



BE A CHANGEMAKER!

A GUIDE TO SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

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READY TO ROCK?

If you've ever been to a big music festival, chances are you have seen HeadCount registering voters. We're at over 1,500 live music events a year, collaborating with artists and cultural influencers to promote civic engagement on a national scale. We meet young people where they already are – concerts, festivals, community events and online – to register voters, provide election information and promote participation in democracy. But the truth is, we can't do this alone. **You** are a key player in promoting voting and civic engagement among your peers.

Voter registration does not require any experience and has almost no cost. The following is a simple guide to how you can run a non-partisan voter registration drive at your school. Follow these steps and join in to become a positive changemaker in *your* community.

To learn more about HeadCount, or volunteer with us visit:

[HeadCount.org](https://www.headcount.org)



ABOUT HEADCOUNT:

HeadCount is a 501(c)3 and 4945(f) organization with 20 years of nonpartisan voter registration at concerts and events. In our history we have registered over 1,000,000 voters, through working with musicians such as Ariana Grande, Dead & Company and Beyoncé. In 2020 alone, we registered over 425,000 voters.

10 STEPS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

1.

Alert school administrators of your plan to put on a voter registration drive. Work with them to decide where it will be held. Successful voter registration drives are held in **large community spaces** – the entryway before school, the cafeteria during lunch periods, the student center – or in **collaboration with specific teachers** during homeroom, history or social studies classes.

2.

Decide if you'll **use paper forms or go digital**, using laptops, tablets and phones to register voters. Use the "Digital vs. Paper" section below to decide what format will be best for you and your school!



3.

Review your state's guidelines for running a voter registration drive [here](#). Some states require specific training or require you to sign up with the election office before you can put on your voter registration drive. Also, check [your state's rules](#) on allowing voters to "**pre-register**" before their 18th birthday.

4.

Contact your state or local election office. Give them a call to make sure everything you are planning is in line with their laws. Ask about **voter registration deadlines**, how to get voter registration forms, and where to **mail or submit completed forms** once your drive is completed.

5.

Drop us a note at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org. If you're going digital, we'll give you a link that lets you track exactly how many people you register. If you're using paper, we'll help make sure you have everything you need.

6.

Recruit friends to help. Gathering volunteers when you're organizing your drive sets you up for success. Plus it's **more fun to register voters with a group!** Put a call out for volunteers in your history/social studies class, clubs, or organizations you are a part of, or the school's service clubs, such as the National Honors Society.

7.

Gather materials. Depending on what type of drive you are doing (paper or digital), you will need a different set of materials. For a paper voter registration drive, make sure that you have **voter registration forms, blue or black pens, and clipboards**. If you are conducting a digital voter registration drive, make sure that you have **laptops or tablets** for folks who may not have their own devices to use.

8.

Advertise your event. Create a flier to share on Instagram. Make TikToks to promote the event. Put up signs and banners around your school. Make a morning news announcement. All of these methods will **help others in your school become interested** in your drive!

9.

REGISTER VOTERS. Don't be shy! If you're in a classroom, speak confidently about the importance of voting, and how easy it is to register. If you're in the cafeteria or other community space within your school, **walk up to people and help them register.** Put out free candy on your table to encourage people to stop and talk with you. However, remember that it is **illegal to trade free gifts for voter registrations.** Registering to vote must be someone's own decision.

10.

Wrap things up. If you did a paper voter registration drive, **turn in the forms** right away. Share your story on social media and send us an email letting us know about your experience. If you are using the link we provided to conduct digital voter registration, reach out to us at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org and we'll tell you how many voters you registered!



IMPORTANCE OF NONPARTISANSHIP

All of the information that is included in this guide is for running nonpartisan voter registration drives. In order to follow all local and national voter registration laws, we encourage you to make sure your drive is nonpartisan. **This means that you (and your volunteer team) can't support or endorse any candidate, party, or campaign in connection with your voter registration drive.** You must accept applications from all voters, no matter their political views or support for a candidate or party. Additionally, we encourage you to avoid talking about specific partisan issues or political figures during your drive.

Why is nonpartisanship so important? When you and your volunteers are nonpartisan, everyone, regardless of political beliefs or identities, **feels comfortable registering to vote with you.** By being nonpartisan, you are creating a safe space that promotes the act of voting for all - a truly unique and incredible experience in a very partisan country. Democracy works best when everyone registers and turns out to vote, and that starts with ensuring everyone has access to voter registration.

