



Get Out the Vote

(with a Youth Focus)

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

BWBR Description: Bonner Curriculum workshop guides participants to organize voter registration and education efforts in a non-partisan manner, as part of civic duty and citizenship.

Overview: In 2000, voting among American 17- to 24- year olds reached its low at around 36 percent, falling more than 13 percent since the voting age was lowered to eighteen in 1971. Voting among those older than 25 isn't at 100% either, with 80% of those eligible claiming to have voted in the 2000 Presidential election but with turnout likely much lower. This module provides strategies for running a Get Out the Vote campaign on your campus or in your community. In particular, it is designed to help increase political engagement of young people. It uses a variety of fun, interactive activities to get participants thinking and equipped to carry out voting campaigns.

Category: Political engagement; voting; leadership skills; campaigns; democratic participation; civic engagement

Level: Intermediate to advanced



**2nd-4th
Year**

Recommended

Bonner Sequence: This training is recommended for Bonner students during sophomore through senior year, or anytime in conjunction with a focus on voter education and registration. It is one of several trainings that expose students to a broader conception of civic engagement, in which political participation as a citizen is a valuable activity.

Type: Structured activity suitable for workshop (e.g. retreat or training)

Learning Outcomes:

- To provide participants with an opportunity to explore and understand the role of voting in a functioning democracy
- To address low voter turnout by providing three steps to increasing voter turnout
- To develop a timeline for organizing, mobilizing, and educating voters, with a particular focus on youth and/or student voters

Materials:

- Example *Voter Education Guide*
- *Tips for Organizing a Voter Registration Drive*/Information regarding the responsibilities of colleges and universities as outlined in the 1998 Higher Education Act

How to Prepare:

Brief preparatory statement aimed at the user/trainer/facilitator. Short paragraph. For example, let the trainer know whether s/he needs to collect any information, create any scenarios, do flip charts, etc.

Brief Outline:

Brief summary statement (describing the activities) aimed at the user/trainer/facilitator. Followed by outline of suggested steps or summary description of contents.

This 1 hour workshop has the following parts:

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| 1) The Scary Truth about Voting Game | Suggested time: 15 minutes |
| 2) Transition into Issues of Youth Voting | Suggested time: 10 minutes |

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| 3) Where is the Youth Vote? (Network Map) | Suggested time: 10 minutes |
| 4) Three Steps to Increasing Turnout | Suggested time: 20 minutes |
| 5) Wrap Up | Suggested time: 5 minutes |

Part 1) The Scary Truth about Voting Price-Is-Right Game

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Start by introducing yourself as the host of a special version of the Price-Is-Right Game (perhaps Barbara or Bart Barker). Ask five volunteers to “come on down” to be a part of the game.

Explain the rules: you’re going to read a question and the contestants have the chance to answer it. They want to get the right answer or be as close to the answer as possible without going over. Give the participants 8 index cards each (there will be 8 questions. (There will be 8 winners then, since someone wins each question; keep calling up new volunteers. If you have fewer than 8 people, adapt it).

Questions:

Question 1:

- What percentage of eligible 18-25 year-olds claimed to have voted in the 2000 Presidential Election?

Answer: 42% (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 2:

- What year did African-Americans in the United States secure the right to vote?

Answer: 1866 (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 3:

- What percentage of people over the age of 25 who are eligible to vote in the U.S. claimed to have voted in the 2000 Presidential Election?

Answer: 80% (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 4:

- What year did women in the U.S. secure the right to vote?

Answer: 1920 (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 5:

- What percentage of eligible Hispanics between 18-25 say they voted in the 2000 Presidential Election?

Answer: 30% (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 6:

- What percentage of eligible whites between 18-25 say they voted in the 2000 Presidential Election?

Answer: 44% (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 7:

- What year was the minimum voting age in the U.S. dropped from 21 to 18?

Answer: 1971 (anyone closest without going over wins)

Question 8:

- What is the decline in electoral participation (or voting) in Presidential elections by 18-25 year-olds since the voting age was dropped to 18?

Answer: 13% (anyone closest without going over wins)

Part 2) Transition into the Issue of the Youth Vote

Suggested time: 10 minutes

At this point, you should call up the winners (8 or more people) and congratulate them. Then, engage them in answering the following question:

Why do you think young people don't vote today? Each of you needs to give a different reason. [Conversely, you can have the rest of the room answer this question].

Engage respondents in generating the various reasons why there is traditionally such a low voter turnout among people 18-25 years old. Use a flipchart for the reasons.

