

# **EMPOWERING THE VOTERS OF TOMORROW**

**DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE  
HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAMS**

**2018 EDITION**



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
E D U C A T I O N F U N D**

# Introduction

Summer 2018

In 2016, 18-29 year-olds represented nearly a quarter of the eligible voting population. Tomorrow's leaders are coming of age in a time of unprecedented diversity and opportunity. Through organized walkouts, protests, and social media engagement, they demonstrate dedication to becoming politically engaged changemakers.

Building a powerful democracy starts with empowering young voters, and voter registration is critical to spurring young people to get and stay involved. According to analysis by the

[Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement](#)

(CIRCLE), less than half of all eligible young people voted in 2016. Young people report that they lack access to information about the registration and voting process that would empower them to become engaged voters.



## **Registration and education are key to unlocking the potential for millions of young voters**

The League of Women Voters believes we all have a role to play in inspiring and empowering young Americans to register and vote. We have a special responsibility to reach out to the young people who are most often left behind. These include people who have no college experience, live in neighborhoods predominately of color, or do not frequent places where most voter registration drives are held. For us, that often means reaching out to potential new voters while they are still in high school. New research is inspiring; political scientists found in 2013 that the simple social act of asking unlikely voters to participate in elections resulted in higher involvement. This effect even trickled down to the families of those who were asked about voting, confirming, yet again, that the in-person power of encouraging long-term civic engagement is as important as ever. Nonprofit Vote's 2016 report, [Engaging New Voters](#), found that young voters contacted

by nonprofits were 2 times as likely to be Latinx and 1.6 times likely to be Black, communities often overlooked and left out of our political debates. Additionally, turnout among the young voters contacted by nonprofits was 5.7 percentage points HIGHER than the average—further highlighting the importance of these efforts. As the nation’s largest voter registration organization, the League plays a vital role in accessing, educating, and registering these young voters.

Now in its fourth edition, this comprehensive training manual represents the best of what we have gleaned from hundreds of League volunteers through our groundbreaking high school voter registration projects. In the 2010 pilot project, the League and Project Vote teamed up to test voter registration strategies in some of our nation’s most diverse high schools. The work continued in subsequent years with new League volunteer teams carrying out registration work and analysis in dozens of communities nationwide. In total, our programs have helped tens of thousands of high school students register to vote for the first time. We are proud that they earned the praise of University of California–Santa Cruz researchers, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, and many esteemed partners.

This manual comprises a comprehensive game plan for executing and evaluating high school registration drives, including tips for conducting the follow-up with young registrants that is critical to transforming them into lifelong voters. The materials are field tested for success by organizers and community leaders who share the goal of engaging young voters.

The League has worked for almost 100 years to encourage all Americans to take charge of their democracy. A key element of that work has been voter registration and education. We hope that educators, elections officials and other organizations will build on these practical resources to inspire life-long voting habits.

Through thoughtful collaboration, we can inspire young people to become active and engaged leaders for tomorrow.

# EMPOWERING THE VOTERS OF TOMORROW

Developing Winning High School  
Voter Registration Programs



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## A Training Guide Fourth Edition

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

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*We gratefully acknowledge the dozens of local Leagues that participated in the LWVEF's 2010-2018 High School Voter Registration projects as well as the many League leaders nationwide who have provided ongoing feedback, ideas and suggestions for developing stronger high school voter registration programs.*

The League would also like to thank its research partner, Project Vote, for its invaluable contributions in developing, executing and analyzing the results of the 2010 High School Voter Registration Project, upon which the original version of this publication was based.

Please note: This guide was prepared by LWVEF staff who are not licensed to practice law. LWVEF intends that the information contained herein is used only as a general guide. This document should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a licensed legal professional familiar with voting and registration guidelines in your state.

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## Contents

Chapter 1: Planning a High School Voter Registration Drive	7
Chapter 2: What to expect: A Lesson Plan that Works	14
Chapter 3: Quantifying Results and Furthering Your Impact	20
Chapter 4: Leveraging Your Program for Visibility and Growth	23
<b><u>Appendices</u></b>	
<a href="#"><u>Appendix A: Sample Outreach Email to School Officials</u></a>	32
<a href="#"><u>Appendix B: Funding Voter Registration Drives</u></a>	33
<a href="#"><u>Appendix C: Registration Drive Checklist</u></a>	34
<a href="#"><u>Appendix D: Coalition-Building Strategies</u></a>	37
<a href="#"><u>Appendix E: Sample Work Plan</u></a>	41
<a href="#"><u>Appendix F: Using Online Voter Registration at Events</u></a>	48
<a href="#"><u>Appendix G: A Script for Talking with Young Voters</u></a>	50
<a href="#"><u>Appendix H: Media Talking Points about Young Voters</u></a>	52
<a href="#"><u>Appendix I: Sample Social Media Posts</u></a>	53
<a href="#"><u>Appendix J: Sample Press Release</u></a>	55
<a href="#"><u>Appendix K: Sample Letter to the Editor</u></a>	56
<a href="#"><u>Appendix L: Sample Get-out-the-Vote Scripts (phone/email)</u></a>	57
<a href="#"><u>Appendix M: Sample Registration Activity Worksheet to Quantify Results</u></a>	59
<a href="#"><u>Appendix N: Printable Voter Pledge Cards</u></a>	60
<a href="#"><u>Appendix O: Printable Sign in Sheet</u></a>	61
<a href="#"><u>Appendix P: Printable Flyer</u></a>	62
<a href="#"><u>Appendix Q: Printable VOTE411.org Postcards</u></a>	63

# CHAPTER 1: PLANNING A HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

In recent years, League of Women Voters volunteers have registered tens of thousands of students nationwide, through a series of school voter registration drives in hundreds of communities. Effective high school voter registration programs require planning and dedicated volunteer and/or staff time. This chapter aims to help you plan for success in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Before starting any high school voter registration program, it is important to discuss your objectives, timeline and plan for success. Key questions include:

- How many schools will we target?
- How will we identify our target schools?
- How many people—volunteers or staff—will we need, and how will we find them?
- What costs will we incur?
- Which community allies can we work with?
- What will best motivate students to register and vote in our community?

Based upon LWVEF’s 2010-2018 High School Voter Registration Project findings, as well as helpful feedback from Leagues and other organizations around the country, we have compiled the following best practices to help guide your work.

Please note that while most League programs are carried out by predominantly all-volunteer teams, we

have made every effort to provide relevant guidance for any volunteer-managed or staff-driven process.

## Build a Versatile Team

Before embarking on your high school registration effort, work to pull together a team that includes:

- A reliable “**organizer in chief**” to lead logistical and coordination efforts. This could be a student intern and should be someone who can think outside the box when it comes to tackling tough challenges.
- **Designated callers.** Someone who is not afraid to pick up the phone and call school personnel, sometimes repeatedly.
- Strong **public speakers** who are equipped to motivate large groups of young people (*hint: this manual has resources to help you do it!*).
- **A registration veteran.** Someone well-versed in the voter registration rules in your state.
- **Enough people** to send 2-3 trained volunteers to each school activity.



## Train Your Team

Once you have established your team, include them in the planning process and put them to work! While some individuals may have lots of voter registration experience, many will not. That is why it is **important for everyone to participate in a training and planning session** before your activities begin. See Appendix E for a detailed training and work plan including the following elements:

- Covering state/local election laws.
- Rights and responsibilities of independent voter registration groups.
- Practice walking through the registration form and discussing common questions.
- Practice presentations to students.
- Data to be collected at each event.
- Protocol for handling completed registration forms, including timeline, copying of legally allowed information for future follow-up, and more.

✓ Best Practice Tip

**Send at least 2  
trained volunteers  
to each event!**

## Select Schools Strategically

Studies consistently show that certain groups of young people, especially those living in communities of color, those unlikely to go on to college and those living in low-income areas are less likely to register and vote than the general population.

Feedback from Leagues conducting high school registration work suggests that the schools serving large numbers of underrepresented students are also less likely to have incorporated voter registration into their curriculum.

Conducting registration work at schools in underserved areas can have the twofold benefit of combating chronic underrepresentation and assuring that your organization will reach the largest numbers of unregistered youth. In other words, choosing schools wisely can you get the biggest bang for your buck.

To maximize your impact, consider targeting:

- Schools in low-income areas
- Schools with high attendance of students of color
- Schools with high numbers of students who qualify for free breakfast and/or lunch
- Alternative or continuing education programs
- Trade or technical/occupational schools
- Schools in Native American communities
- Institutions serving young people in the juvenile justice system, halfway houses, or reformatory schools.

## Breaking Through

- Start early, call often, and repeat.
- Split up the list of schools with a partner.
- Keep your pitch brief!
- Follow up once a week (see Appendix A for a sample e-mail)
- Not getting responses? Find another contact at the school:
  - Student groups/leaders
  - Principals and their staff
  - Guidance/career Counselors
  - Social studies teachers
  - Superintendents/school board
- Tell them you want to reach ALL eligible students, including students with disabilities.
- **Don't give up!**

## How Many Schools?

The most often-cited challenge we hear from volunteers conducting high school voter registration is that scheduling registration activities at high schools, especially those in high-need neighborhoods, often requires repeated outreach. In fact, **in many cases this prep work, not the registration events themselves, requires the greatest time commitment.**

While at some schools you might connect immediately with the right person who is ready and able to set up your visit, it is more likely that you will encounter extremely busy or even unresponsive school personnel.

Furthermore, some school districts require that persons or organizations

visiting their campuses undergo a background or ID check. *Be sure to ask whether any such requirement could affect your registration project planning!*

We recommend reaching out to schools **at least three months before any planned registration events.** Only target as many schools as you can realistically contact (and follow up with) on a weekly or biweekly basis until an event date is secured. If your initial target list proves difficult to “break through” to, consider casting a wider net.



## Scheduling Events: Think Spring

While many would assume that proximity to a major November election would be the best time to schedule registration activities, there are additional factors to consider. **For several reasons, springtime is best.**

First, if you register students immediately before your state’s voter registration deadline, it is likely that most high school seniors will not turn 18 by Election Day, the age of voting eligibility

in most states. Second, early fall tends to be a very busy start-up time for schools as well as civic organizations, meaning that scheduling an activity in this timeframe might be difficult. Finally, registration deadlines are as much as thirty days before Election Day in many states, meaning you might only have a four or five week window after the start of the school year during which to schedule an event.

LWVEF's research showed that late winter/early spring registration activities were three times more effective than those in the fall, both in terms of the total numbers of young people registered to vote as well as the effort required to access school personnel and schedule events.

