

**Michigan State University
2024 Civic Action Plan**

Executive Summary:

The MSU Civic Action Plan for 2024 was developed by Michigan State University – MSUvote Campus and Community Initiative and was written specifically by Renee C. Brown, Executive Director of the Center for Community Engaged Learning and Suchitra Webster, Director of Community and Student Relations. Renee and Suchitra also each serve in the role of Co-Director for the MSUvote Campus and Community Initiative. MSUvote is a non-partisan campus and community coalition with the mission of increasing the number of registered student voters, educating students on candidates and issues, and bolstering student participation on Election Day. The MSU Civic Action Plan was developed with input from the MSUvote Initiative which includes faculty, staff, students, and partners representing the following colleges/departments/organizations and community organizations:

- Associated Student of Michigan State University (ASMSU), MSU’s Student Government
- Center for Community Engaged Learning
- City of East Lansing, Clerk’s Office
- College of Communication Arts & Sciences
- College of Education, Department of Teacher Preparation
- College of Human Medicine
- College of Law
- College of Music
- College of Social Sciences, Political Science Department
- Community and Student Engagement
- Council of Graduate Students
- Office of Government Relations
- Institute of Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR)
- League of Women Voters
- Office of Sustainability 
- PIRGIM Campus Action
- Prevention, Outreach and Education Department
- Spartan Athletics, Department of Student-Athlete Development and Support Services
- Student Development & Leadership
- Student Life and Engagement, Department of Residence Education and Housing Services
- University Outreach & Engagement
- Womens* Student Services

MSUvote has existed for over 25 years. Sharing a strong and effective partnership with the Michigan Secretary of State, East Lansing City Clerk, and the Ingham County Clerk, the initiative is active with the Campus Vote Project, Students Learn Students Vote, All In Democracy Challenge, Ask Every Student, and Vote Early and other national partners. MSUvote has been engaged with the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) for the past 10 years.

Working closely with all 17 degree-granting colleges that comprise Michigan State University and with several Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) MSUvote assures that democratic engagement is core to the student experience. MSUvote coordinates with and receives support from the MSU Board of Trustees, MSU Office of the President, the MSU Office of the Provost, the Council of Deans, MSU Athletics, the Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU), the MSU Student Radio Station 89FM – WDBM, the Council of Graduate Students, University Outreach & Engagement and Student Life and Engagement. The coalition actively collaborates with colleagues at other universities through engagement with the Big Ten Conference Democratic Engagement Partners.

Student Interns and Fellows play a key role in setting MSUvote goals and institutional voting, as well as implementing projects to meet those goals. Students are represented equally in the coalition and play lead roles on multiple initiatives.

The MSU Civic Action Plan will be implemented during 2024-2025 academic year and will impact all students (residential, international, undergraduate, graduate, and online). The goals of this plan include:

- Expanding existing efforts of MSUvote to be more inclusive and with a focus on student democratic engagement and civic skills building and engagement.
- Increasing the number of registered student voters
- Educating students on candidates and issues
- Bolstering student participation on Election Day

Michigan State University's Civic Action Plan is aligned with the MSU Strategic Plan around themes of Student Success and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The MSU Civic Action plan aligns with the university's objectives of providing an excellent educational experience for all students, one that prepares them for postgraduate success and increases proactive engagement with historically underrepresented and underserved communities based on partnership and mutual learning. The MSU Civic Action Plan uses the framework described in Strengthening American Democracy, Fourth Edition.

MSU's 2024 Civic Action Plan will be implemented by the Center for Community Engaged Learning, the Office of Community and Student Relations, and members of the MSU Campus and Community Initiative. MSU Student Life & Engagement provides resources for a campus Democratic Engagement Coordinator who will lead many of the efforts outlined in our plan. Funding for activities will come from a grant from Ask Every Student, the Executive Vice President of Student Life & Engagement, and the Vice Provost for University Outreach & Engagement.