Example reasons include:

- Apathy
- Cynicism – sense that it won't make a difference
- Unclear about procedure
- Not sure how to register
- Not sure how to vote
- Not sure how to file for absentee ballot
- General disdain for politics
- Not reminded
- No time
- Candidates don't make appeals to young voters
- Feel uninformed about candidates or ballot issues
- Don't feel connection to community
- Don't feel policies affect them

Current research suggests that of these reasons, the two major reasons given by young people are that "they do not think that their vote makes a difference (26%) and that they don't have enough information (25%). (Source: *National Association of Secretaries of State. "New Millennium Project-Part 1 American Youth Attitudes on Politics, Citizenship, Government and Voting."* Survey on Youth Attitudes. The Tarrance Group. (Lexington, KY 1999).

Step 3) Where is the Youth Vote? Youth Campus and Community Asset Map

Suggested time: 10 minutes

If participants in the workshop are actually beginning to plan a Get Out the Vote campaign, use this activity to begin the real planning. If they are not, have participant envision embarking on a Get Out the Vote campaign.

Note that if the participants are actually going to be working together to organize a Get Out the Campus Vote initiative, the Campus Asset Map could include more details, including contact people and information, point people, roles or means of involvement, engagement/recruitment strategies, and next steps. Thus, spend more time on the activity and possibly engage in real research (using group knowledge and/or Internet).

Using flipchart paper, guide participants to create a Youth Campus and Community Network Map that answers the following questions:

- What are the student organizations that might be interested in increasing the level of civic participation at the college?
- What are the youth organizations that might be interested in increasing the level of civic participation in the community (youth who are 18 or over but not in college)?
- Who are the faculty and staff members on campus who might support a Get Out the Campus Vote initiative?
- Who are the nonprofit leaders or other community members who might support a Get Out the Campus Vote initiative?
- What campus and community resources are available that could be utilized to increase voter turnout (newspapers, radio and television stations, campus website, etc.)?
- What campus departments, offices, or services might sponsor the initiative either through funding or in-kind donations? Will dining services provide food for volunteers? Will the campus copy center donate photocopies?
- Who are the community partners that might be able to provide support for the effort (as above)?
- Are there any other tools that can be used?

Step 4) Three Steps to Increasing Voter Turnout

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Now, have people brainstorm responses to the question, *"What are way to increase voter turnout?"*

After a few minutes of brainstorming, draw off the ideas and present that there are three basic overarching ways to increase voter turnout. They are:

- **Get people registered** –Many times people will be inspired to vote come election time, but if they haven't registered in time, it won't matter. If you are not registered in time, you cannot vote.
- **Get people educated** – a functioning democracy depends on voters making educated choices at the polls. Also, if people don't feel educated about the candidates, the issues, or the process, they're less likely to vote at all.
- **Get people to the polls** – most people are juggling lots of priorities that demand their time. In particular, students' schedules may make voting seem difficult, schools don't often excuse students from class for voting, and the issue of absentee voting (for students who attend a school not in their home state/area) can be confusing. Getting people to the polls can be the most difficult part.

Explain that now the workshop will turn toward considering strategies for countering each of these types of challenges.

Next, the workshop will require people to work in small groups, in three rotations with about 5 minutes for each category. Divide participants into groups of 4-8.

Getting People Registered

During this period of time, give the group the handouts and allow them to work through the key ideas, which include (from handout):

Step 1: Getting people registered. Three common strategies could include:

- **VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE:** Hold a voter registration drive at your school. See the organizing tips below.
- **PHONE BANKING, BACKED BY A COALITION.** Get the College Democrats, College Republicans, Campus Greens, or other political groups you have on your campus to combine efforts for a joint phone-banking event. See the tips below.
- **USING THE MEDIA.** Write an editorial for your school newspaper explaining the importance of voting.

The group should use the following three guiding questions/goals to guide their work (which are at the end of the handout):

1. How can you (as a group) generate excitement for this step?
2. Who should be involved? How can you best utilize the resources listed on the Campus Asset Map to accomplish this Step?
3. Think about the different tasks that will need to be completed. Capture these tasks on the flipchart paper. Then, create a timeline and plan.

Getting People Educated

During this period of time, give the group the handouts and allow them to work through the key ideas, which include (from handout):

Step 2: Getting people educated. Three common strategies could include:

- **VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE:** Create a Voter Guide that specifically addresses issues that concern college students (See the attached sample). Distribute it in dorms, in classes, wherever you can.
- **VOTER EDUCATION FORUM:** Invite candidates to speak at your school, or invite speakers who are experts on one of the ballot initiatives to speak in classes
- **DEBATES AND ENGAGEMENT:** Sponsor student debates and have students debate issues on the ballot or have students represent each of the candidates

The group should use the following three guiding questions/goals to guide their work (which are at the end of the handout):

4. How can you (as a group) generate excitement for this step?
5. Who should be involved? How can you best utilize the resources listed on the Campus Asset Map to accomplish this Step?
6. Think about the different tasks that will need to be completed. Capture these tasks on the flipchart paper. Then, create a timeline and plan.