**Aim to schedule registration events in early spring.**

*\*See Appendix E for guidance\**

Late winter/early spring was generally the best time to hold registration events, with outreach and scheduling ideally beginning before the end of the previous calendar year. Plan around spring testing, spring break, prom, graduation activities, final exams and general end-of-the-year activities. Summer excitement will come into play as the end of the school year draws near.

## **How Many Students Will We Register?**

League volunteer teams have reported a wide variety of success rates in both the number of schools they're able to schedule registration events, as well as the actual registration rate of students at the events. Success depends on a number of local variables, but here are the things that work:

- Leave lots of time for scheduling
- Ask for opportunities to reach ALL eligible students in the school
- Where possible, schedule individual classroom visits to walk students through the registration process. The personal approach pays off!
- Figure out the best technological approach. If your state offers online voter registration, the school has solid WiFi and your volunteers have ready access to equipment, utilizing online tools (like the one on [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org)) might well be your most efficient option. In other cases, paper registration forms might make more sense. See Appendix F for help thinking this through.

The good news is that the registration success rate tends to grow significantly over time, as groups develop relationships with local schools and build positive goodwill in the community.

## **Touch Base with Local Elections Officials**

Before embarking on a full-scale high school effort, contact your local elections officials to inform them of your plans and lay the groundwork for a fruitful relationship. First, ask what they are already doing to encourage

registration at area schools. Explain that you want to help support or enhance any current efforts or, if none exist, that you are ready to lend your time and resources to develop a successful program.

This initial conversation is a good time to set up a date to pick up voter registration applications and other materials your officials may make available. It is also a key opportunity to prepare officials for a potential influx of voter registration applications and offer your support in helping to process them.

Finally, this initial conversation is your opportunity to ask clarifying questions regarding any rules that govern independent voter registration drives in your state. **Your state or local officials may have produced helpful resources or guides for independent registrars; this is your opportunity to ask!**

For example, some states offer or require organizations or individuals who conduct voter registration drives to register with the state or participate in mandatory training sessions. Others require individuals to become deputized before beginning a voter registration program.

League volunteers have reported overwhelmingly positive and fruitful collaborations because of their outreach to local elections officials, rating their interactions 4.95 of out 5 on average.

## Maximize Personal Interactions

Based on consistent feedback from League members around the country, setting up registration tables in crowded cafeterias or school hallways often results in very low numbers of voter registration applications collected.

Students are leading  
the way with  
renewed activism  
nationwide—  
partner with  
student leaders for  
the most effective  
events!

Instead, we recommend that you work with your target schools to develop registration events that enable interactive conversations with students. In fact, our research indicated that where possible, **individual classroom visits were up to 2 times more effective** than large group assemblies!

Whether you plan to visit government classes, set up small discussions or arrange another event format, the most important thing to do is ask the school to dedicate time and space specifically for registration, and ensure students are empowered to attend and the school deems it a priority. See the next chapter for specific tips on how to structure your event.



## Plan the Most Effective Registration Event

As the day of your registration event approaches, confirm the event with your school contact and make sure you have a full understanding of when you should arrive, how long you will be at the school, and how many classes/groups you will meet with.

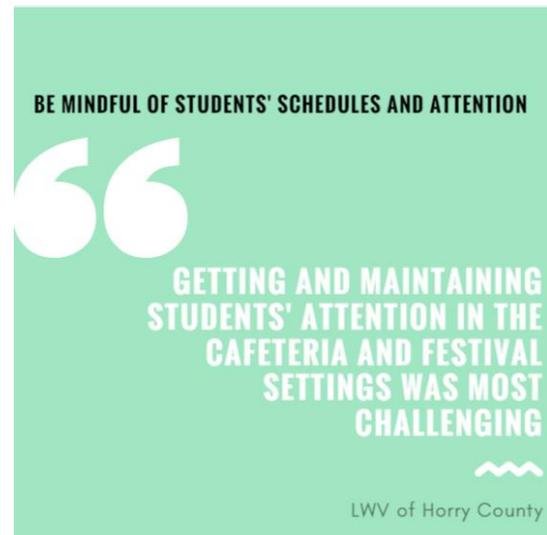
### Additional **tips to consider:**

- Get students on your side! Partner with a school group or leader(s) to plan your events and ensure students have a prominent speaking role. The recent groundswell in student-led activism shows that when students lead the way, the results are powerful.

- Make sure the school prepares students by instructing them to bring any identification or other required personal information. Some states require a driver's license number or part or all of an applicant's social security number—information young people may not know on command.

- Ask the school to publicize your visit through morning announcements, a school paper or TV/ radio show, bulletin board, or other means. See Appendix P for help.

- Make sure eligible students will be in attendance on the day of your event. Several Leagues reported arriving at school events only to find out it was “senior skip day” or that most students were on a field trip!



- Ask about your schedule. If attending classrooms, ask how much time you will have in each room, whether the school follows a block or other special schedule, or whether you should plan a few days' worth of visits to reach every eligible student.

- If you live in a state where online voter registration is available, check into what kind of internet access and/or devices will be available on the day of your drive.

- Think about the ways you will access and include students with disabilities.

### Plan to Follow Up

Multiple studies and registration programs have found that simply helping young people register to vote is not enough; critical follow-up is needed to transform new registrants into informed and active voters. In fact, many voter registration organizations live by the “3 contacts” rule: **all newly registered voters must be contacted with voter education information at least three times before they are likely to turn out to vote.**

By planning ahead to gather contact information about the young people you help register, you will prepare your team to conduct critical follow-up communications.

Doing so will help you create backup data that can empower your team to act on registrants’ behalf should any problems occur when their registrations are processed by elections officials. See Chapter 3 for detailed best practices on data collection.

Working with schools is not a one-size-fits-all task. However, by thinking ahead and anticipating challenges, your team can greatly minimize barriers to success on the day of your registration event. See Appendix E for a comprehensive work plan to help you stay on top of the details every step of the way.



## CHAPTER 2: WHAT TO EXPECT: A LESSON PLAN THAT WORKS

Once you have scheduled a date and time to conduct registration at a high school, prepare for the specifics of the event.

This chapter provides guidance for pulling together an effective and engaging registration event. Please note: this advice assumes you are visiting a classroom; if not, please select the tips that best apply to your event.

### What should I bring?

Plan to have the following on-hand at your event (See Appendix C for a full materials checklist):

- Blank registration forms/equipment to access online voter registration on [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) or your state's registration system
- Sign-up sheets or pledge to vote cards (see Appendices H and I). Nonprofit voters who signed a pledge-to-vote card turned out to vote at a rate 14.1 percentage points higher than comparable registered voters.
- Nonpartisan voter education materials such as those from your local League of Women Voters, [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org), or materials from your local elections official.
- Information about your organization.
- T-shirts, stickers, candy or other items to give away. If you encounter a shy group, try handing these out as an

incentive to get the conversation going! (Note: we recommend making such hand-outs available to anybody participating, whether or not they complete a voter registration form).

### How does voter registration work in my state?

Come prepared to answer questions about the rules for registering and voting in your state. To review the requirements for registering to vote, either read the instructions provided on the applications and/or check with your local elections official. It's also a good idea to have a resource on-hand in the event of complex questions about registration, absentee/early voting, or other aspect of voting in your state. Check out [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) for this info!

### Who are we voting for?

If you are not familiar with who or what will be on the local ballot on Election Day, study up by visiting your local elections official's website or utilizing other nonpartisan resources, such as your area League of Women Voters' website or the League's national voting resource, [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org).

Many local Leagues also make printed copies of their local voters' guides available for free use in schools, libraries, and other places during election season—all you have to do is ask.

## What should I say? A script that works

Keep it simple. High school students have a lot on their plates. The most successful presentations are short and interactive.

Get them talking. A great strategy is to start your presentation by introducing yourself and simply asking the group: “What injustices do you see in our community?” Encourage students to raise their hands and share what they think. Use their responses to segue into how exercising their right to vote is the best thing they can do to be part of the solution to the challenges they identified.

Appeal to what they care about. Poll after poll has shown that young people care about jobs, education and the future of their communities. Try connecting voting to the issues they care about by saying things like the following:

- “Who has already registered or voted? What was it like?”
- “Who has applied to go to college next year?” (Ask students to raise their hands).
- “Who is currently in school?” (All students should raise their hands). “Most states elect their school board members, which means elected officials are making decisions about the resources your schools are getting right now.”
- “Our elected officials make decisions about how much we pay for school, what kinds of financial aid

is available, services available to college students and a lot more.”

- “Who is going to be looking for a job or joining the military soon?” (Ask students to raise their hands).
- “The people we vote into office make decisions every day that impact the kinds of jobs and companies that come to our area. They mandate safety where we work. They are responsible more than 1.4 million military personnel. They help determine the kinds of benefits you’ll receive as an employee and even set the minimum wage.”
- “Who might be looking for an apartment after you graduate?” (Ask students to raise their hands). “The people who we vote into office here in [TOWN] and in [STATE CAPITAL] have a lot of influence over your rights as a tenant. They are the ones who make sure your trash gets picked up and are in charge of keeping your neighborhood safe.”
- “The people we vote for on Election Day matter in pretty much every aspect of our lives. So, how do we influence who they are and what they decide on our behalf? We vote!”



## Focus on the Form

Get a registration form into every student's hands and walk through it step by step as a group (or use online portals as makes sense for you).

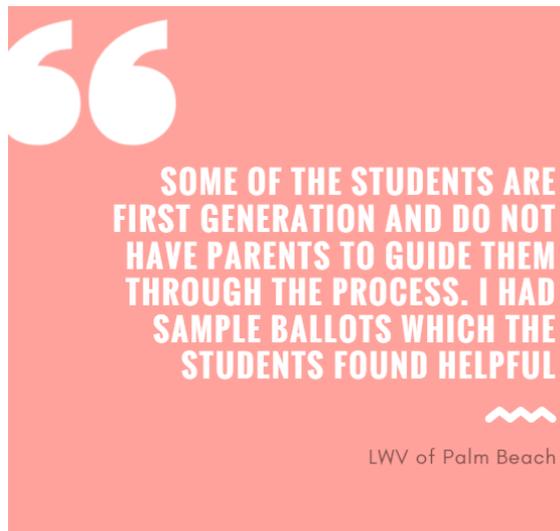
This may be the first time some students have ever filled out an official government form. Go slow, take time to answer students' questions and keep your responses simple.

The bulk of your presenting time should be set aside for assisting students in filling out registration forms.

Studies have identified that Generation Z students are observers—meaning they prefer watching someone complete a task correctly before attempting it themselves.

