ACTIVATE YOUR CAMPUS!
A GUIDE TO INCREASING STUDENT VOTER ACCESS

www.campusvoteproject.org
A Project of the Fair Elections Legal Network
Campus Vote Project (CVP) is about empowering leaders on college campuses to create lasting change that promotes students’ right to vote. We want to work with you to give young people a voice in all midterm elections by ensuring that your campus and community support the ability of college students to participate in our democracy.

The CVP toolkit highlights the barriers that students often face when attempting to exercise their right to register and vote. It gives step-by-step advice on selecting specific goals to increase student voting at your school by identifying and minimizing those barriers. The toolkit also provides detailed guidance on working with campus administrators and local election officials to achieve your goals.

If you sign up to become a CVP partner, our resources go beyond the toolkit. CVP can help you at every step of your planning and implementation process. For example, our staff can organize conference calls and webinars to answer your questions, share the experiences of other partners, and address state-specific issues. Contact Mike Burns at info@campusvoteproject.org to start making a difference on your campus today.

What’s in the Toolkit?

Barriers to Student Registration and Voting
6 Steps to Making Your Campus Voter-Friendly

Achieve Your Goals! Mini-guides to Campaign Success

Maximizing Election Visibility On Campus
Integrating Voting Information into the School Website
Voter Registration Blitz
Establishing a Student Poll Worker Program On Campus
Get ID!
Bringing a Polling Place to Campus
Getting Students to Off-Campus Polling Places
Creating Change that Lasts

Additional Resources

Meeting with College Administrators
Meeting with Local Election Officials

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Voters have to comply with a variety of rules and procedures to successfully register and vote. Due to unique circumstances, students sometimes face extra challenges when confronted with the requirements.

Residency

Some students consider their primary residence to be their college address, whereas other students continue to think of a pre-college address as their primary residence. Students have the right to vote in their college town if they meet the same residency requirements as everyone else. However, the rules can be confusing and students may have to take steps to demonstrate or prove their residency. This is sometimes challenging, especially for students who live in untraditional housing like dorms, fraternities, or sororities. In addition, local community members or election officials occasionally express disapproval of student voters and the residency rules can be easily misinterpreted or misapplied to discourage students from voting.

Documentation

A state may require proof of residency or certain identification at the time of registration or voting. This can be challenging for students, especially when they are not aware of the requirements until the last minute, when it may be too late to get the right documentation in time to register or vote. In addition, proof of residency or identification rules sometimes require that a student produce certain identification showing the student’s current address. For students who have just arrived at their college address or who live in non-traditional housing such as a dorm, this can add an extra challenge. Finally, a few states have started requiring documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration.

Myths

Students are sometimes given misleading information to discourage them from voting in their college communities. The myths include claims that registering to vote at school may jeopardize eligibility for financial aid, their parents’ ability to claim them as a dependent on their tax returns, or their ability to remain covered by their parents’ insurance plans. In reality, insurance coverage and tax status are not directly related to voter registration, and for the vast majority of students, financial aid eligibility is not impacted.
Public v. Private Schools

IDs or other documents issued by state schools are sometimes helpful because they might be considered government documents that meet a state’s voter ID requirements. Unfortunately, the same thing issued by a private school might not be accepted.

Registering By Mail

Regardless of other identification requirements, anyone who registers to vote in a new state must provide certain identification before voting for the first time if they complete their registration by mail.

Insufficient Resources

When local election officials make decisions about resource allocation for polling places, they don’t always account sufficiently for increases in the number of registered voters as students flood campus in the fall and registration drives begin. This can result in inadequate numbers of voting machines, ballots, or poll workers in student-heavy polling places, leading to long lines and insufficient resources for dealing with problems.

According to the U.S. Supreme Court, students have the right to register and vote in their college towns if they meet the same requirements as everyone else. Misinformation, such as claims that registering to vote at school may jeopardize eligibility for financial aid or insurance, are sometimes used to discourage students from voting locally.

Inconvenient Polling Places

Polling place locations can pose problems for students if they are located off-campus in places that are difficult for students to reach.

Poll Worker Training

Poll workers in student-heavy polling places may not be aware of the specific issues students face, or how to best respond. This can lead to longer lines, confusion, and inadequate steps being taken to ensure that students are able to cast ballots that will count.

Absentee Voting

Students who wish to vote absentee from a pre-college address will face specific deadlines for requesting and voting an absentee ballot. If a student intends to vote absentee in another state, the student will have to comply with a different set of residency and identification requirements, and may have to include a copy of identification when submitting a registration form or absentee ballot. Also, some states require a new voter who registers by mail to vote in person the first time they vote, which may be difficult or impossible for students.
A voter-friendly campus is any school that makes registration and voting accessible and convenient for students. It’s a place where every eligible student who wants to vote, can vote.

Step #1: Do Your Homework

There’s a lot that you and your school can do to help students vote, so get excited! As you begin to think about the goals that are right for your campus, be prepared to ask the right questions to the right people. Every school is different. Every state has different voter registration and voting requirements, and every local elections office applies the law a little bit differently. But in every state, students have the same right to vote as everyone else.

Here are a few tips:

- **Find out what the school is already doing.** Many colleges have active programs to make it easier for students to vote. Identify those programs and determine whether your campaign can complement them or reduce barriers that the school’s programs do not address.

- **Reach out to past and current student leaders** like the Student Body President or student organizations like the College Democrats or Republicans. They’ve been in your position and may be able to give you the lay of the land.

- **Ask other students!** Hearing from students first-hand will help you understand how voting works for students on your campus. Ask if they’ve noticed any particular challenges that crop up from year to year. Can they suggest changes they would make voting easier for students?

- **Meet with Campus Administrators.** They know how things work on campus, and they have the power to implement change.

