

# STUDENT VOTE

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT TOOLKIT



# STUDENT GOVERNMENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Student Government Resource Center provides student government and state student association leaders with the training and resources to succeed, from how to run productive meetings to how to win changes in campus policies. For thirty years, we've been giving student governments the skills and know-how to accomplish their goals and be effective advocates for students.

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# INTRODUCTION

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Student governments have a responsibility to promote civic engagement within the student body. Encouraging students to be involved in our democracy is one of the purest ways to promote engagement and strengthen the student voice.

There are a lot of important issues at stake in the upcoming election that affect college students, including jobs, the economy, health care, and college affordability. But all too often, decision makers overlook students' concerns. If students want their voices heard on these issues, they need to turn out at the polls.

This toolkit covers the basic steps for a student government to run an effective nonpartisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote drive on campus.

## YOUR CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

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For your Student Vote campaign, you need to develop a campaign message that will motivate students to register and vote. You'll use this message to write your campaign scripts, come up with slogans, and create posters and other materials.

Overall, the most powerful factor that turns out young voters is being asked by another young person. In other words, the messenger is more important than the message. However, the right message can increase someone's likelihood to vote, and the wrong message can decrease it. To help you get started, we've developed the following message for you. We encourage you to use this or something similar:

### **MORE AT STUDENTGOVRESOURCES.ORG**

For additional resources or help with specific questions, please contact the Student Government Resource Center at [info@studentgovresources.org](mailto:info@studentgovresources.org) or online at [www.StudentGovResources.org](http://www.StudentGovResources.org).



“ We don’t know what’s in store for our future, or if we’ll be able to get jobs, pay off our student debt, or protect our environment. But we do know a better future isn’t going to happen if we just sit around waiting for it. We can’t expect these issues to get addressed or for things to start moving in the right direction if we don’t make ourselves heard.

So on Election Day we need to show up, and show up big. If we’re going to be heard, we all need to work together, raise our voices together and vote. ”

We came to this message based on the latest research on young voters:

- ▶ *Young people are optimistic about the future but pessimistic about government.*
- ▶ *They are concerned foremost about their own future and issues like jobs, debt, and student loans.*
- ▶ *They are not receptive to appeals that voting is their civic duty.*
- ▶ *They believe that young people have the power to change things, but it won't happen overnight.*
- ▶ *They believe in movements and working on things together.*
- ▶ *They are aware that the youth vote is on the rise.*
- ▶ *They have lots of positive experiences with volunteering in the community.*
- ▶ *Peer pressure is powerful. They are more likely to register and vote if they perceive that their friends and family members are doing it.*

Our message fits the research because it focuses on the issues that students care about, makes voting about a combination of self-expression and working together as a team, and shifts the emphasis to being about students, as opposed to making it about politicians. This message taps into students’ optimism about the future, but pessimism about government and elected officials.



### BE NONPARTISAN

As a student government, there’s one other factor you should consider in shaping your message. It’s important that your campaign and message are nonpartisan, meaning that you won’t favor any particular party or candidate. The students who you represent have a wide range of political affiliations and beliefs and it’s your job to mobilize all of them to participate in the democratic process – it wouldn’t be appropriate for you to take sides. That’s why this campaign message focuses on the importance of voting, regardless of how they vote.

# MAKING YOUR CAMPAIGN PLAN

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## SETTING GOALS

The next step in planning your Student Vote campaign is to set goals for what you want to accomplish. Clear goals are important so that you can tell if and how you are making a difference. Goals also help keep your volunteers motivated by giving them something to work toward.

The two key goals to set are the number of students you will help register to vote and the number of get-out-the-vote (GOTV) contacts you will make.

The most important goal is voter registration. Eighty percent of college students who are registered will actually vote. So helping a large number of students register to vote is the single most important thing you can do to increase voter turnout. Once the voter registration deadline has passed, your priority should shift to making personalized GOTV reminders.

**For voter registration**, you should consider several factors in setting a goal:

- ▶ Find out how many students were registered during voter registration drives on your campus in recent election years.
- ▶ Based on past experience, we've seen that a good campus drive can register between 10-20% of the student body.
- ▶ Your ability to hit the higher end of that range depends on the size of the coalition and the number of volunteers you think you can marshal.

## For GOTV:

- ▶ Find out the voter turnout numbers from your local election registrar for the past few election cycles. How many people voted at each local polling place? What was the margin of victory in your local races? How many new votes would it have taken to swing an election?
- ▶ You should expect that for GOTV you will be able through phone banking to contact half of the students who you helped register during the voter registration drive. So at the bare minimum, your GOTV contact goal should equal half of your voter registration goal.
- ▶ Then you should add in estimates for the number of GOTV contacts you will generate from other sources, including voter pledges, GOTV canvassing, GOTV tabling, and texting.

Based on these considerations, set goals for your Student Vote campaign that you feel are ambitious but achievable. Once you set your overall voter registration and GOTV goals, break them down by tactic – for example, setting goals for how many of your voter registrations will come from tabling, from canvassing, and from class announcements.

***Eighty percent of college students who are registered will actually vote.***

## PLANNING FOR VOLUNTEERS

For planning purposes, you should estimate the amount of work a typical volunteer can accomplish in one hour. Based on our past experience working on many campuses, here are some average volunteer rates:

- ▶ A volunteer working at a table or canvassing can help register five students per hour.
- ▶ A volunteer working at a table or canvassing can collect five voter pledges per hour.
- ▶ A volunteer making a class announcement can get 15% of the students in the class to register to vote or sign a voter pledge.
- ▶ A volunteer going door-to-door can help register one student to vote for every four doors they knock on.

The average rates at your school might end up being slightly different. Once your Student Vote campaign picks up steam, you should figure out the actual rates for your drive and adjust your plan as necessary.

Based on your goals and these rates, you should figure out how many volunteers you will need for your campaign. For example:

If your goal is to collect 500 voter registration forms from tabling, then you need 100 volunteer hours to hit that goal (based on the expected rate of five forms collected per hour).

**You should then double that amount of time, so in your plan you should schedule volunteers for 200 hours of tabling.**

Called the “rule of halves,” this is an important planning tool that helps make sure you hit your goals. Assume that only half of your scheduled volunteer hours will actually get done, to account for volunteers who don’t show up or show up late, and for logistical problems that stop volunteers from performing well. The rule of halves gives you a necessary buffer to help make sure you hit your goals.

Use this approach to figure out how many volunteer hours you need for every task in your plan.

Once you know all of your goals and volunteer needs, make a timeline that runs from orientation through Election Day. Add all the major tasks in your plan to the timeline so that you can see how the campaign is laid out.

