

Vice President for Student Affairs Office  
Lower Level, Student Union  
(620) 332-5429



## **Voter Engagement Plan**

### **Executive Summary**

At Independence Community College (ICC), civic and democratic engagement are foundational principles on which the college will continue to build a bright future. Through a complete change in campus leadership, the College has reinvested in the civic engagement principles it was founded on over 100 years ago. Since the arrival of our new Vice President for Student Affairs, ICC has earnestly begun investing in voter registration resources and educational materials ahead of the important 2020 election. This work is supported by a large framework of individuals encompassing faculty, athletic coaches, university administration, and community partners. This voter engagement plan was developed by a committee of committed individuals hoping to see a systematic change in how our students prepare for and participate in the 2020 election. As this is our first time drafting such a plan, we have striven to make our goals achievable and measurable to establish a baseline for future growth.

Embedding this work in the Division of Student Affairs has been essential to the success of this program. Foundations to our work include: voter registration at key events including orientation and move-in; investing in programs like TurboVote in order to promote voter registration for the first time electronically; hosting debate watch parties and local election debates; and transitioning election day to a virtual class setting only in order to promote students going to the polls and voting the day of the election.

We've recently requested our NSLVE data and will use this information to set more concrete goals related to voter participation upon receiving the report. Along with the voter engagement plan, our committee has been actively participating in the Census in our community, which presently has more individuals registered for the Census than the state and national averages, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **2020 Focus Areas**

Independence Community College is committed to helping students engage in the 2020 election through voter registration, voter education, and voter engagement. To accomplish these three goals, Independence Community College is committed to the following

- 1) Integrate TurboVote as ICC's one-stop shop for voter registration.
  - a. ICC will contract with TurboVote for voter registration during the Spring 2020 semester.
  - b. TurboVote will be prominently featured on the ICC webpage and a voter landing page will be created.
  - c. TurboVote will be featured throughout campus and integrated into the college experience course.
  
- 2) Secure accurate college voter information.
  - a. ICC will become a registered campus with the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) in order to benchmark voter registration initiatives.
  - b. ICC will participate in local, state, and national efforts to track college student voting registration and turnout.
  
- 3) Create cross-campus collaborations to promote voter registration, education, and engagement.
  - a. Incorporate voter registration and education initiatives into our campus strategic planning activities.
  - b. Student Affairs will partner with Academic Affairs to host debate watch parties and informative talks on voter issues impacting college students.
  - c. Faculty, staff, and students will be encouraged to participate in voter registration drives, celebrations for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, Constitution Day and election night watch parties.
  - d. Student Affairs will partner with Academic Affairs to make sure that the 2020 election day is a virtual class only day to encourage more students to utilize their time to vote.

## **Commitment**

Independence Community College continues to incorporate civic engagement initiatives like the three listed in this plan into the campus strategic plan. Civic Responsibility is a stated general education outcome at ICC, which states students "will be able to develop a civic identity that promotes the quality of life in a community."

## **Landscape**

During previous election cycles, ICC has hosted voter registration drives and get out the vote efforts in conjunction with our local elected officials. The campus has also annually participated in Constitution Day, which is federally mandated.

Independence Community College continues to focus on growing service-learning and civic responsibility initiatives, giving students a hands-on learning experience with real world implications.

The campus also recently re-chartered the Student Government Association, which will be transitioning power to a new slate of officers for the first time at the end of the Spring 2022 semester. These student leaders continue to contribute to the solid democratic foundation being built on campus.

Given all of these unique perspectives, voter education and engagement are critical going into the Fall 2020 semester. With the added COVID-19 dynamic, it will continue to be important to have mobile and virtual tools to engage students with. This is why ICC is proud to launch initiatives like TurboVote this year to help students navigate the complexities of voter registration no matter where they are.

## **Leadership**

Voter engagement initiatives are coordinated and executed primarily through the Division of Student Affairs at ICC. Cross-divisional efforts have yielded tremendous results and buy-in. We presently have representation from a wide variety of areas, including:

- Student Affairs
- Student Government Association
- Athletics
- Residential Life
- Admissions and Advising
- Library
- Academic Affairs