Over 500 college and university presidents from every sector have endorsed the *Presidents’ Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education*, expressing concern over civic disengagement and committing their institutions to helping students “realize the values and skills of our democratic society and their need to claim ownership of it.” Has yours?
**Step #1 Continued...**

- **Meet with Local Elections Officials.** Ask if you can stop by to learn about how registration and voting work in your community, common problems faced by student voters, and any ideas they have for improvement.

- **Recruit a variety of partners.** As you do your homework, getting buy-in from the student government, student clubs and organizations, professors, administrators, and local community members will help you identify goals and increase your capacity to get things done. Your work will be volunteer-driven, so recruit, recruit, recruit!

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**Step #2: Pick Your Goals**

The basis of any good campaign is a clear issue that the campaign is going to address. Start by clearly defining the areas for improvement that you identified from doing your homework. If your problem is that young people aren’t voting on campus, you’re going to need to do a little more work. But, if your issue is that many young people are not able to vote on your campus because they lack adequate identification, then you’re on the right track.

After figuring out what your campus needs most, it’s time to pick your goals! As a CVP Partner, we recommend you pick 2-3 goals that you want to achieve in time for the next election.

By working with school administrators, election officials, and other school and community organizations, you can radically transform how student voting works in your college community. You can work with the CVP through every stage of the electoral process.

**Examples of Campaigns You Can Use**

- Maximizing Election Visibility on Campus
- Integrating Voting Information into the School Website
- Voter Registration Blitzes
- Establishing a Student Poll Worker Program
- Making Sure Students Have the ID they Need to Vote
- Bringing a Polling Place to Campus
- Getting Students to Off-Campus Polling Places
- Creating Change that Lasts Beyond Election Day

Through all of the work you’re doing on campus, one of your goals should always be to institutionalize relationships with folks that hold power. One of the biggest challenges facing college communities is the ongoing turnover in the student body. Think creatively to ensure that the change you create lasts beyond this election cycle!

Whatever you choose, make sure you focus on the things that are needed at your school. For more ideas, check out www.campusvoteproject.org!

**Step #3: Create a Plan of Action**

Now that you know the issues your campaign will address and how it will address them, it’s time to create a plan to help you reach your goals. Frequently, voter registration efforts of all shapes and sizes hit campuses across the country a couple of months before an election. This is too little, too late. In order to activate your campus as a Voter-Friendly Campus, many pieces need to fall into place far in advance of Election Day.

Campus Vote Project’s resources encourage you to fight for institutional change on campus. As you create your action plans, keep in mind that strong campaigns require us to identify the decision-makers, figure out shared goals, and form plans that appeal to various players.

Put your plan of action in writing. The strongest campaigns have a realistic and attainable time line. Map out when you need to achieve each goal and plan backward.

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Step #3 Continued ...

To get started, use the model below to make a list of long-term and short-term goals, identify tactics for each goal, and point out major dates that may impact your campaign. Here’s an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Goals &amp; Deliverables</th>
<th>Tactics &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Personal Calendar</th>
<th>Community Calendar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Spring Semester | GOAL: Get the University to commit to financially supporting transportation for students to the polls on Election Day | January  
Schedule first meeting of student group and recruit for student transportation project committee members  
February  
Committee completes research and presents proposal to the student group  
March  
Create a letter of support for the project and get 10 other student organizations to sign on  
April  
Meet with campus administration  
May  
Debrief with group and prepare to either implement the project or pressure the campus administration | Home for Mom’s Birthday, 2/14  
Spring Break Trip, 3/6-3/12 | Mid-terms: 2/28-3/4  
Spring Break: 3/7-3/11  
Finals: 4/25-4/29 |

Follow through with what you say you will do. Don’t burn bridges with school administrators by failing to complete promised tasks.

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Step #4: Meet with the Folks that Can Work with to Make Your Campus More Voter-Friendly

Contact your Dean of Students or a similar administrator and tell them about your project. Frequently, the Dean of Students will be your best contact, but in some cases it may be the President of the University or the Chancellor’s Office, or another administrator or student advisor. Make an appointment in person whenever possible – it is always better to put a face to a name when building a relationship.

At your meeting, bring materials with you that clearly and succinctly lay out your goals and what you need from the administration to make them a reality.

If the school representative that you are speaking with does not seem to have answers or interest in what you are talking about, ask if the individual is willing to look into the answers and have a follow-up meeting, or if there is someone else that you should speak with. It is common to find the “right” person only after a few tries.

During your conversations, establish clear “next steps” that your organization and the administration can take. For example, if you are asking the school to distribute voter registration cards to new students, offer to deliver the blank cards to campus and coordinate with Student Life to pass them out. After your meeting, send a brief thank you email or letter that includes a synopsis of your discussion for administrative records. Make sure to follow up as you specified.

Step #5: Organize, Organize

If your meeting with the school administration went well and you got everything you asked for – that’s great! You’re all done. If not, don’t be discouraged. They just need a little encouragement from you and your fellow students. It’s time to get organized.

A great way to improve your success is to reach out to other student or non-student organizations and collaborate. Contact other student organizations on your campus and tell them about your plan.

Step #6: Let Us Know What You’re Up To!

After all of your group’s hard work organizing, reaching out to school administrators, and talking to students along the way – we want you to share your stories and successes with us! Email us at info@campusvoteproject.org. This information will help future students who are working to increase student participation in our democracy.

Our experienced Campus Vote Project staff can also help you build out your plan. Let us know you want our help!

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Making sure that students know important election dates and deadlines is an important step to increase student voting. Campus Vote Project can help you do that with this quick guide to creating buzz on campus.

To run this visibility campaign, work with administrators to choose and implement a variety of proactive tactics that raise awareness about upcoming elections and ensure that all students have the information they need to get to the polls. Many are low-cost, and they can make the difference between students staying at home and students getting involved!

