-YALLA-US (Arabic/English)

CAMPUS VOTE PROJECT