

Houston Community College

Voter Friendly Campus

Action Plan

I. Executive Summary

Houston Community College (HCC) is in Houston, Texas. As one of the largest community colleges in the nation. HCC has served the Greater Houston area for over four decades with a proud heritage of diversity, inclusion, and of providing critical support and economic growth to our community. We deliver instruction to nearly 85,000 students each academic year in more than 300 associate degree and certificate programs.

Houston Community College supports educating our students and community on the importance of voting. This plan's purpose is to educate and increase the quality and quantity of engagement from our students, staff, faculty, and community members to become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform. This is to be accomplished through voter education outreach, voter registration drives, and increasing publicity and marketing.

These efforts are housed within the Student Services department which consists of Enrollment Services, Academic Advising, and specifically within Student Life and Recreational Sports department due to the student organizations and student engagement level. It is also in collaboration with instructional and non-profit organizations like Jolt Initiative.

This plan will specifically run from May 2024 to May 2025. Efforts have already been made to increase awareness and students registered to vote by tabling during campus events. These efforts will continue to prepare for next elections and gather data. According to The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data portal, there has been an increase in electoral participation in two-year public institutions.

An evaluation of the plan and outcome will be conducted to measure the impact of the efforts and used for future planning and continued growth.

II. Leadership

This work is supported by various key holders at Houston Community College. It is a collaboration between several Student Services departments, Academic Affairs and non-profit organizations. It is mainly led by Student Services which consists of the Dean of Student Services, Associate Dean of Student Engagement, Student Life Coordinator, Admission Advisors, Enrollment Services, and Academic Advisors. Their participation is critical due to their daily interaction with students. Specifically, the Student Life Coordinator who engages daily with student organization leaders. Student leaders are going to be the main supporters in promoting and leading the efforts. Student involvement is highly important since they interact with students and have a big influence in student participation. Community involvement in this

initiative is collaborating with Jolt Initiatives, League of Women Voters, Battle Ground Texas, and Harris Voters; all local non-profit organizations. They are going to support by hosting various workshops for our students and tabling events to connect students with information and registered to vote.

III. Commitment

Houston Community College has established various opportunities to improve engagement that align with the 1998 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965 which requires institutions of higher education to engage in certain voter registration activities.

The Service-Learning Program (SLP) at HCC is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community services with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Students become active contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

The Center of Civic Engagement focuses on strengthening democratic citizenship and participation education for HCC students, faculty, staff, and the Houston community at large. This is to be accomplished through voter education outreach, voter registration drives, and voter mobilization. HCC Student Government Associations understand the importance of students becoming civically engaged in the community and works closely with Student Life and HCC to inform students about opportunities to engage, inform, and empower knowledgeable citizens who understand the voting process.

The Department of Student Life in collaboration with the Student Government Association and Student Services Department hosted various workshops in 2022 and collaborated with various organizations to bring additional resources to our students.

We hosted Civic Engagement Tuesdays on campus, as part of our educational workshops, which consisted of speakers, activities, and registering to vote.

- **Tuesday, October 4, Importance of Voting Workshop & Taco Tuesday**
 - Students heard from guest speakers about their journey and their reason of the importance on voting
 - Learned about the impact their vote can have
 - Students had an opportunity to share their reason and if they are able to vote or not
 - Students who are not able to vote stated that they will educate other people who can vote and hopefully it will encourage them to vote
 - Having Tacos was a big hit
 - Number of Participants: 31 students
- **Tuesday, October 11, How to Vote, Election Dates, Voting Sites**
 - Students learned about the process on voting. What to expect the day of
 - They were provided information on the various acceptable documents and identification
 - Students learned about the webpage [Vote411](#) and all the resources and information they can find on that page

- o They were able to search if they are registered to vote and the address on file
- o Learned about the various voting sites available
- o Number of Participants: 32 students
- **Tuesday, October 18, Meet and Learn About Your Candidates**
 - o Our Student Government Association were able to assist in contacting candidates inviting them to our college to talk to our students
 - o Students had an opportunity to engage and ask the candidates questions
 - o Number of Participants: 30 students

Registration drives were available at our campus both indoor and outdoor, as well as during major events. Drives consisted of voter registration and vote sign ups.

*Voter Registration: People who

- Registered to vote
- Requested a replacement card
- Updated their voter registration

*Vote Signups: (Pledges) People who

- Already registered & make the promise (pledge) to vote
- Ineligible to vote (too young, undocumented, etc.) but pledge to do their part by either volunteering, getting deputized to register voters, etc.
 - Getting involved in one of their initiatives (HS Club, University Chapel or Poder Quince, Arriba Las Mujeres)

In 2022-2024 non-partisan organizations were invited to various events happening on campus for tabling to register students to vote and speak to our students about Civic Engagement.

- HCC and City of Houston Career Fair-Jolt Tabling
- Splash Into Summer Jolt Tabling
- Meeting with Jolt to Brainstorm Events & Tabling
- Engineering Academy Meet & Greet-Jolt talked to our students
- Voter Registration Drives at HCC Southeast, Southwest, and other HCC colleges
- Hispanic Heritage Month-Jolt Tabling
- HCC and City of Houston Career Fair-Jolt Tabling

These partnerships are set to persist in furthering the education of our students, faculty, and staff on the significance of civic involvement. The workshops and registration initiatives proved to be highly effective, prompting our Student Life Department, Student Government Association, and Student Services Department to sustain these endeavors. Our focus will remain on fostering collaborations with both on-campus and off-campus allies to devise and execute programs, advocate for voters, and uphold the hosting of registration drives and workshops.