INFORMATION TO KEEP IN MIND

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE RULES

Some states have very strict laws on voter registration drives.

- States like Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, Florida and Virginia require training or additional registration restrictions.
- Wisconsin requires applicants to either register online or submit a photocopy of their proof of residence with their application.
- California and New Mexico have very quick turnaround deadlines for drives to submit voter registration applications.
 - New Mexico asks for forms within 48 hours of the end of the registration drive.
 - California requires that forms are turned in within 3 business days from the signature date on the forms.

Below is information with individual state laws for training requirements. Make sure to check your state's laws [here](#) and *always* call your local or county elections office before your drive to confirm your team is following state guidelines!

Key states of note with training and/or certification requirements to run paper voter registration drives (as of May 2023):

Colorado: State training and certification required. Must be renewed every year. Certification number must be on completed forms.

Delaware: Complete training and register at least 30 days before conducting voter registration drive. Registration valid for two years.

Florida: Must register with the state and obtain a state number, which is put on all voter registration forms.

Maryland: Must be 18 on or before the next Election Day to participate. Training and certification is only required if you want to obtain more than 25 state voter registration applications.

Missouri: Training and registration required if you plan to collect more than 10 forms.

New Mexico: State registration and certification required. Certification number must be on completed forms.

Texas: Training and certification required by each county to collect and return forms within that county. Must be a citizen of the United States to participate.

Virginia: Training and certification is only required if you want to obtain more than 25 state voter registration applications.

Alert! Election laws are constantly changing and this list may not be comprehensive. Be sure to contact your local elections office to confirm that you are following all the local and state requirements for your paper voter registration drive!

PRE-REGISTRATION LAWS

What is pre-registration? It is the way new voters can **register to vote before they turn 18**. People who pre-register are automatically registered to vote when they turn 18, and are ready to vote. In 16 states, you can pre-register to vote at 16 years old. In another 4 states, you can pre-register to vote at 17 years old. In most other states, you simply have to turn 18 before the next general election in order to vote.

Check [here](#) to learn more about pre-registration and see your state's guidelines!

RUNNING AN ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

If you're running an online voter registration drive, the most important thing you need is a link to an online voter registration tool. You can always use:

[HeadCount.org](https://headcount.org) or [HeadCount.org/Register](https://headcount.org/register)

In addition to these links, HeadCount can create a **trackable voter registration link** for you, so you know exactly how many people register to vote as part of your drive. We can also generate a custom QR code and printable sign for you. Just email us at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org to request your own link or QR code. Then, share your link with everyone you know on social media, by email, and text.

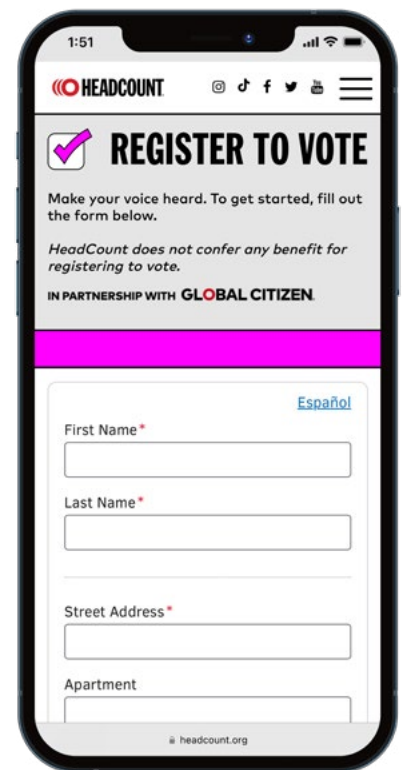
When you run an online voter registration drive, you typically do not need to worry about state certifications to run the drive or collecting and returning the voter registration forms by the deadline. In this case you are creating buzz and **driving people to use online tools**, which simplifies your set up and responsibility.

Note that **driver's license or state ID is required for most state's online voter registration systems**. In some states, voters still need to print out forms, sign them in pen and mail them in. If they register via HeadCount's website and don't have an in-state ID, they can complete a printable form that will be emailed to them to print, sign.

If you are promoting your event, encourage people to have their driver's license or SSN available when they come to register - if they don't have this information, text or email them your voter registration link and walk them through how to register once they have their ID information.

Here are a few tips for getting the link seen by as many people as possible:

- Briefly explain why you think **voting is important** using simple text like "By registering to vote, you are making sure your voice is heard."