## Stay positive!

Studies show that Millennials and Generation Z students are attuned to the challenges facing their generation but remain uniquely optimistic about the future. Set the right tone by being positive and enthusiastic about voting!



## Get them out of their Seats!

1. Ask all the students to stand up.
2. Ask half of the students to sit down. They represent the at least 50% of young people who didn't vote in 2016.
3. Ask ¼ of the remaining standing students to sit. They represent young people who are registered but didn't vote.
4. Those still standing are the only ones who have a say on the issues that matter most to everyone in the class. They decide for everyone else.
5. Ask students: will staying home on Election Day help you make the changes you want to see in the world?

## A Word about Eligibility

Cover the registration ground rules. Hand out registration forms to each student, then recite the age, citizenship and other eligibility requirements for registering to vote in your state.

It is likely that some students you encounter will not be U.S. citizens, will have felony convictions possibly affecting their voting eligibility, will be unsure of their status, or will be reluctant to fill out a registration application due to sensitivities about the status of family members. While some students may be upfront about this, others will likely not want to disclose their concerns in a crowded classroom of their peers. Announce at the start of your

presentation that if a student does not think he/she is eligible or does not care to fill out a registration application, for any reason, they are free to return it blank or take it home with them. This message should be reiterated as the team works to assist individual students.

Depending on the rules for your state, students with felony convictions may need to work to have their voting rights reinstated before being eligible to vote. If this is the case in your state, have rights restoration information on-hand at your school visits.

**FEDERAL VOTER REGISTRATION GUIDELINES**

All voters should expect fair and decent treatment when registering and casting a vote. This includes equal treatment regardless of race, religion, national origin, sex or disability, and privacy, and assistance from poll workers when needed.

**NVRA OF 1993**

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) was enacted to enhance voting opportunities and make it easier for Americans to register and maintain their registration.

**MAIL-IN REGISTRATION**

In addition to requiring that individuals be offered the opportunity to register to vote when applying for a driver's license and/or visiting a public assistance agency and requiring states to improve their statewide management of voter registration records, the law "provides that citizens can register to vote by mail using mail-in forms developed by each state and the Election Assistance Commission" (U. S. Justice Dept., www.justice.gov).

**AVAILABLE TO ALL**

Any individual may use the National Mail Voter Registration Form to register to vote, update registration information due to a change of name, make a change of address, or register with a political party. The National Form also contains voter registration rules and regulations for each state and territory.

All elections officials must accept federal voter registration forms. For more information on the National Mail Voter Registration Form, visit [www.eac.gov/nvra](http://www.eac.gov/nvra).

Any voter registration organization has the option of using the federal voter registration form (instead of a state or local registration form) when conducting registration drives.

Reiterate to students that by signing a completed form, they are legally acknowledging that they have answered every question truthfully.

### Pre-registration

Some states enable young people to register as future voters, even if they won't turn 18 before Election Day. The Brennan Center keeps updated information on policies related to pre-registration initiatives in the states—be sure to check out if your state allows [pre-registration!](#)

### Questions to Anticipate

*“Why should I care about this?”* It is possible that you will encounter disinterested students. Help them connect the dots between their lives and the importance of casting a vote, and ask THEM to tell you why they think voting matters. If all else fails, give yourself a break and move on. The next classroom might be excited and ready to talk about voting.

*“Who should I vote for?”* Students may ask for a recommendation as to who they should vote for. In crafting your nonpartisan response, be sure to let students know that while you cannot tell them which candidate will best represent their interests; there are a number of places where they can learn more about candidates and issues so they can make up their own minds:

- Nonpartisan voters' guides (LWV/VOTE411.org or other)
- Newspapers or other media coverage
- Friends and family
- Local candidate events/forums

- Candidate websites

*“Which party should I designate?”* Some states ask applicants to designate a political party when registering to vote. If students are unsure about which party to designate, let them know that they can select “no party” but explain how this might prevent them from participating in primaries.

### **If you have extra time...**

If you have the time and agreement with teachers to conduct a fuller class session on voting rights or civics, do so! Wonderful resources exist to help you plan such a classroom discussion:

- Visit the [Teaching for Democracy Alliance](#) website for ready-made lessons plans and resources to spark an interesting and effective discussion about civics and political involvement
- Ask teachers to download free civics resources and lesson plans from the [Youth Leadership Initiative](#)
- Check out [www.RocktheVote.org](http://www.RocktheVote.org)
- [Read](#) about a local League’s work with Harvard faculty on a civics education program focused on constitutional case studies, shown to increase students’ interest in voting

### **Final Reminders**

**Put a form in every student’s hands while you speak.** The more time students have to fill out their information, the better.

**Bring at least 2 team members.** While one person talks, the other one can assist individual students, collect forms, and help echo important messages!

**Walk the room.** Take advantage of your personal visit by walking desk-to-desk to help students fill out the forms. Address any common questions with the entire class. If possible, collect forms directly from students while they are still seated.

**Hand out extra forms.** Encourage students to take their participation to the next level by acting as voter registration advocates! Leagues have reported that many teachers and students, especially those in underrepresented communities, request extra materials to provide to friends and family members who may never have had access to voter information. Take advantage of this enthusiasm by handing out extra forms and encouraging students to think of someone in their life who may not be registered to vote.

**Cover every exit!** If you must collect completed forms while students exit the room (for example, from a large group assembly), position team members at every door to collect forms.

**Quickly check all forms for completion.** In particular, check to see that registrants have:

- Checked the box affirming they are over 18 (unless pre-registering).
- Checked the box affirming they are a US citizen.
- Provided any required identification number, usually their driver’s license number or some or all digits of their social security number.
- Signed and dated the form.

**Keep track of your efforts.** Utilize the sample worksheet in Appendix M to keep a record of how many students you register, how many team members

were needed, and more. Implement a strategy for following up with registrants to ensure they are prepared to successfully cast a vote.



## CHAPTER 3: QUANTIFYING RESULTS AND FURTHERING YOUR IMPACT

As with any voter registration activity, it is critical to keep careful track of the results of your efforts. This will enable you to show the world—including your partners and supporters—that your voter registration drive made a difference and will give your team tangible results!



Strategic record-keeping will allow you to follow up directly with the young people you helped register to vote. Evidence shows that newly registered voters who receive follow-up communications are more likely to turn out to vote.

Consider taking the following steps to ensure you will have the opportunity to

remind new registrants to vote as Election Day approaches:

### **Learn the contact rules for your state.**

Because voter registration lists are a matter of public record, most states allow independent registration groups to collect specific information from completed voter registration forms before they are turned in to the appropriate elections official.

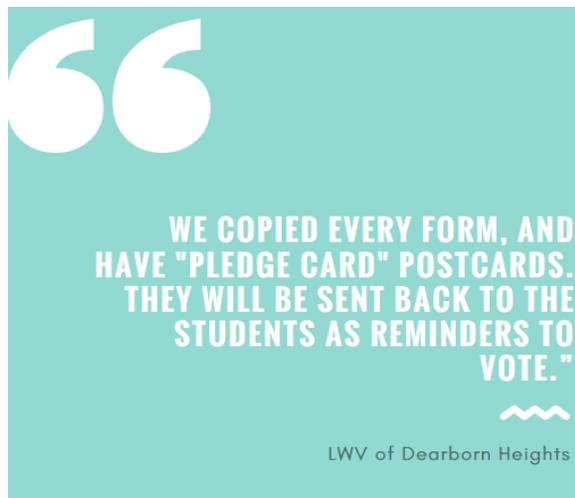
Some states have restrictions against copying or retaining certain information (for example, private data such as a birth date, driver's license number or social security number). To find out the rules for your state, visit your Secretary of State's website. Additional guidance for most states is available at [Fair Elections Network](#).

If you are unable to photocopy or otherwise collect information directly from the voter registration form, consider utilizing a “pledge card” at your registration drives to collect students’ email and cell phone information. According to Nonprofit Vote’s report, nonprofit voters who signed a pledge-to-vote card turned out to vote at a rate 14.1 percentage points higher than comparable registered voters. See a sample pledge card in Appendix N. Don’t forget, you may also choose to use the federal form (pg. 17) if restrictions associated with your state or

local form hamper your efforts.

### **Develop a data collection plan**

Designate an organized person or small team to take the lead on collecting all completed registration forms, copying the legally-allowed information, and promptly turning the original forms in to the appropriate elections official, keeping in mind that there might be a time requirement for turning in forms in your state.



### **Follow-up with Elections Officials**

Use the information you've collected to follow up with your elections official to ensure students were successfully registered. Offer to help contact students if additional information is required to process their registration. You won't just be building a lasting, fruitful relationship with your local elections official; you'll also be evaluating your own efforts to make sure you improve your quality control next time.

Because the students you registered will likely hold you, the registration group, accountable for any processing errors that occur, this important step will help build public confidence in your efforts.

### **Reaching out to New Voters**

New registrants will be more likely to vote if you provide them with voter education materials or direct them to online resources like the League's [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) website, where they can learn about the candidates running for office in their community and find additional information about the voting process.

Empower newly registered voters so that they can feel connected and excited about the upcoming election! Do this by contacting the new registrants by email, phone or mail. See our sample scripts in Appendix G.

- Remind them to vote or invite them to voter education events like debates.
- Ask them to visit [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) and/or your website to find their polling place and learn about what will be on their ballot.
- Let them know you're there to help if they need information or assistance.
- Ask if the voter has a plan for Election Day. Research shows that by asking voters whether they have an Election Day plan (how will they get to the polls? At what time?), you will increase their chances of participating.
- Keep it brief and friendly!
- Be helpful. Have election dates, polling locations, and other information at

your fingertips so that you can help address any questions.

- Be responsive! If you list a phone number or email address in your communications to voters, make sure someone is checking messages in the lead-up to Election Day!

### **The Rules about Contacting Registrants**

IRS rules stipulate that it is allowable to contact new registrants with election-related information such as what has been outlined here. However, it is illegal to use information from a voter registration form to send unsolicited communications about non-election items such as fundraising, action alerts, etc. Before engaging registrants on anything that is not related to educating them about the election process, you must ask registrants (in person or electronically) to “opt-in” to your email list to receive future news and updates. This way, you will be able to foster longer-term contact and encourage them to get involved in your organization.

### **Saying Thanks: A Little Goes a Long Way**

In addition to incorporating evaluative and get- out-the-vote (GOTV) components to your work, it is critical to remember the basics of relationship cultivation in the days following your event. A simple and prompt thank you note can go a long way toward establishing long-term contacts with the teachers and school administrators who helped arrange your visit.

