



**VOTE**

**Your Vote is  
Your Voice**

—  
A Toolkit for  
Youth Justice  
and Electoral  
Advocacy



**NO KIDS IN PRISON**

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this document and related material on electoral advocacy is being provided for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended to provide specific legal advice on election law. Nothing in this publication should be considered a substitute for expert legal, tax, or other professional advice as it relates to an individual's or organization's specific circumstances, and may not be relied upon for the purposes of avoiding any penalties that may be imposed under the Internal Revenue Code.

# I. Introduction



“Voting is the foundation stone  
for political action” — **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

One important way to educate and influence the policymakers who make decisions about why, where and when youth are incarcerated and how valuable resources are allocated is by getting *involved in your local and state elections*.

Governors, state legislators, county commissioners, district attorneys, and mayors all make decisions about their communities and how your tax dollars are spent. They need to hear from you and you need to tell everyone you know who cares about youth justice the importance of registering to vote and voting on Election Day.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide you with the information you need to engage in the political process; to make sure those seeking political power in your state understand the issues facing youth involved in the juvenile justice system and stand ready to work with young people and families if elected. It includes information about what rules apply to organizations and campaigns that want to engage in electoral advocacy as well as information about how to engage candidates on the issues around youth incarceration and community reinvestment.

It also includes tips on getting involved in voter registration and Get Out The Vote (GOTV) activities in your community to make sure youth justice advocates vote because educating candidates and potential policymakers is not enough. *You have to turn out your people.*

Building a voting block of constituents who share your commitment to a fairer, more effective justice system that helps young people and families and improves community safety helps build political power for your issue.

And, establishing relationships with future elected officials and holding them accountable once they are in office can be an important first step in any campaign to change the policies that impact young people and their families.

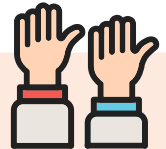
Together we can make a difference!

# II. Getting Started: What You Need to Know

## Know the Law

Just as with public education, legislative advocacy, or lobbying it is important to understand what types of activities that nonprofits can engage in around elections. An organization's tax and corporate status will determine the range of permissible electoral activities.

Most nonprofits are designated 501(c)3 organizations under the IRS code and are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in any candidate campaign for elected office at the local, state or federal level. However, nonprofits can and should engage in **nonpartisan** electoral activities such as registering voters, educating candidates about issues and sponsoring candidate debates and forums.



### Common Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Activities:

- ✓ Conducting or Promoting Voter Registration
- ✓ Educating Voters on the Voting Process
- ✓ Distributing Nonpartisan Sample Ballots, Candidate Questionnaires, or Voter Guides
- ✓ Organizing Get-Out-the-Vote Activities
- ✓ Encouraging and Reminding People to Vote
- ✓ Hosting or Co-Sponsoring a Candidate Forum
- ✓ Educating the Candidates on Your Issues
- ✓ Continuing to do Issue Advocacy During an Election
- ✓ Encouraging Staff to Serve as Poll Workers

*from [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)*

Some nonprofits have a 501(c)4 designation under the IRS code and are able to engage in all of the nonpartisan voter engagement activities described above, but can also engage in more **partisan** activities such as endorsing candidates, highlighting differences between candidates with relation to an issue you advocate for, and asking candidates to sign a pledge on a particular issue.

In addition to complying with federal tax law, organizations must also follow federal or state (or local) election laws. To learn more about what voter registration and electoral activities are permissible under the law see:

☑ [Nonprofit VOTE Resource Library](#). Here you will find a variety of toolkits, timelines, and other resources for nonprofits looking to engage in electoral advocacy.

☑ [Bolder Advocacy: An Initiative of the Alliance For Justice](#). Here you will find a variety of advocacy resources, including:

- [A Comprehensive Resource Library](#)
- [Comparison chart of allowable activities of 501\(c\)3 and 501\(c\)4 organizations](#)
- [Checklist of electoral activity “Dos and Don’ts” for 501\(c\)3 organizations](#)

☑ [Fair Elections Center](#). Here you will find a state by state guide that summarizes important registration and voting information for each state.

☑ [Vote.org](#). Here you will find a comprehensive voter resource that uses technology to simplify political engagement, increase voter turnout, and strengthen American democracy.

