ALL IN NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP REPORT

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the 2016 election, college student voter turnout rates compared to the previous similar election have continued to increase. Student leaders have been key drivers of increasing nonpartisan student democratic participation and college student voter turnout. In 2021, the <u>ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge</u> (ALL IN), a nonpartisan program of <u>Civic Nation</u>, started a process to learn more about student-led nonpartisan voter engagement efforts and surveyed students to learn how many of nonpartisan student voting groups existed, to what extent they are supported by their institutions, and what strategies, tactics, and ideas they use to engage their student body in <u>this report</u>. ALL IN is proud to release the updated second edition of the 2022 ALL IN Nonpartisan Student Voting Group Report.

The goal of this updated report is to increase awareness about nonpartisan student voting groups and to share key action items that campus employees and students can take to start, grow, and sustain nonpartisan student voting groups. While students representing 120 institutions have responded to our survey over the past two years, not every institution has a nonpartisan student voting group. At some institutions, a student participates in the broader campus voting coalition while at other institutions a student leads nonpartisan voter engagement work as a fellow for a nonpartisan nonprofit organization. The action items in this report are applicable to nonpartisan student voting groups, student efforts through a campus voting coalition, or students working with limited institutional support.

In 2022, ALL IN received 94 survey responses about nonpartisan student voting group activities for elections in 2021, a more than 50% increase in responses compared to our first survey following the 2020 election. Additionally, ALL IN completed 7 interviews with nonpartisan student voting group leaders and members. While these data represent a small sample size of self-reported data, they provide an important understanding on ways that institutions and nonprofit partners can support nonpartisan student voting groups.

In addition to self-reported data about nonpartisan student voting groups, this report includes action items that campus stakeholders, nonprofit organizations, and students can take to start, grow, and sustain their nonpartisan student voting group.

We are grateful for the students who completed the survey and were interviewed, the campus contacts who sent the survey to student leaders, and the nonprofit partners who helped distribute the survey and contributed ideas to this report. A full list of acknowledgements can be found at the end of the report. Questions about the report and requests to participate in future surveys and interviews can be directed to <u>allinchallenge@civicnation.org</u>.

THESE ARE THE KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2021 ELECTION CYCLE:

We are now aware of **87 nonpartisan student voting groups or efforts**, up from the 59 we identified following the 2020 election.

Institutions, nonprofit partners, and funders can provide **more financial and technical support to nonpartisan student voting groups**.

Institutions with a nonpartisan student voting group or effort in 2020 had an average 2020 campus voter turnout rate that was **3.7 points higher than other campuses**.

KEY FINDINGS

The data from the 94 survey responses show both positive developments and a concerning decreased level of engagement from key campus leaders and stakeholders in odd-years. This comes after record setting college student voter participation in 2020 when 66% of college students voted according to data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) at the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education at Tufts University

CAMPUS VOTING COALITIONS

89%
Student leaders reported that their institution has a campus-wide voting coalition, up from 80% in 2020.

28%
Student leaders reported participation of the institution's president's office in the campus-wide voting coalition, up from 11% in 2020.

61%
Nonpartisan student voting groups that are a part of the campus-wide voting coalition.

STUDENT VOTING GROUP WEBSITES

75%
Nonpartisan student voting groups have a website, similar to 2020.

56%
websites hosted on the institution's website, an increase from 53% in 2020.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

34%
Nonpartisan student voting groups reporting that they are very supported financially by the institution, up from 21% in 2020. Nearly the same percentage (18%) reported no financial support from the institution in 2020 and 2021.

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

89%
Nonpartisan student voting groups reported believing that the administration trusted them to an average or large extent, up from 82% in 2020.

ON-CAMPUS VOTING SITES

42%
Despite no national elections and few statewide elections, more nonpartisan student voting groups reported on-campus voting sites in 2021 compared to 36% in 2020.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

89%
Nonpartisan student voting groups that believe they are somewhat or very institutionalized, up from 80% in 2020.

