ALL IN TO VOTE

CAMPUS RESIDENCE LIFE VOTING TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to equip campus Residence Life professionals with nonpartisan resources and information to encourage and facilitate student voting on campus. By providing clear guidance and accessible tools, Residence Life staff can empower eligible students to participate confidently and responsibly in elections. Engaging students in the democratic process is a vital part of their civic development and contribution to the community. Additionally, voter registration outreach is supported by federal requirements under the Higher Education Act, which requires institutions to provide eligible students with opportunities to register to vote.

1. WHY VOTING MATTERS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Voting allows students to have a direct say in policies that affect their daily lives, from tuition costs and financial aid to local public transportation and housing regulations. It also fosters a sense of community responsibility and empowers students to advocate for issues they care about.

2. KEY VOTING INFORMATION TO SHARE

Residence Life staff can help students navigate the voting process by providing clear, concise, and nonpartisan information on the following:

Voter Registration

- **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:** Who can register to vote (age, citizenship, residency).
- **REGISTRATION DEADLINES:** Important dates for registering to vote (e.g., dates may vary by state as well as by method of registering — online, by mail, in person).
- **HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE:** Online, by mail, or in person; and in some circumstances when a notary is needed.
- **IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS:** The documents and identification needed to vote in the state a student resides in and is registering to vote in (e.g., proof of address, photo ID, last four digits of a Social Security Number).
  - Some states require voter materials to be notarized. Verify state requirements for notarization here.

Absentee and Early Voting

- **ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST PROCESS:** How to request and submit an absentee ballot if the student wishes to vote by that method.
- **EARLY VOTING OPTIONS:** Provide dates and locations for early voting on or near campus.
- **VOTING BY MAIL:** Provide students with the information on how to submit their vote by mail.

Polling Place Information

- **FINDING YOUR POLLING PLACE:** Instruct students on how to locate their designated polling site.
  - Campuses with off-site polling locations may consider rides or walks to the polls.
- **ON-CAMPUS POLLING LOCATIONS:** If applicable, provide students with information on any polling places located on campus.
- **VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS:** What forms of identification are needed at the polls.
- **BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS:** Provide students with information on where the local ballot drop-off locations are (and what ballots they can be used for).

3. STRATEGIES FOR RESIDENCE LIFE STAFF

Residence Life staff are uniquely positioned to engage students in the voting process. Here are some effective strategies and activities to educate and engage students on the voting process:

Civic Learning and Education Activities

- **BULLETIN BOARDS/DIGITAL SIGNAGE:** Display informative materials about voting deadlines and events in common areas.
- **DOOR HANGERS:** Create door hangers with QR codes to ALLINtoVote.org to help students access key election information during Move-In Day and National Voter Registration Day.
- **CIVIC HOLIDAYS:** Hold educational events to broadcast civic holidays.
- **INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS:** Host workshops or Q&A sessions on voter registration and election basics.
- **PEER-TO-PEER OUTREACH:** Encourage Resident Advisors (RAs) to discuss voting with their residents and provide RAs with accurate and nonpartisan information to answer questions their residents may have.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS:** Share important voting information and dates on campus social media outlets. For example nonpartisan language and graphics, check out the ALL IN Elections Communications Toolkit.
- **TABLING:** Have nonpartisan voter registration and election information tables available at all campus events.

Student Engagement Activities

- **CANDIDATE DEBATE WATCH PARTY:** Hold candidate watch parties in the residence halls (food/snacks are optional but recommended).
- **TRICK OR VOTE:** Hand out candy and voting information to students around campus during Halloween.
- **WALK/RUN/MARCH TO THE POLLS:** Allow students to sign up to walk as a group to the local polls. You can hold a party on campus when all the students return from voting to celebrate their civic engagement.
- **ABSEN-" TEA" VOTER PARTY:** An opportunity for all students who are voting absentee to fill out their ballots together and then throw a party for them in celebration.
- **PLEDGE TO VOTE COMPETITION:** Create a competition between student groups to see who can get the most people to pledge to vote. Either give the winning group a reward of your choice or a reward of their choice. For support, you can use this Pledge to Vote flyer to post in designated spaces in residence halls.
- **POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT:** Encourage students to sign up to be poll workers.

Find more student engagement activities using ALL IN's program example library.

4. ADDRESSING COMMON STUDENT QUESTIONS

Residence life staff should be able to answer common student questions about participating in elections and direct them to trusted nonpartisan sources for voter information.

"WHERE DO I REGISTER?"
Direct students to online state voter registration portals or campus registration drives. Students legally can choose to vote in their campus community or where they consider home.

"CAN I VOTE IF I LIVE ON CAMPUS?"
Yes, students can register to vote using their campus address. Check with your campus voting coalition or local election officials about the correct address to use. In some cases, the address for voter registration is different from the address a student uses to receive mail.

