

All In Campus Action Plan: 2024

The Ohio State University

Executive Summary

This action plan outlines The Ohio State University's strategic plan for voter education and engagement for 2024-2025 and illustrates Ohio State's commitment to engaging students in the democratic process through the November 2024 presidential election and beyond. This action plan starts in May 2024 and will be periodically revisited and updated as needed. The goals outlined in this plan reflect short-term priorities which will be achieved before the November 2024 election, and long-term priorities we hope to accomplish beyond the 2024 election cycle. This plan was drafted using the action plan framework from [Strengthening American Democracy, fourth edition.](#)

This plan was developed by Meagen Rinard, Assistant Director of Community and Civic Engagement, and Madi Barnes, Coordinator of Community and Civic Engagement, with input from Dr. Kristen Rupert Davis, Associate Dean of Students. As staff members in Ohio State's Leadership and Community Engagement division within the Office of Student Life, with varying levels of oversight over OSU Votes, Ohio State's nonpartisan, student-led voter education and civic engagement program, these individuals will be the primary actors responsible for the implementation of this plan. They will be supported by a team of 6-7 paid OSU Votes student employees and members of Ohio State's campus democracy coalition, in partnership with various campus partners to achieve specific initiatives. This plan will be implemented across Ohio State's six campuses: the flagship campus in Columbus, where the staff members and programs outlined in this plan are located, and five regional campuses.

As a land-grant institution, The Ohio State University is dedicated to maintaining positive connections with communities throughout Ohio. One way in which the university enacts its land

grant mission is by encouraging students to practice community and civic engagement, including through electoral participation. Ohio State's motto, "Education for Citizenship," reflects these values and demonstrates the institution's commitment to encouraging students to practice civic engagement. This commitment is demonstrated further through Ohio State's Office of Student Life, which houses OSU Votes and has an articulated mission to "prepare students to be engaged in a global society" and a key objective "to increase civic engagement." This action plan was created to support both the mission of the university and the Office of Student Life.

In alignment with the mission of the university and the goals of OSU Votes, this plan was created with the needs and experiences of all Ohio State students in mind, with attention being paid to what gaps in voter engagement exist and how OSU Votes can work to address them.

Leadership

The primary entity and personnel responsible for overarching voter and civic engagement work at The Ohio State University lives within the Office of Student Life's department of Leadership and Community Engagement. Primary support for these efforts is through the OSU Votes program with three supporting staff and 6-7 OSU Votes student assistants. The organizational/supervisory structure is outlined below:

- Office of Student Life
 - Leadership and Community Engagement
 - Associate Dean of Students, Dr. Kristen Rupert Davis
 - Assistant Director, Community and Civic Engagement, Meagen Rinard
 - Coordinator for Community and Civic Engagement, Madi Barnes
 - OSU Votes Student Assistants

To support the efforts of those above, we actively engage with a campus coalition and community partners to pursue cross-organizational collaborations and resource optimization. We hope to continue to expand these partnerships in the future.

- Members of Ohio State’s campus coalition include staff, faculty, and student representatives from:
 - College of Business
 - College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
 - College of Pharmacy
 - College of Public Affairs
 - College of Social Work
 - Housing and Residence Education
 - Leadership and Community Engagement
 - Office of Academic Affairs
 - Office of International Affairs
 - Office of Sustainability
- Community partners include:
 - ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
 - Campus Vote Project
 - Franklin County Board of Elections
 - Students Learn Students Vote

Commitment

The Ohio State University’s motto is “Education for Citizenship.” Therefore, the institution is committed to developing students into engaged citizens through civil discourse, academic knowledge, and extracurricular engagement, as evident through its [vision, mission, and values](#), as well as various offices, initiatives, majors, institutes, and organizations across the institution.

