2020 Election Guide
This November 2020, 50 seats of the Alaska State Legislature are up for election. The 40 Representatives and 10 senators Alaskans elect will determine the policies and laws that will impact Alaska’s children and families. Plus, two of the seats for Alaska’s Congressional Delegation are up for election to serve Alaskans on the federal level.

Vote For Kids is a grassroots, community movement focused on continually raising awareness of the needs of children, youth, and families during the 2020 election cycle. Alaska Children’s Trust strives to empower advocates for children and families to use this nonpartisan election guide to help elevate key issues. Nonprofit organizations and community advocates will play a key role in educating candidates and encouraging them to address these issues during their campaigns, and after they are elected.

Remember, children have no voice when it comes to the many decisions our elected officials make every day. As voters and advocates, it is our responsibility to be their voice and ensure our future elected leaders are people dedicating to advancing policies rooted in data and ensuring children and families in Alaska are thriving.

"People who don’t vote have no line of credit with people who are elected and thus pose no threat to those who act against our interests. Children can’t vote. But you can and must."

- Marian Wright Edelman
Electoral advocacy is a nonpartisan way to champion issues and bring them to the forefront of discussions and policy agendas. We want candidates to be highlighting the issues that matter most to children and families in Alaska. These resources are to empower you to elevate the topics most important to our children and families and get to know where candidates stand during – and after – the campaign season.

Who decides what policies get implemented has a long-lasting and critical impact on the education, health, and prosperity of our children. Since children can’t vote, we have to cast our ballots with their futures in mind.

**What can I do to engage in electoral advocacy?**

This is by no means an exhaustive list of what you can do to engage in electoral advocacy on the individual and nonprofit organization level. Here are some ideas:

- **Host a (virtual) or socially distanced candidate forum in your community with other parents, neighbors, or friends to ask where they stand on the issues**
- **Invite candidates to speak with you, your community, or your organization by volunteering with you or hosting a meet and greet**
- **Share the Vote for Kids data sheets and other resources widely, including the candidate questions**
- **Use social media with #AKVote4Kids when you host events, go to (virtual) candidate forums, or discuss important voting issues online**

---

**ELECTORAL ADVOCACY**

- **588,072**
  - Number of registered voters in Alaska
- **46.3%**
  - Alaska Voter Turnout in the 2018 election
- **$400 MILLION**
  - Per year loss of spending on Alaska’s children since early 2010s
- **20+**
  - Unique languages spoken in Alaska
## What role can individuals play?

Individuals have the opportunity as constituents to interact directly with candidates. However, as employees or board members of a nonprofit like ACT, there are important considerations to keep in mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk with candidates one-on-one as a constituent about your concerns and hopes for their work as an elected official</td>
<td>Connect personal opinions to your place of work or nonprofit organization you are involved with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions at a (virtual or otherwise) town hall</td>
<td>Be disrespectful on social media or in person about or to a specific candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research your candidate’s policy platforms</td>
<td>Vote down the ballot for whomever has the coolest name or party letter you identify with. Read their ideas!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTE and tell all your friends, family, and neighbors to vote</td>
<td>NOT VOTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## What can nonprofit organizations do to get involved?

Elections provide nonprofits with opportunities to connect with community members, interact with officials, and promote children’s issues. As 501©(3)s, we do have to be careful but it doesn’t mean you have to sit elections out!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invite ALL candidates to participate in events, forums, or questionnaires from your organization</td>
<td>Appear to endorse a candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a nonpartisan moderator at any candidate forums or events you host</td>
<td>Allow staff or board members to distribute a particular candidate’s literature or campaign materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule one-on-one meetings with candidates to invite them to your organization and see the work you do</td>
<td>Make specialized invitations to some candidates and not all candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage your members and followers to register to vote and promote key dates and deadlines</td>
<td>Promote any political party over the others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Access to consistent and timely health care is critical to keeping children healthy and in school. Health insurance is key to reaching that goal for Alaska’s kids, including for those whose parents work in low-wage jobs that don’t offer affordable insurance to families. Unfortunately, Alaska has some of the highest uninsured rates in the nation for children. How will you support efforts to expand health coverage to all children in Alaska and reduce the uninsured rate?