## Find Out Who’s Running and What They Stand For

Elections happen every year and many of these elected leaders will have decision-making authority over policies that affect youth and families. Governor, state legislators, mayor, district attorneys, city council, county commissioners, school board, and, in some states, attorney generals, judges and sheriffs are all possible offices that will be on the ballot.

### To find out who is running:

☑ Check out the election section of your State’s Secretary of State website for information about what is on the ballot and who has qualified to run. You can look up that information on-line at Nonprofit VOTE’s [Voting in Your State](#) or at the [National Association of Secretaries of State website](#).

### To find out what they stand for:

☑ Check candidate websites for information on their positions on issues.

☑ Incumbent candidates running for reelection will have past voting records you can research.

☑ If you can't find any information on where the candidate stands on youth justice issues, you can also review their political party's platform to get some idea of where they might stand.

## Focus on One or Two Races

Pick one or two races that could have an impact on youth justice issues. In any given election cycle there are races for U.S. Congress, Governor, state legislature, county commissioner, district attorney, mayor or town council and you can't be everywhere. In some cases, based on prior relationships or past work on legislation or policy, you will know which race or races matter most to youth justice issues in your community. If you don't, here are a few questions to ask yourself to help determine which race you should focus on:

☑ **Governor.** Think about whether the youth prisons in your state are operated by the state or county and who has decision-making authority over how they are funded and how they operate. As the chief executive officer of your state, the Governor often has a lot of influence over the policy priorities and practices of state agencies and how state resources are allocated.

☑ **State Legislature.** Think about which committees in your state legislature have jurisdiction over the juvenile justice system and the budget and appropriations process. Legislators who have served on these committees and are running for re-election or candidates who talk about an interest in serving on these committees if elected would be likely races to consider.

☑ **Local government.** Think about how much control county government has over the operation of youth prisons and/or the allocation of resources for community-based services in your community. If there is significant local control, you may want to look at local races for county commission, district attorney, town council or mayor.

## Ballot Measures

About half of states allow ballot questions or propositions to be put before the voters either by voter petition or legislative action. 501(c)3 nonprofits may urge people to vote for or against ballot measures, which ask voters to vote on laws, bonding issues, or constitutional amendments. It's important to remember that because in this scenario the voters are acting as the "legislators", activity on a ballot measure counts as direct lobbying against 501(c)3 lobbying limits. But because this is true, activities can be more partisan. For example, messages can focus on a single issue and state a position on that issue; you can target communications to voters likely to support your position; and you can engage in activities that do not have to present both side of the issue.

✓ **Ballot Measures.** This section of the BALLOTPEDIA website allows you to look up information on all [state ballot referendum and initiatives](#).

✓ **The Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (BISC).** BISC works with national and state partners to drive a [cohesive ballot measure strategies](#).

✓ **Nonprofits and ballot measures.** This section of the Nonprofit VOTE website provides information, guidance, and [tools for engaging in a ballot initiative](#).



# III. Get Candidates Talking about Youth Justice

## What You Can Do

Elections offer numerous opportunities to interact with candidates for elected office that are permissible for nonprofit organizations. You can and should raise youth justice issues in candidate campaigns and build relationships with future elected officials through educational activities and efforts. However, as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization, you must be careful not to engage in “electioneering” which is defined as “working actively to secure votes for a candidate in an election.” The IRS applies a “facts and circumstances” test to determine whether an organization’s activity is considered electioneering and therefore not permissible under tax law. For a quick check of the types of activities that are generally not allowable for 501(c)3 organizations, see **Things to Avoid**.



### Things to Avoid:

- ☑ Do not support or oppose a candidate when talking about a youth justice issue.
- ☑ Do not sponsor or cosponsor an event that benefits one candidate over others.
- ☑ Do not rate or score candidates on your issues, as this may be interpreted as favoring one candidate over another. You can record their position on your issues, but do not rank them.
- ☑ Do not compare candidate’s position on youth justice to your organization’s position.
- ☑ Do not use a candidate pledge as voter education; this is considered electioneering because when a candidate signs a pledge it signals implicit support by the sponsoring organization.

Now you are ready. You can’t be everywhere, so think about a particular race that is important to your community and/or will have the ability to influence one or more of your organization’s policy goals.