As time goes by, be sure to contact your school contacts for future registration activities, invite them to community events, or offer to take them out for coffee to discuss other ways to get their students more involved in the community.

## CHAPTER 4: LEVERAGE YOUR PROGRAM FOR VISIBILITY AND GROWTH

High school registration programs are highly visible and positive efforts that directly improve the lives of young people in your community. This chapter aims to help you take full advantage of your hard work by leveraging it for increased interest and visibility for your organization.



### Gaining Visibility for Your Work

Proactive media outreach is the primary way to get the word out about your work in the community. The following tips on working with the media will help you identify opportunities, develop and deliver your pitch, and follow up successfully.

According to some researchers, people need to hear the same message as many as seven times before it sinks in. With this in mind, community organizations have an opportunity to increase awareness about their work

simply by thinking about ways to deliver repeated concise and consistent messages about their organization.

Every time you have an opportunity to speak to the public or the media, it is important to underscore the value of your organization and how your work serves the community. It is also helpful to imagine every opportunity as one that will grow the organization.

To help you prepare for any media outreach opportunity, ask yourself:

1. What's my goal? What do I want to accomplish in this communication?
2. Who is my audience and what do they care most about? How can I resonate with them the most?
3. What are the 2-3 key points I want to leave with my audience?

### Media Mechanics

Below are tips for utilizing the five main mechanisms for getting media coverage: press releases and media advisories, media interviews, media, op-eds and letters to the editor, and editorial board meetings.

#### ***Press releases and media advisories***

Written press releases and media advisories provide succinct and pertinent information about your event or issue in an easy-to-read email format.

- **Media advisories** encourage media to attend your event and provides the **Who, What, Where, When, and Why** of the event.
- A **press release** will include background information and quotes, and is often sent as an immediate follow-up to an event.

When writing a media advisory or press release:

- Include your phone number, email address, website, Facebook and Twitter addresses, as well as any photo opportunities that may be available (for example, if you have the school's permission to film/photograph your team interacting with high school students).
- Make your most important point at the top. Reporters may only read the first paragraph before deciding if it's worth pursuing.
- Keep things short. All information should fit on one page.
- Include a good quote. Why should they care? How does this relate to other issues affecting the community?
- Do not send attachments. Paste the information right into body of your email.
- Follow up with a phone call right

before your event, and reiterate why it's important that they cover your event. Keep it short and friendly, and offer to resend the information!

See Appendix J for a sample high school voter registration press release.

### **Making the pitch personal**

While it may seem important to get your release out to as many media outlets as possible, there really is a great deal of importance placed on providing a personal touch. Taking the time to write a quick personal note to reporters makes a huge difference, especially if you've seen them writing on your organization's issues or have met them in the past.



### **Media Interviews**

Issuing press releases or fostering relationships with members of the media will hopefully result in your organization being called for interviews.

## Prepping for an Interview

- Ask some questions. What outlet is it for? If TV or radio, what is the interview format: Live? Taped? Call-in?
- What's your organization's role in the piece? Is this a profile piece solely about your work, or are you being quoted alongside other stakeholders?
- Know what you want to say in advance. Your expertise might enable you to discuss endless aspects of your work, but only a few points will make it into a story. Even then, a reader/viewer may only remember bits and pieces. Select one or two key points to make.
- Repeat, Repeat, Repeat. Try your best to repeat the key points that are most important and relevant.

## Staying Calm and Confident

The following tips will help you deliver your messages effectively during an interview:

- Collect your thoughts. If a journalist calls and wants to conduct an on-the-spot interview, ask if you can call back in five minutes. Use that time to gather your thoughts and review your key points.
- Keep it simple! Use clear language and avoid jargon. You don't want to bore your audience or make them feel stupid.
- Use numbers, but sparingly.

Memorize or jot down one or two precise statistics that will give weight to your messages and bring your information to life.

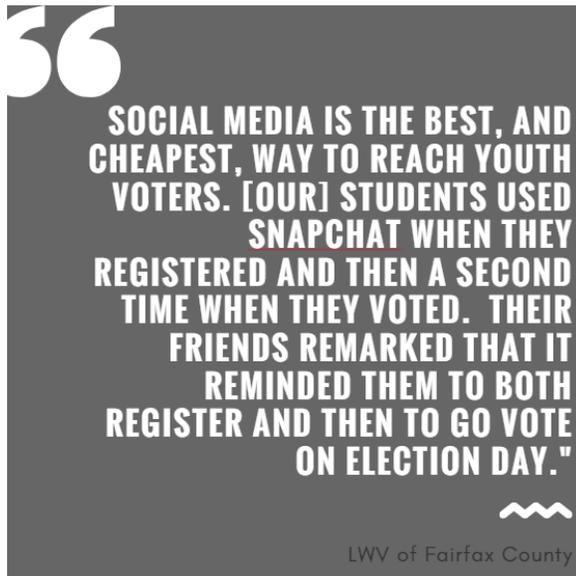
- Tell a story about a particular student who stood out to you or about a particular volunteer who made a difference. People remember points much more if they are illustrated with a story.
- Be honest! Don't stretch the truth. If you don't know the answer, say so and suggest an alternative source. Speak up! If an interviewer misstates something or has a fact wrong, politely make a correction.
- Remember who you are talking to when you are being interviewed. You are talking to the audience that reads the story or sees it on TV. You are not talking to the reporter who is interviewing you.
- Everything is on the record. Don't give in to the temptation to tell the reporter something is "off the record." If you say it aloud, or put it in an email, assume that it will appear in the reporter's story.

See Appendix H-L for sample media talking points/trends related to young voters and additional sample high school registration media outreach materials.

## Social Media

Social networking sites are a primary way to stay in touch with partners and supporters as well as get the word out to potential new audiences.

The most commonly used social media tool of young adults is SnapChat. Leagues have reported that learning how to engage students through SnapChat or by encouraging students to share their voting registration experience through this platform helps reach more students. Get creative and make a [geolocated filter](#) which helps publicize your event. In what ways can you make your event photo-friendly?



Facebook and Instagram are highly used by young adults to share their experiences and is a great way to encourage young adults to publicize their voter registration engagement.

# KNOW THE TOOLS

Social Media Tools for Young Adult Voter Registration

## SNAPCHAT

Use SnapChat to encourage students to share their experiences with their networks!  
71% of Snapchat users are 18-24 years old.  
Roughly 70% of Snapchat users are female.  
Consider getting a geo-located filter for your event!

## FACEBOOK

Provides a great platform to build a following. You can share information related to upcoming events, voter registration highlights, or news on the issues young voters care most about!

## INSTAGRAM

Instagram's highly curated and personal environment, the content is seen as trustworthy, authentic and relevant, and subsequently, more likely to inspire action. You can post 'live' videos to give real time updates on your event!

## TWITTER

Use Twitter to build connections with a relevant audience. These connections can lead to actions across a network of loyal followers. Twitter posts cannot exceed 140 characters and they typically highlight relevant news!

## QUICK TIPS

- Make your posts most relevant to the people you are trying to reach
- Follow similar social media channels for inspiration on topics and ways to *hook* readers' attention
- Visit the LWV management site for best practices and sample social media posts!

League of Women Voters



Consider some of the following ideas for incorporating your high school work into your current social media strategy:

- **Point students to your social media pages to find out important election information.** Then, keep your word by posting relevant updates and resources as Election Day nears!
- **Take and share photos of your registration drive!** Include student images with their permission.
- **Ask students to upload photos or videos of themselves talking about why voting is important.** Share their responses on your Facebook page or website.
- **Recruit volunteers** through your Facebook or Twitter page.
- **Share statistics** or news coverage of young people's issues, and ask young people you know to "guest blog" or otherwise weigh in on what matters to them in the upcoming election.

- **Give teammates a public shout-out via your blog, website, Twitter or Facebook account.** Positive reinforcement will encourage them to help out again next time!

- **Keep up the momentum by announcing which schools you'll be visiting, when you'll be there, and how people can get involved.**

See Appendix I for sample social media posts or check out the League's [Social Media Toolkit](#) for more information!

### ***Op-eds and Letters to the Editor***

Op-eds and letters to the editor serve as great opportunities to gain coverage after an event has already happened and drive the conversation within your community.

### **Op-eds**

Sometimes a newspaper will call upon a local community group to write an opinion piece on a certain issue, but it is more likely that you will have to call the editorial page editor or other newspaper contact to pitch your idea. Op-eds are often selected for their unique or fresh perspective on a recent event or news story. Opinion pages are generally put together a few days ahead of time, so be sure to submit it early enough in advance.

Simply put, op-eds express the opinion of the author on an issue and can offer an excellent opportunity for you to advance your messages.

The following are some tips for writing and submitting an op-ed that will increase your chances of getting published:

- When drafting your op-ed, make sure that you are familiar with the types of pieces that are generally published in the paper and be sure to focus on the topic's significance to the community.
- Once you have confirmed the rules for submitting a piece to the paper (word count, methods of submission and other factors depending on the outlet), submit one for consideration and be sure to follow up after a couple days.
- If it has not been accepted, ask if there are any adjustments that you might make to increase its chances of being published.

### **Letters to the editor**

Writing a letter to the editor is one of the best ways to respond to articles, editorials or op-eds published in your local paper. You should be prepared to submit a letter to amplify a positive editorial or highlight key information left out of an article.

The key to getting your letter published is making sure that it is timely and brief (no more than 250 words). *Be creative: how can you connect your organization's work to something being covered in the newspaper?*

When you submit a letter to the editor, call the opinion page office and ask them who to send to, what their

submission requirements are, and if the paper is likely to run the piece. Your submission must include your full contact information and organizational affiliation. See a sample in Appendix K.



### **Editorial Board Meetings**

Editorial board meetings generally involve one or more people from your organization and three or more writers for the opinions section of a newspaper. They're usually not on issues of immediate news importance, but ongoing issues that are of interest to the community or the editorial board itself. They are conversations, usually about an hour, and sometimes result in an opinion piece being written.

The editorial board members will have questions, but you should also have talking points prepared to make your case.

The best way to set these up is to call the opinion page office or write a brief pitch memo to gauge their interest and find out who is the best contact person.

If you do get a meeting, **DO YOUR RESEARCH!** Look through archives of the paper online, and read through any opinion pieces that have been written on the issues you want to discuss. This will give you a sense of the views of the board ahead of time, and you'll be prepared for what questions are coming.



### **Recruiting and Retaining Supporters and Volunteers**

Like so many of the projects and programs undertaken by youth or civic organizations, high school registration efforts connect your organization with the larger community.

Take advantage of these connections to increase your membership, supporters and allies, resources, and visibility!