A screenshot of a mobile application interface for 'HEADCOUNT'. The top bar shows the time 1:51, signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery icons. Below the header, there are social media icons for Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, along with a menu icon. The main heading is 'REGISTER TO VOTE' with a checkmark icon. Below this, there is a text prompt: 'Make your voice heard. To get started, fill out the form below.' A disclaimer follows: 'HeadCount does not confer any benefit for registering to vote.' At the bottom of the header, it says 'IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GLOBAL CITIZEN'. The form itself has a pink header bar. It includes a language selector 'Español' in blue. The form fields are: 'First Name *' with a text input box, 'Last Name *' with a text input box, 'Street Address *' with a text input box, and 'Apartment' with a text input box. The footer of the form area says '@ headcount.org'.

- Always include your link on a white board or other large surface if possible. Make sure it's clear to everyone that they can **use the link to register to vote**. Ask people to share it if they are already registered.
- Create a QR Code with the link, so that people can scan it and register to vote **from their phone!** We will do this for you if you need help.
- **Share the link** on your social media (Instagram, TikTok, etc.) and encourage your friends and anyone helping you run the drive or who registers with you to do the same!
- If you **tag @HeadCountOrg in your posts**, we'll try to share it and amplify it to more people!

RUNNING A PAPER VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

If you're working with paper, you'll need voter registration forms. Local voter registration forms, pre-printed with the address of your county election office, are sometimes available at post offices or the Department of Motor Vehicles. You can also print forms off of your state election website. Some are postage-paid, which means you can just drop them in the mail once completed. When you talk to your state or local election office, they should be able to tell you the best and proper way to get these forms and how to return them.

Another option is using the "federal form." It's allowed almost everywhere - except in three states (New Hampshire, Wyoming and North Dakota). You can download that form and instructions [here](#). The advantage is that you can photocopy the blank federal form and use it for multiple states.

If you decide to use the federal form, you will need to print copies of **page 4** for individual registrations. If using the federal form, make sure you check your state specific requirements and/or oath, and share with applicants prior to signing in box 9. Then make sure you are mailing them to the correct election office. HeadCount can help you with this, just email us at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org with any questions you might have.

Make sure that you have dark blue or black pens for people to use - forms are not valid if completed in pencil.

Once people have filled out and signed their voter registration form, be sure to collect it and keep it in one envelope or other safe space. Then **submit the forms by mail or in-person the very next day** to your state or local registrar based on your state's guidelines. If you lose forms, or are late in submitting them, someone won't get to vote and you could be subject to civil or criminal penalty.

Voter Registration Application
Before completing this form, review the General, Application, and State specific instructions.

Are you a citizen of the United States of America? No Yes This space for office use only.
Will you be 18 years old on or before election day? No Yes

1 Last Name Mr. Ms. Mrs. Mx. First Name Middle Name(s) Dr. Sr. Jr. III

2 Name Address Apt. or Unit # City/Town State Zip Code

3 Address Where You Got Your Mail If Different From Above City/Town State Zip Code

4 Date of Birth / / Telephone Number (optional) ID Number - (See item 6 in the instructions for your state)

5 Choice of Party None Other I am not a voter in this state

6 Race or Ethnic Group White Black Hispanic Asian Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Other

7 I have reviewed my state's instructions and I understand that:
 • I am a United States citizen
 • I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and
 • I am not currently serving a prison sentence for a crime involving moral turpitude.
 I agree to provide the information requested on this form to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I agree to be held responsible for it and a civil claimant deposited from or refused entry to the United States.

8 Please sign full name (or full name)
 Date / /

9 I have read the instructions and I understand that:
 • I am a United States citizen
 • I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and
 • I am not currently serving a prison sentence for a crime involving moral turpitude.
 I agree to provide the information requested on this form to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I agree to be held responsible for it and a civil claimant deposited from or refused entry to the United States.

10 Please sign full name (or full name)
 Date / /

Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

A If this application is to be changed in any way, what was your name before the change?

B If you were registered before this is the first time you are registering from the address in Row 2, what was your address where you were registered (last)?
 Street or Route and Box Number Apt. or Unit # City/Town/Country State Zip Code

C If you live in a rural area that does not have a street number, or if you have no address, please show on the map where you live.
 Write in the name of the roadway (or identify nearest to where you live).
 • Draw an X in the shape where you live.
 • Use a dot to show any schools, churches, stores, or other landmarks.
 • Draw an arrow pointing to the north direction of the roadway.

D If the applicant is unable to sign, who helped the applicant fill out this application? Give name, address and phone number (phone number optional).