Leadership:

The MSUvote Campus and Community Initiative is supported at the highest administrative levels with the following administrators providing executive level advising and resource coordination:

- Dr. Kevin Guskiewicz, President
- Vennie Gore, Senior Vice President for Student Life & Engagement
- Dr. Allyn Shaw, Assistant Vice President for Student Leadership & Engagement and Dean of Students
- Dr. Janet Lillie, Assistant Vice President for Community Relations
- Dr. Thomas D. Jeitschko, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Kwesi Brookins, Vice Provost for Outreach & Engagement

The MSUvote Campus and Community Initiative is led by co-chairs, Renee Brown, Executive Director of the Center for Community Engaged Learning and Suchitra Webster, Director of Community and Student Relations. There is a full-time democratic engagement coordinator who jointly reports to the co-directors. The design of co-directors ensures a succession plan as a change in leadership roles will be unlikely to impact the two co-directors and coordinator at the same time. If any portion of the three-part leadership changes, the executive advising team will address any vacancies. Additionally, there are members of the initiative that play long-term and specific roles who are positioned to step up and assume additional responsibilities. The current initiative membership includes:

Staff

- Renee Brown, Center for Community Engaged Learning
- Suchitra Webster, Community and Student Relations
- Erin Kramer, Community and Student Relations
- Candace Metzger, CVP (Campus Vote Project) Fellow and MI SOS Collegiate Task Force (student)
- Aiden Bourgeau, MSUvote Intern (student)
- Ella McKanna, CVP Fellow (student)

Committee Members

- John Dowell, staff retiree
- Arnold Weinfeld, MSU Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (faculty)
- Marilyn Wilson, League of Women Voters (community partner)
- Tina Houghton, Center for Community Engaged Learning (staff)
- Matea Caluk, Residence Education and Hospitality Services (staff)
- Brian Johnson, Interdisciplinary Research (faculty)
- Catherine Grosso, College of Law (faculty)
- Amy Gordon, East Lansing Clerk's Office (community partner)
- Marie Wicks, East Lansing City Clerk (community partner)
- Sarah Reckhow, Political Science (faculty)
- Erica Phillipich, College of Human Medicine (staff)
- Landon Myers, Campus Vote Project (community partner)
- Evan Wahmhoff, PIRGS (student)
- Donald Donagrandi, Campus Dining (staff)
- Darwin Taylor, Student Athletes Support Services (staff)
- LaShondra Hemphill, Prevention, Outreach, and Education Department (staff)

The members of the MSUvote Campus and Community Coalition facilitated by the coalition co-chairs, serve as the leaders for the implementation of this plan.

MSUvote will continue to build relationships and opportunities with national student voting organizations including NSLVE, the All In Democracy Challenge, the Voter Friendly Campus Initiative, Ask Every Student, Campus Vote Project, and Civic Holidays Organization. These ongoing partnerships provide national learning networks, create fellowships for students, and develop programs that advance this work.

MSUvote offers student internships and fellowships each year. This will continue during the 2024-2025 academic year. In addition to Campus Vote Project Fellowships MSUvote will also employ interns. Student fellows and interns are supervised by the initiative's co-directors. MSUvote interns will continue to assist with website management, social media, and events.

Commitment:

President Guskiewicz has signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. Along with the administrative leader's advisement, he supports MSUvote's commitment to full campus non-partisan engagement.

Michigan State University continues to demonstrate a commitment to student voter engagement in the ongoing appointment of co-directors to lead the initiative and by funding a full-time campus democratic engagement coordinator. Additionally, the Associate Provost for University Outreach & Engagement (UOE) and the Senior Vice President for Student Life &

Engagement continue to allocate funding to support student interns. The university is a long-standing partner with the National Study of Student Learning & Voter Engagement. The Associate Provost for UOE serves as the MSU Research Designee for the NSLVE Partnership.

The efforts of MSUvote align with the mission of the institution:

Michigan State University, a member of the Association of American Universities and one of the top one hundred research universities in the world, was founded in 1855. An inclusive, academic community known for traditionally strong academic disciplines and professional programs, and a liberal arts foundation, MSU's cross- and interdisciplinary enterprises connect the sciences, humanities, and professions in practical, sustainable, and innovative ways to address society's rapidly changing needs.