As the central hub for student engagement at Ohio State, the [Office of Student Life](#) houses the work of campus civic and voter engagement through OSU Votes, Ohio State's nonpartisan, student-led voter education and civic engagement initiative. With a mission to "prepare students to be engaged in a global society" and a key objective "to increase civic engagement," the Office of Student Life is particularly committed to increasing civic engagement and preparing students to be civic leaders after graduation. Student Life demonstrates this commitment by providing resources and programming to help students practice community and civic engagement in a variety of ways, via OSU Votes as well as other programs dedicated to providing opportunities for students to get involved in leadership and service.

Additionally, Ohio State has been a member of the [All In Campus Democracy Challenge](#) since 2016 and has received the "Gold" recognition in the 2018 and 2020 elections. The Ohio State University also previously had signatories to the [Coaches' Pledge](#) and [President's Commitment](#), and are currently working to secure updated signatories in advance of the 2024 election. In 2022, The Ohio State University was also recognized as one of the [Most Engaged Campuses](#), and multiple students have been recognized through the [All In Student Voting Honor Roll](#) in past cycles. These recognitions illustrate Ohio State's commitment to civic engagement and the institution's status as a national leader in voting and civic engagement efforts.

Landscape

Student Demographics

As of the [Autumn 2023 Enrollment Report](#), The Ohio State University has 60,046 students on the Columbus campus with an additional 5,359 students across five regional campuses. Ohio residents make up 72.3% of all students, with out-of-state students and international students making up 18.6% and 9% of the student body, respectively. Of the 65,405 total students, 17,818 (27.2%) identify with a racially or ethnically minoritized background. In

Autumn 2023, The Ohio State University welcomed 7,983 new first year students (NFYS) to the Columbus campus and anticipate welcoming over 8,300 in Autumn 2024.

Student Affairs Integration

[OSU Votes](#), which is embedded in Leadership and Community Engagement within the Office of Student Life, is the overarching entity responsible for voter and civic engagement at The Ohio State University. OSU Votes supports campus voter engagement via regular voter registration/information tabling events on campus, facilitating educational workshops about voting and civic engagement for the university community, providing election day support, planning campus programming, and sharing information and resources regularly with Ohio State students. As a student-led, university initiative housed in the Office of Student Life, financial and personnel resources are dedicated to OSU Votes, and civic engagement is integrated into student affairs at large. This commitment to civic engagement is outlined in the [Office of Student Life's Strategic Plan](#), with an aspect of the office's mission stated to "prepare students to be engaged in a global society," and a key objective "to increase civic engagement." These written commitments, in addition to financial, personnel, and structural support for voter engagement work, show an overall dedication to civic engagement and voter education across multiple levels of the organization.

Currently, OSU Votes works in close partnership with [other departments](#) within the Office of Student Life, including leadership programs, housing and residence education, student activities and orientation, sustainability initiatives, sorority and fraternity life, and off-campus and commuter engagement. For example, OSU Votes provides resources and guidance for student organization leaders interested in voter registration and engagement. OSU Votes staff members also work in close partnership with student governments to optimize resources and prevent the duplications of efforts when possible. The scale of student affairs at The Ohio State University can be a challenge when coordinating centralized efforts; however, there are many student life

departments and personnel with a vested interest in collaboration with OSU Votes and increasing student voter engagement.

Academic Affairs Integration

Although the work of OSU Votes is primarily focused within student affairs, there is great work towards civic engagement across the academic affairs landscape too. In Autumn 2022, The Ohio State University implemented a [new general education curriculum](#) which requires students to take themed coursework in “Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World,” as well as optional coursework in other related themes, such as “Sustainability.” The new general education curriculum also requires all students to take an introductory “Bookend” course during one of their first three semesters. OSU Votes has collaborated with general education staff to incorporate optional voter and civic engagement content into these courses, providing a broad touchpoint to all students. The new general education’s inclusion of citizenship speaks to The Ohio State University’s motto of “Education for Citizenship.”