Getting People to the Polls

Now, have the group turn toward Step 3: Getting people to the polls. Present the handout of ideas and tips. Then, give people time to tackle the assignment, which again is:

- How can you (as a group) generate excitement for this step?
- Who should be involved? How can you best utilize the resources listed on the Campus Asset Map to accomplish this Step?
- Think about the different tasks that will need to be completed. Capture these tasks on the flipchart paper. Then, create a timeline and plan.

Step 5) Wrap Up

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Research about Youth Participation in Voting

National Youth Survey

March 4, 2002: CIRCLE, in collaboration with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship and the Partnership for Trust in Government at the Council for Excellence in Government, released a survey of 1,500 Americans between the ages of 15 and 25 and their views toward civic life and institutions. The full results of the survey are available online at www.civicyouth.org (Circle).

Lake Snell Perry & Associates, with The Tarrance Group, designed and administered the survey, which was conducted by telephone from January 6 through January 17, 2002. The survey reached 1,500 young people between the ages of 15 and 25 nationwide. The poll has a variable margin of error of 2.5%.

Highlights

Political Engagement and Voting

80% are unlikely to work for local government and 75% are unlikely to work for the federal government.

57% say they are unlikely to run for an elected leadership position (vs. 32% in 1998), 53% are unlikely to work for a political party, 50% are unlikely to join a political organization, and 46% are unlikely to volunteer in a political campaign.

50% say voting is important (49% not important).

34% see voting as a choice vs. 20% a responsibility and only 9% a duty.

Only 53% say government and elections address their needs and concerns, and only 48% say political leaders pay attention to the concerns of young people.

Only 46% say they can make a difference in solving community problems (52% little or no difference).

Impact of Partisanship

78% of Democrats and 76% of Republicans are registered to vote (vs. 58% of independents).

A third of all Republicans volunteer at least once a month and 29% of Democrats do (vs. 25% of independents).

64% of Republicans say it is important to vote, versus 58% of Democrats and 43% of independents.

63% of Republicans and 59% of conservatives say the Bush presidency makes them more likely to participate in politics and government.

Efficacy

85% believe their votes count as much as anyone else's, but 71% believe candidates would rather talk to older, wealthier people than to younger people.

62% of college graduates and 55% of 18 to 25 year olds in college feel they can make a difference.

Only 41% of 15 to 17 year olds believe they can make a difference (and only 35% of those who are not planning to attend college believe they can make a difference).

50% believe someone like them cannot have a real impact on solving community problems (vs. 45% who believe they can).

49% strongly believe politics is about politicians competing to get elected vs. 32% who believe politics is the way average people get their say in government.

Lessons for Candidates

Only 53% believe politics, elections and government address their concerns.

65% say issue stands are the first or second most important consideration in choosing a candidate.

Young adults want a candidate that "face powerful interests and stand up for what they believe is right" (83 mean on a 1-100 scale), calls for a debate at a local high school or college (79), "...who speaks to issues of particular concern to young people..." (78), and "...is experienced in politics and can get things done" (78).

Jobs and the economy (17%), terrorism and national security (14%) and crime and violence (12%) comprise the top tier of the issue concerns of young adults.

Volunteering

72% of young adults say they have donated money, clothes or food to a community or church group (86% of young adults said they had done so in 1998).

49% see volunteering for community activities as most important vs. 12% for participating in politics and government.

37% never volunteer (up from 27% in 2000), 31% volunteer occasionally (down from 38% in 2000), and 27% volunteer at least once a month (down from 30% in 2000).

33% who grew up with political discussion in their home volunteer at least once per month (vs. 22% who did not have political discussion in their home).

30% volunteer because they were asked by a church (17%) or a person (13%), 24% because it makes them feel good, and 21% because it makes a difference. Only 6% say because they are required to by their school.

September 11

69% say the events of September 11 make them more favorable towards government. 67% say the events of September 11 make them more likely to participate in politics and voting.

62% say they trust the government to do what is right.

44% would be more likely to work for a community service organization after September 11 (vs. 17% less likely).

34% would be more likely to choose law enforcement or firefighting as a career (vs. 25% less likely).

But...

66% claim voter registration (down from 70% in 1998).