SAMPLE CAMPAIGN PLAN

	Summer	Week 0 (Orientation)	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6 (VR Deadline)	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10 (Election Day)	GOALS
Voter Registration	Meet with orientation office to ask for permission to do VR	VR at orientation events, move-in day (300 VRs)			Place online VR link on campus websites	Two-day VR test run (300 VRs)	Online VR Blitz (200 VRs)	VR Blitz (2000 VRs), Online VR (200 VRs)					3000 voter registrations (1200 from tabling, 600 from canvassing, 800 from class announcements, 400 from StudentVote.org).
GOTV									Collect voter pledges (1000 pledges)	Collect voter pledges (1000 pledges)	GOTV drive begins (500 contacts)	Final GOTV push (3500 contacts)	Collect 2000 voter pledges. Make 4000 GOTV contacts (2500 from phone banking, 750 from tabling, 750 from canvassing).
Volunteers	Sign up SGA members for Week 0 VR (5 hrs)	VR (30 hrs). Visibility (10 hrs). Databasing (6 hrs). Hold VR training for Week 0 vols.	Visibility (10 hrs)	Visibility (10 hrs)	Sign up coalition group leaders for Week 4/5 VR (5 hrs)	VR (60 hrs). Databasing (6 hrs). Sign up SGA members for VR shifts.	Visibility (30 hrs). Hold daily VR trainings. Phonebank volunteer cards (40 hrs).	VR (400 hrs). Databasing (40 hrs). Visibility (30 hrs). Phonebank volunteer cards (20 hrs). Hold daily VR trainings.	Voter Pledges (200 hrs). Databasing (20 hrs). Visibility (10 hrs). Hold voter pledge trainings. Phonebank volunteer cards (20 hrs).	Voter Pledges (200 hrs). Databasing (20 hrs). Hold voter pledge trainings.	GOTV (50 hrs). Hold poll monitor training. Phonebank volunteer cards (40 hrs).	GOTV (350 hrs). Visibility (40 hrs). Hold daily GOTV trainings.	Recruit 100 volunteers through SGA outreach. Recruit 200 volunteers from coalition members. Hold trainings during each campaign phase.
Visibility	Develop campaign message. Write campaign scripts.	Create volunteer recruitment materials. Leaflet at move-in day (500 leaflets).	Viz for volunteer recruitment (500 posters)	Viz for volunteer recruitment (500 posters)	Create posters and other VR viz materials		Viz for online VR (500 posters, 5 banners, chalking in classrooms, Facebook shares)	VR Viz (500 posters, 1000 leaflets, 5 banners, chalking)	Debate Watch Viz (500 posters)	Debate Watch party (100 attendees)	Create GOTV viz materials	GOTV Viz (500 posters, 2000 leaflets, chalking, 5 banners). Party at the Polls.	Two big waves of visibiity that saturate the campus (VR drive, GOTV drive). 3000 posters, 3500 leaflets. Hang banners. Chalk campus. Online viz. Debate Watch Party (100 attendees), Party at the Polls.
Coalition Building	Meet with admin to ask for their support. Invite top 5 groups to join coalition.	Sign on 10 groups to coalition. Invite college president to Week 4 press conference.	Sign on 10 groups to coalition. Meet with head of faculty senate.	Hold first coalition meeting	Presentation to faculty senate	Hold VR trainings for coalition groups	Coalition meeting to kick off VR drive. Groups and faculty send out emails about online VR.	Groups and admin send out emails about VR deadline	Visit group meetings to thank them for supporting VR drive, hold voter pledge trainings	Coalition meeting to kick off GOTV drive. Groups send out email about Debate Watch party.	Hold GOTV trainings for coalition groups	Groups send out GOTV emails	Have 20 campus groups join coalition. Endorsement from administration and faculty senate.
Media	Identify local media contacts	Set up meetings with reporters at top 5 media outlets	Hold 3 reporter meetings	Hold 2 reporter meetings	Invite media to press conference to launch campaign	Confirm media, hold campaign launch press conference w/ college pres, registrar (3 media hits)	Meet with campus paper to pitch VR story	Invite media to campus for VR deadline (3 media hits)	Submit LTEs thanking campus for supporting VR drive. Invite media to Debate Watch party.	Confirm media for Debate Watch party (2 media hits)	Meet with campus paper to pitch GOTV story	Invite media to polls on E-Day (3 media hits). Release turnout numbers that night (3 media hits).	Generate 14 TV/print media hits. Get college president and local registrar to speak at media events.
Registrar	Meet with local election registrar. Pick up blank VR forms.	Invite registrar to speak at Week 4 press conference. Deliver VR forms to registrar.			Pick up blank VR forms. Confirm registrar for press conference.	Deliver forms daily to registrar. Have registrar speak at press conference.	Pick up blank VR forms	Deliver forms daily to registrar		Meet with registrar to discuss Election Day plan and rules	Get local precinct turnout numbers for past elections	Get turnout numbers on Election night	Hold regular meetings with local registrar's office. Deliver forms to the registrar daily during VR drive. Have registrar speak at campaign launch press conference.
Logistics	Install locked filing cabinet in SGA office for storing VR forms	Database VRs (300 forms). Reserve tables for VR blitz and test run.			Reserve tables for voter pledging and GOTV. Book A/V equipment for Party at the Polls.	Database VRs (300 forms). Reserve room for Debate Watch.	Call faculty to set up class announcements	Database VRs (2000 forms)	Database voter pledges (1000 pledges)	Database voter pledges (1000 pledges)		Set up entertainment for Party at the Polls.	Database 2600 VR forms, 2000 voter pledges. Reserve rooms, tables, equipment.

# WORKING WITH THE REGISTRAR

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Good communication with your local election registrar is critical to the success of your Student Vote campaign, in order to ensure that every student who wants to is able to register and vote.

Your local election registrar controls how voter laws are implemented in your community, so make sure you understand how they intend to enforce them. On your end, this will ensure that you understand all of the rules surrounding voter registration and voting, and can clearly communicate them to your volunteers and the student body at large. In turn, you can help the registrar be as prepared as possible to process large numbers of voter registration forms and handle large numbers of student voters on Election Day.

## THE ROLE OF THE REGISTRAR

When running a voter registration drive, three people are involved in the registration process: you, the person who is registering, and the registrar.

The registrar has the power to interpret the election code, which means that they might enforce regulations differently than expected. For example, the registrar will decide whether or not the voter

registration form you're handing in was filled out correctly. Knowing the registrar's rules and preferences makes sure that the people you're helping to register end up on the rolls.

## MEETING WITH THE REGISTRAR

Before you start helping register voters, you should arrange a face-to-face meeting with your local registrar. If you are turning out students to vote in more than one jurisdiction, meet with each registrar separately.

In the meeting, you should discuss your plans for the campaign, explain your procedures for handling voter registration forms, confirm registration deadlines, and discuss the rules that relate to voter activities. You should establish a point person inside the registrar's office whom you can contact about any issues that arise and set a regular time to check in periodically about your progress.

After the meeting, you should write a detailed summary of what you discussed and email it to the registrar to confirm you are both on the same page. Distribute this email to the other leaders in your coalition and keep a copy for your files.



## TIPS FOR WORKING WITH YOUR REGISTRAR

- ✓ No surprises. Let the registrar know exactly what you're doing and when you're doing it.
- ✓ Point out problems rather than skirting issues. If you think there's going to be a problem with a set of forms, make sure to bring those problems to the attention of the registrar. If you work with them, they will help you.
- ✓ Ask the registrar how you should deal with forms that aren't properly filled out. Should you contact the registrant? Are you allowed to write on the forms? Will they contact the person themselves?
- ✓ Know their deadlines. Frequently registration deadlines are closely followed by bureaucratic deadlines for the registrars. Make sure you know when they need to get their paperwork done, so you can get your forms to them in plenty of time.
- ✓ Return forms as quickly as you can. The sooner the registrar has the forms, the better.
- ✓ Invite the registrar to run voter registration trainings for your coalition. They will be more confident in your campaign if they have a chance to train people themselves.
- ✓ Follow every rule. There might be some rules or interpretations that you disagree with. There's nothing you can do about that, and the best way to make sure that every student can vote is to follow the registrar's rules to the letter.
- ✓ Have a clear system for tracking and databasing voter registration forms and checking for quality, explain your system to your registrar, and implement it rigorously.



## CHECKLIST FOR YOUR MEETING WITH THE REGISTRAR

### Contact info for Elections Officials

- ☐ Name of local election office
- ☐ Name of person talked to
- ☐ Title of person talked to
- ☐ Date(s) of Conversation(s)
- ☐ Name of top local elections official
- ☐ Phone number
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Physical office address
- ☐ Mailing address (if different)

### How do volunteers become qualified to register voters?

- ☐ Do you need to take a class?
- ☐ Do you need to fill out an application?
- ☐ Do you have to be a resident of the county?
- ☐ Do you have to be a resident of the state?
- ☐ Anything else?

### Poorly filled out forms

- ☐ What are the most common mistakes people make when completing the voter registration form?
- ☐ What should we do with forms that are improperly filled out?

### How do you turn in voter registration forms?

- ☐ Can you mail forms to the state office?
- ☐ If yes, what kind of mail (e.g., delivery confirmation)?
- ☐ Can you turn them in to any registrar or do the forms from Municipality X have to go only to the registrar for Municipality X?
- ☐ When do forms have to be in to each office? What day? When is the final deadline to turn in forms?
- ☐ Can we use the national form?
- ☐ Can we copy the forms if we run out?

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## MEETING WITH THE REGISTRAR (CONT.)

### How can we keep records for a GOTV list?

- ☐ Can we keep a photocopy of the voter registration form?
- ☐ Can we database information from the voter registration form?
- ☐ Can we stick a post-it on the form where people fill in their email address and cell phone for us?

### Identification Information

- ☐ Can students register to vote at their campus address?
- ☐ How are students required to show proof of address/residence?
- ☐ Can they show a utility bill or lease?
- ☐ If they need to show ID, does it have to have a local address on it?
- ☐ Can the ID be issued by a public university? A private college?
- ☐ Can residents of the dorms register to vote here?
- ☐ If yes, what kind of address do they need to write on their form (street address, name of dorm, room number, etc.)?
- ☐ What do they need to do if they were registered to vote on campus last year and have moved to a different dorm?
- ☐ What if they used to be registered at home (in the same state) and they now consider college to be their residence?
- ☐ What if they are originally from another state and they now consider college to be their residence?
- ☐ Under what circumstance are voters forced to vote provisional ballots?
- ☐ How will provisional ballots be counted?

### Polling places

- ☐ Where are the key polling places for most students who live on or near campus?
- ☐ What was the voter turnout at those polling places during the last few elections?
- ☐ (If there are no on-campus polling places) What is the process for establishing a polling place on campus?