"HOW DO I VOTE IF I MOVE OFF CAMPUS?"
Provide students with the information necessary to change their address and inform them of any change in their voting district.

HOW DO I GET AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?"
Provide information on how to request an absentee ballot from their home state or their current state of residence.

"I'M NOT SURE IF I'M REGISTERED."
Guide students to state voter registration tools and portals.

"WHAT IF I'M FROM OUT OF STATE?"
Explain options for voting absentee in their home state or registering to vote in their campus state.

5. WAYS TO USE/IMPLEMENT THIS INFORMATION

This section details actionable ways that Residence Life staff and RAs can use this toolkit to promote student engagement, nonpartisan voter registration, and civic learning.

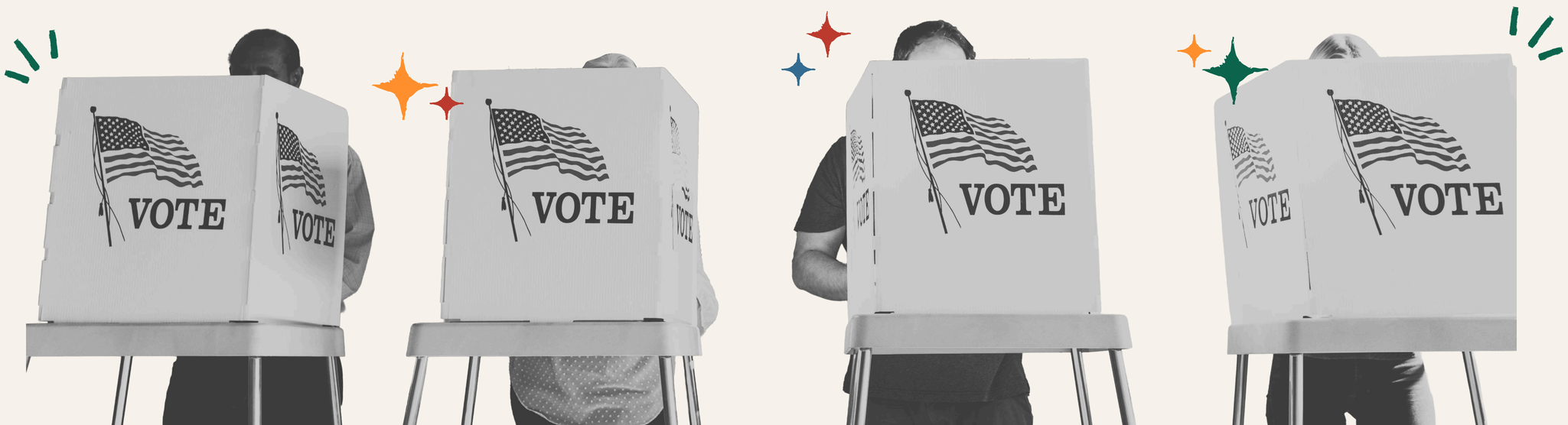
- **RA TRAINING:** During annual Resident Life staff training and RA training, create space to include a voting overview to provide everyone with a baseline understanding.
- **PACKING LIST:** Add information on materials students should bring to campus if they plan on voting to the suggested packing list for move-in.
- **MOVING OFF CAMPUS:** Remind students if/when they move into off-campus housing, they must update their registration.
- **COLLABORATION WITH HOUSING CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT:** Use move-in packets or digital check-in processes to include voter registration information.
- **RA AS A RESOURCE:** Formalize the role of a RA as a nonpartisan resource for basic voting information. Include this in RA job descriptions and training.

6. USEFUL RESOURCES

When in doubt, residence life staff can utilize the following resources to help support their students with nonpartisan voting information.

- **ALLINTOVOTE.ORG:** ALL IN's one-stop shop to register to vote, pledge to vote, and get more information about voting and nonpartisan civic engagement
- **VOTE411:** Nonpartisan election information
- **ALL IN STUDENT VOTE HANDBOOK:** In this handbook, leaders will find important voting information to provide to students and ideas on how to communicate and to encourage their participation in elections.
- **ALL IN NONPARTISAN STUDENT VOTING GROUP TOOLKIT:** In 2021, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge (ALL IN), started a process to learn more about nonpartisan voter engagement efforts and surveyed to learn how many 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 this toolkit. Since then, ALL IN has updated guidance based on campus feedback.
- **VOTERIDERS:** A nonpartisan, non-profit organization with a mission to ensure that all citizens are able to exercise their freedom to vote. VoteRiders informs and helps citizens to secure their voter ID, as well as inspires and supports organizations, local volunteers, and communities to sustain voter ID education and assistance efforts.

By actively promoting civic engagement, Resident Life staff can empower students to become informed and active participants in our democracy.

Acknowledgement:

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