1. **Keep your existing supporters engaged** and invested by communicating with them regularly about your work.
2. **Ask for help**—whether it is volunteer time, donations, transportation, or something else!

Your supporters want you to succeed, and you can help them feel like an important part in your success by asking them for specific kinds of help.

3. **Connect the dots.** Explain to members, supporters and allies how your high school work is helping you fulfill organization's mission in a concrete, measurable way.

### **Foster Strategic Relationships**

High school programs establish a positive relationship between your organization and school administrators, teachers, PTA members, students and their parents, elections officials, and community partners.

- Make a plan to cultivate short-term interactions into long-term partnerships involving voter registration as well as other youth engagement efforts.
- Welcome new friends to your cause and communicate with them regularly!
- When the time is right, ask them to join you as volunteers, email subscribers, supporters or partners in another effort.

### **Four Steps for Recognizing and Retaining Team Members**

Show your team that they are appreciated. Let them know how valuable their work is and how their efforts are making a difference.

- **Acknowledge team contributions** publicly at events, online and in publications.
- **Have fun!** Add a social component to your high school program (e.g., an annual breakfast or happy hour following the registration deadline).
- **Make reporting easy.** Although it's necessary, no one likes doing paperwork. Make forms as user-friendly as possible. A sample registration event activity reporting worksheet is available in Appendix M.
- **Be flexible.** People are busy and have numerous commitments. If they can't attend one high school event, invite them to the next one or find an assignment that works for them.



# Appendices

<a href="#"><u>Appendix A: Sample Outreach Email to School Officials</u></a>	32
<a href="#"><u>Appendix B: Funding Voter Registration Drives</u></a>	33
<a href="#"><u>Appendix C: Registration Drive Checklist</u></a>	34
<a href="#"><u>Appendix D: Coalition-Building Strategies</u></a>	37
<a href="#"><u>Appendix E: Sample Work Plan</u></a>	41
<a href="#"><u>Appendix F: Using Online Voter Registration at Events</u></a>	48
<a href="#"><u>Appendix G: A Script for Talking with Young Voters</u></a>	50
<a href="#"><u>Appendix H: Media Talking Points about Young Voters</u></a>	52
<a href="#"><u>Appendix I: Sample Social Media Posts</u></a>	53
<a href="#"><u>Appendix J: Sample Press Release</u></a>	55
<a href="#"><u>Appendix K: Sample Letter to the Editor</u></a>	56
<a href="#"><u>Appendix L: Sample Get-out-the-Vote Scripts (phone/email)</u></a>	57
<a href="#"><u>Appendix M: Sample Registration Activity Worksheet to Quantify Results</u></a>	59
<a href="#"><u>Appendix N: Printable Voter Pledge Cards</u></a>	60
<a href="#"><u>Appendix O: Printable Sign in Sheet</u></a>	61
<a href="#"><u>Appendix P: Printable Flyer</u></a>	62
<a href="#"><u>Appendix Q: Printable VOTE411.org Postcards</u></a>	63

## Appendix A: Sample Outreach Email to School Official(s)

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Dear [Principal/Lead Teacher/Administrator],

On behalf of the [your organization's name], I would like to offer [SCHOOL or SCHOOLS in XX DISTRICT] our services to help your students register to vote. **With nearly 100 years of experience dedicated to expanding and protecting civic engagement**, we would like to work with you to build voter registration into your current curriculum.

**Each year, Leagues all over the country work closely with schools to reach and build empowered student voters to create a stronger democracy, and you can help us.**

Our [volunteers/ staff members]:

1. Set up class or homeroom visits to talk about the importance of voting,
2. Make sure students know their rights,
3. Assist eligible students in filling out their registration forms,
4. Collect all registration forms, and then deliver them to the appropriate elections officials.

If such visits are not possible, we are open to scheduling a voter registration assembly or visiting during lunch periods. Although, we urge you to prioritize classroom visits as national research by the League of Women Voters has shown it is by far the most efficient and effective method of conducting high school voter registration.

From the economy to the future of their education and the safety of our neighborhoods, young people have a critical role to play in shaping important issues in our community and across the nation. We would be thrilled to work with you to help them register and vote this year.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

[CONTACT INFO]

## Appendix B: Funding Voter Registration Drives

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Based on feedback from League volunteers from across the country, we have compiled these guidelines for estimating costs for your voter registration work.

*\*Costs vary widely by location and breadth of program*

NEEDED ITEMS	GENERAL COSTS*
“REGISTER TO VOTE” SIGNS AND/OR ORGANIZATIONAL BANNERS	\$200-\$600 for several
INTERNS OR PART-TIME STAFF MEMBER TO COORDINATE ELECTIONS WORK	\$1,000-\$2,000/semester
REMINDER POSTCARD OR OTHER EDUCATIONAL HANDOUTS ABOUT ELECTION DAY AND VOTING HOURS/RULES (+POSTAGE)	\$200-\$500
TRANSLATION WORK FOR VOTER EDUCATION MATERIALS	\$400 (dependent on project)
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLICITY, VOTERS’ GUIDE, ETC.	\$100/hour
NEWSPAPER/RADIO ADS	\$200-\$1000 per ad buy
BILLBOARD RENTALS TO DRAW ATTENTION TO KEY VOTER INFO	\$1500/rental
PORTABLE PRINTERS/IPADS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION EVENTS	\$100-\$5,000
TABLE & TENTS FOR EVENTS	\$300-\$600
MILEAGE FOR VOLUNTEERS (IRS RATE FOR CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS)	\$0.14/mile
OVERHEAD/INDIRECT COSTS FOR OFFICE RENT, PHONE USE, ETC. THAT SUPPORTS ELECTION PROGRAMS	10% of program costs
REFRESHMENTS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION AND EDUCATION EVENTS	\$10-\$20/event
PRINTED TRAINING GUIDES & REFRESHMENTS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION PARTNERS/ VOLUNTEER TRAININGS	\$200/training
POST-ELECTION VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTIES	\$250- \$500

## Appendix C: Registration Drive Checklist

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Use this checklist to stay on top of every detail of your voter registration drive.

### Befriend Local Experts

- Coordinate with organizations already doing voter registration in your community.
- Touch base with local elections officials to let them know your plans, pick up blank forms, and attend any offered trainings.

### Pick the Right Venue

- Aim to reach lots of people, especially those who might not be already registered to vote.
- Great locations include:
  - High schools, community colleges, technical schools
  - Individual classrooms
  - School/sporting events
  - Senior events

### Know the Law and Take Time to Train

- Voter registration rules differ from place to place, so make sure your volunteers are familiar with the federal and state laws that govern voter registration in your community. For more information, contact your local elections official or check out <http://fairelectionsnetwork.com/resources>.
- Be sure to keep registration drives nonpartisan, and take the time to practice your registration “pitch” with volunteers.

A positive and enthusiastic attitude is the way to win over potential new voters.

### Plan Ahead

Assign a volunteer or event leader to bring the following items to your event:

- Voter registration forms, clipboards, and collection envelope
- If applicable in your state, equipment to offer online voter registration (you can use [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org))

- Banner and signs, including “REGISTER TO VOTE HERE” sign
- Pencils and pens
- Information on/applications for absentee voting & other voting details for your state (visit [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) for help)
- Sign-up sheets or pledge cards for voters to keep in touch with your group
- Extra forms for newly registered voters to share with their friends and family

### **Publicize!**

- Reach out to your social networks and local media to let them know when and where you’ll be registering voters.
- If you’re able to reach out to potential registrants (such as at a school) ahead of time, **alert them to any identification info required on your state’s voter registration form** (such as a driver’s license number or social security number)
- After your event, report the results to your networks and local media, and THANK your volunteers!

### **At the Event**

- Work the crowd.
- Have a clear plan for how you’ll collect and return completed registration applications to the required elections official, being sure to follow any state requirements.
- Have enough volunteers. While one person talks, others can assist individuals, collect forms, and help echo important messages!
- Quickly check all forms for completion. In particular, check to see that registrants have:
  - Checked the box affirming they are over 18 (unless pre-registering).
  - Checked the box affirming they are a US citizen.
  - Provided any required identification number, usually their driver’s license number or some or all digits of their social security number.
  - Signed and dated the form.
- Follow any and all rules regarding voter registration drives in your state.

## Follow Up

- Keep track of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of everyone you register by creating a spreadsheet or by photocopying registration cards, where permissible by law. You can also ask them to fill out a sign-up sheet or pledge card to receive election reminders from you.
- This information is key to following up with voters to provide helpful information about voting, and will also help your team maintain accurate records about your voter registration drives.
- Closer to election day, help get the new registrants out to vote by directing them to polling place or other critical election information (such as on [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org))

## Appendix D: Coalition-building Strategies

---

This coalition-building planning tool will help you identify and recruit allies, set out goals and priorities, and build a strong foundation for collective success. Whether your organization is just starting out or already participates in a longstanding coalition, it is worth taking a moment to assess your collective strengths and better plan for the future.

### Why Coalitions?

Coalitions are created to bring about collective action at the national, state or local level. Many organizations work in coalitions on a broad range of issues for years, or on specific programs or priorities for a short period of time. Whatever the purpose, coalition efforts can help maximize groups' effectiveness by:

- Empowering organizations to pool resources and brainpower to foster more strategic and effective action,
- Enabling better communication and collaboration between like-minded organizations,
- Increasing diversity by bringing together new or alternative voices, and by
- Bringing about a greater impact than organizations could make on their own.

### Getting Started: Recruit Allies

For voter registration purposes, consider forming partnerships with organizations such as the following:

- Civil rights leaders, including members of the disability community
- Academics, student groups, PTAs and school boards
- Civic/Democracy groups

As you identify potential new partners, keep in mind that nontraditional alliances or highly visible bipartisan efforts often gain attention and respect from the public, the media, and key stakeholders.

## Considerations when recruiting allies

Who shares our same goals?

What strengths do they bring to the table?

What function can they best serve in the coalition (e.g. funding, advocacy, media)?

What are their weaknesses?

Who might they alienate?

