

Campus Virtual Democratic Engagement Resources



The impacts of COVID-19 have created numerous uncertainties about what the higher education experience will be like and what election changes will occur. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge is sharing these resources to help institutions prepare for virtual democratic engagement on- and off-campus this fall. These strategies and programs are intended to assist campus coalitions to address immediate needs for fall 2020 as well as to further develop campus action plans to perpetually include both in-person and virtual democratic engagement.

Timely information, updates, and campus examples will continually be shared on the [ALL IN COVID-19 CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES](#) webpage.

1. ALLINtoVote.org

ALLINtoVote.org is a free, web-based tool powered by [BallotReady](#) and the ALL IN Challenge. Students can check and update their registration status, register to vote online, find their polling place, request an absentee ballot, sign-up for election reminders, vote triple (share the link with their contacts), review what information will be on their ballot, and pledge to vote. Like in 2018, the allintovote.org platform will have a campus leaderboard for campuses that have the most students and highest percentage of students who pledge to vote. ALL IN Challenge staff will share an update when the webpage is active.

In person: Use [allintovote.org](#) during voter registration and education events on smartphones, tablets, and computers. Students can use whichever portion of the tool that they need, e.g., just request a ballot, just pledge to vote, or use all available tools.

Virtual: Share [allintovote.org](#) with instructions via campus emails and social media. Organize a campus couch party (see below) and have volunteers text the link with instructions to contacts in their phone and on-campus organization lists.

2. Host a Couch Party

In person: Host an event with campus influencers (mascot, president/chancellor, music groups, athletes, etc.) to train students how to use their phones to text the [allintovote.org](#) tool to their contacts and ask them to check their registration, register to vote, request an absentee ballot, and/or pledge to vote. Have food, music, and other entertainment to make the couch party fun.

Virtual: Using a video conference platform, invite campus influencers to give a pep talk then do an online virtual training on how to text the [allintovote.org](#) tool to their networks. Have a DJ and/or music acts perform during the couch party to attract and entertain volunteers.

When We All Vote (WWAV), a national nonpartisan nonprofit partner of Civic Nation, has piloted couch parties to recruit and train volunteers remotely to engage their networks and eligible voters online. Campuses can use any online voter engagement tools, including the [allintovote.org](#), to have volunteers text and email their friends. WWAV has shown the impact of engaging virtual networks by streaming these events on Instagram live with famous DJs and celebrities. In their three couch parties, volunteers have contacted more than 550,000 eligible voters. The ALL IN Challenge will provide a campus couch party toolkit to campuses this summer.

Tip: These couch parties can be used during [National Voter Registration Day \(NVRD\) on September 22](#), to request a ballot by mail, and during early voting to encourage folks to vote.

3. National Voter Registration Day

National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) provides social media toolkits, signs, stickers, and other support to plan voter registration drives and is celebrated on September 22, 2020, this year. The goal is to register voters and create a celebratory environment. Online voter engagement tools can be used to celebrate this day. Campuses can [sign up](#) to be an official partner.

In person: Host voter registration drives at popular places on campus during the week of National Voter Registration Day providing paper registration forms and online voter registration for students who live in states with online voter registration. Promote NVRD throughout September and invite campus influencers to help promote and attend the events.

Virtual: Organize a social media and email campaign to make sure students check their voter registration status and confirm it is where they want to vote and encourage students to register and re-register to vote as needed. Use online voter registration tools like ALL IN to Vote and make the event entertaining like a couch party.

4. Vote Early Day

In person: Organize two separate events on campus: 1) a party to request ballots well in advance of all state absentee ballot/vote-by-mail deadlines. 2) a party on or around Saturday, October 24, to have the campus community return their ballots in the mail. Invite campus influencers and promote online and through email.

Virtual: Organize a social media and email campaign for students to request their ballots and to return their ballots. Use the couch party model to make this event entertaining and encourage students to contact their peers to request and submit ballots.

Vote Early Day is a new initiative to celebrate and create awareness about voting early, specifically on Saturday, October 24. Vote Early Day will offer social media toolkits and signage for campuses to promote early voting, including information about voting by mail. Campuses can organize in-person or virtual events to celebrate this day.

5. #VoteTogether

#VoteTogether started in 2016 and has helped campuses and community partners plan and implement parties at polling locations resulting in a 2-4% voter turnout increase at those precincts. #VoteTogether will have toolkits and resources to organize virtual parties at the polls and help voters prepare to vote-by-mail.

In person: Organize a party near an on campus voting location or near where shuttles take students to their polling places to celebrate voting. This can be done during early voting and on Election Day.

Virtual: Similar to the virtual Vote Early Day model, organize a social media and email campaign for students to request their ballots and to return their ballots. Use the couch party model to make this event entertaining and encourage students to contact their peers to request and submit ballots.

