



It's My Vote: I Will Be Heard 2016 GOTV Toolkit

Introduction

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) has been the nation’s leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls since our founding in 1881. Launched in 2012, the AAUW Action Fund It’s My Vote: I Will Be Heard campaign has harnessed the power of AAUW members to register and turn out millennial women voters nationwide at a time when young women are less likely to vote.

AAUW is dedicated to making sure every woman is registered and has the information she needs to cast her vote. From Congressional inaction on the Paycheck Fairness Act to frequent attacks on our reproductive rights, the current political landscape – which increasingly focuses on social issues – seldom includes or responds to women’s voices. To create real change, women must be part of the conversation, and the most powerful way for us to chime in is at the polls.

This toolkit includes our tips to help your branch run a successful voter registration, GOTV, and voter education campaign in your state or locality in 2016. Read on, and remember that the AAUW public policy staff is here to help — consider them your resource and sounding board. Contact us at VoterEd@aauw.org.

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How-To Guide: Hosting a Successful Voter Registration Drive

Step 1: Know Your State's Rules on Voter Registration

A successful voter registration drive must be a compliant one! Start your planning by researching local election laws. Contact your state and/or local elections office – your county clerk, local board of registrars, and local elections office will be important resources for how local voter registration works. Directories can be found on the [National Association of State Election Directors](#) and [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#) websites.

You'll want to ask your election officials questions about eligibility (How long before the election do voters need to be registered? Are college students eligible in the locality and state where they are enrolled?) and registration process (How must registration forms be submitted to election officials? What is the age requirement for volunteers registering people to vote?). Find more examples of relevant questions on the [AAUW website](#).

Remember: legal restrictions prevent the use of AAUW advocacy materials, such as voter guides or issue fact sheets, in conjunction with a voter registration drive. Be sure to familiarize yourself with "Obey the Law: AAUW Guidelines for Election Activities", included in this packet.

Step 2: Have a Plan

Now that you've collected the relevant information, it's time to make a plan and set reasonable goals for your voter registration drive. Consider questions like: How many people do you want to register? Where can you best reach your target audience? When will you need to hold your voter registration drive to meet registration deadlines?

Just like getting people to vote, registering people is best done through direct, personal, targeted contact. The following ideas are creative ways to reach out to the community:

- Send volunteers with clipboards to places where large groups of people congregate — malls, movie theaters, libraries, neighborhood festivals, rallies, farmer's markets, etc. As always, be sure to check the rules for each location before planning a voter registration event there.
- Did you know that the 1998 Higher Education Amendments requires colleges and universities to make a good-faith effort to distribute in-state voter registration forms to students? Set up a table on the campus of an AAUW college/university partner or other university, college, or community college in your area. By working with your local AAUW college/university partner or AAUW student organization to register students, you are helping the institution serve its students and demonstrating AAUW's value to our college/university partners. Check out [AAUW's tabling how-to guide](#) for tips to make your tabling event a success!
- Hold an issue forum on a topic important to your community. Work with coalition partners and other community groups to publicize the event, and make a voter registration pitch at the end of each event. Remember, you can register people to vote at any time of the year. For more information, check out our [guide on how to put together an issue forum](#).

Step 3: Recruit and Train Volunteers

There's no reason to go it alone! Build a team of AAUW members and supporters to assist with your voter registration event. Voter registration drives can attract women who are looking for ways to become more involved in your branch or who aren't even aware that they would be interested in AAUW membership. Let people know that your branch is



looking for extra help — this is a great way to recruit new volunteers and new members. See [AAUW's Woman-to-Woman Voter Turnout Manual](#) for examples of volunteer roles.

Provide a training for your volunteers to make them feel more comfortable registering voters and confident that they are following the voter registration rules in your community. You could hold a voter registration training as part of an upcoming branch meeting, host the volunteers for a small training party in your home, or provide a training on the day of your event well in advance of your start time. In your volunteer training session, review the voter registration form and rules, discuss messages about the importance of voter registration, and practice asking people to register.

Step 4: Register Voters

On the day of your voter registration drive, make sure that you have all the proper forms necessary. Remember to check with your local election officials to see if you need to use a county- or state-specific form. Most states accept the national form, which is available on the [Election Assistance Commission website](#). If multiple languages are spoken in areas where you are conducting your drive, request voter registration forms in those languages. Know the laws in your state, and be sure to turn in voter registration forms to the correct place by the deadline.