City councilors, county commissioners, district attorneys, mayors, state legislators, governors all have decision-making authority over the policies, practices and laws that govern your issue or community. In some jurisdictions, judges, sheriffs and attorneys general are elected, so it is important to understand who can and is running for all levels of elected office in your community.



Once you have decided on a race, you are ready to get started! Below are ways you can get candidates talking about youth justice.

## Educate the Candidate about Youth Justice Issues

No one knows more than you do about the issues important to you, your organization, and your community. Providing elected officials with information and recommendations year-round is important, but during a campaign elected officials are more actively looking for ways to connect to voters and the communities they are seeking to represent. Elections provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate your expertise on youth justice issues and establish yourself as a trusted source of information. When sharing your policy ideas, data, and research with candidates, be sure to *make that information available to all candidates*.

### Some ideas for educational activities:

- ☑ Public polls and surveys – Polling can be expensive, but you may be able to work with allies or a local public opinion polling firm to get one or two youth justice issues placed in a larger multi-issue poll.
- ☑ Develop a briefing book – This should be a comprehensive resource on youth justice issues and include fact sheets, research reports, polling data, information about your organization and others you work with.
- ☑ Schedule meetings with all the candidates in the race – Use this as an opportunity to share the briefing book and have a more detailed discussion about the issues. It also allows the candidate to ask any questions he or she may have.

**EXAMPLES**

- Youth First [Key Facts](#)
- Youth First [Polling](#)
- Juvenile Justice Reform [Fact Book](#) for Louisiana’s Leaders

## Candidate Questionnaire/Survey

Candidate questionnaires let candidates—and the public—know what issues you care about. Develop a survey and circulate it to all the candidates in a particular race and ask them to respond.

Candidates often receive many requests to fill out questionnaires and surveys, so you may want to consider collaborating with other organizations to consolidate your efforts and increase the likelihood that candidates will reply.

Plan to mail/distribute questionnaire in July or August to ensure you have responses by no later than mid-September. If you want to try to include questions in another organization's or coalition's survey start asking around shortly after the June primaries to determine who might be planning a survey or questionnaire.

Make sure to publicize responses on your website and in your communications, including blogs, newsletters, and social media. Share the information with your constituency, allies and the media.

Open-ended questions tend to be better than multiple choice questions because they are generally less directive and allow the candidate to elaborate on their answers. However, when asking a yes or no question, it is recommended that you also include a follow-up "Why or Why Not?" at the end to allow for further explanation.

### **General guidelines for creating candidate surveys and voter guides.**

Because candidates may not be familiar with youth justice issues and related terminology, you should be prepared to define terms used in your survey, such as "status offense" and "community-based alternatives," and/or plan to provide candidates with information from a briefing book or key facts document your organization has developed. [The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(OJJDP\)](#) and the [Juvenile Law Center](#) have developed glossaries which you can share directly with candidates or use to develop your own glossary of terms.

### **SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

Dear Candidate:

On any given day, more than 40,000 youth are languishing in youth prisons and other out-of-home confinement in the United States. It isn't safe, it isn't fair and it doesn't work. Yet, states continue to spend an average of \$150,000 per year to confine a youth and still devote the vast majority of their juvenile justice spending to youth prisons, spending over \$5 billion per year. **[OR USE AN OPENING GRAPH WITH STATE DATA]**

**[INSERT ORG/CAMPAIGN NAME & MISSION]**. We believe that youth deserve a second change and that the resources spent to incarcerate youth currently should be devoted to creating opportunities for rehabilitation and not incarceration.

Below/attached you will find a series of questions about youth incarceration/youth justice. The questionnaire has been sent to all of the candidates running for **[INSERT OFFICE]**. Please fill out the questionnaire and return to **[INSERT ORG/CAMPAIGN NAME]** by **[INSERT DEADLINE]**.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions. Thank you for your time and attention. We look forward to your response.



## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Do you support [INSERT RECENT BILL OR LEGISLATION]? Why or why not?
- What would you change about the current juvenile justice system and why?
- How would you go about making that change?
- What role do you believe community-based alternatives to incarceration play in the juvenile justice system?
- What ways will you work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system?
- How will you help to ensure the juvenile justice system in [STATE] serves its rehabilitative purpose for our youth?
- What is your position on the family’s role in addressing the needs of system involved youth? The young person’s role? The community’s role?
- Do you believe status offenders should be incarcerated?
- Do you believe youth who commit misdemeanors or technical violations of probation should be incarcerated?
- How would you change the way that juvenile justice resources are allocated?

## EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONNAIRES & GUIDES

- Arkansas – Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families [2020 Voters Guide](#)
- Connecticut – Connecticut Voices for Children: [Candidate Briefing Book \(2018\)](#)
- New Jersey – #NJVotes4Kids [2017 Election Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- Ohio – 2010 Ohio [Candidate Juvenile Justice Questions](#)
- Wisconsin – [Ask the Candidates](#) Where They Stand on Children’s Issues
- Virginia – Voices for Virginia’s Children [2019 Election Guide](#)

## Invite Candidates to an Event

Inviting candidates to events you are hosting gets your organization and issue out in front. It gives members of your community the opportunity to interact with the candidate, ask the candidate questions, and provide answers to his or her questions. Make certain to invite all the candidates running in a particular race.

### Invite candidates to:

- Tour a community-based alternative to incarceration program
- Visit a youth prison or detention facility
- Attend an arts exhibit, poetry reading or production featuring work by incarcerated or formerly incarcerated youth
- Attend a film screening

## Co-sponsor a Candidate Forum

Candidate forums are a great way for voters and community members to learn more about a candidate and give you the opportunity to raise questions that are important to your organization and constituency. Hosting or co-hosting a candidate forum can raise the profile of your organization/campaign and highlight your issues during an election.

Several organizations have expertise in hosting nonpartisan candidate forums. Reach out to them to see if you can co-sponsor a planned forum or work with them (and others) to set one up. Check out these local organizations to see whether they are already planning to sponsor a forum and whether your organization would be welcome to co-sponsor:

- Local chapter of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS). LWVUS has chapters in all 50 states. [Find the chapter nearest you.](#)



### Engaging Your Volunteers & Staff

Helping out at a candidate forum is a great way to engage volunteers from your organization or campaign.

Volunteers can do a variety of tasks from helping to staff the event to simply attending and asking a question about a youth justice issue from a candidate survey.



- Local Chamber of Commerce. Here's a [list](#) of the accredited local chambers of commerce.
- Local media outlet. In some areas small print newspapers or local public radio will sometimes host candidate forums or debates.
- Other nonprofits, coalitions or associations in your area that have sponsored forums in the past or may be interested in partnering with you on an event.

If you want to try hosting a forum on your own, check out [Nonprofit's Guide to Hosting a Candidate Forum](#).

You can also find a helpful [candidate forum planning checklist](#).

## Attend a Town Hall or other Candidate Event

You can get out there too, and attend candidate events and ask questions. You can and should use questions from your candidate survey in public forums and at other events where a candidate may be speaking or engaging with voters. Remember that as a representative of your organization, you must remain nonpartisan and ask the same question at events for all candidates in the same race.

## Engage the Media

Use earned media to amplify your issue and messages around youth justice. Reporters and editors are already going to be focused on the election and you have the opportunity to get your constituency talking about what matters to them in the election. Candidates are members of the public and they listen to what is covered in the news.

- Schedule editorial board meetings to educate board members on youth justice issues.
- Write op-eds about youth justice related issues.
- Write LTEs about what is happening in your community and why youth justice issues are important.

# IV. Voter Registration and Get Out The Vote! (GOTV)

Voter engagement is a natural complement to your campaign's issue advocacy. According to census surveys, people who register and vote are more strongly connected to their communities and are more likely to be active in their communities. Voter and civic engagement has also been linked to reduced unemployment, lower recidivism rates, and better individual and community health.

The first step is making sure your staff, volunteers, partners and allies are all registered to vote and have a plan to make sure they are able to vote come Election Day. Once you have done that, it's important to broaden your reach to others who care about youth justice issues, making sure they are registered to vote and explaining to them the importance of getting others who care about youth justice issues to register and vote.

Nonprofits and campaigns whose communities participate in voter engagement efforts are more likely to have a seat at the table at decision-making time. Candidates naturally seek out and respond to communities with higher voter turnout. Helping to educate, register, and turn out voters, leads to more access to elected officials, increased trust on issues, and a better opportunity to advance your group's goals.