# BUILDING YOUR VOTE COALITION

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Gathering a coalition of groups to partner on your Student Vote campaign will help make your drive a success:

- 1 It allows you to gather more people to participate.
- 2 It gives you access to more resources.
- 3 Other groups bring new ideas to the campaign.
- 4 Different groups have access to different people and bring different constituencies to the campaign.
- 5 Having a strong coalition demonstrates to the public, the media, and elected officials that your campaign has broad support and is important to the student body.

Typically, you will end up with a core coalition that is made up of the student government and a small number of other groups that have decided to make the Student Vote campaign their priority. This core should meet frequently, share responsibilities, and work closely together to make decisions on the course of the campaign.

You will also have lots of groups that are less involved, usually because they have less time or fewer resources to contribute to the campaign, but still want to help as much as they can. No matter their level of involvement, everyone can bring something useful to the table that will increase your impact.

## PREPARING TO BUILD YOUR COALITION

- ▶ Brainstorm a list of the groups and people you want to involve in the coalition.
- ▶ Think through the constituencies on campus—cultural groups, sports teams, the Greek community, etc.—and make sure that you’re including groups in your coalition that can reach all of them.
- ▶ Identify the leaders in each group and their contact info.
- ▶ Make a list of all the ways that groups can potentially contribute to the campaign:
  - Helping voters register at tables, in the dorms, etc.
  - Providing information and advice.
  - Hosting or co-hosting an event.
  - Donating money for an event.
  - Donating office space or other supplies.
  - Turning out members to events or to volunteer.
  - Speaking to the media.
  - Helping register their own members.
  - Sending out information to their members through email, Facebook, etc.
- ▶ Set clear goals for how many groups you want to involve and what you want them to do.
- ▶ Decide how you want your coalition to function, including how often the coalition will meet, how groups will communicate, and which groups will be responsible for what.



## CREATING THE COALITION

- ▶ Make contact with each group or person on your target list. It's fine to start with an email, but be prepared to call them or visit them in person if they don't respond.
    - Introduce yourself and the student government.
    - Describe the Student Vote campaign and your goals.
    - Ask them to join the campaign.
    - Explain what activities you would like them to do and why.
  - ▶ Listen to their response.
    - Are they interested? What do they seem interested in?
    - What are their priorities and issues? Are there ways you can help them with their programs?
- Most of the time, coalition partners will be eager to get involved, but it is a matter of settling on the right ask that fits their enthusiasm and available time and resources. Listen respectfully and find a way to fit your campaign into their needs.
  - ▶ What is the process for them to decide to participate in the Student Vote campaign?
  - ▶ Arrange a specific plan to follow up and get their decision.
  - ▶ Track your progress. Keep track of each conversation and follow up with each group.
  - ▶ Hold a coalition meeting with all of the participating groups to launch the Student Vote campaign.



## WORKING WITH YOUR COALITION

Now it's time to put your coalition to work. Coming out of the coalition's first meeting, each member should know their own group's goals as well as the total goals for the whole Student Vote campaign.

The next step is to ensure that the members of the coalition have the materials and training they need to run their pieces of the campaign. Schedule a time when members of these coalition groups can meet with a campaign leader to get trained on key skills like how to help register voters, how to turn in voter registration forms, etc. You can also hold an advanced training for the leaders of coalition groups where you teach them how to run these trainings, so that they can then go back to their groups and train their own members directly.

Once groups are off and running, you need to make sure they communicate with each other. Send out frequent email updates to keep everyone apprised of each other's latest accomplishments. Hold weekly Student Vote coalition meetings where groups can report in on their progress, troubleshoot, plan joint events, etc.

You will also need to hold each group accountable to the commitments they've made to the campaign. Holding groups accountable can be a difficult task, but here are a few steps to help ensure that your coalition is successful. ►



## TOOLKIT TIPS: COALITION SUCCESS

- Get each group's goals in writing. Create a simple form for the group's leader to sign that spells out their commitment.
- Have a member of student government attend the meetings of other groups to show them that you care about their involvement in the project.
- When groups fall behind on their goals, meet with them to strategize on how to fix things.
- Make sure everyone in the coalition gets credit for their efforts in campaign materials and in the media. This gives groups a positive incentive to meet their goals, in the form of good press coverage and general campus goodwill.
- Encourage coalition partners to be actively involved in planning the Student Vote campaign. If they have a hand in shaping the plan, they will be much more committed to seeing it through.

# RECRUITING & MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

It will take a lot of people-power to meet your goals. Depending on the size of your school and your goals, you may need upwards of 100 volunteers, including some experienced leaders to coordinate the effort. That means you'll need to recruit volunteers from outside the student government to help with the campaign.

You can find volunteers from several different sources:

**Your student government** – Assuming that your Student Vote campaign is a priority for your student government, you should set an expectation that every member should volunteer in some capacity. Hold them to that expectation and sign them up for as many volunteer shifts as possible.

**Coalition partners** – Your campaign will include lots of other student groups. Each group should recruit volunteers from within its members.

**The student body** – There are lots of students on campus who would be excited to help with the Student Vote campaign if asked. Put out a call for volunteers, and ask every student who registers to vote if they'd like to help register others.

When reaching out to the student body, here are some keys to effective recruitment:

- ▶ Have a compelling story for why students should get involved. Be ready to tell a short, exciting message about why the student vote is important and why students should volunteer.
- ▶ Make a list of all your potential volunteer roles, so that you know all of the options you can offer incoming volunteers.
- ▶ Cast a wide net. You can never have too many volunteers.



- ▶ Incorporate recruitment into everything that you do. Have a volunteer sign-up sheet at every campaign event.
- ▶ Use a wide variety of tactics to recruit students: tabling, class announcements, email announcements, posters, and whatever else makes sense on your campus.
- ▶ Actively ask people to get involved! Every interaction with someone new is an opportunity to recruit them.
- ▶ Follow up with potential volunteers immediately to schedule them for an activity.
- ▶ After every volunteer activity, ask volunteers to come back and schedule them for another volunteer activity.
- ▶ Make sure you have lots of fun, easy activities for new people to do. If the activities are fun, meaningful and relatively simple then you will start to get new volunteers in droves.
- ▶ It's a good idea to have a weekly all-volunteer meeting where you can bring people up to speed on the campaign plan, get new ideas from people, ask people to take on new volunteer roles, and generally build the team.

# STUDENTVOTE

## YES, I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL OR PRIMARY PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR: FR. SO. JR. SR. GRAD.

Check all that interest you:

- ☐ Voter Registration
- ☐ Voter Education
- ☐ Get out The Vote (GOTV)

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER CARD



# LEADERSHIP ROLES

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To manage all of these volunteers, you will need leaders to coordinate them. These campaign leaders will each oversee pieces of the campaign plan and will recruit and oversee the volunteers who will help them meet their goals. Potential leadership roles include:

▶ **Overall Campaign Coordinator**

This leader coordinates the entire Student Vote campaign and makes sure your campus meets your campaign goals.

▶ **Coalition Coordinator**

This leader oversees the recruitment of student groups, administrators, faculty and local elections officials to join the campaign, runs regular coalition meetings, and holds coalition members accountable to their goals.

▶ **Visibility Coordinator**

This leader coordinates marketing around voter registration and GOTV, including postering and other campus-wide visibility, as well as online marketing through email, Facebook, and the web.

▶ **Lists Coordinator**

This leader ensures that all data from voter registration forms is databased nightly and that voter registration forms are turned in to the local registrar on a regular basis.

▶ **Media Coordinator**

This leader works to get positive stories in the media about your Student Vote campaign. They are responsible for making a press list, contacting the media about big events, and writing press releases and advisories.

▶ **Class Announcement Coordinator**

This leader coordinates two rounds of classroom visits by volunteers, one to help register voters and one to remind students to vote right before Election Day.

▶ **Dorm Coordinator**

This leader coordinates two rounds of dorm visits, one to help register voters and one to remind students to vote right before Election Day.

▶ **Tabling Coordinator**

This leader coordinates volunteers who set up tables in high-traffic areas on campus in order to recruit volunteers, help register voters, and make GOTV reminders.

▶ **GOTV Phone Bank Coordinator**

This leader organizes volunteer phone banks to make reminder calls to students right before Election Day.

*You will also need to have mid-level leaders who coordinate smaller pieces of the campaign.*

▶ **Daily Coordinator**

Each event should have a coordinator who oversees the event for that day, whether it's a table, a phone bank, or a visibility event. The Daily Coordinator is responsible for recruiting volunteers to work the event that day, setting up all of the event's logistics, and making sure the event hits its goals.

▶ **Hourly Coordinator**

For each hour of an event, there should be a coordinator who is in charge of the event for that shift. The Hourly Coordinator manages the volunteers for that hour, makes sure the event runs smoothly, and then reports the hour's results to the Daily Coordinator.