Many of the academic colleges across campus also prioritize civic engagement. For example, [the College of Social Work](#) has a staff member and student fellows dedicated to enhancing democracy in at-risk communities, as well as on campus. Along with their academic programs, including a minor in Civic Engagement, [the College of Public Affairs](#) provides opportunities for students to engage in internships within local governments and for outside politicians to receive training in public leadership. Finally, the College of Arts and Sciences houses the [Center for Ethics and Human Values](#) (CEHV) and the [Institute for Democratic Engagement and Accountability](#) (IDEA), both of which have a strong civic focus. OSU Votes works closely with each of these colleges and centers, as well as others looking to promote civic engagement to students. Although not an exhaustive list, these examples provide context for the current landscape of activities within academic affairs at the Ohio State University.

Limitations and Constraints

There are several overarching limitations and constraints with civic engagement work at The Ohio State University, which are shared with many institutions across the country. Although we are fortunate to have financial and personnel support provided by the university, it is not available at a level which would allow for the ideal support for all of the over 65,000 students, with only two full-time staff members (who also oversee other student life programs) and a small team of student employees (6-7, depending on resources) responsible for advancing civic education at the university.

Recent legislative changes have also presented challenges to voter education at Ohio State. The state of Ohio altered their voter identification laws in April 2023, which has had unique challenges for college students. The new law mandates that a valid photo ID (an Ohio driver's license or state ID card; U.S. passport or passport card; or military ID) is required to vote in-person. Previously, students without one of these forms of identification could vote using their university statement of account, among other forms of identification. While we are actively working to keep students abreast of these changes via university-wide mass communication, social media content, educational workshops, and other outreach methods, this still represents a point of confusion for some students, and a hurdle in the voting process for students without one of these forms of identification.

Similarly, other laws and university policies are continually evolving, and working to adjust to be in alignment with these laws and guidelines can also represent a challenge to voter engagement on campus. However, all these limitations and constraints are not new at Ohio State, nor to those engaging in civic engagement work on college campuses nationwide.

Goals

Voter Engagement

- Increase presidential election registration rate and voting rate of registered students to 90% or above, and the general voting rate to 80% or above, over the 2024 and 2028 presidential election cycles. The voting rate of registered students in 2020 was 84.4% and 2016 was 71.4%, and the general voting rate in 2020 was 75% and 2016 was 59.1%.
 - Increase first year student voting rate to 70% or above for 2024 presidential election by targeting messaging and touchpoints to first year students through orientation and residence hall outreach.
 - Reduce the voting rate gap to under 7% for Asian, Black, and Hispanic students, compared to White students, for the 2024 presidential election through partnerships with diverse university offices and student organizations across campus.

Civic Integration

- Maintain an active campus coalition of at least 15 faculty, staff, and student contributors from across the institution through and beyond the 2024 presidential election to sustain momentum for future election cycles.
 - Connect and build targeted partnerships for regional campuses to better support their student populations, which have higher rates of first-generation and low-income students, by integrating universal design into any planning and actively engaging them in the coalition in Autumn 2024.
 - Develop and share a continuity plan and resources to sustain engagement beyond the 2024 presidential election and in the event of staff turnover by Spring 2025.

Strategy

With guidance from the [All In Campus Democracy Challenge](#), [Campus Vote Project](#), and [Student Learn Students Vote](#) initiative, and in alignment with OSU Votes strategic priorities, The Ohio State University's strategy centers around student life integration, student leadership, academic integration, institutional partnership, and civic holidays.

Student Life Integration

Short-term goals.

- Build civic engagement into the Leadership and Community Engagement strategic plan for the 2024-2025 academic year.
- Conduct voter registration tabling events in each of Ohio State's 42 residence halls/hall complexes during before the October 7, 2024 Ohio voter registration deadline
- Staff an informational table at all 28 new first year student orientation sessions in Summer 2024.

Long-term goals.

- Add additional professional staff support to increase depth and reach of OSU Votes programming by 2028.
- Embed civic engagement further into the Student Life strategic plan and department-specific strategic plans by 2028.