If you plan on registering voters through the Internet, make sure you have enough laptops or tablets and a secure Internet connection. The AAUW/Rock the Vote [voter registration tool](#) enables individuals to populate their voter registration forms in a matter of minutes. To complete registration, these forms must then be printed, signed, and mailed to the Secretary of State. In the process, you collect the contact information of anyone who uses the widget to register to vote, helping to build an instant GOTV or volunteer outreach list! If your state [allows](#) online registration, consider providing access to your state's online registration site so individuals can submit paperless forms electronically to election officials.

Remember to keep it personal — talk to people about why voting is important and what issues are at stake in the upcoming elections!

Step 5: Follow Up!

A successful turnout campaign stays in touch with its targets throughout the year. When you register people, keep track of their information so you can follow up with them before the next election – AAUW's online voter registration tool will allow you to do so by collecting record of the voters you register.

Contact newly registered voters a few weeks after they register to ensure that they received a confirmation of their voter registration, know the date of upcoming elections, and know where to vote and what to bring to the polls. The people you register will be natural targets for other aspects of your Woman-to-Woman Voter Turnout Campaign, such as [issue](#) and [candidate forums](#).

Don't forget to let the AAUW staff know how your voter registration drive went by [filling out this form](#). Your feedback helps us highlight the best events in AAUW publications and capture AAUW's nationwide impact.



Voter Registration Drive Planning Template

Date of Event:	
Time of Event:	
Event Location:	
Event Coordinator/Point of Contact:	
Target Audience:	
Objectives/Goals:	
Event Volunteers (name and contact info):	



Voter Registration Drive Checklist

Before the Event

1. Confirm the logistics for the event with your venue or host organization.
2. Call your volunteers to confirm their attendance.
3. Make sure you've got all the voter registration forms, equipment, and supplies (clipboards, pens, signage, table, chairs, swag) you need.

Day of the Event

4. Arrive an hour before your event starts to set up. Lay out your supplies, set up your signs, arrange your stickers and buttons, etc.
5. Ask volunteers arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the event so you're ready to go at your start time.
6. Train your volunteers. Go through the ropes of voter registration and address any FAQs.
7. Go time! All hands on deck and no standing behind your table. Remember to keep it personal — talk to people about why voting is important and what issues are at stake in the upcoming elections!

After the Event

8. Thank volunteers, celebrate your achievements, debrief and make plans for the next event.
9. Turn the completed voter registration forms to the elections office ASAP.
10. Follow up with registered voters! See our guide for more information.



Getting Out the Vote on College Campuses

Students have the right to register to vote in the place they consider their home. However, local jurisdictions and states across the country are increasingly implementing strict voter requirements that can impede students' access. Knowing this, AAUW and the AAUW Action Fund's efforts to promote voter registration on AAUW college/university partner campuses are more important than ever. Find best practices to help students register and vote below.

For Branches:

- **Tackle the information deficit.** It's not lack of interest that prevents students from voting. By arming them with the information they need about the voting process, important deadlines, and residency rules, you can help empower students to vote. Be sure to research voter identification and residency rules [in your state](#) and include [absentee ballot applications](#) in your efforts. Find more information in the Additional Resources section of this toolkit.
- **Buddy up!** Are there AAUW student organizations or C/U representatives on campus? Partner up! By working together, you can help amplify and strengthen your efforts, share space, and coordinate resources. Email voter@aauw.org to be connected with AAUW entities on campus.
- **Keep it on campus.** Holding issue forums and candidate forums on campus can help to illustrate the importance voting has on the direction of public policy. Encouraging discourse on issues that impact students – think equal pay, campus sexual assault, and college affordability – will motivate them to become engaged citizens.

For Students:

- **Seize every opportunity.** Voter registration can be incorporated into many campus events and activities, whether by providing paper registration forms, links to downloadable forms, or access to an [online voter registration widget](#). New student orientation, move in packets, residence hall meetings, student involvement fairs – make your pitch whenever and wherever you can.
- **Work together.** Consider partnering with a [local AAUW branch](#) to coordinate voter education and registration efforts at campus events. Provided that your voter registration table is separate from AAUW's issue material table, you can work together to maximize your influence. You can even contact your local branch to secure GOTV swag like buttons and pins!
- **Spread the word!** Use social media to publicize your registration drive, then post fliers, hang banners, or use sidewalk chalk to raise awareness about Election Day in advance of registration deadlines. The more reminders you can offer, the better.

Student Voting Resources:

- [Online Voter Registration Widget](#)
- [Campus Vote Project](#)
- [Long Distance Voter Absentee Applications](#)



The Art of Following Up: Voter Education and GOTV

Registering voters is just the first step – evidence shows that newly registered voters who receive follow-up communications are far more likely to turn out to vote. To be truly successful, AAUW’s get-out-the-vote strategy must include plans for following up and engaging with those eligible voters you helped to register.