# VOLUNTEER TRACKING SYSTEMS

With the number of students who will be volunteering for your campaign, you will need good systems to keep track of everything. You should create a few different materials, including:

► **Master Volunteer Tracking Form**

Make a spreadsheet that lists every single campaign volunteer, their contact info, and every volunteer activity they've completed. This makes it easy to find each volunteer's info when you need it, and also lets you keep track of which volunteers are ready to be promoted to more leadership.

► **Campus Maps**

For tabling, mark all of the high traffic tabling spots, along with notes about the best time of day to table in each spot and the number of volunteers needed at peak traffic. On a different map, mark

all of the best poster locations, along with the number of posters needed to cover each area.

► **Volunteer Sign-Up Cards**

Make a bunch of postcard-sized forms that new volunteers can fill out if they want to get involved. Have these cards at every table and event so that you are always ready to sign up new volunteers.

► **Event Tracking Form**

Make a sign-up form that coordinators can use to sign up volunteers for shifts for their events.

## MASTER VOLUNTEER TRACKING FORM

Name	Phone	Email	1st Vol. Activity	2nd Vol. Activity	3rd Vol. Activity	Notes
Nelson Mandela	555-1212	nelson@school.edu	VR Tabling, 9/15, 6 VRs/hour	VR Class Announcement, 9/17, great public speaker!		Very enthusiastic, should ask to be Class Announcements Coordinator

# GENERATING VISIBILITY

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During the two key moments in the campaign – the final days of the voter registration drive and the final days before the election – you want your campaign visibility to be unavoidable. If your visibility is exciting and extensive, it will help motivate students to register and vote.

To generate visibility, you should:

- ▶ Figure out your campaign message. Keep it clear, simple, and memorable – your message should motivate people to action.
- ▶ Visibility takes a lot of work. Make a plan, then figure out how many volunteers you need, just like every other piece of your campaign.
- ▶ Carry out every visibility tactic that you can imagine, and do them big.
- ▶ Have many different types of visibility.
- ▶ Know the campus rules and make sure to follow them.

During the peak moments of your campaign, you should saturate the campus with your visibility. For students to really notice the campaign and feel compelled to act, they need to see the campaign message multiple times, in multiple different formats. The goal should be that a student can't walk through campus without seeing your campaign multiple times, in the form of posters, chalking, banners, volunteers on the quad, etc.

## PASSIVE CAMPUS VISIBILITY

Get creative with your visibility. Here are just a few ideas:

- Hang posters on kiosks and bulletin boards.
- Chalk messages on sidewalks.
- In dining halls and campus restaurants, put out table tents, place signs next to the cashiers, give out custom cups or coffee sleeves, etc.
- Hang banners in the student center and outside dorms and classroom buildings.
- In the library and computer labs, change the computer homepages to StudentVote.org.
- Post ads on campus buses and campus bus stops.
- Get the campus bookstore to insert a campaign flyer in every bag.
- Get the athletic department to make announcements at sporting events, put a StudentVote.org ad in rotation on the digital scoreboard, etc.
- In the dorms, put up posters in the elevators, in the restrooms, in lounges, spelled out in the windows, etc.
- In every classroom, write a small announcement in the corner of the chalkboard or whiteboard.
- Post campaign images and messages on Facebook and Twitter and ask people to share them.

*Ideas for Active Visibility on following page >*



## ACTIVE VISIBILITY

You can also publicize your campaign in more active ways, using fun, eye-catching stunts or props to get attention. For example:

- Build a “Vote Boat” on wheels that “sails” across campus.
- Put a giant thermometer in front of the student center that tracks the number of students registered to vote or the number of days until Election Day.
- Get the agriculture school to bring a goat to hang out in front of the student center and make him your unofficial “Vote Goat” mascot.
- Get the campus cheerleading squad to hold a GOTV “pep rally” on Election Day.
- Organize a flash mob where dozens of students with Student Vote campaign t-shirts and signs dance their way across campus on their way to the polling place.

## GENERATING MEDIA COVERAGE

Media stories about your campaign will help showcase the importance of student voters to politicians and the community, motivate your team, and bring great publicity to campus. You should invite the media to cover the great work you are doing.

There are two primary ways to get media coverage: meeting with individual reporters and editors to pitch them on covering your campaign, and inviting the media to come to campus to cover your events.

You should begin by identifying all of the media outlets in your community, including newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and blogs. Check the website for each outlet and get the names, phone numbers, and email addresses for their reporters and editors.

You should prioritize reaching out to your top targets:

- ▶ The editor of your campus paper.
- ▶ The reporter who will be covering the youth vote for your local newspaper.
- ▶ The news planning editors for the network TV affiliates (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox) in your community.





## MEETING WITH THE MEDIA

At the beginning of the campaign, you should meet with local reporters and editors to encourage them to cover the student vote. Reporters and editors will be more likely to cover your events throughout the campaign if they have met you and know who you are.

The best way to get started is to call up and schedule a face-to-face meeting. Even if a particular reporter can't meet with you, a phone call will introduce you and the Student Vote campaign.

## INVITING REPORTERS TO YOUR EVENTS

You should also invite reporters to cover major events during your campaign – debate watch parties, voter registration concerts, and even Election Day itself.

- 1 Start by writing a news advisory, an announcement that tells reporters about your event. Email the advisory out to all of your media contacts a few days before your event.
- 2 A few days before your event, start calling through your media list and personally inviting each person to attend. The one exception is the campus newspaper, where it's probably easier and more effective to stop by and talk to them in person. Make sure to come up with a compelling 1-2 sentence pitch in advance that explains what your event will be and why it will be newsworthy.
- 3 Early in the morning on the day of your event, email out your advisory again to all of your media contacts, then make a round of calls to remind them about your event and ask if they will be able to attend.
- 4 Write a news release that describes the event as you would want reporters to describe it and print out a few copies.
- 5 At the event, be on the lookout for reporters. As they arrive, get them to sign in with you so that you get their contact information. Give them a copy of the release and then take them to a place where they can view the event, interview the participants, and ask you questions about the campaign.
- 6 As soon as the event is over, email the release to any media contacts who didn't attend the event.
- 7 That afternoon, call through all of your media contacts again to answer questions about the event and ask if they will be doing a story.
- 8 Have a few volunteers write and submit letters to the editor to your campus and local papers talking about the event.

## IDEAS FOR MEDIA EVENTS

There will be lots of opportunities for your campaign to get media coverage. Be on the lookout for events that you can highlight. Here are a few ideas:

- ▶ On the first day of your voter registration drive, hold a “campaign launch” news conference. Invite the local registrar, the college president, and your top coalition members to speak.
- ▶ On the verge of your state’s voter registration deadline, invite the media to come cover the final registration blitz.
- ▶ Hold a debate-watching party where students can watch and discuss the candidates, and invite the media to attend.
- ▶ On Election Day, invite the media to cover your final GOTV push and to come interview students who are lined up at the polls.
- ▶ Right after the election, contact your local registrar and find out how many people voted at student-heavy polling locations. If turnout went up significantly compared to the last election, hold a media event to announce the numbers and celebrate the increase in student voting.

## TALKING TO THE MEDIA

Before you talk to the media, take some time to practice your talking points about the campaign. Role-playing likely questions and answers beforehand will

help with this. Be prepared to talk about your coalition, your goals, and why the student vote is important.

Your campaign is nonpartisan, and as its spokesperson it’s important for you to avoid making partisan statements to the press:

- ▶ Do not talk about candidates who are running for office or even what issues you would like them to focus on.
- ▶ If a reporter asks you who you will vote for, tell them that because you are involved with a nonpartisan project, you’d rather not talk about that.
- ▶ If a reporter asks you who you think students will vote for, tell them that your campaign is nonpartisan and that who young people vote for is not important to us – you just want to make sure that students’ voices are heard, regardless of what they want to say.
- ▶ If a reporter asks you what students want to see happen on specific issues like tuition hikes, you should say that the Student Vote campaign is not an issue advocacy project – you want students to come out and vote based on whatever issues are important to them.



# RUNNING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

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Research has found that 80% of students who are registered to vote will actually turn out at the polls. That means that registering students to vote is the single most powerful thing you can do to increase student turnout.

There are three key pieces to most successful campus voters registration drives:

- ▶ Freshman orientation or welcome week.
- ▶ Online voter registration.
- ▶ Your voter registration blitz.

You should prioritize these pieces depending on what works best for your campus.

## FRESHMAN ORIENTATION AND MOVE-IN DAY

At freshman orientation and move-in day, you have a whole new group of students who will be entering your campus in the fall and who you can help register to vote right away. Many will have just turned 18 and will need to register to vote for the first time.