Student Leadership

Short-term goals.

- Hire, train, and guide 6-7 new OSU Votes student assistants for the 2024-2025 academic year.
- Invite student leaders to actively engage with faculty and staff in the campus coalition in Autumn 2024.

- Allow students to take a leading role in increasing OSU Votes social media presence and reach in Autumn 2024

Long-term goals.

- Further develop OSU Votes student assistant position into a fellowship-like experience with emphasis on professional development by 2026.

Academic Integration

Short-term goals.

- Develop a toolkit that provides resources for all faculty to incorporate election information into their Autumn 2024 curriculum, including guides and template language.
- Work with general education to include civic engagement into all “Bookend” courses which are required of all students.

Long-term goals.

- Incorporate civic engagement into new faculty orientation and training by 2028.
- Create language on voter registration and civic engagement for faculty to include in syllabi or other methods of information dissemination, like online course structures, by 2028.

Institutional Partnerships

Short-term goals.

- Rebuild the campus coalition in Summer 2024 to incorporate representatives from various colleges and departments across campus.
- Work with and provide resources for all five regional campuses on voter registration and civic engagement for Autumn 2024.

Long-term goals.

- Deepen partnership with Ohio State's Department of Athletics and Eugene D. Smith Leadership Institute to embed voter registration and civic engagement into high profile varsity sports at the Ohio State University, including football, men's and women's basketball, and women's volleyball by Spring 2025.

Civic Holidays

Short-term goals.

- Work closely with campus coalition and in partnership with the College of Social Work to plan programming on each civic holiday leading to the November 2024 election.
- Allow student assistants to lead the 2024-2025 academic year civic holiday planning to better engage students across campus.

Long-term goals.

- Develop civic holidays into a sustained programming initiative, including National Voter Education Week as a weeklong initiative with programming from various campus and community partners by 2028.

NSLVE Summary

The most recent and comparable NSLVE data available is the [2020 NSLVE Campus Report](#). A few key statistics from this report are provided below with how they have informed our action plan:

- The Ohio State University's voting rate is 75% compared to 66% for all institutions: As institutions across the country work to increase their voting rates, we are committed to continuous growth and maintaining a rate well above that of all institutions.

- Voting rates for Asian (65%), Black (69%), and Hispanic (67%) students at The Ohio State University are behind their White (78%) counterparts: Along with a commitment to increase voting rates for all students, our action plan includes specific initiatives to bridge the racial voting rate gap.
- First year students (68%) are voting at lower rates than their second year (73%) and upper level (76%) counterparts at The Ohio State University: Our action plan includes purposeful partnership with orientation, first year experience, and the general education curriculum to create multiple touchpoints for all first-year students.
- Computer and information sciences (69%), multi/interdisciplinary studies (63%), parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies (67%) are the only fields of study categories below a 70% voting rate at The Ohio State University. We are committed to fostering connections and inclusion of faculty, staff, and students in relevant colleges within our coalition to reach these students.

Reporting

The action plan for the Ohio State University will be available on the [All In Democracy Challenge](#) website with direct links from the [OSU Votes](#) website. Various initiatives and achievements related to the action plan will be shared via social media, campus-wide student and staff emails, and department-wide in-person recognitions. NSLVE data will also be posted on the All IN Democracy Challenge website and the OSU Votes website. This data will also be shared directly with university leadership, including the Senior Vice President for Student Life.

Evaluation

NSLVE data will be used to understand and evaluate the impact of these efforts on voting numbers at The Ohio State University. Utilized in comparison to past NSVLE data, these statistics will tell whether our action plan efforts have been successful overall. Internally, OSU

Votes will track the number of meaningful interactions with students at tabling events, the number of workshops completed, the number of students who have attended an OSU Votes workshop, the number of voter registration and absentee ballot request forms received through these outreach initiatives, the number of requests for OSU Votes to speak or table at campus events, and other metrics.