POTENTIAL TRENDS TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Underrepresentation of MSIs and community colleges

While more Minority Serving Institutions and community colleges are represented in the 2022 report, they still remain underrepresented. ALL IN will pursue additional outreach efforts in 2023 to reach more students at these institutions.

Decreased campus stakeholder engagement

Across many key campus stakeholders, nonpartisan student voting group respondents reported less engagement in 2021 compared to 2020: including but not limited to the institution's administration, student government, deans, faculty, student affairs staff, campus staff, undergraduate and graduate students, Greek life, and diverse student groups and centers.

Less election messaging and coordination with nonpartisan student voting groups from campus leadership

While 88% of respondents indicated that campus leaders sent an email or text message about the election in 2020, only 54% of respondents reported that campus leadership sent election messaging in 2021. There was a nearly fourfold increase in responses that campus leaders didn't send any messages about elections in 2021. Nonpartisan student voting groups reported a nearly 50% decrease in campus leaders working with their groups on messaging compared to 2020.

Decrease in stakeholder communication

The percentage of respondents who reported average or strong communication with key campus stakeholders like the administration and faculty decreased from 87% to 83%.

Decreased financial support

Nonpartisan student voting groups reported that their 2021 budgets were 50% lower compared to 2020. Nearly 40% of nonpartisan student voting group respondents reported not knowing their budget, up from 24% in 2020.

FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

After consulting with nonprofit partners and student leaders, additional data about funding and student involvement were collected in the 2022 survey about the 2021 election cycle that was not collected about the 2020 election.

In addition to nonpartisan student voting groups needing increased financial support, student leaders need more access to and understanding of nonpartisan student voting group budgets. Student leaders can be more proactive to access financial information and campus staff supporting these efforts can include student leaders in financial processes.

Based on self-reported budgets, on average 4-year institutions had more financial support and had a greater percentage of their financial support come from the institution.

4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

$4,934
Average 2021 budget

60% coming from the institution

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

$3,350
Average 2021 budget

22% coming from the institution

39%
Student leaders reported that they were unsure of their nonpartisan student voting group's budget, an increase from 24% to 39% in 2021.

32%
Student leaders that reported their budget was between $0-$1,000, a 10 percentage point increase from 2020

29%
Student leaders reported their budget was greater than $1,000, a 25 percentage point decrease from 54% in 2020.

NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

STUDENT LEADERS

5 to 7

For both 4-year institutions and community colleges, nonpartisan student voting groups had roughly the same number of leaders at 7 and 5, respectively.

VOLUNTEERS

The number of student volunteers, however, had a greater disparity

with 4-year institutions reporting an average of 24 volunteers. Community college nonpartisan student voting groups reported only 3 volunteers on average.

Student leaders of CAU Votes at Clark Atlanta University

Average number of student volunteers

24

3

4-year institutions   2-year institutions
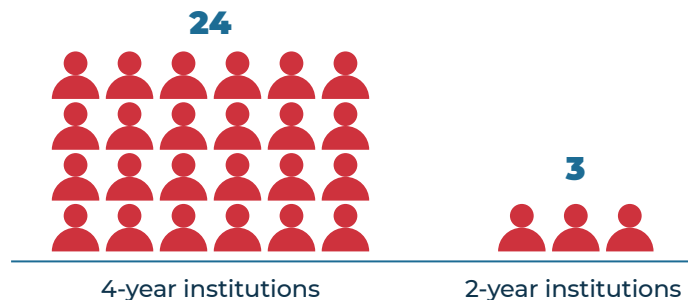
Numerous ideas and recommendations exist whether your institution is starting, growing, or sustaining a nonpartisan student voting group. Check out these actions for **campus employees** and these actions for **students** to determine your next steps. These actions include key recommendations for:

- Where to house the nonpartisan student voting group on campus

- How to access financial and non-financial resources

- How to grow your coalition and on-campus partnerships

- Where to find external partnerships and resources

- What specific strategies and tactics the nonpartisan student voting group can pursue

NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUPS

Click here to access the list of institutions that completed the survey, as well as, a list of nonpartisan student voting group names, social media handles, and websites where available.