As a public, research-intensive, land-grant university funded in part by the state of Michigan, the university's mission is to advance knowledge and transform lives by:

- providing outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to promising, qualified students to prepare them to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders
- conducting research of the highest caliber that seeks to answer questions and create solutions to expand human understanding and make a positive difference, both locally and globally
- advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world

Further, one of MSU's key undergraduate learning goals is Effective Citizenship.

The MSU graduate:

- Participates as a member of local, national, and global communities and has the capacity to lead in an increasingly interdependent world.
- Understands the structures of local, national, and global governance systems and acts effectively within those structures in both individual and collaborative ways.
- Applies knowledge and abilities to solve societal problems in ethical ways.

The Center for Community Engaged Learning promotes democratic engagement as a form of community-engaged learning. Students track their democratic engagement efforts SpartansVolunteer platform. Students who have engaged in democratic and civic education

(debate watches, candidate forms, serving as poll workers, election protection training...) in and beyond the classroom are eligible for [annual recognition](#) from the Office of the President.

MSUvote partners with others across campus and in the community to offer civic engagement dialogues, candidate panels, registration drives, get out the vote efforts, voter guides, and more.

Academic Courses that specifically include civic/democratic engagement and election education have consistently been offered in the following academic colleges/departments/programs:

- First Year Writing
- Communications
- James Madison College
- Journalism
- Political Science

Landscape:

MSU’s student voting rates, as reported in the 2020 and 2022 NSLVE Campus Report, improved 24.4% and 7.4% over the 2016 and 2018 student voting rates, respectively. This increase marked the MSU student voting rate at 76.6% total for the 2020 election and 46.4% for the 2022 election, both higher than the national average on college campuses and earning MSU the **Most Improved Voting Rates** recognition for the State of Michigan.

Student voting rates for 2022 across racial and ethnic categories saw an average of 11% increase in voting rate, with the largest increase being among American Indian/Alaska Native at 14%, and smallest increase being Asian students at 7%. Along with Asian students, MSU’s largest demographics of minority students are black and Hispanic, which each saw an increase of 13% and 10%, respectively, that constitutes an average turnout rate between the latter two of 46%.

	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Change
Asian	1,889	126	6	2,593	734	28	3,086	2,082	67	1,589	574	36	↑ 7
American Indian/ Alaska Native	119	27	22	97	35	36	118	81	68	57	29	50	↑14
Black	2,746	402	14	3,149	1,106	35	3,309	2,323	70	1,424	687	48	↑13
Hispanic	1,716	230	13	2,200	738	33	2,626	1,880	71	1,249	550	44	↑10

2024 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

Students aged 18-24, which accounts for 85% of the student population, saw an overall increase of 4.5% in voting, while the lowest rate occurred in students aged 30-39 at 39%, which was a decrease in 2022 from 2018's 52%. Both female and male voting rate increased by 11% and 3%, respectively, putting the overall female rate at 59% and male rate at 39%.

	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	
18-21	26,122	2,710	10	28,303	10,207	36	29,701	23,614	79	31,072	12,924	41	↑ 5
22-24	7,392	1,083	14	6,454	2,613	40	6,578	4,774	72	7,000	3,166	45	↑ 4
25-29	4,133	849	20	3,480	1,613	46	3,904	2,661	68	3,980	1,672	42	↓ -4
30-39	2,376	724	30	1,778	928	52	1,877	1,183	63	2,015	791	39	↓ -12
40-49	712	322	45	625	418	66	570	417	73	577	317	54	↓ -11
50+	302	194	64	242	179	73	249	191	76	193	120	62	↓ -11

2024 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

While undergraduate voting rates increased by 8% and graduate rates decreased by 5%, both overall voting rates are 44%. Among undergraduate classes, freshmen had the lowest voting rate of 33%, a rate unchanged since 2018, while Sophomore and Upperclassmen increased by 8% and 7%, respectively.