31% would be less likely to join the military (28% more likely) and 28% are less likely to run for political office (17% more likely).

Parental Impact

Only 50% say they discussed politics, government or current events with their parents (down from 57 % in 1998). 19% say "never" vs. 15% "often."

Of those who grew up with political discussion in the home, 75% are registered to vote (vs. 57% rate of registration among those who did not have political discussion in the home); 71% trust government (vs. 53%); 68% believe voting is important (vs. 33%); 57% believe politicians pay attention to their concerns (vs. 39%); and 56% believe they can make a difference solving community problems (vs. 37%).

Impact of Church-Going

70% of devout, occasional church-going and born again young adults trust government to do what is right, far more than non-church goers (50%).

64% of devout young adults say voting is extremely or very important (vs. 37% of non-church goers).

Policy Implications

81% favor a year of national or community service to earn money toward college or advanced training.

66% favor requiring civics and government classes in high school.

61% would favor a new draft that gives people a choice between civilian or military service.

53% favor service in return for federal financial aid.

55% oppose requiring community service in order to graduate from high school.

One person, Two Votes; That's Essentially What Happens, Experts Say, When Large Groups of Electorate Don't Vote

Newhouse News Service
The Grand Rapids Press, November 3, 2002

By Miles Benson

WASHINGTON – Imagine an election in which each poor person gets one vote but each wealthy person gets two. A high school dropout gets one vote, but a college graduate gets two. A renter gets one vote, but a homeowner gets two. A 20-year-old gets one vote, but a 60-year-old gets two.

Welcome to American democracy and the 2002 election, where experts say a system of weighted voting has taken hold, in practice if not in law.

It's what happens when the electorate voluntarily divides itself into voters and nonvoters, diluting the potential strength of some groups and exaggerating the voices of others.

The imbalances will be at work again Tuesday.

"The system is skewed toward the wealthy, the higher-educated and older individuals because they vote at much higher rates than young people, the under-educated and poor, and therefore they are influencing the outcome of policies," said James Thurber, a professor of government and director of American University's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies.

In other words, the interests of those who vote come first when members of Congress decide which programs will be funded and which cut, whose taxes will go up and whose will go down.

Experts anticipate a turnout as low as 36 percent of the voting-age population this Election Day, with the same predictable patterns:

--Seniors will vote at twice the rate of young citizens.

--The top 20 percent in income will vote at twice the rate of the bottom 20 percent.

--College graduates will be twice as likely to vote as those with only high school diplomas.

"This leads to perpetuation of advantage for the advantaged," said Stephen J. Wayne, professor of government at Georgetown University. "They get better education and better means to maintain their position. People who need to vote to change the system vote the least, and people who contribute most try to maintain their across-the-board advantages."

There is no mystery about why some people turn their backs on voting and some flock to the polls.

"The poor don't vote because they no longer find a home in either party, and others because of the decline in civic education, disinterest in current events and hostility toward government," said Curtis Gans, who heads the nonpartisan Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. "What used to drive people to vote was civic duty. Now it is an interest in specific issue outcomes, a sense of identification with certain leader or ideological zealotry."

Wayne suspects voting or not voting reflects the nature of many political issues: They are not yes-or-no questions. "Some people face ambiguity and complexity much better than others do," he said. "People who don't understand the issues stay home."

For many, political intensity is like religious intensity. "In general, people with a strong religious commitment, regardless of denomination, are more likely to be voters," said Scott Keeter, associate director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

Voting is learning behavior. Citizens raised by parents who voted regularly are more likely to become regular voters themselves, experts said.

And, of course, party activists on both sides will vote, along with members of groups that encourage voting, such as organized labor and the National Rifle Association.

A 30-year-decline in voter turnout has benefited Republicans, Harvard political scientist Thomas Patterson said.

"When you shrink the electorate you get more Republican victories because what you lose at the bottom are voters who are disproportionately Democratic," Patterson said. "If everybody had voted in 1994, instead of 36 percent, we wouldn't have seen a

Republican revolution, and if everybody had voted in 2000 instead of just 50 percent, Al Gore would have won handily and the Democrats would have taken the Senate and the House."

The expectation that this election will produce another low turnout is "amazing when you consider the economic conditions we are in and the fact that we had 9/11 and that we may go to war in Iraq," said American University's Thurber.

But this year, those who vote are in the grip of "the politics of disappointment," pollster John Zogby said.

The terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 provided a "moment of reconnection" with their government for many Americans, Zogby said. "In a big way, they expected a lot from government and other familiar institutions, family and church and so on, to provide for them comfort and security, not the least of which is their future security through their investments." (Two-thirds of voters have 401(k) plans or IRAs and consider themselves investors.)

