

# Resources Guide for Mayors

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**CIVIC  
CITIES**

WHEN WE ALL  
**VOTE**

When We All Vote is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization on a mission to increase participation in every election and close the race and age gap in voter registration and turnout.

**When We All Vote's Civic Cities initiative aims to close the race and age voting gap in America and fundamentally shift the culture around voting in every election, while also providing the resources and support cities will need as we face an election year during a global pandemic.**

The Civic Cities initiative encourages mayors to use their voices, governing authority and convening power to mobilize civic leaders, business leaders, community members, and stakeholders, to increase voter participation in their communities. When We All Vote (WWAV) will support elected officials to implement comprehensive voter engagement strategies and will also identify and celebrate innovative engagement tactics and share best practices among mayors nationally.

Together, we can work to ensure **safe and fair elections** for every eligible voter, while also protecting the integrity, accessibility, and security of the election process.

When you commit to joining Civic Cities, you:

- Join a **national network of mayors** to learn from and share best practices and creative ideas for voter engagement strategies;
- Get **access to resources, regular webinars, monthly actions, and ongoing support** to coordinate efforts and increase voter engagement;
- **Receive regular voter registration data** to help set a city-wide goal for 2020 and track progress throughout the program; and
- Have an **opportunity to be promoted on WWAV's national platform** through media, press releases, and social media channels.

*This Resources Guide is intended to provide cities with access to tools, programs, and organizations to increase voter registration and participation and ensure fair and safe elections in your communities. As 2020 elections approach, we are committed to providing you with updated best practices and resources.*

# Officially join civic cities & set a city-wide goal

When you commit to Civic Cities, you receive an initial data snapshot that can be used as a guide to set a city-wide goal and develop a plan to help reach that goal. Your data will be updated and sent out on a monthly basis by WWAV in order to track your progress on voter registration numbers. In the fall, the data will be updated more frequently.

## Your data dashboard will include:

- The percentage of residents who voted in the 2016 election.
- Your city's current percentage of eligible voters that are registered to vote, and will be broken down by age, ethnicity and zip code.
- The percentage of residents who have requested a mail-in ballot.

## EXAMPLE GOALS:

- I pledge to increase turnout in 2020 by 10% over 2016.
- I pledge to increase voter registration this year by 10%.
- I will engage with local high schools and universities to ensure that young people and students are ready and registered to vote by asking schools to join My School Votes and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- I will form partnerships with local organizations or other local elected officials that can help reach underrepresented populations in my community.
- I will embed voter registration into city services, including voting deadlines for upcoming elections.

# Commit to taking at least three actions

After setting your city-wide goal, let us know via our [Commitment Form](#) at least three key actions your city plans to take to mobilize, amplify, and support voter engagement in 2020. This can include work that is already being done in your city, plans to engage with WWAV and CN programs, or other voter engagement efforts you plan to implement.

## EXAMPLE ACTIONS :

- Make sure K-12 schools and local colleges and universities have programs and resources to support students and parents getting registered and ready to vote
  - Check out My School Votes, a WWAV program that engages school administrators, teachers, and students to register and activate hundreds of thousands of high school teachers to mobilize the next generation to register and vote. To learn more, visit [www.whenweallvote.org/schools](http://www.whenweallvote.org/schools)
  - ◆ ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a project of Civic Nation, designed to change civic culture and institutionalize democratic engagement activities and programs on college campuses, making

them a defining feature of campus life. To learn more, visit [www.allinchallenge.org](http://www.allinchallenge.org)

- Throw a virtual #VoteTogether event #VoteTogether is a national, evidenced based initiative to increase voter participation by making voting fun and celebratory. Organize a city-wide, community-driven (virtual) festival on early vote day(s) or Election Day to celebrate voting with local organizations, institutions and companies. For more information, visit [www.votetogetherusa.org](http://www.votetogetherusa.org)
- Embed voter registration throughout city services by providing voter registration at city offices such as libraries, parking enforcement, and transit agencies
- Engage with local media outlets, social media platforms and utilize municipal communications to ensure public awareness around voting deadlines
- Work with local partners, community-based organizations, churches, and nonprofits to organize voter registration drives. Include voter registration in city events and festivals.
- Work with city public transit agencies to create free or reduced transportation on Election Day
- Make Election Day a holiday for your city workers
- Provide rides to polling locations through available city resources
- Engage local celebrities and athletes in the community to remind residents to register and get out the vote.