Increased voter registration in an area also means more visits from candidates and elected officials to attend events in the community and listen to those voters' concerns. Finally, engaging in voter registration and turnout activities builds relationships that can be important down the road as you work toward specific legislative and policy goals after the election.

## Voter Registration Basics



Voter registration is an appropriate and allowable nonpartisan activity for nonprofits, but there are a few important things to remember:

- ☑ Stay nonpartisan. If you are conducting or participating in a voter registration activity you *may not* recommend a candidate to support or a party to join. You can refer questions about candidates and parties to other nonpartisan sources, including local newspapers or other nonpartisan voter guides, like ones produced by the League of Women Voters.





REGISTER TO

**VOTE**

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

WWW.SOS.CA.GOV

*Remember:*

You must re-register  
when you move or change  
your name.

**Vote en 2014!**

**MYVOTE**

**SmartVot**

SmartVoter.org

- ☑ Make sure you know the voter registration deadline in your state.
- ☑ Make sure you know the law and eligibility rules in your state. In general, you can register to vote if you will be 18 on or before Election Day. In some states, the law allows for the pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds. In addition, most states restore voting rights to allow citizens with a felony conviction to vote.

See [Vote.org](https://www.vote.org) or Nonprofit VOTE’s [Voter Engagement Resource Library](#) for more tools and information on voter registration.

You can check your state’s voter registration page or the following resources for rules on who can register voters and when they can be registered in your state.

- Information about [voter registration laws in your state](#)
- [Preregistration](#) for young voters
- [Student voting](#)
- [Felon voting rights](#)

## Potential Partners on Voter Registration and GOTV Activities

- Nonprofit VOTE partners at the state level with state nonprofit associations, state and regional service provider networks, foundations, and other nonprofit conveners. Check out their [state partner page](#) to see if there is an organization in your state.

- The [National Coalition on Black Civic Participation](#) (The National Coalition) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing civic engagement and voter participation in Black and underserved communities.

- *[Black Youth Vote!](#) (BYV!) is the youth and young adult civic leadership development and organizing arm of the National Coalition. The BYV! #Vote4Justice Organizing Initiative’s goal is to continue its legacy of engaging black youth in civic engagement, issue organizing, voter empowerment and voter protection.*

### You Don’t Have to Go it Alone!



There are plenty of organizations you can partner with to do voter registration and GOTV activities.

*The best time to conduct a voter registration event is the month leading up to your state’s voter registration deadline.*

This is when voter interest and engagement is highest and will ensure a successful event.

- Black Live Matter’s (BLM) [#WhatMatters2020](#) is a campaign aimed to maximize the impact of the BLM movement by galvanizing BLM supporters and allies to the polls in the 2020.
- NAACP Civic Engagement program: [Black Voices Change Lives 2020](#) is a volunteer engagement project designed to help turn out Black voters.
- [NALEO Educational Fund \(NALEO\)](#) is the nation’s leading nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.
- [Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote \(APIAVote\)](#) encourages active participation amongst all individuals committed to amplifying AAPI voices and encouraging political participation in the AAPI community.
- [Alliance for Youth Action](#) is a nationwide network of organizations building political power of young people, and the premier youth vote vehicle in the United States.
- [Campus Vote Project](#) works with universities, community colleges, faculty, students and election officials to reduce barriers to student voting.
- [League of Women Voters of the US \(LWVUS\)](#) is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. There are [chapters in all 50 states and several local chapters](#) have very robust juvenile and criminal justice positions.

## Ideas for Voter Registration Activities

In deciding when, where, and how to engage in a voter registration activity, it is good to assess what the assets and needs are in your current campaign or coalition. For example, where do you have existing relationships with organizations already engaged in voter registration activities, are you a state that can pre-register young voters, are there other natural allies on voter registration and civic engagement that you can easily partner with or ask for assistance? It is also good to think about your own capacity and what you can contribute in terms of staff or volunteer time before reaching out to another organization or effort.

### Volunteer at a National Voter Registration Day Event

The fourth Tuesday in September each year is National Voter Registration Day, when volunteers, celebrities, and organizations from all over the country take action. This

single day of coordinated field, technology and media efforts will create pervasive awareness of voter registration opportunities —reaching tens of thousands of voters who would not be reached otherwise.