ACTION ITEMS FOR CAMPUS FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATORS

Campus employees play a vital role in the establishment and growth of nonpartisan student voting groups which are instrumental in institutionalizing and increasing nonpartisan democratic engagement on campuses. Student leaders are key to ensuring the success of these nonpartisan efforts and the most successful nonpartisan student voter engagement groups have strong institutional support. Campus employees can use their positions of power and access to knowledge and resources to support students to start, grow, and sustain a nonpartisan student voting group.

SUPPORT THE CREATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF A NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP:

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

SERVE — Serve as an advisor to the nonpartisan student voting group or ensure that a campus employee has the responsibilities to support a nonpartisan student voter engagement in their job description.

HOUSE — House the nonpartisan student voting group in a center, department, or through the student government.

SUPPORT — Support students through the process to form an official student organization for the nonpartisan student voting group.

ADVISE — Advise students on creating a sustainable organizational structure that includes a leadership succession and volunteer recruitment plan.

FACILITATE — Facilitate introductions and organize meetings for nonpartisan student voting group leaders to meet with key campus stakeholders like the president or chancellor, deans, athletics department, department chairs, facilities management, and others.

INCLUDE — Include students and nonpartisan student voting group leaders in the campus-wide voting coalition and have students help create the coalition if one does not yet exist.

PROVIDE — Provide opportunities for student leaders to draft or provide edits to the campus democratic engagement action plan.

SHARE — Share the institution's NSLVE report with the student leaders and encourage the students to use the data to develop goals and strategies to close voting gaps by race and age.

FUNDING

- **INCLUDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT** in your budget to provide consistent funding to the nonpartisan student voting group each year.

- **USE FEDERAL WORK STUDY FUNDS** 7% of which must support civic engagement efforts, to create paid student positions for the nonpartisan student voting group.

- **HELP STUDENTS ORGANIZE** their own fundraising events and connect with the advancement office to help attract funders and donations.

- **WORK WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS** that support paid student fellowships.
    - Use the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition's Partner Directory to search for organizations that provide paid student fellowships.

- **PROVIDE SUPPORT** to the nonpartisan student voting group to create a budget and manage finances.

- **SHARE INFORMATION** about the budget for the nonpartisan student voting group with student leaders and include them on budgeting and accounting processes when possible.

- **CONNECT** with community partners for grants.
    - Join the *Ask Every Student Community* to also be the first to hear about new funding opportunities and virtual programming that can support your work.

DETERMINE the preferred method of communication for the nonpartisan student voting group leaders like email, group texts, Slack, or other communication systems.

ESTABLISH regularly scheduled meetings with nonpartisan student voting group leaders.

ASSIST the nonpartisan student voting group to create a website, hosted on the institution's web domain, and to start social media accounts.

TRAIN students on a process to develop and share meeting agendas before each meeting.

ENCOURAGE the institution's president, provost, or chancellor to meet directly with student voting leaders at least once a year.

INCLUDE input from the nonpartisan student voting group on email and text messages sent to the student body by campus leadership about elections and add links to the nonpartisan student voting group's and campus voting coalition's resources.

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ACTION ITEMS
FOR STUDENTS

Whether you're starting your institution's first nonpartisan student voting group or an established nonpartisan student voting group already exists, review these ideas and resources from campuses and nonprofit partners across the country to start and sustain your nonpartisan student voting group. Developing a nonpartisan student voting group can take time. Know that you're creating the foundation for future students to build on your work to deepen student-led nonpartisan voter engagement on your campus, a key effort to increasing student voter participation.

STARTING YOUR NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP

LOGISTICS & PEOPLE OPERATIONS

■ **DETERMINE WHERE TO HOUSE THE NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP.**
Explore the process for starting an official student group on campus, working through student government, or working with a civic engagement center. The most successful groups have official institutional support.

