

# Rhodes College Civic Engagement Action Plan

Academic Year: 2024-2025

## Table of Contents

1. **Executive Summary**
  2. **Leadership**
  3. **Commitment**
  4. **Landscape**
  5. **Goals**
  6. **Strategy**
  7. **Reporting & Evaluation**
  8. **Resources**
- 

## 1. Executive Summary

**Introduction:** This Civic Engagement Action Plan outlines strategies and initiatives to foster civic learning and political engagement at Rhodes College, with a focus on leveraging the resources of The Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement.

**Vision Statement:** Our vision is to cultivate a campus culture that prioritizes active citizenship, community involvement, and informed voting, integrating these principles into the fabric of student life and academic endeavors.

---

## 2. Leadership

### Campus Vote Coalition:

- **Lead Office:** The Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement

### Committee Members:

- Iris Mercado, Associate Director, The Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement
- Dani Bonner, Director of the Bonner Center for Service
- Beatrix Weil, Chaplain, Office of the Chaplain
- Anna Yates, President, Student Government Association (RSG)
- Yesica Trejo, Generation Action Rhodes Chapter
- Anna Claire Tilley, Rhodes Student Associate, The Lynne & Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement

- Qari Silva, President, Rhodes Students Demand Action
- Trinity Williams, Founder, NOISE (Network of Organizers Igniting Student Empowerment)
- William Flukinger, Vice-President, Contents Under Pressure
- Faculty Representatives from various departments
- Representatives from major student organizations on campus
- Shelby County Election Commission - [Joe.Young@shelbycountyttn.gov](mailto:Joe.Young@shelbycountyttn.gov)
- Community partners from Memphis area civic organizations
  - Votes for All
  - Shelby County Voter Alliance
  - New partners:
    - Memphis Artists for Change
    - Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition
    - Memphis Coalition for Action and Hope

### 3. Commitment

#### Institutional Commitment:

- **Mission Alignment:** Rhodes College's commitment to civic engagement aligns with our historical affiliation with the Presbyterian Church and our liberal arts mission.
  - **Public Statements:** Regular updates on civic initiatives in college publications and social media.
  - **Civic Engagement Recognition:** Annual awards from groups like the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and Tennessee Campus Democracy Network (TCDN) for outstanding student and faculty contributions to civic engagement.
- 

### 4. Landscape

#### Current Civic Engagement Landscape:

- **Strengths:** Strong history of community service, robust partnerships with local organizations, engaged student body.
  - **Challenges:** Increasing voter registration and turnout, ensuring continuous engagement across all academic disciplines, sustainability of campus vote coalition.
  - **Opportunities:** Utilize the Turley Center's resources to enhance civic learning and incorporate voter education into ongoing/new service projects.
- 

### 5. Goals

#### Short-Term Goals:

1. Increase voter registration by 10% among students by end of 24-25 academic year.
2. Integrate at least three new civic engagement modules into existing courses by Fall 2025.
3. Organize three community service projects per semester through the Turley Center.
  - a. Fall 2024
    - i. Sept 10<sup>th</sup> - Sojuh Fest (Rhodes International Social Justice Festival)
    - ii. Sept 11<sup>th</sup> - Involvement Fair – Turley Memphis Center & Memphis For All, Votes For All/Shelby County Voter Alliance
    - iii. Sept 12<sup>th</sup> - Involvement Fair Generation Action (Turley Memphis Center)
    - iv. Sept 17<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - v. Sept 17<sup>th</sup> - National Voter Registration Day Drive (Rhodes Students Demands Action)
    - vi. Sept 18<sup>th</sup> , 5-6pm in Turley Memphis Center - Civic Engagement—GOTV & Voter Education with Bonner 2nd Year Class (Turley Memphis Center & Bonner Center for Service)
    - vii. September 24<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - viii. September 27<sup>th</sup> – Rhodes Student Government Registration Drive
    - ix. Oct 1<sup>st</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - x. Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> , 5-6pm in Turley Memphis Center - Civic Engagement—GOTV & Voter Education with Bonner 1st Year Class (Turley Memphis Center & Bonner Center for Service)
    - xi. Oct 8<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - xii. Oct 15<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - xiii. Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> – Memphis Centered: An Evening with Water Warriors (Turley Center)
    - xiv. Oct 29<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - xv. Nov 12<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - xvi. Nov 18<sup>th</sup> – City of Memphis Mayor Town Hall
    - xvii. Nov 19<sup>th</sup> - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - xviii. Dec 3 - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
    - xix. Dec 10 - Food, Faith, and Free Elections (Office of the Chaplain)
  - b. Spring 2025 - TBD

**Long-Term Goals:**

1. Achieve a 75% voter turnout rate among registered students by the 2028 presidential election.
2. Develop sustained partnerships with five new Memphis community organizations by 2025.

---

**6. Strategy**

**Voter Registration and Education:**

- Host voter registration drives during major campus events.
- Incorporate voter education and registration into freshman orientation (if they live on campus they can vote in Memphis, but they can also vote absentee).

**Community Service and Engagement:**

- Partner with local organizations to provide hands-on service opportunities.
- Create service-learning courses that connect academic content with civic engagement.

**Civic Learning Integration:**

- Offer workshops and seminars on civic topics through the Turley Center.
- Encourage faculty to include civic engagement components in their syllabi.

**Communication and Outreach:**

- Use social media and campus newsletters to promote civic activities.
  - Engage student leaders to advocate for participation in civic events.
- 

**7. Reporting & Evaluation****Data Collection:**

- Short term goal: Our community partner Memphis For All/Tennessee For All tracks all registered students in their database and follows up with registrants to help educate on issues and creating plan to vote.
- Long term goal: Achieve institutional support to track voter registration and turnout rates through NSLVE
- Monitor participation in civic engagement events and courses.

**Evaluation Methods:**

- Conduct surveys to assess student attitudes towards civic engagement.
- Review feedback from community partners on the impact of service projects.

**Reporting:**

- Annual reports on civic engagement progress to college administration and nonprofit stakeholders.
  - Share success stories and challenges in college publications.
-

## 8. Resources

### Support and Funding:

- Secure funding through college budget allocations, department budgets, and Project Pericles civic engagement grants.
- Provide training for faculty and staff on integrating civic engagement into their work with the assistance of TNCDN.
- Utilizing the national student voting movement's vast resource library through partnerships with ALL IN, Campus Vote Project, and the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition.

### Tools and Materials:

- Access to voter registration resources and educational materials.
- Facilities for hosting civic events and meetings.

---

**Prepared by:** Iris Mercado, Associate Director of the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement; Kayla J. Jones, President of the Tennessee Democracy Network; Yesica Trejo, President of Generation Action at Rhodes College; and Anna Claire Tilley, Rhodes Student Associate, The Lynne & Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement at Rhodes College

---

### For additional information or to get involved, contact:

**The Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center for Community Engagement**  
Rhodes College  
Iris Mercado  
[mercadoi@rhodes.edu](mailto:mercadoi@rhodes.edu)  
901-843-3260