Examples of election awareness tactics include:

- **Campus-wide listserv emails to inform student voters of important dates**
  Schools can use their mass email systems to make students aware of voter registration deadlines and requirements, and to provide helpful links to information about exactly what’s on the ballot.

- **Integrate voting information into the school’s website**
  Just like campuses prioritize making sure you know when your FAFSA is due, they should be equally diligent about setting up prominent voter information sites and registration opportunities on school websites and in conjunction with the campus computers and technology that students use.

- **Host candidate forums and debates**
  Work with a variety of campus organizations and local campaigns to hold candidate forums and debates.

- **Hold nonpartisan election rallies**
  Voting is important and being civically engaged is a learned behavior. Hold non-partisan rallies and parties to get folks excited about the power of having a voice.

- **Take it to the classroom**
  Many professors are the biggest student vote advocates you’ll find. Work with academic departments to integrate information about the importance of registering and voting into class time. Make sure voter registration cards are handed out as part of the lesson. Even if professors don’t integrate voting into their lessons, they might let you visit their classrooms for 5-10 minutes to hand out registration cards. Try starting with the political science department.

- **Use the campus newspapers and radio stations to inform students**
  Be creative with your use of media. Campus newspapers and radio are the primary source of big news for many people on campus. Pitch stories, write op-eds, propose editorials – get these folks to advocate for your cause.

- **Build your list!**
  Visibility efforts are great, but the work isn’t done until folks follow through with registering and voting. Be sure to take down the names of all the people that you meet and follow up with them! These will also be the best people to join your efforts as volunteers and potential leaders.

The first step in increasing election awareness is to contact leaders in student government, campus Democrats and Republicans, and other organizations that might be interested in a campaign. Contact your school’s Office of Civic Engagement or the Dean of Students as well to discuss school-sponsored election awareness campaigns.
These days, we get most of our information online. In addition, an increasing number of school-related transactions occur online, often through a college or university’s own website or intranet. For example, students register for classes, order books, receive assignments, request transcripts, use library resources, and maintain school expense accounts online. It’s only natural that students would also seek information about civic engagement and voting online. However, accurate local information can be hard to find, especially for students unfamiliar with the voting process or with a particular community.

Colleges and universities can and should do a service for their student body, especially for new students and students from out-of-town, by providing accurate information about where and how to register and vote. One way to do this is to integrate important voter information into the school website by creating a page dedicated to voting information and featuring links to it on landing pages that students use frequently. This guide will help you work with campus administrators to integrate voting information and resources into your college or university’s website.

Step #1: Do Your Research

Before you approach campus administrators about changes to the school website, you’ll need to do some legwork to assess the existing website and draft your recommendations.

Start by determining whether a student voting website already exists and whether the information it contains is up-to-date.

Next, identify web pages that students most frequently use to conduct school-related business. Even if a student voting website already exists, determine whether links to it could be placed more prominently and in more locations. Consider the following pages:

- Course management (Blackboard, Moodle, TWEN, etc.)
- Class registration
- Textbook purchases
- Library resources
- Facebook
- Email login
- Registrar address update

Finally, examine those sites closely to determine where a voter registration page link would be most visible. In addition to a prominently placed link, does the website have the capacity to prompt a student to register to vote before moving to the requested transaction? Determine specific locations and prompts for each identified website.
Step #2: Draft Recommendations and Outline a Plan

Use the results of your research to draft a set of recommendations for how the school website could more effectively convey important voter information to students. Outline the structure you envision for what type of content will be presented, how and where it will be presented, and how different parts of the website will relate to and link to each other. Identify specific deadlines by which you hope to achieve each of your recommendations.

The website should include information on the following topics:

- **Voter Registration**
  - Deadline. Information about same day registration or Election Day registration where available. List acceptable proof of residency if necessary.
  - Link to state online voter registration website where possible [direct online registration is available to individuals with an in-state driver’s license in Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington]
  - Link to state voter registration verification website or place a verification tool directly on the website. Available in 35 states and the District of Columbia (State Voter Registration Verification Websites).

- **Website and contact information for the local elections office, usually a county or city board of elections.**

- **ID requirements:** Some states require voters to take ID to the polls with them before they will be allowed to vote. List acceptable forms of ID. In some states, a student ID is acceptable but it might depend on whether your college is public or private. Some schools produce documents, like zero balance utility bills for dorm residents, that may be used as ID.

- **Early voting dates and locations.** Include information about ID or other requirements specific to early voting.

- **Election Day polling place locations on and near campus.** Example: University of Wisconsin-Madison

- **Absentee ballot information (students may want to vote “back home” by absentee ballot, or in their college town if they won’t be able to vote in-person)**
  - Whether an excuse is required to vote absentee and a list of acceptable excuses
  - Link to in-state absentee ballot application for students seeking to vote absentee in their college community or their in-state hometown.
  - Link to absentee ballot information for all 50 states for students seeking to cast an absentee ballot in their out-of-state hometown.

- **Other examples of organizing information on student voting websites:**
  - Important dates and deadlines: University of New Haven
  - Frequently Asked Questions: University of California, Santa Barbara

Having trouble? We’d be happy to help! Contact Campus Vote Project for help designing a plan for your new student voting information website.

Step #3: Meet with Campus Administrators

Schedule an in-person meeting with the Dean of Students/Dean of Student Life. Call or email the dean, introduce yourself and include a brief description of your organization, your project, and your goals for the meeting.

Ask the dean how to go about getting approval for this project. Approval may require a high-level decision, and/or decisions by individual school departments that administer their own websites. To integrate voter registration opportunities into course registration, you’ll need to work with the college registrar.

Set up any necessary meetings with other campus administrators. Be sure to ask the dean or other administrative contacts for help if you encounter trouble getting things done along the way.