What followed, though, was "a tremendous letdown," beginning this past spring, Zogby said: "A letdown by church scandals, a letdown by CEO accounting scandals, a letdown in the pursuit of Osama bin Laden and the direction of the war on terrorism."

Beneath the present sour mood is a prevailing sense of cynicism.

Thurber is convinced many refuse to vote based on the absence of real competition in so many races. "there are probably only about 12 tossup races in the House of Representatives and maybe six to eight in the Senate," he said.

"People look at these races and say, 'Look, it doesn't make any difference if I vote, the outcome is preordained because of redistricting and the amount of money going to the incumbents.' There is really only one party in Washington, and that's the incumbency party. In the last midterm election, 1998, 97 percent of those who stood for re-election in the House of Representatives were re-elected. In the Senate the re-election rate was 88.7 percent."

In their 1999 book "Nonvoters: America's No-Shows," Jack C. Doppelt and Ellen Shearer suggested the habit of not voting is deeply ingrained.

"For the majority of Americans for whom voting is neither duty nor ritual, a more fundamental evolution must take place if voting is to be used as an indicator of the legitimacy of a thriving democracy," the authors wrote.

"The voice of the nonvoting majority, with its competing strains of alienation and complacency, political awareness and obliviousness, futility and indifference, speaks of no heroes or icons in the political landscape.

"Nonvoters exhibit little trust in the responsiveness of the political process, not even those who believe it is working. They get little reinforcement at home or on the job for the importance of the political or voting process. What has resulted is a generation of which half its members lives outside the body politic."

GOTV Part #1: Running a Voter Registration Drive

Step 1: Getting people registered. Three common strategies could include:

- VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE: Hold a voter registration drive at your school. See the organizing tips below.
- PHONE BANKING, BACKED BY A COALITION. Get the College Democrats, College Republicans, Campus Greens, or other political groups you have on your campus to combine efforts for a joint phone-banking event. See the tips below.
- USING THE MEDIA. Write an editorial for your school newspaper explaining the importance of voting.

In general:

- Know the deadline for registering to vote, and plan accordingly.
- Get the forms, and arrange for the completed forms to be dropped off.
- Document your work – keep track of who you register. You can use this information later when you get people to the polls.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE TIPS

Table Sitting Model

- Reserve a table and several time slots. You'll want to set up a table in a highly visible place, such as in front of a dining hall or in the student union.
- Make sure you have volunteers ready to help register people.
- Collect supplies – voter registration forms, pens, and clipboards.
- If you can, set up a computer for students to request forms from other states. Go to <https://ssl.capwiz.com/congressorg/nvra/> to request voter registration forms from 46 states. Or go to www.election.com where residents of 43 states can register to vote online.

- Be sure to decorate your table to attract attention. However, you cannot have any campaign materials on the table – this includes signs, buttons, bumper stickers, or literature endorsing any particular candidate or party.

Use a Pyramid Model

Some people recommend a pyramid model to get people registered to vote, because people are often more likely to register if a friend encourages them, rather than a stranger.

- Find a group of core volunteers. Depending on your goals, you may want 10 core volunteers or up to 50 volunteers.
- Give each of the volunteers 10 to 25 voter registration forms, and have them agree to get 10 – 25 of their friends to register to vote.
- Make sure that the volunteers collect the registration forms so that you can keep track of the people you registered. Just before Election Day, you'll want to contact these people to remind them to vote.

PHONE BANKING TIPS

To do a successful phone bank, you may need the following:

A Coalition: Build a coalition of individuals representing diverse or committed constituencies who care about bringing out the votes. Look to the Building Coalitions or Power Mapping training for more guidance.

Call List: A master list — including every individual on the voter list— should be developed and maintained by the organizers.

Phone Lines: To carry out a successful phone bank requires sufficient available telephone lines. You can request the use of phones from local non-profits, departments, or other offices. Certain non-profits may have evening hours. They may be willing to support a non-partisan phone banking (but note that many are prohibited from supporting a partisan phone banking campaign). Another possibility is the use of home or dorm room phones. Keep in mind that phone banks are more likely to achieve better results if organized as group events led by a coordinator, with the momentum being created through group interaction (and a little pizza doesn't hurt).

