



***ACTIVISM GUIDE:***  
***VOTER REGISTRATION***  
***DRIVES***

# INTRODUCTION

As the 2016 Presidential election draws closer, our nation is preparing to align itself on certain political, social and economic issues, allowing students across the nation to spark conversation, educate citizens, and provide others with the resources necessary to help our democracy grow. Despite being an off election year, 2015 has laid the groundwork for all the candidates seeking their parties' ticket nomination. In a true democracy, all Americans should actively participate in the electoral process. Unfortunately, according to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, only about half of all young people voted in 2012. Many young people feel that the government doesn't take their voices seriously.

This year, the Junior State of America aims to raise this statistic by holding voter registrations drives across the nation as well as lobbying for the youth of our nation to be represented through creating a Presidential Youth Council. Through these initiatives, students and adults will become more informed on the issues and more prepared to vote.

In this packet, you will find the initiative instructions, how-to guide, letter templates, and tips for how to make your chapter's voter registration successful. While there is some set structure to these initiatives in regards to dates and other logistics, chapters should still have the flexibility necessary to make these initiatives a success. As such, the tips provided are not rigid guidelines but rather general suggestions. In addition, all links, resources, documents, and contact information mentioned will be provided further in the packet.

We hope that you enjoy implementing voter registration drives in your communities and making a difference this election season.

Sincerely,  
Rachna Mandalam and Hannah Edwards  
National Directors of Activism 2015-2016

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# HOW TO HOLD A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

Step 1: Research the voter registration laws in your state and contact local officials and organizations.

Research local election laws and contact your state and/or local elections office as your county clerk, local board of registrars, and local elections office will be important resources for how local voter registration works. All contact information and links will be provided in this packet to simplify the process. In addition, the League of Womens' Voters is an extremely active organization in voter registration and can be great partners who can make your drive a success. They can give you tips, resources, and volunteers, which can all be valuable given the short time frame.

Step 2: Build a team

Suggested positions are as follows:

- Main event organizer – oversees all work and logistics and ensures everything runs smoothly.
- Someone to contact school personnel, local elections office, and any organizations
- Volunteers to run the drive (at LEAST 2)
- People wanting to register!

Step 3: Choose a location and date for your drive

The JSA-set time span to hold registration drives is from **September 21-October 21** but dates may vary due to individual state registration deadlines. Location can be anywhere, but public locations such as local colleges may be ideal to reach out to younger voting-age citizens. Public locations are preferable to maximize the amount of registered voters, but it is important to receive any necessary permits and permissions prior to holding a drive. Scheduling registration activities often require repeated contact (once or twice a week) as people may be extremely busy and unresponsive, and it is best to start early as there may be scheduling and timing conflicts. If you plan on holding a drive at a high school, some districts require that persons or organizations visiting their campuses undergo a background or ID check, so be sure to ask about that.

Step 4: Advertise your drive

On the week of your drive, start setting up flyers (with permission) in the area you plan to hold your drive. Make sure that people know about your drive to ensure high attendance. Having a notice in your local newspaper can be a great way of advertising your event, as well as having schools give announcements and set reminders. A sample flyer is attached below.

Step 5: Hold your drive

On the day of the drive, make sure that you have all the proper forms necessary. If you plan on registering voters through the Internet, make sure you have enough laptops and a secure Internet connection. Most importantly, have a printed, visible notice that state "Our voter registration services are available without regard to voters' political preference". Make sure you have enough volunteers for the day and organize all of your forms so nothing is lost.

## WAYS TO REGISTER VOTERS

### Online Registration:

- Check here to see if online registration is available in your state:  
<http://www.rockthevote.com/voter-registration/online-application-system/online.html>
- This is pretty straightforward as you just need to provide laptops at your drive and have people fill out the online form. Using the website listed above is the best way to link you to your state's online voter registration site, but other options will be listed in Additional Links/Resources.

### National Mail Voter Registration Form:

- Any individual may use the National Mail Voter Registration Form to register to vote, and the National Form also contains voter registration rules and regulations for each state and territory. Any voter registration organization has the option of using the federal voter registration form (instead of a state or local registration form) when conducting registration drives. All elections officials must accept federal voter registration forms. You can either get these forms from your local elections office or just print them out yourself. This form is what the voters will fill out at your drive, and this is what you will send in to election offices to officially register the voters once the drive is over. Please make sure you are extremely organized so you don't lose any papers! Instructions as to where to send the form for your specific state are listed at the bottom of the form for your reference.
- [http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/Federal%20Voter%20Registration\\_6-25-14\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/Federal%20Voter%20Registration_6-25-14_ENG.pdf)

## VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE BY STATE

### **November 3<sup>rd</sup> is Election Day!**

California	N/A until 2016 Primaries	Florida	N/A until 2016 Primaries
Texas	October 5th	Ohio	October 5th
Oregon	N/A until 2016 Primaries	Indiana	October 5th
Washington	October 5th	Illinois	N/A until 2016 Primaries
Idaho	October 9th	Michigan	October 5th
New Jersey	October 13th	Wisconsin	N/A until 2016 Primaries
Maryland	N/A until 2016 Primaries	Massachusetts	N/A until 2016 Primaries
Pennsylvania	October 5th	Connecticut	October 20th
Virginia	October 13th	New York	October 9th
North Carolina	October 9th	Arizona	October 10th

## FAQs/GENERAL TIPS

- What do I say to local election officials?