	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022 Rate Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	
EDUCATION LEVEL													
Undergraduate	31,586	3,546	11	33,338	12,142	36	34,326	26,742	77	27,114	12,082	44	↑ 8
Graduate	8,304	1,987	23	7,336	3,713	50	8,324	5,932	71	8,407	3,759	44	↓ -5
Class Unknown	1,147	349	30	208	103	49	229	166	72	9,316	3,077	33	↓ -16
CLASS YEAR													
Freshman	7,277	610	8	8,035	2,739	34	7,912	6,343	80	3,441	1,145	33	→ 0
Sophomore	7,142	690	9	7,873	2,510	31	8,060	6,329	78	4,809	1,964	40	↑ 8
Upperclassman	17,211	2,254	13	17,472	6,919	39	18,471	14,175	76	18,364	8,737	47	↑ 7

2024 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

The lower Freshman rate of voting will likely improve with the cooperation of the East Lansing City Clerk, who is operating under Michigan's new voting laws that will be in effect for the 2024 Presidential Election, including:

- Early Voting – Clerks must provide 9 days of early voting for 8 hours a day ahead of elections, starting the second Saturday before the election until the Sunday before.
- Absentee Ballot Tracking and Processing – Voters can sign up to receive email and text alerts tracking in the status of their submitted ballots.
- Permanent Absentee Voting – Michigan voters can choose to get no-reason absentee ballots for all future elections.

The City of East Lansing has agreed to place the city's Early Voting location on campus, allowing students, particularly Freshmen who are required to live on campus, with easier and longer access to voting locations and registration services. Additionally, MSUvote is cooperating with student organizations (to include racial/ethnic/minority organizations), a major source of socialization for students, to coordinate times to collectively vote together to lower the barrier of voting anxiety. MSUvote is also hosting information booths and sessions for students answering questions about registration and new voting regulations.

Goals:

Short-term 2024-2026:

- By 2024 General Election, the MSU student voting rates will increase by 3% and improve student voting gaps by race/ethnicity by working with multicultural student orgs and informational sessions and presentations to their members.
- By the 2024 General Election, MSU will develop resources and support, in the form of informational material on new voter guidelines and the easing of registration requirements, for all 17 degree-granting colleges. This information is to be shared with all faculty, advisors, and administrators and will be showcased in college communications, including social media. Colleges will be asked to report back on how these materials were utilized and shared.
- By the 2024 General Election, MSUvote will send a voting information packet to all Registered Student Organizations and will gauge utility of these materials, and which avenues of information were most utilized by students. Additionally, Registered Student Organizations will be encouraged to have MSUvote speak to their members on new voting rules and regulations, as well as provide information on early voting campus locations, and encouraged to coordinate times to take their members to vote in groups to lower the anxiety barrier to voting.

Long-Term (2026-2028)

- By the 2026 Mid-term Election, MSU will analyze 2022 NSLVE data and develop strategies for addressing student voter gaps by race/ethnicity and field of study in conjunction with related student groups and staff.
- By the 2028 General Election, MSU will increase student voting rates by 3% from the 2024 NSLVE Data and improve student voting gaps by race/ethnicity and field of study.

Overall Strategy:

MSU’s democratic engagement efforts have been primarily focused on student voter registration, election education, and improving student voting rates for the last decade. Moving forward, the MSUvote Campus and Community Initiative strategy will be to build ongoing civic education efforts across campus in ways that are effective, embraced, supported, implemented, and sustained. These efforts will be embedded in the classroom and in the co-curriculum.

Fall 2024 Strategies and Timeline:

MONTH	EVENT TYPE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust social media campaign to promote voter registration. • MSUvote Meeting 	Strategy is to encourage students to register with clerks and Secretary of State’s office and to vote before leaving for Spring Break.
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voter Registration Rally @ STEM Building • Early Voting Center @ STEM Building • MSU SPRING BREAK OCCURS • MSUvote Meeting • February 27 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY 	Strategy is to encourage students to register with clerks and Secretary of State’s office and to vote before leaving for Spring Break.