Volunteer Training and Support: The volunteer caller has two tasks. The first task is to provide accurate information to the potential voter. The second task is, when necessary, to be persuasive. **In this case, you are trying to get the person registered; later, you'll follow up to persuade them to use that vote.** A properly supplied telephoner's kit is crucial to the accomplishment of these tasks. The kit should include a good script, a calling list (including space to record information), request forms for election day help, such as transportation, child care, etc. (to be submitted at the end of the shift), pens and pencils, notepads, and a daily record sheet. *You can get a kit from several national GOTV campaigns.*

Phone Follow-up: A two step follow-up should be done after the original phone bank, in time for the person to register. The first follow-up call should occur a week or several days before the election. The volunteer caller should be very direct in asking the potential voter if he or she plans to vote, and if not, why not? If the person states a lack of interest, try information and persuasion. If the problem is logistical or process-related, for example a lack of transportation or not knowing how to vote, try to provide the needed information or a link to others who can assist.

The second follow-up call should occur the day before or on Election Day itself. Every potential voter needs to be called. Results should be recorded for every person on the list.

Assignment:

With these ideas and others in mind, do the following:

- 1. How can you (as a group) generate excitement for this step?**
- 2. Who should be involved? How can you best utilize the resources listed on the Campus Asset Map to accomplish this Step?**
- 3. Think about the different tasks that will need to be completed. Capture these tasks on the flipchart paper. Then, create a timeline and plan.**

GOTV Part #2: Voter Education

Step 2: Get people educated. Three common strategies are:

- **VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE:** Create a Voter Guide that specifically addresses issues that concern college students (See the attached sample). Distribute it in dorms, in classes, wherever you can.
- **VOTER EDUCATION FORUM:** Invite candidates to speak at your school, or invite speakers who are experts on one of the ballot initiatives to speak in classes
- **DEBATES AND ENGAGEMENT:** Sponsor student debates and have students debate issues on the ballot or have students represent each of the candidates

VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE TIPS

When creating a voter education guide, be sure to do the following:

Consider the issues that are important to your audience

College students care about specific issues - for example - the environment, privacy rights, foreign policy. Include the candidates' views on the issues that your audience cares most about.

Include all candidates or all sides of an issue

If your goal is to get people to vote, write from an unbiased perspective. If you editorialize, you will lose credibility with your audience.

Cite sources

Be sure to include where you got your information so people can find out more. And double-check your facts before you publish!

Make it easy to read

Don't get bogged down in designing the guide – it should be attractive, yet simple enough so that people can read the content and not be distracted by the look of it.

Remind people when the election is

Include the date of the election, as well as the deadline to register

VOTER EDUCATION FORUM TIPS

The best way to educate students about candidates or issues is to invite speakers so that there is an opportunity for students to ask questions and engage in a dialogue with the candidates.

When planning a voter education forum, keep the following in mind:

Plan ahead

Political candidates have very busy schedules, so you'll want to plan ahead. Call the candidate's scheduler far in advance with several possible dates in mind. Be flexible, as candidates' schedules often change at the last minute.

Collaborate

If your school is small, you may want to consider co-hosting an event with one or more other schools. This gets the word out to more people, and the candidate is more likely to agree to speak if he or she has a larger audience.

Go through the right avenues on campus

You'll want to let the President of the school know if a major candidate is coming to speak. Also, inform the Office of Community and Government Relations, Campus Security, and any other office who may be contacted by the candidate.

Find a great speaker to introduce the candidate

A student or faculty member should research the accomplishments and platform of the candidate and prepare a brief introduction.

The more candidates or sides of an issue the better!

For students to feel fully informed, they should hear from more than one candidate or speaker. The more you invite the better. If they don't all show up, at least you will have tried.

Get media attention

Contact campus and local news stations and papers to cover the event. This way more people can be reached.

DEBATES AND ENGAGEMENT TIPS

If you aren't able to host political candidates, you can at least organize student debates. Find students who are willing to research different candidates or different sides of an issue. Give each student an opportunity to present and then rebut one another's arguments. This is a great opportunity to get students talking about the issues on the ballot.

Assignment:

With these ideas and others in mind, do the following:

- 1. How can you (as a group) generate excitement for this step?**
- 2. Who should be involved? How can you best utilize the resources listed on the Campus Asset Map to accomplish this Step?**
- 3. Think about the different tasks that will need to be completed. Capture these tasks on the flipchart paper. Then, create a timeline and plan.**

GOTV Part #3: Getting People to the Polls

Some key ideas

- **REMINDERS:** Canvass the campus (or community) or do a final phone banking
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Organize a Ride to the Polls carpool or other transportation
- **COMPETITION:** Sponsor a competition between classes or dorms to see which group can get the most students to the polls

REMINDERS: Canvass the Campus

Go back to your network maps and again look at where students gather or where are the influential spaces. Have volunteers stand outside classrooms, dining halls, student unions, wherever students congregate to remind people to vote on election day. This is especially good if the polls are close by and directions are clear. Consider doing creative things to build momentum to get people to the polls.