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Step #4: Follow-Up (Now and All Along the Way)

Follow-up after your meeting. Contact the dean and any other administrators with whom you met to thank them for their time and to confirm the details and deadlines you discussed. Update them periodically about the progress you make on your next steps, and check-in to see how they are progressing with their commitments.

Step #5: Refine Your Plan

Once you enlist support for your project, it’s time to work with the key administrators to refine your plan for the student voter information website.

Step #6: Check In With Your Local Election Officials

Your local election officials are the best source for accurate information about how voting works. Contact them about your project and ask for help identifying the key information that you want to place on the website. Election officials may already have text that you can use or link to. They may also be able to identify relevant information that you should add to your plan.

Step #7: Review and Launch!

Once you’ve worked with administrators to build a model website and associated links, review it before it goes live to make sure it is well-organized and that all the links work properly. See if your contact in the local election office will review the model to make sure the information is accurate and complete. You can also contact us for feedback!

Next, make sure you get final approval from all the necessary administrators. This is also a good time to thank them for all their help!

When the site and links go live, make sure you get the word out. Notify student press, student government, other student leaders, professors, and administrators. If there are groups conducting voter registration drives or Get Out the Vote work on your campus, make sure they know about this great new resource. Think creatively about ways to promote it and get the word out on campus.

Step #8: Show Off!!!

At Campus Vote Project, we want to hear about your success and show off all your hard work! Contact us so we can share your new website with other Campus Vote Project partners.

When the site and links go live, make sure you get the word out! Think creatively about ways to promote it.

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Voter registration efforts are even more important during midterm elections. With the Campus Vote Project, you can be a part of this important work, and create even more lasting change, by finding ways to institutionalize voter registration on campus.

A lot of new students have never voted before, and may be new to town. Realizing that there’s a voter registration deadline and figuring out where to get a form and how to return it might not happen before the deadline passes.

On the other hand, new students on campus must fill out a ton of forms, take photos for their student ID, participate in orientation, and do a bunch of other mandatory things to get set up at school – why not build voter registration opportunities into these processes? With your help, you can encourage your school to make giving folks the opportunity to register a natural part of coming to campus.

To run this campaign, you should select one or two concrete goals for the distribution of paper voter registration cards. Bringing these plans to fruition will require cooperation with relevant school administrators, and in some cases professors, RA’s, elections officials, and others. Contact Campus Vote Project to see what rules apply to voter registration drives in your state.

Get creative! This can mean challenging your fellow student organizations to a voter registration competition or holding statewide campus days of action. Registering people to vote is something every organization can get behind.

Work with administrators to institutionalize voter registration by...

- Distributing registration cards during freshman move-in and orientation. Include a card in every welcome packet.
- Handing out forms door-to-door in dorms, during class, and in dining halls.
- Prominently displaying registration cards in offices and other spaces frequently visited by students, such as campus health services, the bursar’s office, the library, the dining hall, and other social spaces.
- Building a student voting coalition by coordinating voter registration activities with other campus organizations.
- Coordinating a short and intense period of voter registration. Include campus posters, reminders in administrator emails to students, features on the school website and social media platforms.
- Ensuring that students living in dorms and other nontraditional housing receive the correct street address to use on voter registration forms.

Note: To ensure they get follow-up mail, students should be sure to put a correct mailing address in the “mailing address” section of the registration card. However, students will usually need a valid street address for the residential address section of the form - a P.O. Box or other campus mailbox or mailroom address will usually not be enough. In many cases, an address based solely on a residential hall name and room number, like “Smith Hall Room 150” will not be sufficient, either. Work with your school and the local elections officials to make sure students know what they need to write on the form.
Election Day poll workers play an integral role in making sure elections work and voters can vote. They are responsible for everything from setting up and opening the polling place to reconciling ballot counts at the end of the day and preparing ballots for delivery to the elections office. Poll workers interact directly with voters by getting them checked in, helping them understand the ballot and use voting machines, and resolving questions or problems about the voting process.

Local election officials often face challenges recruiting enough poll workers, and the level of training that poll workers receive can vary quite a bit. The unfortunate result is that voters are sometimes deterred by under-resourced polling places, which lead to long lines or other delays. With the average poll worker above retirement age, another unfortunate reality is that poll workers are not necessarily familiar with the particular challenges that student voters face when they enter a polling place, especially for the first time.

Training a new group of poll workers through the development of a student poll worker program is an effective way to:

- engage students in elections
- enlist a workforce that is comfortable using and explaining new technology
- create a voting environment that is friendly and welcoming to other students and young voters

Successful programs have been implemented on campuses across the country through the collaboration of students, university faculty and administration, and local elections officials. Poll workers are often paid for their service and students may be able to receive course credit if programs are integrated into a curriculum.

Here are some tips for bringing a student poll worker program to your campus!

6 Steps to Establishing a Poll Worker Program at Your School
1. Get in touch with local election officials
2. Work with college administrators and faculty
3. Recruit other students
4. Incorporate ineligible students
5. Organize supplemental poll worker trainings
6. Make it FUN!!!
Step #1: Get in Touch with Your Local Election Official

The first step in initiating a program is to learn about the legal requirements imposed by the state or municipality on poll workers. Developing a working relationship with election officials is vital and maintaining communication is the key to success. A friendly meeting to establish a relationship, clarify needs, and set timelines and requirements is a good way to start this process. Establishing a student poll worker program may take time, so set up a meeting as soon as possible.

Step #2: Work with College Administrators and Faculty

The success of the student poll worker program relies on close working relationships with faculty and support from college administrators. Faculty advisors can be a liaison between students and administrators and can help encourage other faculty to spread the word and encourage participation by incorporating poll working and related issues into their curricula. In addition, your school’s service learning coordinator is there to connect students to opportunities just like this. Working with administrators will grant access to greater resources for program coordination and implementation and will bring higher visibility to the program.