Other Info

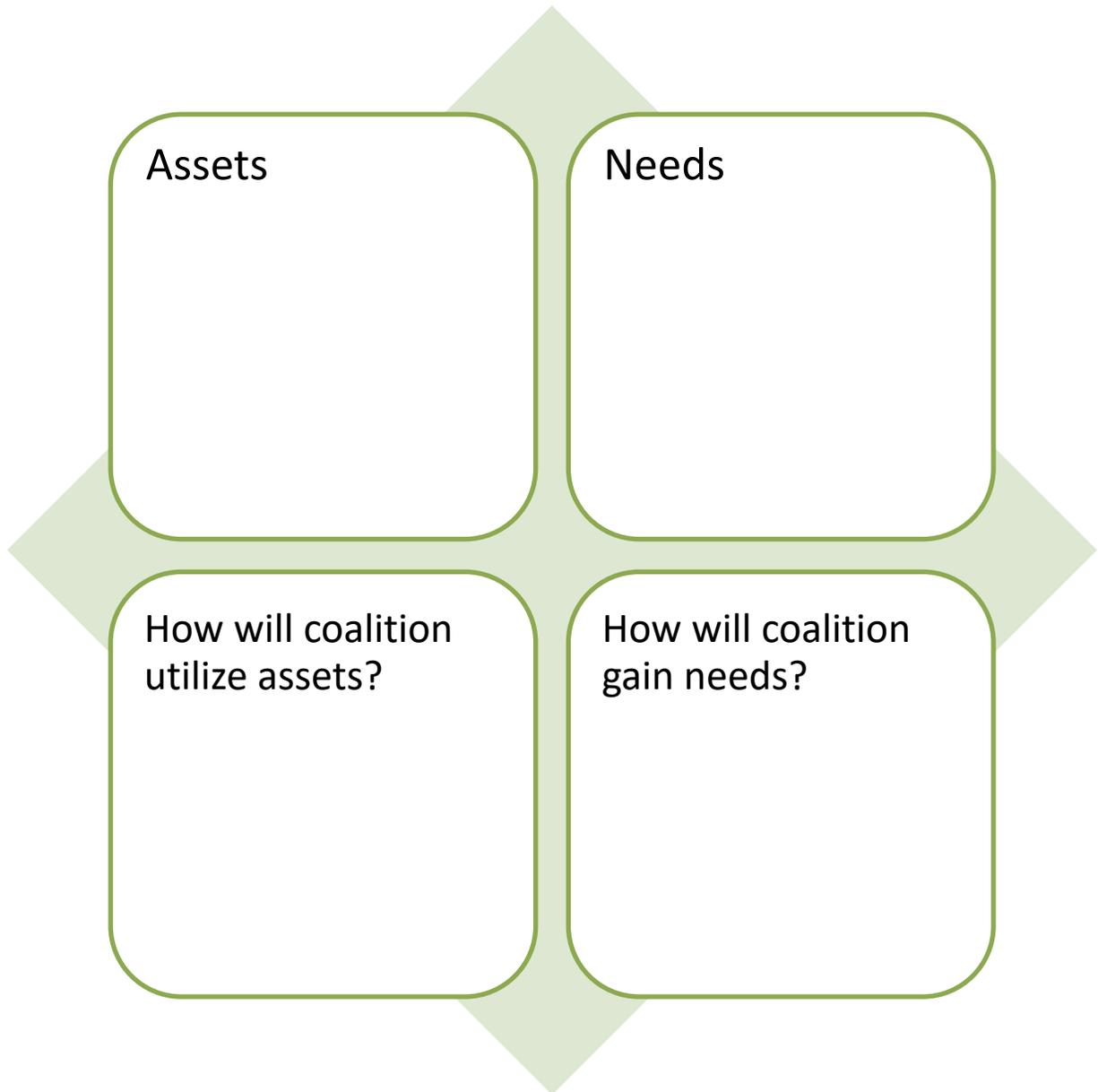
## Building your Registration Campaign

**Set Goals.** What are the top three things you want to achieve? What will “success” look like for the coalition? Articulating these goals, and keeping your mission very focused, are critical first steps toward establishing a successful coalition.

*Remember, the purpose of this initiative is to increase youth voter engagement, particularly those who are most often left out of democracy.*

The image shows three horizontal rows for setting goals. Each row consists of a green rounded rectangle on the left containing the text 'Goal 1', 'Goal 2', or 'Goal 3' in white. To the right of each green box is a long, light gray rounded rectangle, which serves as a space for writing the details of the goal.

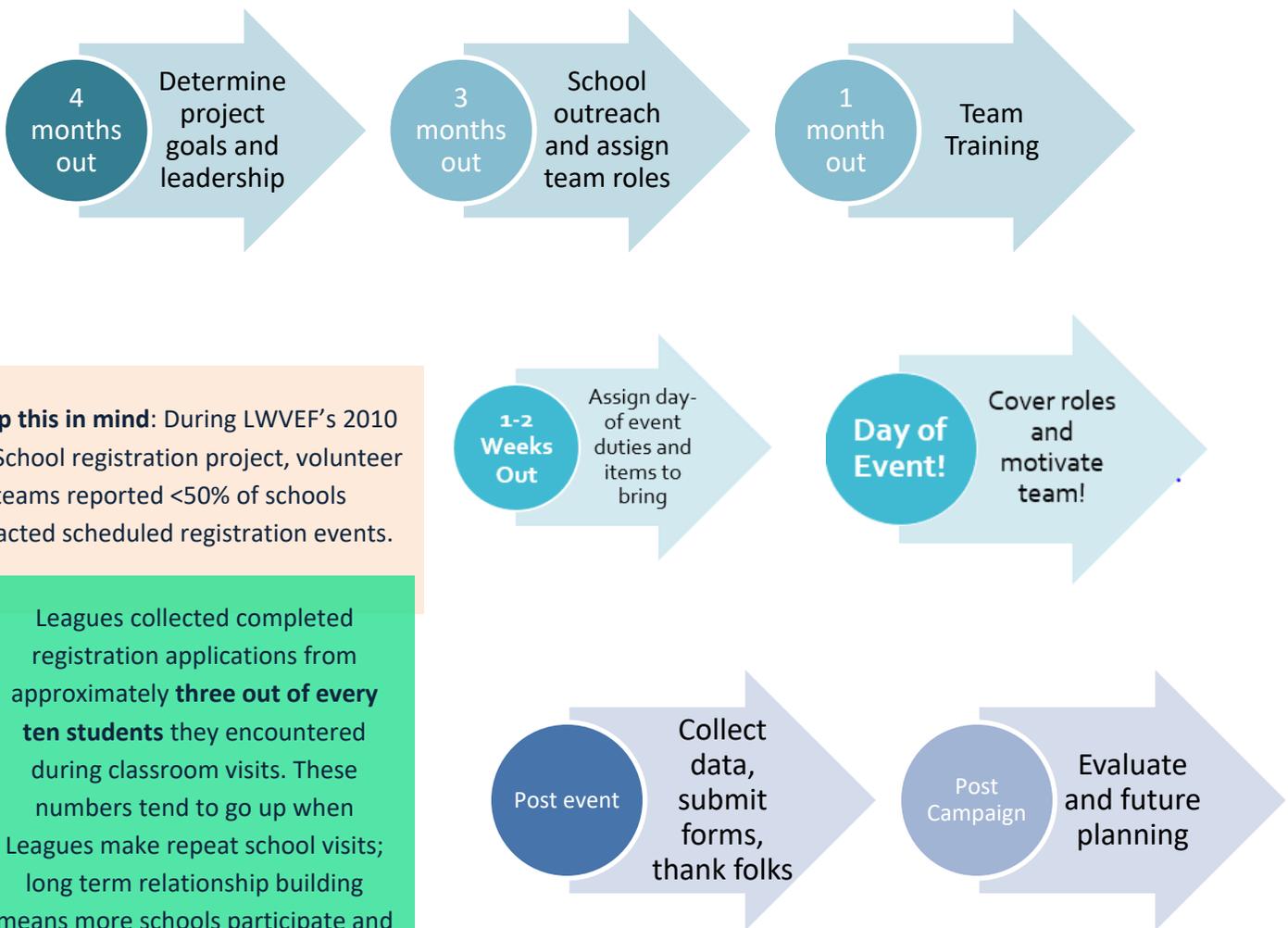
**Identify assets and needs.** What does the group have or need to achieve its goals? Coalition members may have great school connections, but lack tools for reaching out to key media. You may have access to coalition funding, but no staff to coordinate activities. Use this guide to map out your coalition assets and needs.



## Appendix E: Sample Work Plan

This work plan will help you stay on track from the planning stages of your registration program through the very end. Remember: **our research shows that mid-spring is the best time to do high school voter registration.**

### *At a Glance: High School Voter Registration Event Planning Timeline*



**\*Keep this in mind:** During LWVEF’s 2010 High School registration project, volunteer teams reported <50% of schools contacted scheduled registration events.

Leagues collected completed registration applications from approximately **three out of every ten students** they encountered during classroom visits. These numbers tend to go up when Leagues make repeat school visits; long term relationship building means more schools participate and the process works better each time.

**Four months out:  
Determine project goals and leadership**



Who are the team leaders?

How many schools will you target?

How many students do you want to help register to vote\*?

How will you communicate and stay on track?

Who will recruit additional volunteers?  
By when? How many?  
Their roles?

Who will develop a list of target schools? By when?

## Two/three months out: School outreach and assigning team roles

Get Organized: Once you have recruited additional helpers and developed a list of target schools, pull together your entire team to get organized and assign roles. Use these charts as a guide, or consider setting up a Google Doc or other method for regularly updating and sharing the results of your efforts.

School Outreach: Who will call or write the schools to ask them about setting up a registration program? How often will they follow up? Does anyone know of a good contact to try first?

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Team Member Responsible</b>	<b>Initial contact made? With who? When?</b>	<b>Who is following up?</b>	<b>Drive scheduled? When?</b>

### Additional roles to assign

Who will develop educational materials?

Who will set up a meeting with elections official(s)?

Who, if anyone, needs to attend mandatory state or local training or deputization?

Who will lead media outreach?

Who is responsible for following up on new registrants?

Who will thank teachers and participants?

## One month out: Team training

As your activities approach, hold a training for everyone who will be visiting schools and/or handling registration forms. This is a good idea whether or not training is required by your elections officials.

At the training:

- **Assign** additional school outreach as needed
- **Practice walking through the registration form or online registration system for your state/available through VOTE411.org.** State the eligibility requirements and remind students that they are legally obligated to provide truthful information, but that no one is required to fill out the form and may opt out of doing so if they choose.
- **Ask** team members to practice their voter registration pitch aloud!
- **Review** registration event activity forms.
- **Anticipate** likely questions you will hear from students and practice how you will handle sensitive issues (non-eligible students, questions about partisan issues, etc.).
- **Provide a timeline** and process for handling completed registration forms, including:
  - What form turnaround time, if any, is required by state law
  - Which members of your team are responsible for handling completed forms.
  - Your plan for collecting registrants' contact information and following up with them with additional voting-related information.
- **Motivate** your team for the busy work ahead!