- ☑ Reach out to other organizations (listed above) who may have scheduled events and volunteer to staff a table. [Search for events in your area.](#)
- ☑ Send staff to voter registration training.
- ☑ Bring information, such as a flyer or postcard, about your organization and/or youth justice issue or an event you may be hosting.

## **Register System-Involved Youth**

Twenty-four states allow 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote. If you work in one of these states, registering these young people to vote is a great way to make sure your base is engaged in the electoral process as soon as they are eligible. It is also an important way to help educate and empower system-involved youth. You could partner with a local LWV chapter or other voter organization to help register youth in a youth prison, juvenile detention center, or at a community-based alternative to incarceration.

- ☑ Contact the facility or program and request day/time.
- ☑ Recruit a LWV member or other trained voter registration leader to join you and at least 2 volunteers to register youth.

## **Participate in the LWVUS High School Registration Project**

Voter registration is critical to spurring young people to get involved. Census data tells us that approximately three quarters of young people who register end up turning out to vote in major election years. To get idea about [how to participate in a high school registration drive](#), check out the LWV's training manual.

## **Register Voters Online**

Rock the Vote has an easy [on-line tool](#) you can embed in your website.

## **Get the Word Out through Social Media**

Repurpose or create sample social media graphics that tie your issue to the importance of voting that groups can easily use and are somewhat evergreen or that local entities can put their logo on and share widely.



## Election Day Is Here!

You can continue to be involved in the election right up to and through Election Day. Nonprofit VOTE provides a useful checklist of nonpartisan activities for Election Day, including:

- Allowing staff time off to vote.
- Allowing staff to spend part or all of Election Day doing nonpartisan get out the vote activities.
- Encouraging your staff and volunteers to sign up as poll workers or translators.
- Involving staff members as nonpartisan election observers.
- Providing rides to the polls.
- Holding an Election Day party or event.
- Use email and social media to encourage your members and allies to vote.

# V. Resources

## Useful Websites

- **Voting In Your State: 50 State Tool**  
Updated by Nonprofit VOTE in cooperation with the National Association of Secretaries of State, this site will link you to information for your state on registering to vote, vote by mail, early in-person voting, polling locations, ID to bring when voting and contacting your local or state election office.
- **BALLOTPEDIA**  
Ballotpedia is the [online encyclopedia](#) of American politics and elections that seeks to provide accurate and objective information about politics at all levels of government.
- **Election Official Directory & State Voting Requirements**  
U.S. Vote Foundation [online tool](#) allows you to look up election and voter information by state, including sample ballots for local elections.
- **Vote.org** Here you will find [everything you need to know to vote](#). This comprehensive voter resource uses technology to simplify political engagement, increase voter turnout, and strengthen American democracy.
- **VOTE411.org**  
Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October 2006, this site is a “[one-stop-shop](#)” for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state specific information on the election process.
- **Student Voting Guide**  
Campus Vote Project has compiled a [statewide map](#) with information on student voting in every state.
- **Rock The Vote**  
[Rock the Vote](#) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1990 to encourage young people to vote.

- **Project Vote**  
[Project Vote](#) is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to build an electorate that accurately represents the diversity of this nation’s citizenry, and to ensure that every eligible citizen can register, vote, and cast a ballot that counts.
- **CIRCLE**  
[The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement \(CIRCLE\)](#) focuses on young people in the United States, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged in political life. CIRCLE’s scholarly research informs policy and practice for healthier youth development and a better democracy.

## On-line Toolkits

- [United Way Voter Engagement Toolkit: A Nonpartisan Guide for 501\(c\)3 Nonprofits](#)
- [Nonprofit VOTE: Voter Registration Toolkit](#)
- [National Voter Registration Day Toolkit](#)
- [LWVUS High School Voter Registration Training Manual](#)
- [Boulder Academy Ballot Measures Toolkit](#)
- [Rock the Vote! Voter Registration Toolkit](#)

# VI. Appendix of Resource Links

The following is a section-by-section outline of the resource links provided in the toolkit.