Step #3: Recruit Other Students

Recruitment methods are vital in maximizing student participation. In addition to class announcements and faculty encouragement, posting on bulletin boards and social media sites are important ways to reach out to students. Highlighting the incentives like payment and extra credit also help get students engaged. Developing a pitch can bring in dedicated students by emphasizing the key role poll workers play in the democratic process.

Contact Your Local Election Official as Early in the Process as Possible!
Step #5: Incorporate Ineligible Students into the Program

Some students may not be able to serve as a poll worker because of state and local laws, but there are various ways they can help the Election Day effort. These students may be able to: play a role in organizing and recruiting for the program, volunteer in other ways for the local election board office, facilitate student absentee ballot applications, work on a GOTV effort or voter registration drive, or be on hand on Election Day to help coordinate the student program and provide services like food and transportation for poll workers and volunteers.

Step #6: Organize Supplemental Student Poll Worker Trainings

The quality of poll worker training varies widely across the country. Arranging with election officials to offer poll worker trainings for students on campus is a way to ensure that substantive, hands-on training is available to busy students. Where this is not possible, supplementary training materials can be developed to make sure students are comfortable with the procedures, familiar with the election laws, and aware of common problems and their solutions.

Step #7: Make it Fun!!!

One of the goals of bringing a student poll worker program to your campus is to encourage more students to get engaged. Providing participants with T-shirts can help raise team spirit and awareness on campus. Arranging to have food at trainings and on Election Day can help make the poll working experience more enjoyable and will make the program attractive to more potential poll workers.

Information drawn from:

- Strategies for Success: Starting a College Poll Worker Program, Rachael V. Cobb, Ph.D. Suffolk University 2006, University Poll Workers Civic Education Project
- League of Women Voters: Recruiting College Aged Poll Workers

For More Information

Student Poll Worker Program Guides
Election Assistance Commission Guidebook for Recruiting College Poll Workers

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Voter identification requirements vary state to state and can be the difference between whether a student is able to vote or not. In some states, ID is not needed at all; in others, a variety of photo or non-photo ID is acceptable. In the strictest states, only certain types of government-issued photo ID are accepted. For example, a student might not be able to use a driver’s license if it is issued by a different state. With a little planning, you can make sure students at your school aren’t caught unaware by your state’s voter ID law. Here’s how:

Consult elections officials to find out what ID is needed

Contact your state’s top election official or your local election officials if you have questions about voter ID. You can also call Campus Vote Project for assistance.

Work with campus administrators to spread the word

If your state has specific ID requirements, it’s important to get the word out to students. Even better, you can work with campus administrators to implement ongoing practices to make sure students get this information every year – implementing change that lasts long after you’re gone. To do this, it’s important to formalize responsibility for this task within your student group or student government so that there’s a person responsible for following up with the administration every year.

Here’s what spreading the word looks like:

- Integrate voter ID information into the school website.
- Make sure information about ID requirements is distributed with voter registration cards during move-in and orientation, and encourage Residence Life to distribute information through dorms and Greek houses.
- Get the administration to send campus-wide email alerts well in advance of Election Day.
- Institutionalize a regular feature in campus press related to voter registration and voting requirements.
- Set up a “Voting Help Desk” in the student union, library, bookstore, cafeteria, or other highly trafficked place on campus. Include information about voter ID requirements, and information about how to get ID for students who don’t have the right kind.

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Encourage your school to issue ID documents where possible

Sometimes your student ID card can be used as voter ID, but it may need to include certain information. In other cases, your school can issue a formal letter, utility bill, or other document that students can use as voter ID. Or your school might be able to provide a list of enrolled students to local elections officials. Check with your local elections office to see if there are ways your school can provide voter ID to students. If so, work with campus administrators to promote this practice. Remember, it’s always better for a school to send qualifying documents to all students automatically, than to make something available to students only upon request.

Help students get the ID they need

The narrower your state’s requirements, the more likely it is that students could be unable to vote because they don’t have the right ID when they turn up at the polls. For example, consider Indiana’s voter ID law, which requires a photo ID issued by the state of Indiana or the U.S. government. A student ID card from a public school will only work if it meets certain requirements, like having an unexpired or recently expired expiration date. A student ID from a private school and many other common types of identification simply won’t work, so students who do not have a U.S. passport or an Indiana driver’s license may have difficulty voting. At Campus Vote Project, we can help you assess your state’s voter ID law for potential pitfalls that students could face.

If the risks are high, think about ways you and your school can help students get the ID they need. For example, you can:

- Circulate information about where students need to go to get acceptable ID. It may be the county board of elections office, or a local DMV.
- Arrange a “Get ID” day with free transportation to an office that issues acceptable voter ID. Even better, arrange for officials to come to your campus to accept and process applications for ID.
- Provide information about any underlying documents that a student needs in order to get the necessary voter ID, such as a birth certificate or social security card. Have a computer set aside in the library or computer lab for students who need to apply online for certain types of ID (like a passport) or underlying documents (like a birth certificate).

Stay current

Voter ID laws have been the subject of much debate recently, and many states have passed new laws. Check in with your local elections office periodically to make sure the information you have is still current.
College and university students face several obstacles to voting that make them less likely to go to the polls on Election Day. For example, college students are often first-time voters who are new to the community. Many have no history of voting at a local polling place and might not be able to get there easily even if they know where it is located. Establishing a polling place on campus for early voting and/or Election Day could increase student turnout by making voting more convenient. Examples of schools that have hosted polling places on campus include:

- Arizona State
- Penn State
- University of Akron
- University of California Riverside

### Step #1: See Where Things Stand

Contact your local election office to explain your goal, determine what specifications a location must meet to be used as a polling place, and learn about the procedure for requesting one. A polling place is the voting location for all people who live in a particular precinct. Occasionally, a polling place covers more than one precinct. Ask election officials about the precinct or precincts in which your school is located. Determine **whether your state has early voting** and find out whether requirements for obtaining an early voting site on campus are different than requirements for Election Day polling places. The county or city Board of Elections in your community administers elections and selects polling place locations in the city or county. If polling places have not already been determined, ask whether your campus housed a polling place in the last election and whether it is likely to do so again.