## Convene & engage partners; develop a plan

These partners should include local civic leaders, business leaders, education leaders, community members, election officials, public health officials, local celebrities and media figures, and other stakeholders that will support voter engagement efforts in your community. Either formally or informally, build your group of stakeholders and leaders into your "civic participation council." Charge them with helping your city reach the city-wide goal set as part of the program. You will find an example of a voter engagement plan at the end of this document.

## Turn your plan into action

Designate a staff person to lead this work, track progress, and report back to Civic Cities.

### Don't forget to:

- [Share](#) your successes with WWAV so that we can lift up your work.
- Share [best practices](#) among the Civic Cities network of mayors to learn from and adapt engagement efforts.

# Programs & initiatives to support local mobilization

Civic Nation and When We All Vote house and operate 501(c)3 programs and initiatives that support local leaders and communities in strengthening democracy and increasing voter participation. Each of the programs described below offer resources and engagement opportunities for local organizations, leaders, educators, and citizens to get involved.

## **My School Votes:**

When We All Vote's program, My School Votes (MSV), aims to empower educators and students to change the culture around voting in their schools and ensure that all eligible students are registered and ready to vote in every election. By working through district leaders and key local partners, schools create MSV teams led by educators and students to create action days that register all eligible voters. In order to maximize engagement in light of COVID-19, all of the organizing is being done online. MSV has created a weekly student action series and a bi-weekly educator action series for hundreds of MSV teams, to provide the tools, resources, and guidance around digital organizing, online voter registration, and civic engagement. Mayors can invite district leaders, educators, and students to get involved in My School Votes.

## **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge:**

A project of WWAV's sister organization, Civic Nation, ALL IN is designed to change civic culture and institutionalize democratic engagement activities and programs on college and university campuses, making them a defining feature of campus life. In response to COVID-19, the Challenge has compiled a [list of resources](#) for campuses and students to track election changes, request absentee ballots, research ballots online, and plan virtual engagement for voter registration, education, and turnout. Currently, [more than 635 campuses](#) participate in the ALL IN Challenge and more than 130 campuses have signed the [Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#). Mayors can share information about the ALL IN Challenge with local colleges and universities in their city and encourage them to participate.

## **#VoteTogether:**

#VoteTogether is an evidenced based national campaign to increase voter participation by making voting fun and celebratory. The #VoteTogether research experiments show that voting celebrations are a powerful and cost-effective tool for increasing voter participation and can increase voter participation by as many as 4 percentage points. #VoteTogether is scaling up virtual celebratory events and digital engagements with a focus on vote-by-mail where applicable and leveraging friend-to-friend relational outreach to ensure that hard to reach communities get the information they need to vote in upcoming elections. Mayors can commit to hosting #VoteTogether events for Vote Early Day or Election Day.

## **When We All Vote Partnerships Program:**

Companies, non-profits, associations, and community-based organizations are essential partners in When We All Vote's efforts to strengthen our democracy and work to make sure that every American makes their voices heard at the ballot box. Our partnerships

program onboards and trains partners, and sets up online voter registration portals where organizations can track their progress. Mayors can direct local nonprofits, companies and other community-based organizations to become a WWAV partner.

### **When We All Vote Voting Squads Program:**

WWAV's Voting Squads program recruits, trains, and supports volunteer leaders to build their squad and reach out to friends, family, and other community members to get registered and ready to vote.

## **Best practices for city leaders**

### **Cities Vote Municipal Action Guide:**

National League of Cities' Cities Vote Guide offers a list of recommended interventions designed for city leaders to increase voter participation in their cities.

## **Resources for supporting fair, safe and secure elections**

### **When We All Vote's Principles for Fair and Safe Voting:**

No American should ever have to make the choice to risk their health or the safety of their family to cast their ballot. As our country continues to grapple with the impact of COVID-19, it is now more important than ever that voters have fair and safe access to registering and voting. WWAV's Safe Voting Principles include measures to ensure that every American can participate in our Democracy without causing unnecessary risk to our public health or preventing voters from the opportunity to cast their ballot in upcoming elections.

### **Center for Civic and Tech Life Webinars for Election Officials:**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacts nearly every aspect of election administration. Center for Civic and Tech Life created 12 free webinars for election officials on topics ranging from ballot dropoff locations to virtually training election workers. This builds on their other [CTCL COVID-19 Resources](#) provided at no cost to election officials.

### **Cities Vote COVID-19 Voter Engagement Resources:**

City leaders have a unique ability to understand and address the challenges their residents face to safely and fairly participate in this year's elections. The NLC's Cities Vote team has gathered resources on voter engagement, turnout, and protection strategies in the face of COVID-19.