6. Ask Every Student

In person: During new- and transfer student orientation, ensure that there is a process to engage students about voter registration, vote-by-mail, and any ID requirements. Ideally, plan for a 3-5 minute conversation per student. Develop a plan to visit first-year seminars and large lectures to give presentations about voter registration and voting on campus. Provide information and encourage Residential Assistants, Campus Admission Ambassadors, Student Government representatives, Orientation Leaders, and other student leaders to include voter engagement into their programming.

Virtual: During virtual new- and transfer student orientation, include video snippets that give updates to the voter registration process and an opportunity for incoming students to connect with their peers to discuss voting, especially for students who may not have lived in the campus community before. Voter registration modules could also be incorporated into online class modules, the course registration process, and virtual academic advising conversations.

Ask Every Student uses the framework that full student voter participation comes from integrating person-to-person voter registration into existing processes, such as orientation or classes that reach all students. Every campus has different challenges, opportunities, and context to create a program that asks every student about their democratic engagement plan. Toolkits will help campuses to prepare for systematic campus voter registration in-person and online. Campuses can [join the listserv as an interested campus](#) at any time to receive updates about resources. There is also an opportunity for campuses to apply to participate as a Commitment Campus for the 2020 election cycle (applications are accepted on a rolling basis). The time period to apply to be a Codesigner campus has closed for 2020.

7. Virtual National Student Voting Summit

In early August 2020, national and local partners are planning a virtual national student voting summit. Campuses will learn about resources, strategies, and partners before the start of the fall semester. The ALL IN Challenge will share more information via email, newsletter, and social media once details are confirmed and public.

Additional Ideas for Student Engagement

- List election dates, National Voter Registration Day (9/22), and Vote Early Day (10/24) in course syllabi and encourage professors to announce these dates throughout the semester.
- Organize a virtual Pledge to Vote challenge using the free [allintovote.org](#) tool and monitor the campus leaderboard to see how your campus is doing compared to others across the country.
- Film an Instagram live session with your campus mascot and campus president or chancellor about registering to vote and requesting a ballot by mail.
- Encourage campus influencers to make a video about voting or create a video between campus rivals like [this video](#) of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University student body presidents.
- Do Instagram or Facebook live Q&As about registering to vote, requesting a ballot, and voting by mail.
- Host a Facebook live "Voting 101" session to educate students on how to research candidates and issues and how and where to vote.
- Host virtual office hours where student leaders answer questions students or first-time voters may have about how to register/plan their Election Day.
- Help students develop voting plans. Send out printable (engaging & simple) worksheets that students can use to fill out their voting plans on and post on their wall! This can be at home, or if in person, these flyers can be delivered to on-campus residential facilities. Use the [allintovote.org](#) tool and encourage students to schedule a time to vote, set a reminder on their calendar, and to map out their voting plan.
- Create an Instagram story template for students to fill out and share their voting plans on social media.
- Use campus social media to tell students to look up their polling location on [allintovote.org](#) and then pledge to vote.
- Collaborate with your campus IT department to send reminder emails or texts to every student. These messages can include links to resources like the [allintovote.org](#) platform where students can find out where to vote and what they need to bring and sites where they can verify their registration.
 - Send at least one message before the absentee ballot request deadlines
 - Send follow-up messages leading up to the election, and then a final election-day message to remind all students to vote.
- Include voter information and links on key campus websites including a countdown to Election Day.
- Organize student-to-student phonebanks to encourage students to vote early and answer any remaining questions.
- Host a virtual Party at the Mailbox to celebrate and promote vote-by-mail like Baltimore Votes did for the primary election <https://www.baltimorevotes.org/party>.
- Make informational short clips explaining to students, by students, how to register and how to vote by mail like this [Hawk the Vote](#) video from the University of Iowa.
- Hold a contest where students submit videos on why voting matters and display the winning videos on your institution's social media channels.
- Create a hashtag for your campus election efforts (like [#JumboVote](#) for Tufts University) and encourage students to share their election activities and get out the vote messages through their social media networks.
- Create a competition to create voter engagement posters, merch, and stickers and use the winning images in your institution's social media.
- Host a Cooking Up Change live cooking class. While a student is teaching how to cook they also share important voter engagement information. Other options include Working Up Change during a workout class and Drawing Up Change for art classes.
- Create voting memes and videos relevant to your campus and share on your institution's social media like this University of Wisconsin absentee ballot request [post](#).
- Post on social media and encourage students to tag 5 friends who need to register to vote. Enter those names into a raffle and give a \$50 Amazon gift card to one of the students!
- Make social media posts that turn students towards resources like [allintovote.org](#).
- Work with campus administration to include voter registration on the course registration or class portal (like SIS, Blackboard, and Canvas).
- Share [state student voting guides](#) from Campus Vote Project.
- Encourage your campus president or chancellor to send out a campus wide email about voter registration, absentee ballot requests, and other important voting deadlines.
- Encourage Residential Life to have the Residential Assistants incorporate voter planning into their first events of the semester. This can especially be done with first-year students living in residence halls. If there are virtual RAs or mentors, encourage them to do the same.
- Host an info session for students who are not eligible to vote to get involved.