■ **DEVELOP A NAME**
for your nonpartisan student voting group connected to your institution's branding like Hawk the Vote at the University of Iowa or KVCC Votes at Kennebec Valley Community College.

■ **RECRUIT AN EXECUTIVE TEAM.**

■ **CREATE A GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS**
that the executive team can access and students, campus employees, or community partners can email.

■ **DETERMINE**
your organizational chart and position roles and responsibilities.

■ **REVIEW YOUR INSTITUTION'S NSLVE VOTING DATA.**
Check here to see if your institution has shared NSLVE data with ALL IN. Encourage your administration to authorize NSLVE if your institution isn't participating in the study.

■ **DEVELOP A MISSION STATEMENT, VISION, AND STRATEGIC PLAN.**

■ **PLAN YOUR LEADERSHIP**
successions and recruit and train students to fill your leadership roles when you leave the institution.

■ **SET UP A GROUP CHAT**
in WhatsApp, GroupMe, Slack, or another platform for easy communication between the executive team, volunteers, and with campus staff supporting your group.

■ **CHECK OUT THE SLSV COALITIONS**
Student Starter Pack to learn more about the nonprofit partners and resources available to support you.

BUILD CAPACITY

DEVELOP — Develop a training program for volunteers and connect with your local election officials for voter registration training support, materials, and expertise.

RECRUIT — Recruit volunteers and meet students where they are to include underrepresented students. Ensure your leadership team and volunteers are representative of the student body.

CONNECT — Connect with campus staff, administrators and faculty to build support as their access to resources, decision makers, and relationships are valuable assets.

BUILD — Build a website hosted on the institution's web domain. Check out these examples from <u>College of DuPage</u>, <u>University of Pennsylvania</u>, and <u>Williams College</u>.

CREATE — Create social media accounts and develop a social media plan to share trusted voter engagement information.
- Check out this SLSV Coalition created <u>Student Democratic Engagement Social Media Guide</u>.

ACCESS AND SHARING RESOURCES

PROCURE — Procure resources like laptops or tablets for online voter registration during events.

CREATE — Create signs to post at events to increase your brand awareness.

USE — Use QR codes so students can easily access online voter information or voter registration forms.

WORK — Work with campus leaders to secure initial funding to develop a budget and create paid positions for nonpartisan student voting group leaders.

ORGANIZE — Organize a fundraiser with a local business to diversify the revenue stream.

SEEK — Seek grants from nonprofit partners, especially for <u>Civic Holidays</u> by opting into the <u>Campus Takeover</u> program.

SEARCH — Search the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition's <u>Partner Directory</u> for nonprofit partner organizations, especially partners who support paid student fellows.

PROVIDE — Provide funding for stamps for mail-in ballot request applications and mail-in ballots.

- **CREATE PARTNERSHIPS**
  with key campus and community stakeholders including student leaders, faculty, staff, administrators, the athletics department, community and nonprofit partners, and local election officials.

  - Consider creating an advisory council with these key stakeholders to provide guidance, support, and introductions to other stakeholders.

- **CONNECT**
  with your institution's campus-wide voting coalition. If one doesn't exist, help recruit campus employees, students, and community partners to join.

- **SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT**
  of your institution's action plan. If one doesn't exist, review these action planning resources to start an action plan for your institution.

- **PLAN AND SCHEDULE**
  your first virtual or in-person voter engagement events.

- **ENSURE**
  the campus mail center is properly staffed and has the resources and policies ready to handle election mail as many states prohibit the forwarding of mailed ballots.

GROWING AND SUSTAINING YOUR NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP

GROW YOUR COALITION

- **JOIN THE Student Voting Network** which connects student voting leaders across the country to learn from each other and share best practices. Sign up here!

- **MEET WITH YOUR PRESIDENT OR CHANCELLOR** and ask them to sign the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. Check here to see if they have already signed.