### Step #2: Find the Right Location

Identify locations on campus that meet the requirements for a polling place. A campus polling place should be easily accessible to students by foot or campus shuttle to accommodate those who do not have a car. Other considerations include available space, providing security, and ensuring that the locations will be available all day on Election Day. It might be helpful to list locations in order of preference before you propose them to campus administrators. Some college campuses fall within two different voting precincts. As a result, it might be possible to place more than one polling place on campus.

### Step #3: Draft Recommendations and Outline Plan

Use the results of your research to draft a set of recommendations for how to proceed. List specific locations you found. Include deadlines by which you hope to finalize a site, prepare it for use, and submit a request to the local board of elections.
Step #4: Meet with Campus Administrators

If your campus is not already set to host a polling place, schedule a meeting with school administrators to determine whether they will support your effort to establish one. Typically, the Dean of Students or Dean of Student Life is the administrator responsible for voting initiatives related to students. If your school has an Office of Civic Engagement, contact its director as well. Introduce yourself and your organization in a phone call or email, briefly explain your goals, and request an in-person meeting to discuss them.

Tell the administrators you meet with that you would like permission to submit to election officials a request to add a polling place on campus. Inquire whether your school is willing to make the request to election officials directly. Provide your list of potential locations and discuss whether any of them can meet specifications in their current state and whether funding is available to prepare a site. Think creatively about potential funding sources if preparing a campus polling place will require money. Ask whether your college’s Office of Student Life, Office of Civic Engagement, or another department would be willing to contribute funds. Host a raffle, auction, or other type of fundraiser with the student government or other campus organizations that are civically or politically engaged. Contact the civic organizations in the community.

Step #5: Follow Up! (Now and All Along the Way)

Follow-up after your meeting. Contact any administrators you met to thank them for their time and to confirm the details and deadlines you discussed. Update them periodically about the progress you make and your next steps, and check-in to see how they are progressing with their commitments.

Unfortunately, some election officials are not as enthusiastic about student voting as you are. Although the Supreme Court affirmed the right of students to vote in their college communities 33 years ago, your relationship with campus administrators could be useful if election officials are hostile to the rights of student voters and you need an advocate from your school.

Always follow-up after your meetings with administrators to thank them and to confirm details and deadlines discussed.

Step #6: Make the Request

Submit your request for an on-campus polling place according to the procedure elections officials describe. If possible, maintain working relationships with the local election officials to collaborate on this project.
Getting an off-campus polling place can be the obstacle that keeps students from voting. Knowing where to go is the first challenge; being able to get there is the second. For this reason, one of our recommended Campus Vote Project campaigns is to establish polling places on campus.

Sometimes, however, it’s simply not possible to get a polling place on campus. If that’s the case, there are still plenty of things you can do to help students get to where they need to be. Here’s how to get started:

### 6 Steps to Getting Students to Off-Campus Polls

1. **Identify the Location of Student-Heavy Polling Places**
2. **Identify Your Options**
3. **Access Resources and Create a Plan**
4. **Build a Working Group**
5. **Meet with College Administrators**
6. **Get it Done!**

### Step #1: Identify the Location of Student-Heavy Polling Places

Doing your homework is always the first step. We recommend meeting with your local election officials to identify the locations of student-heavy polling places.

Be sure to ask the right questions:

- Does your campus community cover multiple precincts? If so, find out all the relevant polling sites.
- What are the hours of operation for the polling sites?
- Are there on-campus or off-campus groups that are already helping community members get to the polls?
- Map out how far the polling location is from campus and how students would get there.

The answers will help you build a comprehensive plan to get students to the polls.

### Step #2: Identify Your Options

How you are able to help get students to the polls will depend upon what you find out during Step 1. It will also depend on your resources and the support you are able to obtain from your school or other groups. Here are some ideas for what you might be able to do:

- Arrange for buses to transport students to and from an early voting location or Election Day polling places
- Work with the city/municipality to offer free public transportation on certain routes for Election Day
- Organize volunteer carpools/rides to the polls
- Plan a “March to the Polls” if there is an early voting site or Election Day polling place close to campus. Seek the participation of professors and other administrators

Publicize polling place locations and transportation options in ways that students can’t miss. Don’t forget to let them know what ID they need to bring so that they can actually vote when they get there!
Step #3: Assess Resources and Create a Plan

Now that you know where the student-heavy polling places are and have some ideas for how to get students there, it’s time to assess your resources and create a plan to help you reach your goals.

This campaign requires two things: a variety of resources and a realistic and attainable timeline. As you’re doing your research, figure out what resources you will need to effectively get students to the polls. Include financial resources, people resources, and advertising costs among other possible resources. From there, create a list of goals that must be reached for your program to be successful.