## FRESHMAN ORIENTATION

Freshman orientation is different for each campus. Some places do a series of small orientation dates during the summer, while others do one big orientation right before classes start. Either way, you should try to be a part of the biggest events that are planned.

Meet with the office or group that is in charge of freshman orientation to get permission to help register voters at their events. Ask to set up tables at any big banquets, presentations, or other large events that are planned.

## MOVE-IN DAY

Get permission from the housing department to table when students arrive to get the keys to their dorm rooms. If possible, also set up tables outside the dorms where freshmen will be moving in.

As students come by to pick up their keys, give out voter registration forms. Many students will be in a hurry to move their stuff into their room, but try as much as possible to get them to register right away. Have a drop-box at the table so that students can come back and drop off their forms later in the day. Also ask the resident advisors to remind students about voter registration as they help them settle in.

**“Those who stay away from the election think that one vote will do no good: ‘Tis but one step more to think one vote will do no harm.”**

**- Ralph Waldo Emerson**

# ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION

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Online voter registration is an exciting tool that is getting more important with every election cycle. It can help boost the size of your voter registration drive, while also bringing other benefits:

- ▶ It's efficient. Many students are already planning to register on their own and by giving them an easy way to do so, you can focus the rest of your energy on reaching the harder-to-register students.
- ▶ It's a great way to recruit new volunteers. There are countless ways that new volunteers can help promote online registration using Facebook, text messaging and other visibility tactics.
- ▶ It's easy to incorporate online registration into your other voter registration visibility, making your visibility more effective in the process.
- ▶ It's a good way to engage your coalition members. There are lots of easy ways that they can help promote online registration.

## STUDENTVOTE.ORG



A growing number of state governments have implemented online voter registration systems run by their Secretary of State. However, most voter registration drives

use third-party online voter registration tools rather than the state-managed systems, because with the state systems your drive has no way of knowing how many students actually register and there is no way for your drive to capture their contact information to use during GOTV.

The most effective third-party tool that we've found for use on campus is StudentVote.org. This site is sponsored by the Student PIRGs' New Voters Project and Rock the Vote, two groups that have decades of voter registration experience and have helped register millions of young voters.

Your student government can visit StudentVote.org to try out the site and sign up to use their tool on your campus. The site, which uses Rock the Vote's best-in-the-industry software, will track how many students from your school register using the site and provide you with the contact information for those students so that you can reach out to them during GOTV.

We assume that you'll use StudentVote.org for your voter registration drive, but these tips apply no matter which online voter registration system you choose.



## PUBLICIZING STUDENTVOTE.ORG

Students usually need to see a website advertised many times before they will take the time to visit it, so you should publicize StudentVote.org in as many different ways and places as possible.

The easiest way to promote the site is to include it in all of your other visibility for the voter registration drive. By including the link on all of your materials, you'll quickly get the site in front of lots of people.

There are also ways to promote the site online that have proven to be extremely effective:

### ► Website Links

Getting popular websites to link to StudentVote.org is an easy way to encourage people to visit the site. Make a list of the most high-traffic university websites. Examples include: the university's main webpage, the email login page, the athletics website, the campus newspaper's website, and the Blackboard sign-in page.

### ► Email Lists

Make a list of everyone on campus who has a large email list – student groups, campus departments, residence halls, etc. Ask them to send out an email encouraging students to register to vote online.

### ► Campus Administration

The campus administration is a powerful ally for your campaign. Ask them to post a link to StudentVote.org on the university homepage or other sites. Have them send out an all-campus email message encouraging students to register to vote. Ask them to email all faculty members encouraging them to let the campaign register students in classrooms.



# THE VOTER REGISTRATION BLITZ

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During the last few days before the voter registration deadline, you should organize a campus-wide voter registration blitz.

At first, it might seem counterintuitive to do a three-day blitz instead of spreading your voter registration out over a longer period of time. In truth, compressing your drive into a short window right before the deadline is the easiest, most effective, and most fun way to run your drive. If done right, you will smash your goals, while also motivating your entire campus to register and vote.

If you do the alternative – run a long, slow slog of a drive where you do a little bit of voter registration every day over a long period of time – your campaign will tend to blend into the background on campus. This approach also tends to burn out your volunteers over time.

By instead doing a ton of voter registration at once through a blitz, students will see your Student Vote campaign volunteers everywhere on campus. The resulting visibility will help motivate other students to register, boosting your efforts and motivating your volunteers.

We do recommend that you do a couple days of heavy voter registration in the weeks leading up to your blitz, in order to work out your systems and give your volunteers some experience.

## METHODS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION

During the blitz, you will concentrate an immense amount of volunteer power into just a few days, with the goal of making sure that the average student is asked to register to vote multiple times. You should use three basic methods to register voters: tabling, canvassing, and class announcements.

### TABLING

Tabling is one of the most tried and true forms of one-on-one outreach. It simply involves setting up a table and talking to passersby about your Student Vote campaign.

At most campuses, tabling will account for the majority of your voter registrations. Here's how to make your tabling successful:

- ▶ You should set up tables in multiple locations around campus and at varying times of day, to make sure you reach a wide mix of students.
- ▶ Set up in high-traffic areas like dining halls, dorms, the student union, the library, on the major quads, or on the way to and from major parking lots.
- ▶ Go where and when the people are. Classroom buildings and the student union tend to be better during the day, while dorms and dining halls tend to be better in the evening.

- ▶ Make sure to follow the rules. Find out how to get proper permission to table so that you don't get shut down.
- ▶ "Tabling" doesn't necessarily require a table. If it's inconvenient to set up a physical table in a particular spot, then just have volunteers with clipboards work that location.
- ▶ If you do have a physical table, make it fun and designed to draw people over. Put a nice campaign banner on the front of the table. Hang some posters nearby directing people to the table. Play music at the table.
- Cover the table with campaign leaflets, buttons, stickers, and other materials you can hand out.
- ▶ Use the table as a base, not a wall to hide behind. Don't sit down behind the table. Instead, stand in front of it and talk to people as they go by. More confident tablers should float out into the foot traffic in order to reach more people.
- ▶ Never leave the table unattended. It projects the wrong image for your campaign and makes you seem disorganized or inactive.

## VOTER REGISTRATION TABLING AND CANVASSING SCRIPT

Hi, are you registered to vote?

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm with the Student Vote campaign. Nice to meet you!  
[hand over the clipboard]

We're working with a campus-wide vote coalition to make sure our school turns out to vote in a big way on Election Day. We don't know what's in store for our future. But we do know a better future isn't going to happen if we just sit around waiting for it. We can't expect things to start moving in the right direction if we don't make ourselves heard.

So on Election Day we need to show up, raise our voices together, and vote.

You can fill out this form to register to vote. The deadline is \_\_\_\_\_.

Thanks for registering! We also need help with this campaign to make sure we reach the whole campus. Check this box if you're interested in volunteering and we'll follow up.

Here's a sticker and some info about voting! Thanks!

### TIPS:

- ▶ **Check their form for the following:**
  - Printed neatly in blue or black ink
  - All of the required boxes are filled out
  - SSN or State ID number
  - Signature and date
  - Email and cell phone
  - Any other local requirements
- ▶ Smile, make eye contact, and wave – it makes a huge difference.
- ▶ Speak loudly, slowly and clearly.
- ▶ Hand over the clipboard as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Make sure to double-check the form to ensure it is complete – remember: you are responsible for making sure they complete the form properly.

## CANVASSING

Canvassing involves going door-to-door in the dorms or in student-heavy neighborhoods. Depending on your campus, this may be an important piece of your voter registration plan.

- ▶ Find out the rules at your school for going door-to-door in the dorms. At many schools, you need permission to do so. At some schools, only dorm residents are allowed to go door-to-door. Always follow the rules.
- ▶ Working with your school's residence hall association and resident advisors can be a big help, both for getting permission to go into the dorms and for recruiting volunteers.
- ▶ Assign each volunteer to a territory, called a "turf" – either a couple blocks in a student-heavy neighborhood or a couple floors in a dorm.
- ▶ Volunteers should plan to make a couple passes through their turf each night during the blitz. They should keep a list of all the rooms or addresses in their turf and mark down each time they talk to someone. This lets them go back through their turf more quickly on each pass, as they skip the people they already talked to.

## CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Classrooms are a great place to find a large audience and ask them all to register to vote at once. Many professors will allow you to use 3-5 minutes at the beginning of class to make a short presentation and have students fill out voter registration forms.

Class announcements should be a big piece of your voter registration drive plan.