Mail this application to the address provided for your State.

OMB Control No. 3205-0015

Most states prefer that you use the state or local form, not the federal one. Sometimes the ID number is not required in a state form - like in New York or North Carolina. If you are in a state with pre-registration and will be registering 16 and 17 year olds, we recommend using your state form as that option will be clearly defined on the form.

TEXAS: In Texas, you can not collect voter registration forms unless you are deputized by the county that you are collecting forms in. Without being deputized, you can only pass out forms for voters to complete and the individuals must mail the forms themselves.



FLORIDA: In Florida, you must register with the state and have a state issued number before running a paper voter registration drive. Without this number, you can only register voters online.

If you are interested in running a paper voter registration drive in Florida or Texas, let us know at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org. We may have a volunteer who can assist.

Lastly, if you're using paper, double check every form to make sure they're completed properly (you'd be amazed how many people don't get registered because of incomplete or incorrect forms). Do not fill in missing information for anyone, it is **against the law** in some states! Also, make sure all the forms end up in one big envelope so nothing gets lost.

DIGITAL VS. PAPER

PROS & CONS OF DIGITAL DRIVES

PROS	CONS
HeadCount sends you a link to track the number of voters you registered	Not every state has online voter registration; some states still require you to print out a form, sign it, and mail it.
There are fewer rules to follow	Applicants often need a state ID to register online
Software helps to ensure everything is completely filled out	
No mailing responsibilities	
Saves paper	

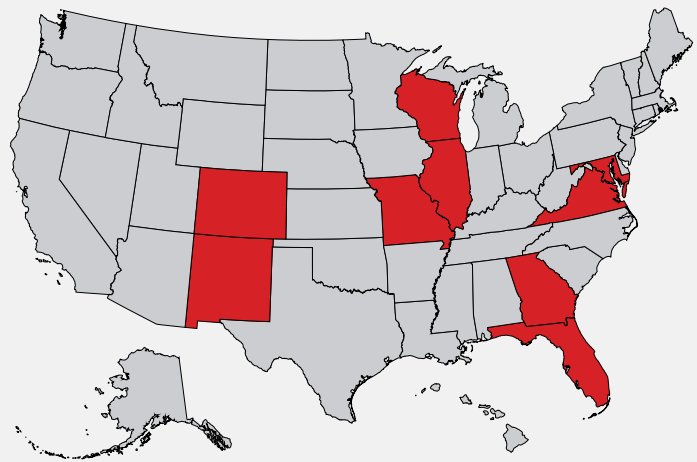
PROS & CONS OF PAPER DRIVES

PROS	CONS
You can make sure people complete the form and assist with any questions they may have	You must protect people's personal info while in possession of the forms
More reliable than sending folks a link and relying on them to fill it out	You must physically obtain forms before your drive and return forms to the correct address afterwards - before the voter registration deadlines
	You must comply with all state laws, which are more strict than digital voter registration drives

If you're having trouble deciding, take a look at whether your state has true online voter registration. The states listed below require anyone registering to vote to submit a paper copy of their voter registration form. Some have online resources to fill out the majority of the form, but it still will need to be printed and signed before being mailed or delivered in person. If someone doesn't have a printer, or forgets to mail it, they may never get registered.

States where we recommend running a digital drive because of the state laws surrounding voter registration drives:

- Wisconsin**
- Florida**
- New Mexico**
- Georgia**
- Virginia**
- Maryland**
- Colorado**
- Illinois**
- Missouri**



If you want to run a paper-based voter registration drive in these states, reach out to us at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org and we will see if we can send a volunteer out to support your drive.

The following states **do not offer online voter registration** and require a signature on a printed voter registration form (as of May 2023):

- Arkansas**
- Mississippi**
- Montana**
- South Dakota**
- Texas**
- Maine**
- Oklahoma** (first time registrations only)

These following do not offer online or traditional paper voter registration. If you are in one of these states, we recommend **running a voter education booth** to let people know what to expect on Election Day):

Wyoming: Prefers in-person registration with ID, can occur on Election Day or in advance at the county clerk's office. If using a paper form, state form must be notarized and returned by the state's deadline. No online registration.

New Hampshire: Requires in-person registration with qualifying ID. Can occur in advance by the municipality's deadline or on Election Day. Paper voter registration is only open to voters with a qualifying excuse, such as a medical condition that prevents you from appearing. No online registration.

North Dakota: No voter registration required.