Next, map out when you need to achieve each goal and plan backward. Since your goal is to run a campaign to establish transportation to the polls for students, you’ll need to plan out strategies and tactics to attain the necessary resources and implement the plan by Election Day. This strategy will also help you to build in smaller goals along the way, which keeps everyone enthused and excited to be a part of your efforts! See the example below and repeat for the fall and summer semesters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Goals &amp; Deliverables</th>
<th>Tactics &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Personal Calendar</th>
<th>Community Calendar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Spring Semester  | GOAL: Get the University to commit to financially supporting transportation for students to the polls on Election Day | January: Schedule first meeting of student group and recruit for student transportation project committee members  
February: Committee completes research and presents proposal to the student group  
March: Create a letter of support for the project and get 10 other student organizations to sign on  
April: Meet with campus administration  
May: Debrief with group and prepare to either implement the project or pressure the campus administration | Home for Mom’s Birthday, 2/14  
Spring Break Trip, 3/6-3/12 | Mid-terms: 2/28-3/4  
Spring Break: 3/7-3/11  
Finals: 4/25-4/29 |

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Step #4: Build a Working Group

Creating a program to get students to the polls is a project that many different campus organizations can get on board with, and having a variety of active partners will help the program succeed. Once you’ve done your research, schedule one-on-one meetings or a large group meeting with organizations you’d like to partner with. Think creatively. Consider working with both the College Democrats and the College Republicans. Reach out to a variety of partners like the Black Student Union and feminist groups.

At the meeting, be prepared to talk about the challenges at hand and explain what will need to happen to overcome those challenges. Showing the group the plan you’ve drafted will legitimize your effort and give attendees the opportunity to provide suggestions and feedback to refine the plan. Be prepared with next steps for folks to sign up to do. Most importantly, do not let the meeting end without gaining firm commitments from each group at the table. Does someone want to lead the outreach work? Does someone else want to be the liaison with the administration? Does someone want to be in charge of logistics? Great! This will lessen your burden and increase their investment in the project.

Step #5: Meet With College Administrators

Contact campus administrators and tell them about your project. Frequently, the Dean of Students will be your best contact, but in some cases it may be the President of the University, the Chancellor’s Office, the Office of Civic Engagement, or even a student advisor. Make an appointment to meet in person.

At your meeting, bring your plan and other materials that clearly and succinctly lay out your goals. Be prepared to tell the administrator exactly what support you are seeking, whether it is arranging buses to take students to the polls, circulating information about public transportation or working with them to get free public transportation on polling place routes. Know what you want and ask for it.

It is very important to establish clear “next steps” that your organization and the administration can take and dates by which each of you will take action. After your meeting, send a brief thank you email or letter that includes a synopsis of your discussion for administrative records. Make sure to follow up as you specified.

If you need help along the way, don’t hesitate to contact the Campus Vote Project staff!

Step #6: Get it Done!

Once you’ve created your plan, built a coalition, and met with campus administrators, the last thing to do is to make it happen. Follow your plan and don’t let yourself or the coalition get distracted.

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By working with school administrators, election officials, and other school and community organizations, you can radically transform how student voting works in your college community. In other words, you can make sure it does work, for all student voters. Campus Vote Project has given you the tools to create and implement effective campaigns. Now, let’s talk about how we can make the change we want last.

One of the biggest challenges facing student organizers is the limited time you have to do this work while on campus. Your time is limited both because you’ve got classes and tests to attend to as well as the fact that you’re only on campus for 4 or more years.

One way to create lasting infrastructure for student voting and all of the other amazing work you’ve done on campus is to establish structures for ongoing collaboration between school officials, student leaders, the student body, and the local elections office. Here’s how:

Institutionalize important relationships To keep the student body connected even as students come and go, work with the student government to identify an officer who can be responsible for maintaining relationships with the right campus administrators and the local elections office. By institutionalizing this responsibility, you will help ensure that the connections continue even during transitions from student leader to student leader. Likewise, work with campus administrators and the local elections office to identify counterparts in their offices that can serve as point people for incoming student leaders. Regular contact and collaboration that lasts between and through changeovers in student leadership is one of the best ways to institutionalize ongoing support for student voting in your college community.

Build strong coalitions Organizing is all about building strategic relationships and finding common ground to take action collectively. To do this, and to truly have power, you have to prioritize building strong coalitions on campus. When you’re able to express the power and support of campus leaders and all of the people on campus that they represent it will make a compelling argument to whoever has the decision-making power over the issue at hand. Some of the strategies and tactics to increase student voter access on campus may require you to be creative in the ways that you “encourage” campus administrators and elected officials to support you. Remember: as young people, your greatest strength is each other.

Commit to developing new leaders From grassroots organizing to running a nation, it’s important to continually recruit, train and develop new leaders. As you create programs and build relationships, be sure to give folks opportunities to be a part of the work. Leaders are developed through relationship-building, they’re proven through actions and they are empowered by having clear roles and responsibilities. For your work to be most effective there must be folks that are invested in it that can continue to move the project forward after you’ve moved on.

Be strategic and stay focused. The work of increasing student voter access doesn’t just focus on one issue. By getting young people to the polls you’re making our democracy one that truly reflects the hearts and minds of its people - including you.

Campus Vote Project can provide resources and assistance along the way. Have questions? Contact us!

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At Campus Vote Project, we’re excited to help you advocate for long-term changes on campus that set the stage for more convenient student registration and voting for years to come.

To pursue institutional changes that will have lasting impact, you’ll have to approach administrators at your school for help and support. Finding and maintaining these relationships will help you cut through layers of bureaucracy and launch your campaigns into exciting, far-reaching projects.

Here are some tips to help you get started!

Find the Right People

The right contacts in the school administration will vary depending upon your project. Think about your specific goals and try to match them with the people who can help you get things done. Find a list of administrators on your college website and go through it for ideas. Here are some likely candidates:

Office of Civic Engagement: If your school has an administrative office that focuses on civic engagement or coordinates volunteer activities, you may be able to find administrators who are enthusiastic about your mission and willing to devote time and energy into helping you with your goals. This office is also a good start if you’re interested in establishing an ongoing institutional relationship between the school and the local election office.

Dean of Students/Dean of Student Life: This is a good contact to start with, especially if you’re not sure who else to approach. Having buy-in from the Dean of Students will help pave the way for approval from other administrators. The Dean will also be able to point you in the right direction regarding the other relationships you should cultivate.