Creating Informed Voters

Provide newly registered voters with voter education content so that they can feel connected and excited about the upcoming election! Do this by:

- Contacting the new registrants—by email, phone or mail—to remind them to vote!
- Inviting them to attend your branch’s voter education events like [candidate forums](#) and [issue forums](#).
- Providing them with voter education resources like AAUW’s fact sheets, Congressional Voting Record, and head-to-head candidate comparison, available on the [Action Fund website](#).
- Challenging them to ask five friends to register using AAUW’s [online registration tool](#).

Capturing the Data

Voter registration lists are a matter of public record, so states allow third-party registrants to collect information – like names, phone numbers, and email addresses – from completed voter registration forms.

Please note: while it is allowable to contact new registrants with election-related information, it is illegal to use information from a voter registration form for non-election communications such as fundraising, action alerts, etc. However, you can ask newly registered voters to “opt in” to the [Action Network](#) to maintain future contact.

Voter Education Resources

The member-endorsed AAUW [Public Policy Program](#) guides our lobbying and grassroots efforts to advance policies that break through educational and economic barriers for women. Refresh your knowledge of AAUW’s policy priorities then go forth and spread the word!

- [AAUW Issues](#)
- [Congressional Voting Record](#)
- [AAUW’s Woman-to-Woman Voter Turnout Manual](#)

Ask your candidates if they support or oppose ...

- Passing legislation that would provide paid parental leave for all employees, including those working for the federal government
- Increasing funding for student loan forgiveness programs, Pell grants, and other college affordability programs
- Strengthening Social Security for future generations, including Social Security Disability Insurance, which is currently the only form of disability insurance most young adults possess
- Increasing resources to promote prevention efforts and stronger enforcement of federal laws prohibiting campus sexual harassment and violence
- Passing legislation that would require companies to allow employees to earn a minimum number of paid sick days each year
- Affirmative action programs that seek to break down the barriers confronting women and minorities in education and employment
- Passing the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would update equal pay laws and improve the enforcement of existing civil rights laws aimed at closing the gender pay gap
- Confirming federal judges who uphold civil rights laws and established legal precedents
- Access to affordable birth control and family planning by supporting funding for Title X family planning programs and coverage requirements under the Affordable Care Act
- Passing legislation that would require companies to allow employees to earn a minimum number of paid sick days each year

IT'S MY VOTE
I WILL BE HEARD
AAUW ACTION FUND
www.aauwaction.org

AAUW
empowering women since 1881
www.aauw.org

Candidate Question Guide

Planning to attend a candidate forum or campaign event? Bring this handout and raise your hand to ask a question!



Obey the Law: AAUW Guidelines for Election Activities

Election activities carried out in AAUW's name must be conducted within the guidelines set out in [AAUW policies](#). Activities must also be allowable under regulations established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Commission.*

AAUW branches and state organizations may conduct election-related activities, as long as:

1. the activities do *not* expressly advocate the election or defeat of any clearly identified partisan candidate or political party, and
2. the preparation for and conduct of the election-related activities are *not* coordinated with any candidate or political party.

Acting as private citizens, individual AAUW members *may* endorse candidates for partisan elective office, contribute money or anything of value to such candidate(s), and organize for supporting such candidate(s). Such endorsement, contribution, or organizing activity cannot use the name of AAUW. Any AAUW member who is actively involved in a candidate's campaign should avoid participating in activities that may give the appearance of AAUW's endorsement of the candidate.

In sum, AAUW branches and state organizations *may* do the following:

- Focus issue education messages and get-out-the-vote activities on the impact that the election results will have on AAUW priority issues. Those messages or activities must not expressly advocate the election or defeat of any candidate or party.
- Encourage voters to support unspecified candidates who agree with AAUW's position on specific issues. For example, a branch or state can publish a "vote pro-choice" message. The message cannot appear, however, in a publication that gives candidates' views on reproductive rights.
- Identify particular groups in the community (e.g., women, people of color, people with disabilities) to be part of coalition efforts or to receive election materials. Decisions about which groups to work with should be based on factors such as the desire to build a broad-based coalition, not on whether an anticipated coalition member can affect the outcome of an election.
 - Any political action committee or organization that has endorsed a candidate cannot be asked to be a coalition member in an AAUW voter education or voter turnout campaign.
- Determine and publicize the positions of candidates. In addition to voting records, the following may be used to gather and publicize information about the candidates' positions on issues: position papers issued by candidates, public statements made by candidates, candidate questionnaires, and candidate forums. Different guidelines apply to each activity.
 - Candidate questionnaires: All candidates running for the offices to be covered in the questionnaire must have the opportunity to participate. All questions must be phrased as



neutrally as possible; language must not favor or disfavor a particular candidate. All responses received must be printed in their entirety in any publication of responses to the questionnaire. The publication of responses should include the names of all candidates to whom the questionnaire was sent, but publication may proceed even if all candidates do not respond.