PHONE BANKING TIPS

As the election approaches, a great phone bank may be a key strategy. It may also be a follow up strategy to the voter registration phone bank. To do a successful phone bank, you may need the following:

A Coalition: Again, tap your coalition. Perhaps a little good-spirited competition at this point, with key people all bringing out their networks, could be effective.

Call List: A master list — including every individual on the voter list— should be developed and maintained by the organizers.

Phone Lines: To carry out a successful phone bank requires sufficient available telephone lines. You can request the use of phones from local non-profits, departments, or other offices. Certain non-profits may have evening hours. They may be willing to support a non-partisan phone banking (but note that many are prohibited from supporting a partisan phone banking campaign). Another possibility is the use of home or dorm room phones. Keep in mind that phone banks are more likely to achieve better results if organized as group events led by a coordinator, with the momentum being created through group interaction (and a little pizza doesn't hurt).

Volunteer Training and Support: The volunteer caller has two tasks. The first task is to provide accurate information to the potential voter. The second task is, when necessary, to be persuasive. **In this case, you are trying to get the person to get to the polls, so they may need address information, directions, gentle urging, and other information that makes them want to get there on Election Day.**

This call should occur on the day before or even Election Day itself. Every potential voter needs to be called.

LOCATING TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to the polls may be a barrier for some people. Students or other young people may not have cars, may be unfamiliar with city public transportation, and so on. A lot of the ease of transportation depends on other factors related.

You can work on securing transportation for all voters (especially those with more barriers) with any local GOTV groups, local government, election officials, and elected representative from you area.

Helpful Hints:

1. Make sure you have lists of all persons who want to go to the polls, any special circumstances, most importantly, what times they will be available to go to the polls.
2. Look into logistical details and insurance issues for any carpooling efforts.

Resources: Local Media local government, elected representatives, local chapters of political parties, organizations, social service providers, churches, nonprofits, youth organizations, individuals who are willing to drive people to the polls in their own cars and vans.

Assignment:

With these ideas and others in mind, do the following:

4. **How can you (as a group) generate excitement for this step?**

5. **Who should be involved? How can you best utilize the resources listed on the Campus Asset Map to accomplish this Step?**
6. **Think about the different tasks that will need to be completed. Capture these tasks on the flipchart paper. Then, create a timeline and plan.**

Web-based Resources

Compiled by Youth Vote Coalition

Source: www.youthvote.org

Voting

<http://www.napalc.org/programs/votingrights/resources/index.html> National Asian Pacific Association Legal Consortium resource pages: handbooks, fact sheets, and other resources on Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, using alternative languages in polling places, bilingual voting assistance, redistricting impact, exit polling, and other voting issues.

<http://www.calvoter.org/manual/quicktips.html> How to Make an Online Voter Guide: Quick Tips for the Voter Educator. Provided by the California Voter Foundation, publisher of the California Online Voter Guide. August, 2002. Available online or in a .pdf file which can be emailed or printed easily.

<http://www.fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm> The FEC provides the National Voter Registration Form in .pdf file, also a list of states that will not accept this but require their own form.

<http://www.dnet.org>

A project of the League of Women Voters, DemocracyNet - DNet - is your premier public interest site for election information. Enter your zip code to find out who's running for offices on your ballot and where the candidates stand on issues you care about.

The League also produces nonpartisan material on how to organize voter registration, education, and get out the vote drives at their website: <http://www.lwv.org/elibrary/pub/issue9.html>

[Make Your Vote Count and Your Voice Heard in the 2002 Elections!](#)

The 2002 edition of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities' National Campus Voter Registration Handbook explains how to plan a voter registration campaign on your campus, and how to build voter education activities for this important election year.

[Project Vote Smart](#)

Picture this: at an extraordinary research facility high in the Rocky Mountains hundreds of idealists -- conservatives and liberals alike -- volunteering together, spending

thousands of hours researching the backgrounds and records of over 12,000 candidates for public office. Forcing them, with or without their cooperation, to fill out a detailed application of employment. Their voting records, campaign finances, position statements, backgrounds, and the evaluations done on them by over 100 competing special interest groups. Research that will defend the people's right to abundant, accurate, relevant information and enable them to check the credibility of the often misleading claims candidates make.

<http://capitoladvantage.com>

Founded in 1986, Capitol Advantage connects citizens to their elected officials, and helps organizations realize legislative goals through grassroots activism. Enter your zipcode for current elected officials' contact information and websites/policy statements.