Residence Life Department: Projects related to residence halls should be coordinated with the department that oversees them. Examples include campaigns to distribute registration forms and correct street addresses to all dorm dwellers, voter registration “dorm storming,” and efforts to distribute information about polling place locations for specific dorms and dorm rooms.

Consider working with your Student Government to approach college administrators. They have direct relationships with key offices, and their help will show the administration that your goals are have broad support.

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Prepare for Your Meeting

Prepare for the meeting by outlining your ideas and your questions. Think about the next steps you hope to identify during the meeting. Campus administrators have a lot on their plates and they’ll be most willing to devote time if they can see you’re also committed to working hard on the project.

Be Persistent

Don’t get discouraged if it takes a few tries to find the “right” person or people for your projects. If the administrator you approach does not seem interested in your projects or does not have answers for your questions, ask if the individual is willing to look into the answers and have a follow-up meeting, or if there are other people you should speak with about your goals. It’s not unusual for there to be several steps involved before you hit upon the best contacts.

Follow Up and Follow Through

During your meetings and conversations with administrators, establish clear “next steps” that your organization and the administration can take. For example, if you are asking the school to distribute voter registration cards to new students, offer to deliver the blank cards to campus and coordinate with Student Life to pass them out.

After your meetings, send a brief thank you email or letter that includes a synopsis of your discussion for administrative records. Make sure to follow through with the next steps that you committed to and check-in from time to time to update your administrative contacts about your progress. Maintaining an ongoing and friendly relationship will help ensure that your contacts stay enthusiastic about your goals and are available to troubleshoot as you encounter obstacles.

Contact Campus Vote Project for Help

We have experience connecting with campus administrators, and we’re happy to help! Let us know if you’d like to:

- Set up a planning call to outline your goals and identify likely administrative contacts;
- Work on an introductory letter or email;
- Collaborate on outreach to campus administrators;
- Set up a phone call or meeting with administrators that includes a staff person or volunteer from Campus Vote Project.

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To pick your Campus Vote Project goals, you’ll need to identify the particular problems that trip up student voters and keep them from voting in your community. Local election officials (LEOs) – the people who run everything from voter registration to counting the ballots – are a great resource and are often willing to help. Setting up a meeting early on will help you identify your priorities. Not only that, it will also allow you to introduce yourself and establish a relationship so that you can consult the right people when questions or problems arise at later stages of the campaign, or during voter registration and GOTV drives.

Here are some tips to help you set up and prepare for a meeting with your LEOs. But don’t hesitate to contact Campus Vote Project for help along the way!

Four Steps to Meeting with Local Election Officials

1. Identify a Starting Point

Do you have a specific goal or project in mind? Or are you looking for an overview of how elections work in your new community, and any problems that typically arise for student voters? Voter education and outreach is often a key aspect of what LEOs do, and they are generally approachable and willing to help. However, they are busy administrators with a lot to do. You can help ensure good relationships and productive conversations by figuring out your goals and doing some initial legwork ahead of time.

2. Find Your Local Election Office

Your college community falls within the jurisdiction of a set of election officials, or, in some cases, it might be split between more than one jurisdiction. These are usually county-level administrators, but it will vary from state to state. If you aren’t sure where to begin, contact the state Administrator of Elections for help. This person is usually the Secretary of State, but it might be a Lieutenant Governor or Director of Elections.

Once you’ve figured out who your LEOs are, call to schedule a meeting. Explain your goals for the meeting and ask if there’s a particular administrator you should meet with. Identifying as clearly as possible the purpose of the meeting and what sort of information you are hoping to obtain will help ensure you have a useful meeting and aren’t wasting anyone’s time.

3. Plan For Your Meeting

Think through your goals and what information you need to know to run your project. Identify key questions ahead of time. Examples of questions you may want to ask can be found on the following page. At Campus Vote Project, we have experience helping students identify useful questions and prep for meetings with LEOs. Contact us for a planning session.
4. Follow Up

Send a quick email or note to thank the LEOs who gave you their time. As you work on your project, update them about your progress and any challenges you encounter. If you are coordinating voter registration opportunities, give them a heads-up about any key dates when you anticipate submitting a large number of voter registration cards. Staying in touch and sharing information is the best way to maintain a good relationship and ensure that your LEOs are available to help if problems arise.

Examples of Questions for Local Elections Officials

It’s important not to bombard LEOs with a long survey of questions. Below are some common introductory questions that you can pick and choose from. Depending on your goals, there may be other questions that you should ask. Contact Campus Vote Project for help thinking through your goals and planning your questions ahead of time.

How does voter registration and voting work in [your town]?
- What are the residency requirements? Is there anything students need to do to prove residency?
- What is the registration deadline? Is same day or Election Day registration available? If so, are there any special requirements?
- If students live in a dorm or other non-traditional housing, what address information do they need to put on the registration form?
- Is there someone from your office who can come to campus to educate students and administrators about the requirements or run a registration drive?
- Is early voting available? Where can students vote early?
- Do you need an excuse to vote by absentee ballot? What is the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot?
- Do all students who live on campus vote at the same polling place? If not, can you help us identify who votes where? For example, which dorms are assigned to which polling places?
- What identification is needed to register and vote?

How do you prepare for voting in student-heavy polling places?
- What are the student-heavy polling places?
- How do you estimate how many student voters you will have?
- Do you have staffing or resource challenges for student heavy polling places?
- How long do students usually have to wait in line to vote?
- Do you need more poll workers for student polling places? How can students get involved?
- Do poll workers greet voters at polling places and help them make sure they are in the right place before they wait in line? Can student volunteers help?

What are the most common problems that student voters have when they try to register or vote in [your town]?
- Incomplete registration forms? Invalid registration addresses?
- Identification problems?
- Polling place problems?
- What other problems can you think of?
- How can students and college administrators help prevent these problems from occurring every year?

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