- ▶ Start by going through the course catalog and identifying the biggest classes on campus. These will tend to be intro courses in popular departments. Make a list of all of these classes, including when and where they meet and the professor.
- ▶ Contact these professors and ask for permission to make a short announcement and register voters at the beginning of their class. Start by emailing professors, then follow up with phone calls. If necessary, drop by professors' offices during office hours.
- ▶ Schedule volunteers to visit the beginning of each class where the professor has agreed to let you help register voters.
- ▶ Make sure to help each volunteer practice in advance. Your campaign will be judged based on their presentation, so help them make sure it goes well. Give them basic tips on public speaking, including: speak slowly and loudly, vary your tone and emphasis, and make eye contact. Have them practice their presentation until they're comfortable with it.
- ▶ The volunteer should arrive a few minutes early in order to meet the professor and confirm their permission to speak. They should then hand out the forms and make a brief announcement explaining the forms and encouraging students to complete them. They should stay and collect all the forms, completed or not. In big classrooms, it helps to bring an extra volunteer or two to help hand out and collect the forms more quickly.

## VOTER REGISTRATION CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT SCRIPT

### **Introduction** (30 seconds)

*[Thank the professor and introduce yourself. Briefly describe your campus's Student Vote campaign.]*  
I'm here to tell you how you can get involved this fall in the Student Vote campaign.

### **Campaign Message** (90 seconds)

We don't know what's in store for our future. We don't know if we'll be able to get jobs, pay off our student debt, or protect our environment.

But we do know a better future isn't going to happen if we just sit around waiting for it. We can't expect these issues to get addressed, or for things to start moving in the right direction, if we don't make ourselves heard.

So on Election Day we need to show up, and show up big. If we're going to be heard, we all need to raise our voices together and vote.

*[Briefly describe some of the exciting highlights planned for your Student Vote campaign.]*

So please take a moment right now to fill out your voter registration form and we'll pick it up before we leave.

*[Walk through how to fill out the form properly:*

- Instruct them to print neatly in blue or black ink*
- Explain which fields are required*
- Tell them to make sure they enter their State ID or SSN #*
- Remind them to sign and date*
- Note any other local requirements*

### **Ask for Volunteers** (30 seconds)

We also need help making sure your friends and everyone else knows they need to make their voices heard, so please sign up to volunteer by checking the volunteer box. Please be sure to include your phone number and email address so we can contact you, and check off if you're interested in getting involved in certain parts of the campaign, like voter registration, get out the vote, or in being a poll monitor on Election Day.

### **Personal Story** (30 seconds)

While you fill out the forms, I will tell you why I got involved... *[Briefly explain why you are volunteering.]*

### **Wrap up** (10 seconds)

Thank you, Professor, for allowing me to present to the class. Please pass the forms over to the aisles so I can collect them on my way out.



# ELECTION DAY VOTER REGISTRATION

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A few states have enacted Election Day voter registration, where eligible voters can register to vote at the polls on Election Day. This makes voting easier, so it's no surprise that these states have higher voter turnout than normal.

To find out if your state has Election Day registration, visit [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org).

If your state does offer this option, you should adjust your voter registration plan in two ways:

- ▶ You can hold a longer voter registration drive. In these states, the deadline for pre-Election Day registration is usually much closer to the election itself. This gives you more time to help register voters.
- ▶ Since everyone can turn out on Election Day, not just people who pre-

registered, you'll be able to turn out even more people. Make sure you have two versions of your GOTV leaflets and other materials, one for those who are pre-registered and one for those who need to register at the polls.

While it might be tempting to skimp on the voter registration part of the campaign, since people don't need to pre-register, we strongly advise that you don't.

- ▶ Many people don't realize they can register at the polls and so they don't show up on Election Day. By helping them to register early, you can make sure they know they can vote.
- ▶ Helping people register early ensures that you will get to send them GOTV reminders, answer their voting questions, and get them thinking in advance about voting.

***“Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.”***

***- Franklin D. Roosevelt***

# TRAINING VOLUNTEERS TO HELP REGISTER VOTERS

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Before a volunteer starts helping register voters, they need to be trained. You should hold frequent trainings before and during the blitz.

Good trainings are fun, informative, quick and engaging. The most important element is practice – give volunteers a chance to partner up and practice on each other, and make sure that there are enough experienced volunteers there who can help answer questions. At the end of the training, send the volunteers out to help register voters for a little while, then give them feedback when they return.

Assemble clipboards for the trainees in advance with the script, blank voter registration cards, pens, and other materials. Stick a “Register to Vote” sign on the back of each clipboard.

Make sure you’ve met with your local registrar before running these trainings so that you understand all of the local rules around voter registration.

## **The training should cover:**

- ▶ Who can register to vote in your state – people with felony convictions? Students who are 17 now but will turn 18 before the election?
- ▶ How to fill out a registration form properly and which fields are required.
- ▶ How to ask students to fill out their email and cell phone number.
- ▶ Where to look for common mistakes when people complete the form, such as confusing fields or sections that are easily overlooked.
- ▶ Nonpartisan messaging and how to answer partisan questions.
- ▶ Who to call if the volunteers have questions when helping someone register.
- ▶ The voter registration script to use when approaching someone.
- ▶ How to report and turn in forms at the end of a shift.

**“[T]he vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.”**

**- Lyndon B. Johnson**

# MANAGING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

You need to carefully manage the voter registration forms that you collect. You have a responsibility to make sure that every form is carefully handled, treated in accordance with the law, and turned in to the registrar in a timely fashion. In addition, the data from your voter registration forms will form the basis for the contact lists for your GOTV efforts.

Completed forms should be kept in a secure, locked cabinet in a locked office until they are delivered to the registrar. Immediately after every event, the event coordinator should give their forms to a campaign leader who can lock them up.

This level of security, along with the other systems listed below, help ensure that you avoid any problems that could possibly harm anyone's ability to vote.

## FOR VOTER REGISTRATION VOLUNTEERS

When asking a student to fill out a voter registration form, volunteers should check the form to make sure it is filled out properly and ask the student to immediately fix any mistakes.

If possible, they should then have a second volunteer double-check the form right away.

Volunteers should then write their initials in the corner of each form they collect (unless the law in your state prohibits writing on the form) so that coordinators will be able to tell later who collected them.

At the end of their shift, the volunteer should turn in their collected forms to their event coordinator.

## FOR EVENT COORDINATORS

At the end of any event, the event coordinator should double-check the forms for problems, rubber-band them together along with a cover sheet listing the details of the event (date, time, location, coordinator's name, and number of forms collected), and then return the bundle of forms to a campaign leader with keys who will return the forms to the secure storage location.

## FOR THE LISTS COORDINATOR

Each night, the Lists Coordinator should do the following:

- ▶ Randomly call 5-10 newly registered voters from that day to confirm that they actually did register to vote.
- ▶ For any registration forms that are incomplete, call the student to get the missing information.
- ▶ Photocopy all of the new voter registration forms from that day (unless prohibited by state law).

Every day, the coordinator should deliver the completed voter registration forms to the local registrar and get a written receipt from the registrar. That receipt, along with the photocopied forms, should be locked away as well.

## MAKING THE VOTER LIST

During the course of the drive, the Lists Coordinator should recruit a team of volunteers to database all of the information from the photocopied forms into a spreadsheet that will later be used for GOTV. One volunteer can database about 50 forms an hour, so make sure to recruit enough volunteers for this project.

You want to create the largest, most accurate list of students who are registered to vote as you can, so that you can contact them by phone, email and face-to-face during your GOTV drive. At a minimum, you can build your list through two avenues: from the voter registration forms that you collect during your voter registration drive and from voter pledges that you collect during the GOTV phase of your campaign. If you database and combine both of these lists, then you should have a large enough list to do serious GOTV.

One challenge is that voter registration forms don't usually ask for a person's cell phone number or email address, but that information is essential to your GOTV efforts. Unless state law prohibits doing so, you should print pads of small sticky notes and affix one to every voter registration form. The notes should have lines for people to write down their cell phone number and email address, as well as a box that students can check off if they're interested in volunteering. Once you're done databasing the forms, remove the sticky notes before you turn the forms in to the registrar.

## WHEN DATABASING:

- ▶ Use Microsoft Excel to database students' info. Excel is simple to use and most computers can read it. Avoid using less common programs like Access.
- ▶ Have a student government computer available for databasing, so that students aren't recording this data on their personal computers.
- ▶ Always store voter registration forms safely, and clearly track which ones have been databased.
- ▶ Have a system for backing up the database daily to a secure location in the cloud and to a flash drive that you keep locked in a secure location.
- ▶ Make a list of the correct addresses (as determined by the local registrar) for all of the campus dorms, so that you have them easily accessible.
- ▶ Train your databasing volunteers on how to properly enter data, then spot-check their work periodically.

When all of your contacts have been databased, you should clean up the list to prepare for GOTV:

- ▶ Do your best to remove duplicates from the list.
- ▶ Sort the list by address and polling place. This is important so that during GOTV outreach you can tell people exactly where their polling place is.