IV. Landscape

Houston Community College is a diverse institution. We are #1 among all community colleges in providing associate degrees to minorities and in educating international students, with more than 10 percent of our student population coming from outside the USA. HCC is a minority-serving

institution with students representing the full diversity of our region, with more than 10 percent of our student population coming from outside the USA. Our diverse population ranges from Hispanic approximately 38%, African American approximately 26%, White approximately 14%, and Asian approximately 12%.

HCC provides various opportunities to incorporate teaching and civic engagement for our students. Professors in Government courses incorporate information about civic engagement, voting, how to register to vote, and provide extra credit or other incentives to students who are registered to vote.

We recognize that transportation is an issue for our students to get to the polls. HCC assists with this barrier by being a voting site. Early voting and regular voting is available at our institution.

The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data portal shows there has been an increase in electoral participation in two-year public institutions.

2 Year Public Institution	2016	2018	2020
Registration Rate	68%	65%	75%
Voting Rate	47%	35%	57%
Yield Rate	71%	54%	76%

Institutional efforts will continue by Academic Affairs and Student Services collaborating and implementing programming to educate and increase engagement from our students.

V. & VI. Goals & Strategies

The general goals for Houston Community College with this action plan is to:

Short term goals:

- Increase student engagement and participation related to civic engagement.
 - **Strategy:** Collaborate with various community organizations on campus and off campus. Joint Initiative and League of Women Voters, non-profit organizations, have demonstrated a great interest in joining efforts to be on campus and work with our students. Capture data of students engaging with non-profit organizations
- Increase Civic Engagement Participation on campus by hosting approximately three educational workshops for students, faculty, and staff
 - **Strategy:** Conduct various workshops for our students, faculty, and staff that focus on
 - **Workshop Series: Civic Engagement and Voting Registration Drive**
 - **Workshop 1: Understanding Civic Engagement**
 - **Educational Focus Point:** Introduce participants to the concept of civic engagement, emphasizing its importance in democracy.
 - Workshop Content:
 - Definition and significance of civic engagement.

- o Exploring various forms of civic engagement (voting, community volunteering, activism).
- o Case studies highlighting the impact of civic engagement on social change.
- o Interactive activities to assess participants' understanding and encourage discussion.
- **Workshop 2: The Power of Voting**
 - **Educational Focus Point:** Educate participants about the significance of voting as a fundamental right and responsibility.
 - Workshop Content:
 - o Importance of voting in democratic societies.
 - o Historical context of voting rights movements.
 - o Exploring the voting process: registration, absentee ballots, polling stations.
 - o Addressing common misconceptions and barriers to voting.
 - o Role-playing scenarios to simulate the voting experience.
- **Workshop 3: Voter Registration Drive**
 - **Educational Focus Point:** Empower participants to actively participate in voter registration drives and initiatives.
 - Workshop Content:
 - o Overview of voter registration requirements and procedures.
 - o Strategies for conducting effective voter registration drives.
 - o Utilizing technology and social media platforms for voter outreach.
 - o Legal considerations and ethical guidelines for voter registration activities.
 - o Practical exercises to develop outreach materials and organize registration events.
- **Workshop 4: Advocacy and Mobilization**
 - **Educational Focus Point:** Equip participants with advocacy skills to mobilize their communities for increased voter participation.
 - Workshop Content:
 - o Understanding advocacy and its role in civic engagement.
 - o Identifying key issues and stakeholders in voter mobilization efforts.

- o Developing messaging and communication strategies to promote voter registration and turnout.
- o Building coalitions and partnerships with community organizations and stakeholders.
- o Action planning: creating a roadmap for sustained advocacy and mobilization efforts beyond the workshop series.

Goal: Increase the number of students, faculty, and staff registered to vote

- **Strategy:** Conduct a survey prior to workshops to capture data on number of students, faculty, and staff registered to vote. Conduct a post-survey to capture data of student, faculty, and staff registered to vote after implementation of the strategies. Compare data from both surveys.

Long Term Goals:

- **Civic Engagement Community Walk**
 - o Student Life will host a workshop to engage community members by hosting a walk in the community that ends at the college with resources available for them to learn more about civic engagement and have the option to register to vote.
- **Educational Workshops (up to three)**
 - o Student Life alongside the Student Government will collaborate with community organizations to bring community workshops for students, faculty, staff, and the community to learn more about civic engagement.
- **Civic Engagement Education/ Voter Registration Tabling at Community Events**
 - o Student Life alongside the Student Government will host community events for the local community members to come and get involved with the college. A component of the event will be to have a local non-profit organization have a table for the community members to have the option to register to vote and find out more information about civic engagement.

Voter Registration and Engagement Efforts will Include

- Invite Student Government Association leaders to New Student Orientation to conduct campus tours and talk about voting and provide registration forms
- Tabling events throughout the semester
- Send out campus-wide announcements regarding voting registration deadlines, voter registrations drives, and information about upcoming elections
- Host various registration drives and events, especially during Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day
- Continue to host early voting on our campus
- Email voting information and links to voter registration forms

- Utilize social media to publicize voting information
- Share information with student organizations

VII. Reporting

The primary data source will consist of the surveys that will be conducted, tracking number of participants at the various events that will be hosted, and most importantly utilizing the data from The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE).

VIII. Evaluation

Evaluation is extremely important and necessary to determine the impact of the civic engagement efforts associated with this plan. The purpose is to evaluate if there was an increase on the goals mentioned as part of the action plans. The audience will be administrators, staff, faculty, community partners, students, and everyone who played a key role in executing this action plan. Data will be collected to analyze and evaluate the impact of the efforts and share what worked and what needs improvement.