

PREPARING TO SUPPORT STUDENT VOTERS IN THE EVENT OF A CAMPUS CLOSURE CHECKLIST

Each of our vote plans may end up being a little different this year than in the past. With campus operations being in flux this Election season, it's important to provide students with quick, accurate information about their voting options. Use this checklist to make sure that you're proactively preparing students on your campus to make strategic voting plans that ensure their vote will count in any scenario.

1) GATHER THE IMPORTANT AND CORRECT INFORMATION.

- ❑ **Ask your students.** Avoid making inaccurate assumptions and learn about what your students' needs actually are. Ensure that you're addressing their concerns and have the foresight to share relevant, accurate information.
 - Examples of things to ask students: What factors are you most concerned about in terms of making sure your vote will get counted? Where would you go in the event of a closure?
- ❑ **Ask your election officials.** Connect with your local election officials to understand how you can best support student voters right now. Voice the concerns that your students raised.
 - Examples of things to election officials: Is there anything we can do if students have a mail-in ballot delivered to their on-campus address but no longer have access? How can we support students who are temporarily in COVID isolation housing?
- ❑ **Utilize existing resources.** There are many online state-by-state guides and key information on Secretary of States' voting websites that you can refer students to (or reference yourself!). You can check out [Navigating Civic Technology and Digital Voter Guides](#) for some ideas.

2) CENTRALIZE YOUR INFORMATION.

- ❑ **Build an anticipated FAQ document.** Using the information gathered, clearly outline the steps students can take to protect their vote in a campus-closure scenario.
- ❑ **Make sure you have a central webpage that contains all of the information students need to know.** If you can make a page on your campus' website, great! If you don't have access to that, you can make a free webpage using a tool like [carrd.co](#).
 - View this [example of a simple webpage](#) that addresses the concerns and context of "Sample Campus", a fictional university in Illinois. [Here's a guide to make your own version.](#)
- ❑ **Make a social media plan.** Through social media you can highlight key dates and deadlines, share examples of how students are making their voting plans, and distribute your information in a time-sensitive manner. Take the time to draft a social media plan now so you can easily roll it out if the need arises.

3) CREATE CLEAR, SIMPLE, AND ACTIONABLE MESSAGING BASED OFF YOUR INFORMATION.

- ❑ **Be clear about your vote-by-mail guidance early on.** Encourage students to request and submit their vote-by-mail ballot early and have it delivered to the most reliable address that they have access to. In many states it is illegal for campus mailing centers to forward election mail.
- ❑ **Highlight early voting opportunities, as well!** If your state offers early voting, students may be able to vote early on their way off campus if they are moving to a different county/state.
- ❑ **Help students proactively make a voting plan and/or a backup plan.** The Student Voter Move-Out Plan can help students make an informed decision based on their context. A Canva template to make your own customized sheet to distribute to your students is coming soon to [studentvoting.org/campus-closures](#).
 - You can also provide students with the actual relevant physical forms and stamped envelopes as part of their move out materials if that works for you!
- ❑ **Share peer testimonials and voices of confidence.** Don't make the unknown scarier than it needs to be. Provide examples of students' different plans and ways they are planning to cast and secure their votes.

- **Include opportunities for students to connect with someone.** Here's a few different ways to do so:
 - **Provide students the ability to call, text, Zoom, or email someone.** An easy way to set this up is creating a Google form that can be shared out easily.
 - **Create a staffed hotline.** You can use a Google voice phone number to create this!
 - **Hold Instagram Live or Zoom drop in sessions.** This is an accessible way for students to drop in, ask questions, and get answers.
 - **Add the Election Protection hotline.** The national, nonprofit Election Protection hotline has legal volunteers ready to help voters through all stages of the voting process at (866)-OUR-VOTE or (866)-687-8683. Check out their website, <https://866ourvote.org/> for more information.

4) PREPARE YOUR OUTREACH.

- **Identify the point people. Determine in advance key individuals on campus– students, faculty, and staff– who can serve as experts on the changing voter landscape.**
 - TIP- If you serve students in multiple states, recruit students to serve as “state captains” for voter information in that state.
- **Develop a unified message.** Make sure that administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders know where to point students to get accurate information.
- **Include voter information in existing communications.** Work with administrators and other key stakeholders to include voting as part of the general communications going out to students.
 - **Include building managers on your team and/or comms plan early on.** If you have polling locations on campus, these stakeholders may oversee those changes.
 - **You may want to include parent & family stakeholders in your messaging.** If family members tend to be involved in your student population’s lives, they can be a very effective messenger in times of uncertainty.
- **Utilize physical space.** Work with RAs to post key information or QR codes to your website on dorm news boards. Host a City Clerk satellite office on campus, if possible, to allow for registration and ballot completion in one fell swoop!
- **This is important– include your information as part of the anticipated move-out process.** Work with Residential Life or other relevant stakeholders to make sure that your information is included on a move-out checklist/packet or included in the communications to students during move-out.
 - This can could look like including the link to your prepared webpage on the move-out checklist, including a Move-Out Voting Plan Sheet in their move-out materials, and/or giving students a pre-stamped envelope with a ballot request form for your campus’ county to fill out and drop off in a collection box if time permits.

NOW, IF A CAMPUS CLOSURE HAPPENS, YOU HAVE THE STEPS IN PLACE TO:

- **Point students to a centralized digital location** that houses all the important information they need to adapt their voting plans as necessary.
- **Leverage the relationships and asks you’ve made** to other campus stakeholders to get out your message and information.
- **Share out** pre-developed clear and actionable content.

THE LAST STEP IS THE POST-CLOSURE FOLLOW UP.

- **Depending on how close the campus closure happens to important deadlines, be mindful about bombarding students with information!** Students are going through a lot during this time. Give them space to breathe and resettle somewhere before bombarding them with information about voting again. The communications you planned as part of the move-out process will do for now!
- **Frame your communications as “one less thing to worry about”.** You don’t want students to view voting as an intimidating responsibility on top of everything else they’re dealing with. Make sure to present your support in a way that makes the process easier, not more complicated.
- **When it is time to reach back out, be strategic about when you’re reaching out.** Make your communications relevant to key deadlines related to the top states your students are coming from, if possible.
- **Continue to promote opportunities for students to connect with someone.** This includes the opportunities listed above. for students who are having extra difficult issues adjusting their plans.