# RUNNING A GET-OUT-THE-VOTE OPERATION

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Now that you've helped register as many students as possible to vote, you need to make sure they turn out at the polls. The best way to measure the progress of your Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign is by tracking how many one-on-one "contacts" you make before Election Day, either over the phone or face-to-face.

Extensive research has found that these GOTV contacts really do make a difference in increasing voter turnout, and the more personal the contact, the better.

- ▶ A personalized face-to-face contact at a student's dorm or house increases turnout on average by about 11%.
- ▶ A personalized phone call from one student to another increases turnout on average by about 5%.
- ▶ A text message from an organization to a student increases turnout on average by about 4%.
- ▶ When a person is contacted through multiple methods, their likelihood of voting is amplified even more.

You can start doing GOTV outreach a week or more before the election, but you should concentrate your efforts on the final 72 hours before Election Day.

Your GOTV drive will require a lot of people, so you should recruit back all of the volunteers who participated in the voter registration phase of the campaign.

## COLLECTING VOTER PLEDGES

The time between the voter registration deadline and your GOTV drive is a good time to focus on collecting voter pledges from students. This generates visibility for the election, keeps your volunteers engaged, and expands the list of students you can contact for GOTV.

By signing, a student is pledging to vote in this election. In addition to their contact information, the pledge card should also ask if they are planning to vote early (where applicable), vote absentee, or vote in person. Filling this out forces each student to think through their voting plan, which increases their likelihood of voting.

You can collect voter pledges using the same methods you used for voter registration, including class announcements, dorm canvassing, and tabling:

- ▶ These class announcements will be shorter than your voter registration announcements, since the voter pledge doesn't take as long to fill out, so you will only need 2-3 minutes of the professor's time.
- ▶ When canvassing to collect voter pledges, make sure to also hand out leaflets with information on where and how to vote.



## SAMPLE VOTER PLEDGE CARD

# STUDENTVOTE

I PLEDGE TO VOTE *in the election*  
on **NOVEMBER 4, 2014**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL OR PRIMARY PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR: FR. SO. JR. SR. GRAD.

I plan to vote:

☐ On Election Day

☐ At early voting

☐ By absentee ballot

☐ VOLUNTEER

## MAKING GOTV CONTACTS

Your GOTV contacts will primarily come from two tactics – phone banking and canvassing.

### GOTV PHONE BANKING

Phone calls are the most efficient way to reach lots of students quickly and make the bulk of your GOTV contacts. A phone bank is the most effective way to make a lot of phone calls in a short period of time.

- ▶ Find a location where you can have a lot of volunteers make their phone

calls together over the period of several hours in the evening. The group energy of phoning together makes the experience a lot more fun and keeps volunteers motivated.

- ▶ Snacks, music, and prizes for the best phoners can all help energize the phone bank.
- ▶ You can start phone banking as early as the Wednesday before Election Day, but you should do as much of your phoning as possible on the Sunday night and Monday night right before the vote. Don't bother phone banking on Friday and Saturday night since you won't be able to reach many people.

- ▶ You should plan enough volunteer hours of phone banking to call through your entire GOTV contact list a few times. You won't reach everyone, but if you're persistent then ideally you'll succeed in talking to half the students on your list.
- ▶ When making GOTV contacts, in addition to reminding students to vote you will also ask them when they plan to vote and how they plan to get to their polling place. This is because research has found that these questions increase turnout, because they help people to visualize their plan for voting, which makes them more committed to following through.
- ▶ Don't leave voicemail. Messages aren't effective at increasing voter turnout – you need to speak to them personally. Keep calling through the list in the hope of eventually contacting them.
- ▶ After each call, the volunteer should mark their phone list to indicate the call's result.
- ▶ Each volunteer should keep a "tick sheet" where they track the results of their volunteer shift.

## GOTV PHONE BANKING SCRIPT

Hi, is this \_\_\_\_\_?

Hi \_\_\_\_\_, this is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling with the Student Vote campaign at [your school]. We're working to make sure the campus turns out to vote in a big way in this election. How are you doing?

Good. I'm calling because you [registered to vote/filled out a pledge to vote card]. Do you have a minute?

Great! So far, \_\_\_\_\_ students on campus have pledged to vote this November. We don't know what's in store for our future. But we do know a better future isn't going to happen if we just sit around waiting for it. We can't expect these issues to get addressed, or for things to start moving in the right direction, if we don't make ourselves heard.

So on Election Day we need to show up big. If we're going to be heard, we all need to raise our voices together and vote.

Can we count on you to vote this Tuesday, Nov. 4th?

Great. I have that your polling place is at \_\_\_\_\_. Is that close enough to walk? Or will you drive or take the bus?

On Election Day, your polling place is open from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Do you know when you might go to vote? In the morning, afternoon, evening? Do you think you'll head to the polling place from your home, work, or somewhere else?

Do you know what you need to bring with you to the polls? [Go over the list. Make sure they have what they need or a plan to get it.]

Great! Again, thanks for helping us raise our voice by promising to vote this year.

Finally, we've found that text messages can really increase turnout. Will you send a text right now to ten friends telling them to vote next Tuesday? Great!

Thanks!

## STUDENTVOTE

### PHONE BANKING *and* CANVASSING TICK SHEET

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME STARTED: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME FINISHED: \_\_\_\_\_

GOALS: CONTACTS: \_\_\_\_\_ YESES: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTUALS: (keep a tally)

CONTACTS: \_\_\_\_\_

YES: \_\_\_\_\_

NO: \_\_\_\_\_

MAYBE: \_\_\_\_\_

FRIENDS THEY TEXTED: \_\_\_\_\_

## GOTV CANVASSING

Canvassing is another effective way to contact students for GOTV. Depending on your campus, you may want to canvass in the dorms, in student-heavy neighborhoods around campus, or both.

- ▶ Assign each volunteer or pair of volunteers to a turf, consisting of a few floors of a big dorm or a few blocks in a student neighborhood.
- ▶ Volunteers should go out on the Sunday and Monday evenings before Election Day. Schedule enough time for volunteers to make a couple passes through their turf each night in order to talk to as many people as possible.
- ▶ Make sure to leave GOTV leaflets at every door.
- ▶ After each house, volunteers should write down the address on their walk list and mark down the result of their visit.
- ▶ As with phone banking, volunteers should keep a tick sheet where they track the results of their volunteer shift.

## GOTV TABLING AND CANVASSING SCRIPT

Hi, can you help us make sure we're heard on Election Day?

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm with the Student Vote campaign. Nice to meet you!  
*[hand over the clipboard]*

We're working with a campus-wide vote coalition to make sure our campus turns out to vote in a big way on Election Day. We don't know what's in store for our future. But we do know a better future isn't going to happen if we just sit around waiting for it. We can't expect things to start moving in the right direction if we don't make ourselves heard.

Election Day is next Tuesday, November 4th. Can we count on you to vote?

Fill out this pledge card to add your name to the list of people who are voting on Election Day, so we can raise our voice on the issues we care about – like jobs, the economy, affordable education. Make sure to include your cell phone number and e-mail address so we can remind you to vote on Election Day!

*[For canvassing only:]*

Great. I have that your polling place is at \_\_\_\_\_. Is that close enough to walk? Or will you drive or take the bus.

On Election Day, your polling place is open from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Do you know when you might go to vote? In the morning, afternoon, evening? Do you think you'll head to the polling place from your home, work, or somewhere else?

Do you know what you need to bring with you to the polls?

*[Go over the list. Make sure they have what they need or a plan to get it.]*

Great, thanks! Will you send a text right now to ten friends telling them to vote? Great!  
*[After they do it, note on your tracking form how many people they texted.]*

We are doing a big push over the next few days to make sure everyone knows what they need to do to vote. Can you help us out for a few hours over the next few days? Great, just check this box on the card and we'll follow up.

Here's a sticker and some info about voting! Thanks!

### TIPS:

- ▶ Smile, make eye contact, and wave – it makes a huge difference.
- ▶ Speak loudly, slowly and clearly.
- ▶ Hand over the clipboard as quickly as possible.

## TEXT MESSAGING

One of the most powerful ways that you can engage people in your GOTV drive is by asking them to remind their friends to vote. Text messaging is the easiest way for them to do so.

You can incorporate texting into your GOTV outreach in several ways:

- ▶ During class announcements, ask students to text a GOTV reminder to five friends.
- ▶ When tabling, ask every student who stops at the table to pull out their phone and send a text right then to 10 friends.
- ▶ When phone banking, ask everyone you reach to send a text to five friends reminding them to vote.

## EARLY VOTING

In most states, voters can now vote early without having to provide a reason for doing so. The process, location, and times for early voting vary considerably. Learn more about your state's early voting rules at [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org).