- Candidate forums: All major party candidates for the office must be invited, and an effort must be made to ensure their participation. If only one candidate can attend and the other candidates do not send representatives, AAUW branches with 501(c)(3) status may not proceed with a forum. AAUW branches with 501(c)(4) status (most AAUW branches) may proceed in organizing regardless of how many candidates attend. (For the full set of rules pertaining to candidate forums, see AAUW Policy 302 in the Board of Directors Policy Book).
- Any publication or oral statement of the candidates' responses to questions asked on a questionnaire or at a forum may include a statement of AAUW's position on the issues covered, as long as there is no call to remember AAUW's position when voting.
- Only 501(c)(4) states or branches: Publish voting records for the state's congressional delegation, state legislature, or other body. The voting record must include all incumbents within the district or geographic area to be covered. Its content (e.g., the votes to be included) and distribution must not be coordinated with candidates.
- Only 501(c)(4) states or branches: Publish voter guides that include the position of major party candidates on specific issues. The information in the voter guides must be available from public sources, such as prior votes cast by candidates, position papers, or public statements made by the candidate.
 - AAUW's Public Policy and Government Relations Department provides a voter guide template at www.aauwaction.org/voter-education/voter-guides.

AAUW branch and state organizations may *not* do the following:

- Endorse candidates in any partisan election, including local, state, congressional, gubernatorial, or presidential elections.
- Target any voter registration efforts at members of a particular political party or at individuals likely to vote for partisan candidates who support AAUW issues. The public must be notified by signs and in any handouts that all voter registration information is available to individuals without regard to their political preference.
- Distribute advocacy materials as part of voter registration.
- Distribute voter guides in conjunction with any event designed to highlight an incumbent's or a candidate's positions (e.g., a press conference regarding how a member of Congress voted on budget cuts affecting women and families). During such events, no mention should be made of the election.
- Coordinate any election-related activities with one or more candidates, campaigns, or political party organizations.
- Provide membership lists to be used in fundraising or other efforts as an in-kind gift to any partisan or nonpartisan campaign. This includes AAUW e-mail, phone, and mailing lists.
- Use AAUW e-mail, phone, or mail network updates to expressly advocate on behalf of a candidate who is running for partisan political office. This includes advocating financial or any other in-kind support of a particular candidate.



** Note: AAUW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and the AAUW Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization. Any branch or state that has not filed to be separately incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization falls under AAUW's 501(c)(4) status. Certain AAUW policies prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from undertaking some activities that are legally permissible for 501(c)(4) organizations. Election activity guidelines for state and local races sometimes differ from those found in federal regulations. To determine state and local regulations for partisan and nonpartisan races, including school boards, check with your state elections division.*

Additional Resources

Voter Registration

- [AAUW Online Voter Registration Widget](#)
- [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#)
- [AAUW's Woman-to-Woman Voter Turnout Manual](#)

Voter Education

- [AAUW Issues](#)
- [Congressional Voting Record](#)
- [How to Put Together a Candidate Forum](#)
- [How to Put Together an Issue Forum](#)
- [AAUW's Woman-to-Woman Voter Turnout Manual](#)

Voting Rights and Election Protection

AAUW and the AAUW Action Fund will work with state leaders, branches, and allies to ensure that voters know the registration rules in their state, their rights, and what to bring to the polls on Election Day.

- [Fair Elections Network State Specific Guides](#)
- [Election Protection Coalition](#) (1-866-OUR-VOTE)
- [National Association of Secretaries of State](#)

Student Voting

Did you know that federal law requires colleges and universities to make a good-faith effort to distribute in-state voter registration forms to students? By working with your local AAUW college/university partner to register students, you are helping the institution serve its students and demonstrating AAUW's value to our college/university partners.

- [Campus Vote Project](#)
- [Long Distance Voter Absentee Applications](#)

Contact Us

Have questions in the planning process? Need materials for your upcoming GOTV event? Use the following to get in touch.

- [Upcoming Advocacy Activity and Event Form](#) (materials request)
- [Advocacy Activity and Event Report Back Form](#)
- [Email us](#)