<p>March 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation at C. Chavez, D. Huerta Commemoration • MSUvote Meeting 	
<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSUvote Meeting 	<p>Interviews and Hiring for Democratic Civic Engagement Coordinator</p>
<p>May-June-July 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 6 East Lansing Local Ballot Election • New Student Orientation Podcasts Available to Students Regarding Voting and Elections • Develop, revamp resources for faculty classroom use 	<p>HR (Human Resources) search for Democratic Civic Engagement Coordinator reopened</p>
<p>August 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 6 PRIMARY ELECTION (before students return) • Engagement in Fall Welcome Events, including Sparticulation and Convocation • MSUvote Meeting • List Registration Opportunities on Campus on MSUvote website 	
<p>September 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premade kits for residential housing • MSUvote Meetings • Visits to ISS and UGS classes to discuss registration and voting options. • Programming for National Voter Registration Day & 	

	<p>Constitution Day (September 17)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List Registration Opportunities on Campus on MSUvote website Launch a voter education social media campaign utilizing MSU leaders, athletes, students, partners 	
October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming for National Voter Registration Week (October 7-11) Early Voting Center (EVC) Opens at WKAR Studios October 21 MSUvote Meetings List Registration Opportunities on Campus on MSUvote website 	The EVC is part of the 9 days of early voting. Specific programs will be created around those days.
November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EVC closed for conversion to satellite office on November 4 November 5 GENERAL ELECTION MSUvote Meeting 	
December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look back, lessons learned 	
Long term Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain fulltime Democratic Engagement Coordinator and interns for continual civic engagement in non-federal election years Continue momentum built from federal 	Long term strategies are focused on education about current elected officials in the form of awareness and civic knowledge. This ideally creates more civically minded students who have more motivation to engage in elections due to their awareness of local

	<p>election years to channel into local elections and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create informational campaigns to inform students on who local, incumbent, elections officials are, such as judges, and build knowledge of these offices to increase voter knowledge. 	<p>government and issues that are not federal, translating to higher local election turnout.</p>
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Reporting:

MSUvote will share the MSU Civic Action Plan for 2024 broadly on campus along with the 2022 NSLVE Data on its civic engagement website, MSUvote.msu.edu. Additionally, MSUvote will utilize the MSU Civic Action Plan and NSLVE data in its presentations to faculty, student groups, and community leaders to highlight MSU’s strengths and weaknesses in turnout and assist these stakeholders how they can best assist in increasing turnout of those groups that are not rising in turnout at the same rates as others. MSUvote will also be hosting information sessions for faculty, staff, students, and partners about the NSLVE data and progress toward short-term and long-term goals, as well as adjusting those goals in accordance with community feedback.

MSU has always shared our campus plan and NSLVE data with national and local networks via direct connect in community meetings, and indirect contact through media and dissemination, and will continue to do so.

MSU's NSLVE Data:

MSU has been an NSLVE research partner and campus participant since the inception of the study and the report. This data is used to report student voting rates to campus, community, and national organizations, for consideration. NSLVE data is shared with campus administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community partners. It is also posted on the MSUvote website. Additionally, MSUvote hosts sessions to discuss this data and strategies for making improvements and strategizing as a campus. Some past sessions have included analysts and staff from the NSLVE team.

The most updated MSU NSLVE Report may be found [HERE](#)

Evaluation:

MSU will continue to utilize NSLVE Reports as a consistent form of evaluation. All national and regional voting partners, including the All In Democracy Challenge, SLSV (Students Learn Students Vote), CVP, and Big Ten Voting Challenge utilize the NSLVE to measure and evaluate the success of democratic and voter engagement on campuses.

MSUvote will implement program and event evaluations for activities and effort during the fall semester as a way of determining effectiveness of each and for program improvements. Evaluation will include recording the number of student interactions, as well as feedback from student org and community partners on the effectiveness of informational presentations. The utilization of the on campus Early Voting Center will also be a key point of evaluation in if students are utilizing, and thus aware of, the period of early voting and same day registration afforded by the East Lansing City Clerk and compared against the forthcoming 2024 NSLVE data to assess if there was an increase in voting amongst targeted demographic groups. For example, if multiple presentations are given in collaboration with multicultural student orgs, success would be seeing marked increases of turnout in those groups.

MSUvote staff will also continue attending sessions held by the State of Michigan Secretary of State and local clerk's offices to learn more about the successful campus/community strategies and to evaluate the effectiveness (traffic, voter registration, and voter turn-out) of our Early Voting Center on campus launching in Fall 2024, and make adjustments to location, advertising, or informational campaigns for future elections in order to increase the effectiveness of this asset.