- **CONNECT WITH THE ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT** and ask coaches to sign the ALL IN's Coaches Pledge for the 2022 Midterm Election. Encourage coaches to use the Voter Engagement Playbook to ensure student-athletes are registered to vote and have a plan to vote.

- **ENCOURAGE** the marching band and other arts departments to produce voter engagement content, like this University of Michigan Marching Band's halftime performance.

- **CONNECT WITH MARKETING STUDENTS** to enhance your nonpartisan student voting group's brand and online presence.

- **ASK STUDENT-ATHLETES** to attend events, appear in social media content, and share election information on their social media accounts.

- **ENCOURAGE** students and student-athletes to serve as poll workers like Weber State University's women's basketball team.

- **THINK OF CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS** and engaging programming for voter engagement events like including food trucks or having a pop-up thrift store.

- **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** with nearby colleges and universities and their nonpartisan student voting groups to organize joint events like debates and candidate forums. Search on social media for student groups and check to see if institutions have an ALL IN action plan with contact information.

- **CONNECT WITH LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS** to organize voter engagement events and presentations for high school students.

CONNECT WITH LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

DEVELOP
Develop a relationship with your local election officials and develop a student internship program or student-run polling location on or near campus. Check out this toolkit for more ways to engage with your local election officials.

WORK
Work with your local election officials to train volunteers on voter registration.

ORGANIZE
Organize voter education and voter engagement events with your local election officials.

SECURE
Work with Campus Vote Project and MTV's Campus Challenge to secure an on-campus voting site.

PLAN
Develop a plan to recruit more student poll workers by using this guide to build a youth poll worker project.

PROMOTE
Promote 866-Our-Vote so voters can access support if they encounter challenges with registering to vote or casting a ballot.

FOCUS
Focus on primary elections and local elections, too. Check out these resources about primary elections.

CELEBRATE CIVIC HOLIDAYS

☑ **SIGN UP YOUR INSTITUTION**
for the Civic Holidays and organize events for National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day.

■ By signing up to celebrate the Civic Holidays and opting in to Campus Takeover, partners are eligible for mini-grants to support their Civic Holiday events. You also get access to specific toolkits and additional guidance to plan your events.

CHECK OUT THE WORK OF DAY ON DEMOCRACY
and create opportunities for students to volunteer as poll workers or participate in celebratory get out the vote events on Election Day.

DEEPEN YOUR PROGRAMMING

DEVELOP a voter registration or pledge to vote challenge between student organizations like the University of Iowa's Hawk the Vote 90% Challenge or the Harvard Votes Challenges Pledge to 100%.

CONNECT WITH FACULTY departments to organize classroom presentations (class raps) about nonpartisan voting information.

ASK PROFESSORS to include key voting deadlines in their syllabi and to avoid scheduling tests, quizzes, papers, or major projects on or around Election Day.

REVIEW the Ask Every Student Playbook for ideas to deepen nonpartisan democratic engagement at your campus.

- Join the Ask Every Student Community to also be the first to hear about new funding opportunities and virtual programming that can support your work.

SEARCH the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition's Resource Library for additional strategies.

CHECK OUT the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition's guide to Decode the #StudentVote.

ORGANIZE in-person or virtual friend-to-friend text banking events. Check out event ideas here and this guide to organize texting events.

CO-HOST EVENTS with campus and community partners like the League of Women Voters, diverse student organizations, and Greek Life.

SHARE INFORMATION to help students secure their voter ID through Vote Riders.

ACCESS MORE RESOURCES AND USE YOUR VOICE

$$ **DEVELOP** additional sources of funding through the student government, a civic engagement center, the office of advancement, the president's office, or other departments on campus.

WRITE OP-EDS for local and state-wide publications about increasing support for student voters. Check out this SLSV Coalition created guide on writing op-eds.

ORGANIZE an advocacy day for voting rights at your state capital.

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Student volunteers of Hawk the Vote at the University of Iowa registering students to vote.

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Students Learn Students Vote Coalition

Student PIRGs

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