



How to Register to Vote



Created for high school teachers and faculty

Are you 18 years old? If so, congratulations! You have officially reached the age where you can vote. Your vote has an enormous impact on both your community and your own life. Not only can you affect the results of [close elections](#), but you also ensure that your political voice is heard. The battle to make sure that all U.S. citizens are able to vote has been long, and 18-year-olds have only been allowed to vote since the 1970s. Now, it is time to register to vote.

How and Why Do You Register to Vote?

Most states require voter registration prior to voting in an election in order to prevent ineligible people from voting. To register to vote, you will need to fill out state-specific forms to prove that you are a U.S. citizen, be at least 18 years of age or older and meet local requirements, like residency. Most states also offer [pre-registration](#) for people who are not 18 years old yet. Pre-registration allows individuals as young as 16 to sign-up to be automatically registered when they turn 18. Registration forms are offered on paper or electronically. After filling one out and turning it in, you may receive a voter identification card if your state requires it. If you are underage, you can pledge to register to vote [here](#).

How and Why Do You Vote?

An election offers you the ability to vote for candidates that best represent you. Some elections, especially local ones, are decided by just a handful of votes. This makes your vote even more important. Voting is not only beneficial to you, but it is also an important part of maintaining a democracy where every voice can be heard.

If you are 18 and a U.S. citizen, make sure to register to vote before your state deadline, which could be anywhere from Election Day itself to a month earlier. If you are not a U.S.



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citizen, you can still be civically engaged. Join your neighborhood association, work with community organizations and look into [election-related volunteering](#). If you are under 18, you can volunteer, [pre-register](#) to vote if your state offers it and [pledge to vote](#).

For presidential elections, Election Day is the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. For primary, local, and special elections there may be other dates. If you can make it to your polling place, a physical location where you vote, on Election Day, then find your [polling place](#), make a plan to get there and bring all [necessary identification](#) with you. If not, fill out an application for an [absentee ballot](#) so that you can vote by mail. Depending on what your state offers, you may be able to vote early in-person, so check [here](#). Next, you should take some time to inform yourself by reading [nonpartisan candidate guides](#), watching debates and finding out what positions are on the ballot. Finally, vote! Encourage your friends and family to vote too, and stay engaged by contacting your representatives to let them know your opinions on issues you care about.

About Us

Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) is a national nonpartisan project that helps administrators, faculty, staff and student leaders at America's institutions of higher education engage students in federal, state and local elections. CEEP views voting as a means to promote a more equitable and inclusive democracy and to address past and present disenfranchisement. To learn more, visit campuselect.org or contact us at info@campuselect.org.

Looking for More Resources?

Visit campuselect.org for more resources and case studies to get students involved in the voting process.