First, ask what they are already doing to encourage registration at schools, and explain that you want to enhance their efforts. Then, set up a date to pick up materials that your officials may make available, such as voter registration applications. Ask any clarifying questions regarding rules that govern independent voter registration drives in your area. For example, some states offer or require organization or individuals who conduct voter registration drives to register with the state or participate in mandatory training sessions, while others require individuals to become deputized before beginning a voter registration program.

- What method is better to use?

Either method is fine! It is easier to track online registration (links found on Rock the Vote), but if you were to hold a drive with manual registration, be sure to tell registering voters that you'll turn the forms in for them (to be able to have a clear report back to your state's Director of Activism). Both methods need to be reported back on the spreadsheet.

- What should I bring to the event?

- Blank registration forms and writing utensils
- Nonpartisan voter education materials
- Information about joining JSA
- Sign-up sheets or pledge to vote cards
- T-shirts, stickers, candy or other items to give away and attract people (Note: do not use these items as a bribe or reward for filling out an application.)

- What sort of voter educational material should I bring?

There are some provided voter manuals and tips at the very bottom of this guide in the Additional Links/Resource section. These are printouts that you could provide at the drive as more information for voters. In addition, it is a good idea to have someone read these beforehand so they can answer any possible questions people may have about voting during the event

- What should I do after people register?

After people register, let them know that they should receive a registration card or notification in the mail within a month. Review upcoming election dates (Nov. 3) with them and let them know where they can get more information.

- How do I follow up with JSA?

This is really important. These numbers need to be reported back weekly to the state Director of Activism who can follow up with National. In the webinar, we'll go over tracking on spreadsheets. For coordinators: even if chapter presidents have not followed up or if the drives have not been held yet, report these findings back to state! It's integral for us to see how many members are following through on our civic engagement initiatives.

## SAMPLE LETTER

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello, my name is [Insert Name Here] and I am writing this letter on behalf of School Name Chapter of the Junior State of America. We are a student run, non-profit, non-partisan political awareness organization that seeks to get high school students interested and involved in politics and government. JSA allows students to voice their opinions on important issues and determine their own political beliefs.

This month, our chapter wishes to hold a voter registration drive to increase voter turnout on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Given your involvement with voter registration drives, we were interested in seeing if you would be able to provide any resources or suggestions for our drive (optimal dates, locations, etc.). In addition, if you have any members who would be interested in volunteering at our drive, please let us know. Having a contact at Organization Name would be extremely helpful for providing us with information we may need throughout the process.

We look forward to hearing back from [you and the Organization Name]. We admire the dedication that your organization has devoted to ensuring that voting-age citizens are registered and prepared to vote. The Junior State of America shares the passion to spread the values of democracy through increased voter registration and we hope that this event will create a lasting relationship between our organizations.

Sincerely,

Name

Position

Junior State of America

[www.jsa.org](http://www.jsa.org)

Email:

Phone:

SAMPLE FLYER

# REGISTER TO VOTE



**\*Insert Chapter Name\* JSA Voter Registration Drive October 2nd, 12-5PM**  
**123 Generic Ave**  
**Somewhere, CA**

**\*To vote in the 2015 Election, you must be a United States citizen and 18 years of age by  
November 3<sup>rd</sup>\***

## ADDITIONAL LINKS AND RESOURCES

For more information and general guidelines:

- <http://www.eac.gov/>
- <http://www.vote411.org/>

Quick State Election Information/Contact Information:

- [http://www.eac.gov/blogs/quick\\_state\\_election\\_info\\_-\\_website,\\_phone,\\_twitter\\_polling\\_place\\_hours/](http://www.eac.gov/blogs/quick_state_election_info_-_website,_phone,_twitter_polling_place_hours/)

State by State Voter Registration Information:

- [http://www.eac.gov/voter\\_resources/contact\\_your\\_state.aspx](http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx)
- [http://www.americancla.org/voters\\_registration.html](http://www.americancla.org/voters_registration.html)
- <http://registertovote.org/state-info.html>

Voter ID Requirements per State:

- <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx#FL>

More information for the National Voter Registration Form: [www.eac.gov/nvra](http://www.eac.gov/nvra)

League of Womens In-Depth Voter Registration Guide

- [http://www.lwv.org/files/HManual.Edition2.FINAL\\_.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/files/HManual.Edition2.FINAL_.pdf)

Voting Manuals and Tips (to provide at the drive):

- [http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/EAC\\_VotersGuidePrint%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/EAC_VotersGuidePrint%20(2).pdf)
- [http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/EAC\\_Tips\[sbs\].pdf](http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/EAC_Tips[sbs].pdf)

Other Online Voting Registration Websites:

- [https://register2.rockthevote.com/registrants/map/?\\_ga=1.186464361.1954323704.1409406856&partner=39](https://register2.rockthevote.com/registrants/map/?_ga=1.186464361.1954323704.1409406856&partner=39)
- <http://www.rockthevote.com/register-to-vote/?source=rtv.com>
- <http://registertovote.org/>