<http://www.congress.org/> Identify and contact your federal and state elected officials by entering your ZIP Code, through a public service of Capitol Advantage.

Academic

<http://www.yale.edu/isps/publications/voter.html>

The Institution for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University has published several papers and articles on youth voter mobilization and participation, including the most recent evaluation of Youth Vote Coalition work, [Getting Out the Youth Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments](#), Green, Gerber and Nickerson, 2002.

<http://www.crfc.org>

The Constitutional Rights Foundation in Chicago helps young people develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to serve their communities and nation as active, responsible citizens. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, CRFC has conducted law-related education programs for elementary and secondary students and their teachers for over twenty years and publishes many curricula guides.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/cived/>

In 1999, the United States participated with 27 other countries in the IEA Civic Education Study (CivEd), an international assessment designed to tap the civic knowledge and skills of 14-year-olds and their attitudes toward democracy and citizenship. The report is intended to inform education practitioners, policymakers,

parents, and concerned citizens of the status of civic education in the United States today. This brochure is based on the results from this report.

<http://www.majbill.vt.edu/polisci/brians/polsci.html>

Largest list of political science departments at universities and colleges in N. America, with website information and contact numbers.

<http://www.academy.umd.edu>

The James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership promotes leadership knowledge and practices that empower all those who strive for a just, equitable and thriving society, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented in leadership.

<http://www.manhattan-institute.org/>

The Manhattan Institute is a think tank whose mission is to develop and disseminate new ideas that foster greater economic choice and individual responsibility.

<http://www.acs.ohio-state.edu/glenninstitute/>

The John Glenn Institute has three related missions: To engage citizens of all ages in public service; To enhance the quality of public service; To disseminate the highest quality policy research.

<http://www.morehouse.edu/leadershipcenter/overview.htm>

The Leadership Center at Morehouse College, established in 1995 with a generous grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation, was created to reflect the ideal of the "Beloved Community" embraced by former Morehouse College President Benjamin E. Mays, Howard Thurman, Martin Luther King Jr. and other distinguished Morehouse alumni. "Beloved Community" provides the context for the cultivation of compassion, integrity and courage as primary values in the development of leaders. The Leadership Center's program also reflects Morehouse College President Walter E. Massey's vision to create a "World House at Morehouse" -- a microcosm of the knowledge, skills and character needed for future civil society.

<http://www.centerforpolitics.org>

The University of Virginia Center for Governmental Studies launched the national Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) as its signature program in 1998 to encourage greater interest and participation in American Democracy. The Youth Leadership Initiative officially became the Center for Politics in May 2002, a national citizenship education and engagement program designed to involve students in the American electoral and policymaking process. The Center for Politics develops classroom resources and social studies course units that are specifically linked to each state's unique academic

curriculum standards. Technology is the signature component and the primary tool that enables The Center for Politics to link schools and students with their counterparts in every region of a state and throughout the nation.

<http://www.civiced.org/>

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational corporation dedicated to fostering the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy.

State

<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/lrgov/adp/>

The goal of The Alaska Democracy Project is to expand and improve civics education in K-12 and to increase youth participation in programs and experiences that will deepen their interest and understanding of citizenship.

<http://www.sos.state.al.us/press/releases.cfm?trgtitem=61>

The Alabama New Millennium Project of the Alabama Secretary of State Jim Bennett created over 100 billboards as part of this project. Secretary Bennett traveled to various college campuses to help conduct voter registration drives and to speak to political science classes.

Federal

<http://www.congresslink.org/Campaign2004.htm>

For links to the most informative Internet sites about the 2004 presidential campaign

<http://www.house.gov/judiciary/107-370.pdf>

U.S. House of Representatives 107th Congress, 2nd Session report

<http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

[26 Amendment](#) The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

<http://www.senate.gov>

U.S. Senate 107th Congress, 2nd Session

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Acting under the directive of the leadership of the 104th Congress to make Federal legislative information freely available to the Internet public, a Library of Congress team brought the THOMAS World Wide Web system online in January 1995.

<http://www.congresslink.org/>

CongressLink provides information about the U.S. Congress -- how it works, its members and leaders, and the public policies it produces. The site also hosts lesson plans and reference and historical materials related to congressional topics. The Dirksen Congressional Center, a non-profit, nonpartisan research and educational organization, designed the site as a service for teachers of American government, history, and civics.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

Searchable site of recent news, policy, and history.

<http://www.census.gov/>

Searchable maps and data tables of voting information, congressional districting, and current population estimates and characteristics.

<http://www.fec.gov/>

The FEC provides federal data on elections and voting statistics.