SUBMITTING YOUR FORMS

The last and most important piece in accomplishing a successful voter registration drive is turning in all of the completed forms! Individual states have very different deadlines that you must submit your forms by. Remember, if you lose forms or are late in submitting them, someone won't get to vote and you could be subject to civil or criminal penalties. The best thing to do is make sure that you submit all forms the day after your drive.

Check your state [here](#) to confirm your deadlines!

CONCLUSION AND OTHER RESOURCES

We are so excited that you are registering voters in your school community, and hope this experience is an incredibly powerful one. There is nothing better than **using your voice to help others**, which is exactly what you are doing!

Something that's even more exciting is that you will be registering some first-time voters. On the next page of this guide, you'll find a one-pager that you can share with them for guidance. It includes tips and helpful information they should keep in mind as they head to the polls for the first time!

If there is anything that HeadCount can do to help, from helping you find other resources, answering random questions that you receive during your voter registration drive or anything else that may come up during the planning and running of your voter registration drive, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team at VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org.

Additionally, if you ever are interested in getting more involved with HeadCount, and registering voters at concerts or festivals near you, we would love to have you. Visit HeadCount.org/volunteer to see what events are happening near you.

LINKS TO USE

Fair Elections Center State Voter Guides: fairelectionscenter.org/voter-registration-drive-guides

Voter ID Information: HeadCount.org/Voter-ID

LGBTQ+ Voting Resources: HeadCount.org/Pride

PREPARING FOR THE POLLS

The steps you take before the polls are just as important as voting itself! Here are some important steps to remember:

- Register to vote
- [Check your state's early voting and mail-in voting rules](#)
- Locate your polling place
- Familiarize yourself with your ballot – research candidates, referendums, etc.

INSIDE YOUR BALLOT

There are various positions that are often up for re-election during the election season. Some of these important positions include:

- **President:** the chief executive responsible for enacting and enforcing the laws
- **Ballot Initiatives:** a citizen proposal or measure to enact or repeal a law presented to voters in a ballot. This is direct democracy at work!
- **School Board:** an elected board responsible for setting policies, curriculums, budget, funding and other logistics for public school systems
- **Governor:** signs state laws and oversees the operation of the state executive branch
- **Senator:** write and vote on laws on behalf of the citizens in their elected states
- **Representative:** write and vote on laws on behalf of the citizens in their elected congressional district
- **Secretary of State:** in charge of running elections in their elected state
- **Mayor:** highest-ranking official in a municipal government such as a city or a town
- **City Council:** the policy-making body for a municipal government

Learning about the different positions up for election on top of researching candidates can be overwhelming. Luckily, there are plenty of resources that can help you make an informed decision. [VOTE411](#) and [Voterly](#) are great resources for election and voting information. [Vote Smart](#) helps you learn about a candidate's voting records, campaign finances, biographical backgrounds, and issue positions.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE POLLS

Now that you have prepared for the polls, you're ready to cast your vote! Keep these points in mind as you head to the polls:

- Be prepared for a wait
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes
- Bring a snack
- Make sure to bring a valid state ID
- Ask poll workers any questions about the voting process

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

If you are a college student, there are a few additional resources and considerations to keep in mind, in addition to what is provided above. **Contact campus administrators and work with Student Life** to coordinate where and when you can hold your registration drive. Some campus offices that will be helpful to reach out to are the office of student affairs and the office of service/social justice/community engagement.

Ideas for maximizing the impact of your voter registration efforts on campus include:

- Setting up during the day (peak class-time) on the quad, inside the student center, or at any other location that has high foot traffic
- Setting up at the dining hall in the evening to interact with a ton of students in a small window of time
- Reach out to student organizations to set up a time to visit their chapter meetings - You'll be able to register dozens of voters in a couple of minutes!
 - Affinity groups, Greek life, Commuter student associations, and Arts-associated organizations (dance and music troupes) are just a few of the many types of student-run spaces that may be willing to have you join a meeting of theirs!

Another important piece to consider is the identities represented on your campus. Are most students from in-state or from across the country? This will help you decide if paper or digital voter registration makes more sense for your drive. If most students are from the same states, you can print state-specific and federal forms, but if students are from all over the country you will need the federal forms and digital voter registration options for students to use. Either way make sure to bring extra laptops and tablets so that ALL students can register, no matter what state they're from!

As college students, many of these new voters will not be at home to cast their ballot. Talk to students about their voting options on [campus](#) and have them check their state's early voting and absentee voting guidelines [here](#).