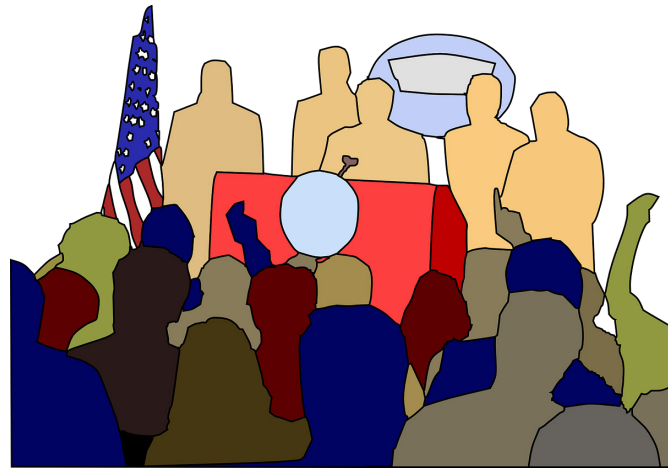


Register, Learn, Vote, Stay Engaged!

Cynthia Peters

So, you want to vote! Or you want to support someone else to vote. Follow the four steps below. After you read, consider holding a voter registration drive at your program or hold a mock election. Find more resources here: <https://nelrc.org/vera/>.



1. Register to Vote

Every state in the U.S. (except North Dakota) requires you to register to vote if you want to vote. Most states allow you to register online.

To register to vote in the U.S., you need to be a citizen and at least 18 years old on election day.

Don't miss the deadline (which is different in every state)! Ask someone who knows or look it up online. Here are some websites that help you figure out how to register:

- <https://www.vote.org/>
- <https://www.rockthevote.org/how-to-vote>

2. Learn about the Issues and the Candidates

Now that you are registered, how will you vote?

Do you have a preference for a certain political party, and will you vote based on the candidate's affiliation with that party?

Or will you study the candidates and vote on the one who is most aligned with you on the issues?

Here are some ways to learn more about the political parties and who is running for office and what they stand for:

- <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/>
- <https://www.diffen.com/>



3. Vote in Person or by Mail

Learn about how to vote in your state. If you vote in person, where is your polling place?

Can you vote by mail? If so, how? (You may need to apply for a mail-in ballot.) If you are voting by mail, don't wait until the last minute to send in your ballot.

Support others to get their ballot in the mail or to go to the polls on election day. If it is safe to do so, give rides to the polls or volunteer at the polls.

Use your phone and social media to remind people to vote and to connect them with resources they might need to be able to vote.



4. Stay Engaged

Voting should not be something we do every few years and then forget about it. Once candidates are elected, they need to keep hearing from us. You can be sure that they hear from special interest groups that try to convince them to vote one way or another on legislation.

You, too, should put ongoing pressure on your elected officials to vote the way you want them to. Stay engaged!

- Contact your legislator and let them know how you feel about an issue.
- Join a community organization that is working on an issue you care about.
- Participate in actions and protests that show how you feel about an issue.

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