If your state has early voting, this should factor into your GOTV plan. The U.S. Elections Project at George Mason University estimates that 24% of all voters in the 2012 election voted early. In places where early voting is the most convenient, this number is even higher.

If your state has early voting, you should maximize that opportunity by running a special GOTV drive during early voting. The more students you get to vote early, the easier your job will be on Election Day.

You can also organize trips or rides to the polls if the early voting sites are not near campus. In some cases, you can even work with your local registrar's office to get an early voting location on campus.

***“Do the unexpected. Take 20 minutes out of your day, do what young people all over the world are dying to do: vote.”***

***- Rick Mercer***





## ELECTION DAY

On Election Day, you should make sure that:

- ▶ Students are able to find their polling place and know what ID or other materials to bring.
- ▶ Problems at the polls are dealt with quickly so everyone has a chance to vote. You should have poll watchers set up to monitor each polling place.
- ▶ Stories about students voting are featured in the media. Your media coordinator should spend the day pitching reporters.
- ▶ You hold big, fun events at student-heavy polling places to entertain students while also generating publicity around the high student turnout.
- ▶ You know how to get voter turnout numbers for student-heavy precincts from the registrar on Election Day, so that you can see if turnout increases compared to the last comparable election.



## SAMPLE ELECTION DAY SCHEDULE

- 6:30 a.m.** – First shift of volunteers pick up materials and head to the polls.
- 7:00 a.m.** – Polls open. Launch Party at the Polls.
- 8:00 a.m.** – Make media pitch calls. Hand out GOTV leaflets outside the dining halls.
- 9:00 a.m.** – GOTV poster and chalking across campus.
- 10:00 a.m.** – Flash mob: Conga line across campus to the polling place. New volunteer shift starts at the polls.
- 12:00 p.m.** – Campaign leaders check-in to review total GOTV contacts, voter turnout so far.
- 1:00 p.m.** – Make another round of media pitch calls. New volunteer shift starts at the polls.
- 2:00 p.m.** – Final round of GOTV phone banking.
- 3:00 p.m.** – Blitz of GOTV reminders on social media.
- 4:00 p.m.** – Campaign leaders check-in. New volunteer shift starts at the polls.
- 5:00 p.m.** – GOTV visibility outside the dining halls.
- 6:00 p.m.** – Last minute GOTV tabling outside the dorms.
- 8:00 p.m.** – Polls close. Campaign leaders check-in to review results for the day. Send out news release with final turnout numbers.
- 8:30 p.m.** – Celebrate! Watch election night returns.

# MONITORING POLLS ON ELECTION DAY

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You should recruit volunteers who can serve as poll watchers on Election Day. Make sure you have one or two students monitoring each student-heavy polling place throughout the day.

- ▶ Poll watchers should be trained in advance so that they're familiar with the election rules and can recognize if they are incorrectly enforced.
- ▶ The poll watchers' most important responsibility is to report any problems at the polls to the Election Protection hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683). Trained lawyers will be on hand on Election Day to help you sort out problems quickly.
- ▶ They should keep an informal tally of the number of students who vote at their polling place and send those tallies to the campaign coordinator hourly.
- ▶ Take pictures outside the polling place of students having fun while waiting to vote and send them to the campaign coordinator for use with the media and online.

## ELECTION DAY PROBLEMS

In some places, no matter how much you prepare, election laws and procedures will create obstacles to student voting. Although we advise that you focus your energy on registering and turning out as many voters as possible, there are a few things you do to help document systemic problems and build the case for long-term reform. Some of the most common problems include:

- ▶ Lack of sufficient planning at the local level for extraordinarily high turnout, resulting in polling places not having the voter registration forms, machines, or poll workers to meet the demand.
- ▶ Polling places at inconvenient locations.
- ▶ Students, seniors and other eligible voters being turned away from the polls for lack of appropriate ID.
- ▶ Confusion among poll workers about election rules, resulting in eligible voters being wrongly turned away.
- ▶ Technical problems with voting machines.
- ▶ Problematic laws in some states that effectively prevent students from being able to register or vote at their school address.

## KEY SOLUTIONS

### ▶ **Work with Your Registrar**

Your best defense is to work closely with your registrar. If you skipped over that section earlier in this guide, go back and review it closely.

### ▶ **Voter Education**

Make sure to educate voters as thoroughly as possible. This begins during the voter registration drive when your volunteers help people complete the forms accurately. It continues in the GOTV phase when you make sure students know how to find their polling place, what form of ID to bring to the polls, and what to do if there are problems with their registration status.

# AFTER THE ELECTION

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## INSTITUTIONALIZING VOTER REGISTRATION ON YOUR CAMPUS

As impressive as your Student Vote campaign might be, it could undoubtedly be more effective with more backing from the campus administration. Now is the time to start meeting with the administration to convince them to expand their support in the future.

You should urge your campus to establish an institutional voter registration program, sponsored and implemented by the administration in partnership with the student government. An institutional program to promote voting falls squarely within every college's civic mission to promote citizenship and community engagement. As a result, many college administrators will be excited to join your effort.

## PROPOSING A PROGRAM TO CAMPUS ADMINISTRATORS

Start by setting up a meeting with the senior administrator in charge of student affairs.

- ▶ In asking for a commitment like this from the administration, it's important that you be professional, serious, and well-prepared.

- ▶ Provide an overview of the Student Vote campaign and why you need their help.
- ▶ Explain how the support of the administration could directly impact students, while also promoting the civic mission of the school.
- ▶ Have a specific proposal and ask them to support it.
- ▶ Get their feedback on your proposal and ask what you would need to do to implement it.
- ▶ Make a concrete follow-up plan to get their decision on the proposal.

You may need to follow up repeatedly and meet with additional administrators, but stay with it until you get a commitment from the administration to implement your proposal.

Once you've garnered a commitment from the administration, follow up to ensure that the program becomes effective. Make sure that the administrative staff who are tasked with implementing this new program have the materials, the training, and the systems to succeed. It's particularly important to make sure that they understand the voter registration form and how to have students fill it out properly, and to make sure there's a system to guarantee that forms are submitted properly to the local election registrar.

## TEMPLATE FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAM

We've provided a template here for an institutional program that has three parts: voter registration, voter list development, and GOTV. With institutional support and resources behind these three components, your campus could help register and turn out student voters far more effectively. Use this as a starting point for creating your own proposal for your administration.

### 1 VOTER REGISTRATION:

- Create a central website where students can register to vote.
- Have registration forms and drop boxes available at key locations such as the student ID office, the parking office, the library, and the computer centers.
- Have campus staff trained to ask students if they are registered to vote and to answer basic questions.
- Include a voter registration form in move-in packets and have resident advisors remind their residents about the importance of registering.
- Incorporate voter registration into freshman orientation events.
- Ask students to register to vote as part of the class registration process.
- Encourage faculty members to give up 10 minutes of class time for students to fill out voter registration forms.
- Make volunteering with the Student Vote campaign an option for any community service requirement.
- Create a rewards system for fraternities, sororities and student organizations that help with registration efforts.
- Develop a system for collecting contact information from voter registration forms that are collected by the college, so that those students can be contacted by campus GOTV efforts.

### 2 CREATING THE VOTER DATABASE:

- Provide the student directory to the Student Vote campaign so that it can be matched with the county voter registration list and used to create an up-to-date voter list for GOTV.

### 3 GET OUT THE VOTE:

- Send emails to the student body with voter registration reminders and Election Day reminders.
- Request that the local election registrar place polling stations on campus.
- Request that the local election registrar place early voting locations on campus.
- Provide transportation between campus and hard-to-reach polling locations.
- Encourage professors to offer extra credit for voting.
- Provide funding or other support for GOTV visibility events on campus and at the polls.
- Use alumni office phone banks for GOTV calling in the week leading up to Election Day.
- Offer course credit for any student who will be a GOTV precinct coordinator.

# STUDENT GOVERNMENT **RESOURCE CENTER**

## OUR PARTNERS



The Student PIRGs' New Voters Project is a nonpartisan effort to help register young people to vote and get them to the polls on election day. Since 1984, the New Voters Project has helped to register over 1.7 million young people and made strides in getting young people's voices heard by elected officials.

[WWW.STUDENTPIRGs.ORG](http://WWW.STUDENTPIRGs.ORG)



Rock the Vote designed and manages the online voter registration tool that we provide to student governments and state student associations. Founded at the intersection of pop culture and politics, Rock the Vote has helped register more than 5 million young people to vote.

[WWW.ROCKTHEVOTE.COM](http://WWW.ROCKTHEVOTE.COM)

[WWW.STUDENTGOVRESOURCES.ORG](http://WWW.STUDENTGOVRESOURCES.ORG)