## Getting Started: What You Need to Know

### Know the Law

- ☑ Nonprofit VOTE Resource Library. Here you will find a variety of toolkits, timelines, and other resources for nonprofits looking to engage in electoral advocacy. <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/making-plan/>
- ☑ Bolder Advocacy: An Initiative of the Alliance For Justice (<http://bolderadvocacy.org>). Here you will find a variety of advocacy resources, including:
  - A Comprehensive Resource Library: <https://bolderadvocacy.org/resource-library/>
  - Comparison chart of allowable activities of 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 organizations. <http://bolderadvocacy.org/resource/comparison-of-501c3-and-501c4-permissible-activities>
  - Checklist of electoral activity “Dos and Don’ts” for 501(c)3 organizations [http://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Election\\_Checklist\\_for\\_501c3\\_Public\\_Charities.pdf](http://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Election_Checklist_for_501c3_Public_Charities.pdf)
- ☑ Fair Elections Center. Here you will find a state by state guide that summarizes important registration and voting information for each state. <https://www.fairelectionscenter.org/state-specific-resources>
- ☑ Vote.org. Here you will find a comprehensive voter resource that uses technology to simplify political engagement, increase voter turnout, and strengthen American democracy. <https://www.vote.org>



## Who's Running and What Do They Stand For?

☑ Nonprofit VOTE's Voting in Your State: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/>

☑ National Association of Secretaries of State website: <http://www.nass.org/>

## Ballot Measures

☑ Ballot Measures. Look up information on all state ballot referendum and initiatives. [https://ballotpedia.org/Ballot\\_Measures\\_overview](https://ballotpedia.org/Ballot_Measures_overview)

☑ The Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (BISC). BISC works with national and state partners to drive a cohesive ballot measure strategies. <https://ballot.org/>

☑ Nonprofits and ballot measures. Information, guidance, and tools for engaging in a ballot initiative. <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/ballot-measures-2/>

## Getting Candidates Talking About Youth Justice: What You Can Do

### Educate the Candidate about Youth Justice Issues

Examples of briefing materials for candidates:

☑ Youth First Key Facts: <https://www.nokidsinprison.org/the-facts>

☑ Youth First Polling: <https://nokidsinprison.org/solutions/what-the-public-says>

☑ Juvenile Justice Reform Fact Book for Louisiana's Leaders: [http://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/resource\\_149.pdf](http://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/resource_149.pdf)

### Candidate Questionnaire/Survey

☑ General guidelines on creating candidate surveys and voter guides: [http://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Candidate\\_Questionnaires\\_and\\_Voter\\_Guides.pdf](http://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Candidate_Questionnaires_and_Voter_Guides.pdf)

☑ Glossaries of juvenile justice terms

— OJJDP: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/glossary.html>

— Juvenile Law Center: <http://jlc.org/news-room/media-resources/glossary>

## Examples of Questionnaires & Guides

- ☑ Arkansas – Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families 2020 Voters Guide: <https://www.aradvocates.org/issues/be-an-advocate/2020-voters-guide>
- ☑ Connecticut – Connecticut Voices for Children: Candidate Briefing Book (2018): [https://kidsimpact865312240.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/ct-voices-ece\\_print\\_version\\_final\\_2018\\_09\\_21.pdf](https://kidsimpact865312240.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/ct-voices-ece_print_version_final_2018_09_21.pdf)
- ☑ Virginia – Voices for Virginia’s Children 2019 Election Guide: <https://vakids.org/our-news/blog/2019-election-guide-advocacy>
- ☑ New Jersey – #NJVotes4Kids 2017 Election Advocacy Toolkit: <https://acnj.org/njvotes4kids/>
- ☑ Ohio – 2010 Ohio Candidate Juvenile Justice Questions: <http://jjohio.org/2010/10/05/2010-ohio-candidate-juvenile-justice-questions>
- ☑ Wisconsin – Ask the Candidates Where They Stand on Children’s Issues: <http://www.wccf.org/take-action/ask-candidates-stand-childrens-issues>

## Co-sponsor a Candidate Forum

- ☑ Local chapter of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS): <http://lww.org/get-involved/local-leagues>
- ☑ Local Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.uschamber.com/members/chambers/accreditation>
- ☑ Nonprofit’s Guide to Hosting a Candidate Forum: <https://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2018/02/hosting-candidate-forum-nonprofit-guide.pdf/>
- ☑ Candidate Forum Planning Checklist: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2013/06/candidate-forum-checklist.pdf>