Last legislative session, there was a bill to promote mental health education in schools that gained bipartisan support and many youth turned out to testify that they need more support for mental health resources. How can Alaska build and sustain a strong behavioral health system so that young people have what they need to mental health, find confidence and become healthy young adults?

Many adults in Alaska, including parents, lack health insurance. Research shows that when parents have health insurance, their kids are more likely to have health coverage and use it. What should Alaska do about uninsured parents, including those that have recently experienced job-loss (therefore insurance loss) due to the COVID-19 crisis?

Alaska has some of the nation’s highest rates of child abuse and neglect. What will you do to ensure more children are safe with their families, and how will you support efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect in Alaska?

A child’s first five years of life are the most critical period for brain development. A key method to prevent trauma is to provide supportive parenting skills and strong family connections, especially during those first five years. What role, if any, should state policymakers play to promote and support strong families?

In the past few years, great strides have been made to educate community members and leaders about the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and facilitate trauma-informed practices in health, courts, schools, and other systems. If elected, what role would you play in advancing these efforts and cross-systems collaboration on addressing ACEs?
FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

- There are many families in Alaska who work full time, but cannot make ends meet. The availability of jobs differs around the state, and has been significantly impacted by our economic challenges before and after COVID-19 hit. If elected, what steps would you take to address the needs of Alaska’s children and working families struggling to make ends meet?

- When families are economically secure, children have better access to stable and affordable housing, nourishing food, high-quality health care and educational opportunities. In your view, what can Alaska do to ensure all families have access to opportunities that allow them to achieve economic security?

- What is your position on funding for the social safety net programs that aim to support the needs of children living in poverty to eat healthy food, see the doctor, and find a place to live?

NURTURING HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

- The average cost of infant child care in Alaska is more $12,120—that’s $1,010 per month—costing $4,899 (40.4%) more than in-state tuition in the UA system. If elected, what will you do to expand quality, affordable child care to more families?

- Afterschool programs support children and families by providing safe spaces for learning and socializing after school hours. How will you work to engage your local school and community based partners to create more access to quality afterschool and summer programs in your district?

- The link between student health and academic achievement is strong: when students are healthy they are better learners. What challenges do you see with the current school-based health and mental health services and how would you approach addressing them?

HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

- Alaska is currently ranked 49th in Education, according to the 2020 Kid’s Count report. What would you do to improve our education outcomes for all children in Alaska?

- Research has shown that access to full-day high-quality pre-k ensures that more children start kindergarten with the academic, social, and emotional skills they need to succeed in school and become strong readers by third grade. Progress was made last session in moving universal pre-k bills along the process but they did not make it to the finish line. What will you do to build on access to pre-k for Alaska’s children?

- From your perspective, what is the most important education issue facing Alaska students and their families today?
REGISTER TO VOTE

Register to vote or update your registration online it’s quick and easy! You only need your current Alaska driver’s license or state ID.

Most Alaskans are already registered to vote if you have applied for your Permanent Fund Dividend in the past year. However, it is always good to make sure your registration is updated and current. Go here to either update your registration, or contact your local Elections Office to ask what they have on file for you.

VOTING SAFELY DURING COVID-19

The safest way to vote is with an Absentee By-Mail Ballot. The good news is now the application to receive an Absentee Ballot is online! You don’t need a reason to request one – just a valid Alaska driver’s license or state ID card. Apply online on Alaska Division of Elections website, and learn all about absentee and early voting options here.

GO VOTE!

- To check your voter registration status and find your polling place location, go here.
- For Early and In-Person absentee voting locations, visit this page to find choices for the Primary and General elections
- Anyone may request a ballot by mail. You do not need a reason! To Vote By Mail, this page has all the information you need about By-Mail Ballot Delivery, including how to apply for an Absentee ballot and key dates.
- If you are voting by mail, don’t forget two stamps and a witness to sign your ballot!

KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/18</td>
<td>Primary Election Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4</td>
<td>Deadline for voters to register or update their registration for the General Election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Deadline to receive absentee by-mail applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Return ballot envelope must be postmarked before Election Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>Election Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more important dates and deadlines, visit: [https://elections.alaska.gov/](https://elections.alaska.gov/)