## One/two weeks out: Final preparations

In the final days before your registration events, check in with each team member to clarify their roles during the event, and assign a person to bring each of the following:

Blank registration, absentee ballot forms and other voter information and/or equipment for online registration

Pens, collection envelopes and volunteer name tags/sign-up sheets

Flyers/Posters/Banners

## Day of the Event and Beyond

During the registration event, designate one person to serve as the “spokesperson” and additional people to serve as “helpers”. Helpers can walk from desk to desk to answer students’ questions or otherwise support the spokesperson. Designate a “collector” to gather all completed applications forms and record the results of each event.

### Post-event

- **Data Collection:** After the event, follow your plan for collecting data from the completed application forms (as allowed by state law) and return all completed registration forms to the appropriate official in the timeline set by your state.
- **Follow-up:** Next, begin planning your follow-up communications with the newly registered voters, urging them to learn more about the elections process and reminding them to vote.
- **Say Thanks:** Finally, follow up with a quick, timely note to thank school teachers/administrators for their time. This will go a long way toward establishing a fruitful relationship in the future!

### Post-campaign

- **Visibility:** After all your registration events have wrapped up, work with the individual designated earlier to get the word out to the public and the media about your impact.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluate your program and learn about how to improve future efforts. Ask your team what could have been done better and start thinking about your planning process for next semester.
- **Follow up with your elections officials** to determine how many of your registrants successfully made it onto the voter rolls and/or turned out to vote.
- **Celebrate:** Thank your team, publicly if possible, and take some time to celebrate your successes!

## Appendix F: Using Online Voter Registration at Events

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With an [increasing number of states](#) adopting online voter registration portals in recent years, community organizations like the League of Women Voters are taking advantage of widely available technology to help voters complete the registration process on the spot at community events, in schools, and on their way to work. Online voter registration reduces costs and streamlines the administrative burden on voters, those of us who serve them and local elections officials. It can dramatically increase the number of voter registration applications that are successfully processed by local elections officials. At the same time, it raises new questions about how best to deploy technology for maximum effect.

Consider these questions if your group is planning to use online registration voter registration at a community event:

- **Does the venue and expected volume of people make sense for online tools?**
- **Is your location WiFi enabled?** Can it reliably handle multiple devices at once?
- **Do you have enough tablets/computers/smartphones** to handle the potential demand for voter registration?

*For example: a crowded classroom with only one available computer is probably NOT a great fit for an online voter registration experiment. But how about a school where every student is equipped with a device? Or heading to an event with five volunteers, each equipped with a compatible device?*

- **Will the screen of your devices be visible in bright sunlight (if outside)?** If not, does your League have a tent or a shadier option?
- **How mobile-friendly is the online tool?** Does your state's tool work completely and efficiently on various devices, or only on a desktop computer? Test it out ahead of time!

HINT- VOTE411.org's online registration tool IS mobile-friendly and works in every state where online registration is offered. In states without online registration, the system will email a print-ready PDF to registrants to print and mail in themselves.

- **How inclusive is the online tool?**  
In some states, online voter registration tools currently only accept applicants who possess a current state driver's license and/or a learner's permit; thus, many potential voters may not be able to use the online tool and will instead need a traditional paper form or a tool like the one available at [www.vote411.org/register](http://www.vote411.org/register) (see below).
- **How comfortable are your volunteers with the online tool?**  
As you would before any voter registration drive, make sure your team takes some time to practice using the online registration system to ensure your volunteers are comfortable answering questions and navigating the technology.
- **How will you follow-up with voters?**  
Can you ask registrants to "Like" your Facebook page (or ask them to "Like" the League's VOTE411 Facebook page) on the spot? Fill out a sign-up sheet to receive

emails from you? Hand out educational materials including your contact information? All of these go a long way toward ensuring voters have the information they need to participate. Please note: new voters should only be contacted about election information unless they have specifically signed up to receive other kinds of information from you (such as fundraising emails or action alerts).

### Key Reminders:

- [Review the rules governing voter registration drives in your state](#). Contact LWVUS if you need help. If you are using paper forms in addition to online technology to help voter register, be mindful of any requirements to turn in forms in a certain timeframe.
- Remember: voters may need to use a paper form if they do not have the identification required by your state's online tool, or if they do not have an active email address. **ASK if they have the required identification and an email address before they start the process.**
- As an alternative to your state's online portal, consider promoting the **League's national online voter registration tool** at [www.VOTE411.org/register](http://www.VOTE411.org/register), which provides a mobile-friendly platform for voters from any state to fill out a voter registration form online. In most states, the system will automatically pass registrants on to their state's online voter registration portal to complete the process. In states without online registration, the system will generate an email to the voter with a PDF of a voter's completed voter registration application, which they must print, sign and mail in to the elections official. This option could work well if your state does not have an online voter registration system that is available to all voters (including those without a driver's license) as well as at events where a printer will be available.
- Always ensure you have an adequate supply of **back-up paper registration forms** (or comfort using the [www.VOTE411.org/register](http://www.VOTE411.org/register) tool) should any logistical or technological challenge arise.
- **Remain flexible.** You'll no doubt think of newer, better ways to deploy online technology as you go. Stay flexible and open to suggestions from your "front line" of volunteers.
- **Be mindful of any restrictions** on providing assistance to registrants. In some states, there may be restrictions on voter registration volunteers directly assisting voters in filling out an online form (for example, typing in the information for someone who is unfamiliar using mobile technology). In that case, it may be more appropriate to provide a paper form to the voter and provide instructions on filling it out.
- **Stand by to help.** Volunteers should help voters navigate the system.

## Appendix G: A Script for Talking with Young Voters

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Walk into your registration event with a clear plan for inspiring your young audience to know their rights and get registered to vote.

### Why vote?

- Voting is our chance to take control over what happens to us, our families, and our community.
- Ask the group: Why do you think it's important to vote? Who here has registered or voted already? If so, why did you do it?
- Do you care about: Keeping crime low in your neighborhood? Job opportunities and health care for your family & friends? Every single one of those things, and so many more, are decided by our elected officials (the people who run your school board, work in city hall and represent you in Congress). They are making decisions every day that impact your life. Voting is our chance to have a say.
- Voting brings us all together as proud Americans. It's one time whether you're young or old, rich or poor, that we all have the same say.
- America's future is our future. We must elect leaders who will lift up our communities and make them better.
- We can't complain about the way things are going if we don't stand up for what we believe in and what we want.

### How does it work?

These points will vary by state, but these are the basic messages to convey to students as you hand out voter registration forms:

- If you are a U.S. citizen and will be at least 18 years old by [the next federal election date], you are eligible to register to vote.
- Provide any state-specific **pre-registration options** for 16 or 17 year-old voters.
- In most states, you **MUST** register to vote before participating in an election (30 days, 2 weeks, etc. before Election Day).
- We're making that easy for you to do today. By filling out these forms and having us turn them in for you at the [Board of Elections, County elections office], you're taking a first step toward having a say in our democracy.
- Once you fill out the application form, you should receive confirmation by mail within a few weeks. If you have questions, you can contact your local elections office or the organization holding this drive (have necessary contact information on-hand for students).
- Whether you'll be voting in person or absentee this election, it's easy and important to learn about the candidates running for office and find out what to do on Election Day.

We'll be following up with you with the basic information you'll need on Election Day.

- Most likely, you'll have several choices to make when you vote. For example, this year you'll vote for [Senate, Governor, members of Congress, mayor and school board]. You may also be asked to vote on other things, like money for schools or roads, and whether you approve of certain laws.
- Visit [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) for more information, or go to (local League site or other resource).
- Every voter deserves to be treated fairly. You have rights at the polling place! This includes:
  - Equal treatment and opportunity to register and vote, regardless of race, religion, national origin, sex or disability.
  - Privacy—only you should know how you voted.
  - Having your vote accurately recorded and counted.
  - If you have a disability, access to a voting device you can use and appropriate assistance.
  - Assistance from poll workers on how to use the voting equipment if you request it.
  - Courtesy from poll workers and others at the polling place.

### **Tips for youth registration:**

- **Partner with a student group.** Research shows: Peer-to-peer voter engagement works!
- **Keep it relevant and personal.** Tie voting to a hot issue in the community and frame it in a way that speaks to results. Has the school budget recently been cut? Is a highway being built through the center of students' neighborhoods? Chances are the students have an opinion.
- **Tie it to something in the classroom.** Find out what issues or trends they are discussing in the classroom and weave it into your discussion of current events and the importance of voting.
- **Keep it brief and interactive.** While you want to use your speaking opportunity to tell the students a little about your organization and discuss the importance of voting, it is important to keep your remarks brief and interesting. Kick things off by asking students why they think voting is important, and allow them time to ask questions about completing their form. Students and teachers are pressed for time—make the most of it!
- **Study up on voting rules in your state.** Be prepared for questions regarding the registration and voting process, especially absentee voting and preregistration in your state. Help any students in need of assistance and be sure to look over their registration forms to ensure they are complete.

## Appendix H: Media Talking Points about Young Voters

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Utilize these talking points to prepare for media interviews, public appearances, or even internal questions about the importance of reaching young voters.

### Who are young voters?

- The Millennial and Gen Z generations are large, diverse, tolerant, civically engaged and optimistic. More than almost any other group, they are enthusiastic about voting but need helpful, accurate and timely information in order to exercise their right.
- Young people are involved in their local communities. Generation Z students are motivated by volunteer opportunities that aim to address large social problems, rather than one off service opportunities.
- Young people are leading social movements, volunteering in their communities, and are civically engaged at all-time high rates.
- Young voters are more diverse than other age groups. Young voters (age 18-29) were more diverse than older voters according to 2016 exit polls.

### Do young people vote?

- Young people register and vote at levels lower than the overall population, but research has shown that they turn out more when elections are competitive, when voter-friendly options are in place in their state (especially same-day voter registration), and when they are explicitly ASKED to register and vote.
- Eighty-four percent of young people believe their generation has the power to change our country.
- An estimated 24 million young Americans under the age of 30 voted in the 2016 presidential election, representing 46.1% turnout among eligible young people.
- It is especially important to reach young people who do not attend college. Those with no college experience vote significantly less than youth overall.
- Turnout among young voters contacted by nonprofits was 5.7 percentage points HIGHER than those who were not contacted.

The lesson here is that when candidates and elected officials talk, young people listen. It is critical for us to engage young voters in our community and provide them with meaningful opportunities to get involved. One way to do this is through voter registration at the high school level.