# Voter Registration and Get Out The Vote (GOTV)!

## Voter Registration

- ☑ Nonprofit VOTE's Voter Engagement Resource Library for more tools and information on voter registration: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voter-registration-2/>
- ☑ Everything you need to know to vote: <https://www.vote.org/>
- ☑ Information about voter registration laws in your state: <https://www.fairelectionscenter.org/state-specific-resources>
- ☑ Preregistration for young voters: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/preregistration-for-young-voters.aspx>
- ☑ Student Voting: <https://www.campusvoteproject.org/>
- ☑ Felon voting rights: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights.aspx>

## Potential Partners on Voter Registration and GOTV Activities

- ☑ Nonprofit VOTE: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/our-partners/state-partners/>
- ☑ The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (The National Coalition): <http://www.ncbcp.org/>
- ☑ Black Youth Vote! (BYV!): <http://ncbcp.org/programs/byv/>
- ☑ Black Live Matter's (BLM) #WhatMatters2020 campaign: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-matters-2020/>
- ☑ NAACP's Black Voices Change Lives 2020 project: <https://blackvoiceschangelives.org/>
- ☑ NALEO Educational Fund (NALEO): <http://www.naleo.org/>
- ☑ Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote): <http://www.apiavote.org/>
- ☑ Alliance for Youth Action: <https://allianceforyouthaction.org/>

☑ The Campus Vote Project: <https://www.campusvoteproject.org/>

☑ League of Women Voters of the US (LWVUS): <http://lww.org/>

### **Volunteer at a National Voter Registration Day Event**

☑ National Voter Registration Day: <http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>

### **Participate in the LWVUS High School Registration Project**

☑ LWVUS High School Voter Registration Drive training manual: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/high-school-voter-registration-training-manual-3rd-edition>

### **Register Voters Online**

☑ Rock the Vote has an easy on-line voter registration tool: <https://www.rockthevote.com/get-involved/register-voters/>

## **Resources**

### **Useful Websites**

☑ Voting In Your State: 50 State Tool: [www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state](http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state)

☑ BALLOTPEDIA: <https://ballotpedia.org>

☑ U.S. Vote Foundation Election Official Directory & State Voting Requirements: <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/vote/eoddomestic.htm>

☑ [Vote.org](http://Vote.org)

☑ [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org)

☑ Campus Vote Project: <https://www.campusvoteproject.org/>

☑ Rock The Vote: <http://www.rockthevote.com/>

☑ Project Vote: <http://www.projectvote.org/>

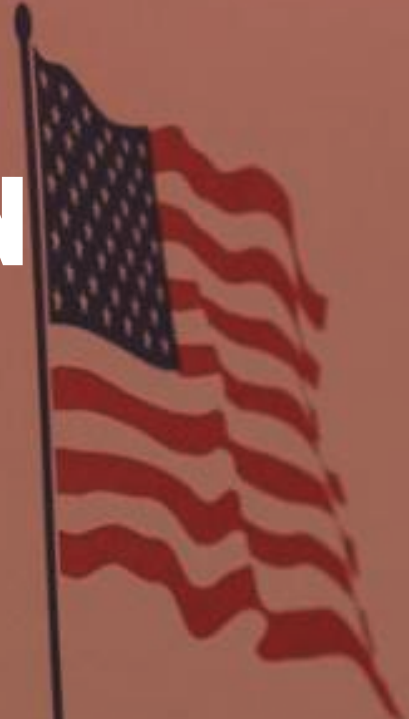
☑ Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE): <http://civicyouth.org/>

## On-line Toolkits

- ☑ United Way Voter Engagement Toolkit: A Nonpartisan Guide for 501(c)3 Nonprofits: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2016/05/united-way-voter-engagement-toolkit.pdf>
- ☑ Nonprofit VOTE: Voter Registration Toolkit: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voter-registration-2/>
- ☑ National Voter Registration Day Toolkit: <http://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org>
- ☑ LWVUS High School Voter Registration Training Manual: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/high-school-voter-registration-training-manual-3rd-edition>
- ☑ Boulder Academy Ballot Measures Toolkit: <http://bolderadvocacy.org/tools-for-effective-advocacy/toolkits/ballot-measures>
- ☑ Rock the Vote! Voter Registration Toolkit: <https://www.rockthevote.org/action-center/host-your-own-event/>



**NO KIDS IN PRISON**



**VOTE**