### **National Vote at Home Institute:**

The National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI) is dedicated to ensuring the security of our elections and putting voters' needs first. NVAHI website also includes equity driven research about voting by mail, a roadmap for scaling up vote by mail across states, and information on COVID-19 driven state policy changes.

## **Center for Secure and Modern Elections:**

The Center for Secure and Modern Elections is dedicated to advancing pro-voter policies at the state level that modernize the voting process and ensure that every American, regardless of party affiliation, can have their voice heard. The Center works directly with local partners and lawmakers who lead in-state activities in order to elevate local voices, provide support, and advance policy changes.

# **Key voter engagement dates & holidays**

Mark your calendars for these key moments during 2020 when cities and local partners across the country can take action together to increase voter registration, education, and engagement.

<b>July 26</b>	<b>100 Days Out:</b> Volunteer Thank You and VR Week of Action Preview
<b>August 6</b>	<b>Voting Rights Act Anniversary</b>
<b>August 10-17</b>	<b>Back-to-School/Youth Engagement</b>
<b>August 17-23</b>	<b>100th Anniversary of 19th Amendment Week of Action</b>
<b>August 28</b>	<b>March on Washington Anniversary</b>
<b>September 10</b>	<b>Request your Ballot Day of Action</b>
<b>September 15</b>	<b>Hispanic Heritage Month Kickoff</b>
<b>September 20-27</b>	<b>Voter Registration Week of Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>September 22: <a href="#">National Voter Registration Day</a></li></ul>
<b>October 4-11</b>	<b>Vote By Mail Week of Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>October 6: Request your Ballot Day of Action 2</li></ul>
<b>October 18-25</b>	<b>Early Vote Week of Action &amp; Voting Celebrations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>October 24: <a href="#">National Vote Early Day</a></li></ul>
<b>November 3</b>	<b>Election Day</b>

# Example voter engagement action plan

## VOTERTOWN, USA

The City of Votertown, USA, in partnership with When We all Vote, joined the Civic Cities Initiative. The City of Votertown has already taken the following steps to increase voter participation:

- Declared Election Day a holiday for all city workers.
- Passed legislation requiring all landlords to include voter registration materials to support the engagement of more transient residents.
- Made public transportation free on Election Day and reduce fares during early voting periods

### CITY-WIDE GOAL:

Votertown pledges to improve access to voting and to increase voter participation by 10% this year.

### Votertown commits to taking the following additional actions:

- Mayor of Votertown will work with the local colleges and the superintendent of high schools to ensure that all schools in the area implemented voter registration for eligible parents and students through My School Votes and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Mayor of Votertown will host a virtual #VoteTogether celebration for Early Vote Day in partnership with community organizations and other local partners
- Mayor of Votertown will provide safe voting information via public health officials, including vote by mail explainer videos and important deadlines for registration and in-person early voting.
- The City of Votertown will recruit young people to work at the polls this year

### CIVIC PARTICIPATION COUNCIL

#### Votertown USA's Civic Participation Council includes:

- County Elections Commissioner
- Votertown Public Health Official
- Votertown Mayor's Youth Council
- Faith leaders
- Local business leaders
- 15 community organizations
- Teacher unions
- Local athletes and coaches
- High school superintendent & local college presidents



## **ACTION PLAN:**

### **[AUGUST]**

- Publish op-ed by mayor to announce commitment to Civic Cities and city-wide goal
- Hold a virtual convening of local partners and stakeholders to launch Votertown's Civic Participation Council
- Press conference with mayor and Elections Commission to rollout Votertown USA's Safe Voting campaign; press releases from Council to celebrate the work and amplify the message

### **[SEPTEMBER]**

- Participate in WWAV's National Voter Registration Week of Action - challenge Votertown to register 10,000 voters
- Release radio, digital and print ads on important voter registration, vote by mail and early-in person voting deadlines
- Launch poll worker recruitment campaign

### **[SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER]**

- Publish ongoing op-eds from third party validators
- Launch social media campaign about the importance of voting with other elected officials, public health officials, and "real people" in the community
- Release PSAs for radio and TV with Votertown athletes

### **[OCTOBER]**

- Release vote by mail explainer video series with Votertown athletes and performing artists
- Participate in WWAV's National Early Vote Day Week of Action - challenge Votertown to cast as many ballots as possible
- Highlight volunteer poll workers and publicly thank them for their commitment to civic engagement

### **[ELECTION DAY]**

- Provide discounted rides to the polls through Lyft
- Partner with local businesses to provide pizza at polling locations
- Provide rapid-response information to voters throughout the day via social media