\*Analysis by CIRCLE (<https://civicyouth.org/full-analysis-young-voters-in-the-2016-general-election/> and <https://civicyouth.org/an-estimated-24-million-young-people-vote-in-2016-election/>) and Harvard Kennedy School (<http://www.iop.harvard.edu/survey/details/harvard-iop-fall-2015-poll>)

## Appendix I: Sample Social Media Posts

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Social media has revolutionized public political engagement. Thanks to these tools, it is easier than ever to build and sustain engagement on important issues. While there are many social media tools, we will focus on the four social media platforms predominately used by young people today. Tailor messages to fit your community and learn more from the League's [Social Media Toolkit](#).

### Photo-focused social media:

- **SnapChat** is a mobile messaging app used to share moments through photos, videos and texts. It can be a helpful marketing tool for voter registration events. Young people are influenced by their peers and by encouraging the students you come across who register to share their experiences through SnapChat, they will be helping spread the word about your registration event and what it means to be an empowered voter.
- **Instagram** is a photo and video-sharing social networking service. Similar to SnapChat, people use Instagram to post videos or pictures of themselves experiencing important moments.

Through SnapChat and Instagram's 'story' and 'live' functions, registration participants can share their excitement about voter registration with their community in real time.

Make events photo-friendly! **Filters** are functions associated within SnapChat that allow individuals to enhance their pictures. For a minimal cost (0-\$3), you can purchase a geo-located SnapChat 'filter' that allows you to highlight your event and attract further participation.

### Information sharing and public education focused platforms:

- **Facebook** is a widely used social media platform and is a great way to advertise your efforts ahead of any event where you will be registering young voters. You can build an event page, post pictures, and post related news articles. After your efforts, you can post pictures with a succinct message reflecting on the event and what it meant to the people you registered.

#### *Sample posts*

Today, we are preparing our teams of volunteers to register and empower young people to vote. Young people are leading the way toward a democracy that works better for all Americans! [Insert relevant picture]

Elections are the heart of our democracy. Engaging students by registering them to vote is just one of the many ways the League of Women Voters of [LEAGUE NAME] serve and protect democracy in our country. We are honored to be able to register new voters.

The League of Women Voters is the largest voter registration group nationwide. We are excited to keep up those efforts this year by engaging the new generation through voter registration events!

- **Twitter** is an online news and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Most posts must be within 140 characters, but it is a great way to share and advertise League related news. Samples:

*Sample tweets*

LWV of [STATE/COUNTY/CITY]'s team is spending today empowering young people by registering them to vote at [SCHOOL] ! #voting

Our democracy is about citizens' voices! League of Women Voters of [STATE/COUNTY/CITY] loves registering young people to vote.

**Hashtags** enhance the social media and networking experience. Compelling hashtags (ie #voting #empoweredvoters) allow people to take and share their voter registration experience with their friends and feel part of a broader movement. They can be used within any of your social media posts, and you can encourage those you come across to use your hashtag when they make their own posts through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat.

## Appendix J: Sample Press Release

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Use this press release to send a customized message to media in your area. Be sure to include tangible facts about the success of your registration program!

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
[DATE]

**CONTACT:[NAME]**  
[PHONE, EMAIL]

### **YOUNG VOTERS ARE KEY TO UPCOMING ELECTIONS** [LOCAL ORGANIZATION NAME] Registers [XX] High School Students to Vote

[TOWN, DATE]- [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] members recently registered [XX] students at [XX] local high schools to vote, according to a statement released today by [SPOKESPERSON].

“We’re thrilled to have worked with the dedicated faculty and students at [HIGH SCHOOL NAME(s)] to make sure all newly eligible voters know their rights and have the opportunity to play a critical role in our community’s future,” said [SPOKESPERSON’S NAME]. “We can’t wait to see them at the polls in November.”

From strengthening the economy to building safer communities and making education more affordable, young people are building a stronger America. This year, [ORGANIZATION] is taking advantage of that energy by helping students register to vote for the first time.

“Students were excited to have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming election,” said [SPOKESPERSON]. “For example, one young man/woman [provide interesting anecdote or quote from student about why they are registering to vote here].”

Young people are an increasingly influential part of the electorate. In 2016, Americans under 30 represented almost a quarter of the overall American electorate, yet nearly half did not vote. Exit polling has shown that young people participate in significantly larger numbers when they are directly contacted by an organization or have the opportunity to interact with candidates for office.

“From the president and Congress, all the way down to our local school boards, our elected officials have incredible influence over the issues and policies that affect our families and communities most. Election Day is our chance to weigh in and take control over what is most important to us,” said [SPOKESPERSON].

For more information about registering to vote or getting involved in [ORGANIZATION’s] work, visit [YOUR WEBSITE].

## Appendix K: Sample Letter to the Editor

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Customize this sample Letter to the Editor to submit to your local newspaper(s). Doing so will help publicize your efforts and expertise and elevate your organization within the community.

### Young Voters Key to the Future of Our Democracy

To the Editor,

Every passing day brings renewed debate about the future of our economy, the fate of health care and education, and our place in the world [If possible, refer to a recent article written on a public policy issue & include publication date]. Too often lost in the shuffle of partisan politics is the reminder that each one of us has an equal say in influencing our future.

[Today, this week, last Thursday, etc.], an active debate was underway, not in the halls of Congress or City Hall [or other local government seat], but in the [12th grade history class/auditorium] at [High School name]. Together with [ORGANIZATION], I had the opportunity to talk with students about why their voice is needed on Election Day and throughout the year. As [18]-year-old student [NAME] told us, “[reason why registering/why voting here is important].”

Now more than ever, our community’s young people want to be a part of the solution to the challenges we face. Their future depends on it. Thank you to [Student NAME from Above] and all [School name] students who took a stand and registered to vote. I hope readers will do the same.

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ORGANIZATION]

## Appendix L: Sample Get-out-the-vote Email and Phone Scripts

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### Sample GOTV Email Script:

Subject Line: Important Information before you Vote  
(Best if sent personally and/or in a mail merge with at least the first name of the recipient customized).

Hi [NAME],

Election Day is almost here! Are you ready to vote?

You may remember that we helped you register to vote at [venue/your school] back in [September/October]. Now we're reaching out to share some important tips for Election Day.

This may be the most important election of our lifetime. Election Day, [November X], is your chance to take control for your community and weigh in on the issues that matter most to you and your family. As voters, we all have an equal say in determining our future. That's why it is so important to go cast a vote!

#### Here are a few important tips:

- If you need to find information about how, when and where to vote, please visit [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) and enter your address.
- On Election Day, polling places are open in from XX am to XX pm.
- [IF required in your state] At the polls, you'll be required to show [an ID/utility bill/etc.].

The leaders we elect will make decisions that affect your everyday life — your job, health care, energy costs, the economy and more. So don't sit this one out — join your friends and neighbors and make it count on [DATE]!

If we can help answer any questions you have about the election process, please feel free to contact us at [LEAGUE or YOUR ORG CONTACT INFO]

Thank you for voting!

YOUR NAME

YOUR ORGANIZATION

PS- Sign up to learn more about the League of Women Voters or YOUR ORG by [joining us on Facebook/signing up for our newsletter, etc.].

## Sample GOTV Phone Script

(Best if made starting a few days before or up until the night before the Election)

Hello, is [VOTER NAME] there?

Hi! This is [CALLER NAME] calling from the League of Women Voters of XX or YOUR ORG.

We helped you register to vote at [venue/your school] back in [September/October].

We wanted to thank you again for registering and wanted to remind you about the election on [DATE].

Can we count on you to go vote on [DATE]?

IF YES:

Great! We've been calling other voters and it sounds like a lot of people in [COMMUNITY] will be voting this year. It's an important election, and we're so excited that you'll have the chance to stand up for our community by casting a vote. Can I remind you of your polling place [you can most likely look it up on VOTE411.org or your Secretary of State's site]? Do you know when you might go to vote on Tuesday? In the morning, afternoon, evening? Do you have a plan for getting there?

IF NO/MAYBE:

OK, what other information can I provide to you to help make voting a little easier? I'd be happy to tell you a little more about what to expect at the polls [have polling place hours, required ID info handy].

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Can I answer any questions about voting?

Great! Again, thank you for your promise to vote this year.

## Appendix M: Sample Registration Activity Worksheet to Quantify Results

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### **BASIC ACTIVITY INFORMATION**

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Activity (in hours) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Activity (tabling, classroom visits, assembly, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Volunteers/staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Cost of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

### **BENCHMARKS OF SUCCESS**

Total Number of Participating Students:

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Registration Forms Distributed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Completed Registration Applications Collected:

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Applications Taken Home/Left Behind at School:

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Pledge Cards/Sign-ups Collected:

\_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Number of Educational Materials Distributed:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix N: Printable Voter Pledge Cards

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Print and cut out these cards to collect student information and motivate them to vote.

**I will vote this Election Day to stand up for what matters most to me, my family and my community.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_pledge to vote this year.

Please send me reminders about upcoming elections:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_



**I will vote this Election Day to stand up for what matters most to me, my family and my community.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_pledge to vote this year.

Please send me reminders about upcoming elections:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_



**I will vote this Election Day to stand up for what matters most to me, my family and my community.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_pledge to vote this year.

Please send me reminders about upcoming elections:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_



# Appendix O: Sample Sign-In Sheet

Sign Up to Receive Helpful Election Information from **[YOUR GROUP]**

Name	Email	Phone

## Appendix P: Printable Flyer

Customize this flyer and ask school officials to post it prominently on the day(s) preceding your registration event.



# UPCOMING VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

What?	The opportunity to Make your voice heard! [Organization] will help eligible voters register to vote
When?	[DAY]
Where?	XX Room during XX period/time

VOTING IS  
YOUR CHANCE  
TO BE HEARD  
MAKE IT COUNT



\*In order to register to vote, you must be at least 18 years old by [DATE] as determined by state law.

**DON'T FORGET!**  
Bring your driver's license/social security number to the event!

[YOUR LOGO HERE]

## Appendix Q: VOTE411.org Printable Cards

Access a printable VOTE411.org flyer [here](#)



**YOUR ONE-STOP-SHOP  
FOR ELECTION-RELATED  
INFORMATION.**

- Absentee ballot info
- Ballot measure info
- Early voting options
- Election dates
- Candidate data
- ID requirements
- Polling place locations
- Registration deadlines
- Voter registration forms
- Voting machine details

WWW.VOTE411.ORG / @VOTE411



## **Making Democracy Work™**

The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership in the League is open to women and men of all ages. With nearly 800 state and local affiliates nationwide, the League is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement!

Join us in Making Democracy Work™!

### **League of Women Voters Education Fund**

1730 M Street, NW Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20036

202-429-1965

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)