

GET READY TO VOTE

1. Register to vote
2. Sign up to vote by mail
3. Find your polling place
4. Research the candidates and choose your faves
5. Pack your bags for election day



#9 in the Democracy Series

Collect them all!

Protest 101

How to Recognize Voter Suppression
in its *Habitat Naturel*

How to Change the World: Pocket Guide

Testify!

Why We Vote

Save the Phenomena

Democratize Your Commute

Artists for Democracy

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August 2020



by Bronwyn Mauldin

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Bronwyn Mauldin is a writer and zine maker, and a member of Artists 4 Democracy. She believes in your right to vote. 

This year's election will change the world

Your vote
is your voice.

Make it loud.

"Demographic shifts means that in the 2020 election, non-whites will account for a third of voters and one in ten voters will be members of Generation Z. We will encourage and provide resources for those seeking to vote."

*Black Lives Matter
#WhatMatters2020 Campaign*

Background info:

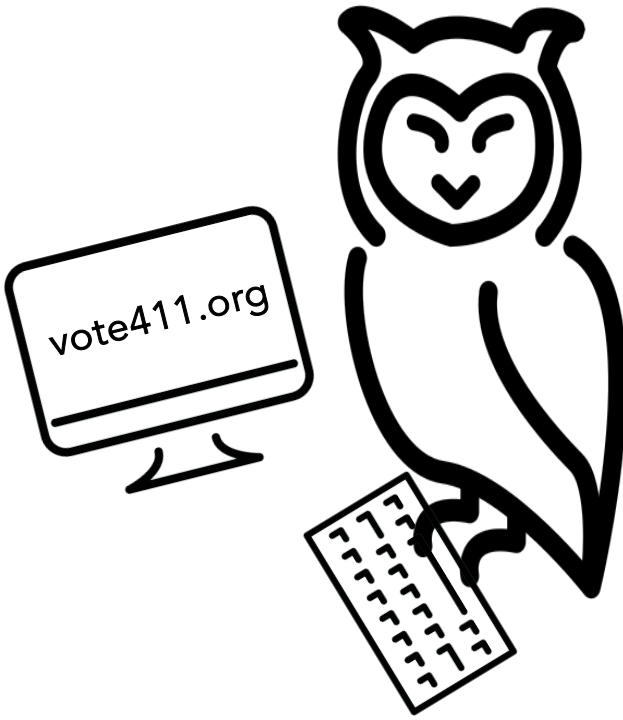
Who runs elections

and why does it matter to you?



Elections are run by state and local governments.

Some election laws are set by the state where you live. Some are set by the county or city or town or village. So the rules aren't exactly the same for everyone everywhere.



This means you'll have to do a little research:

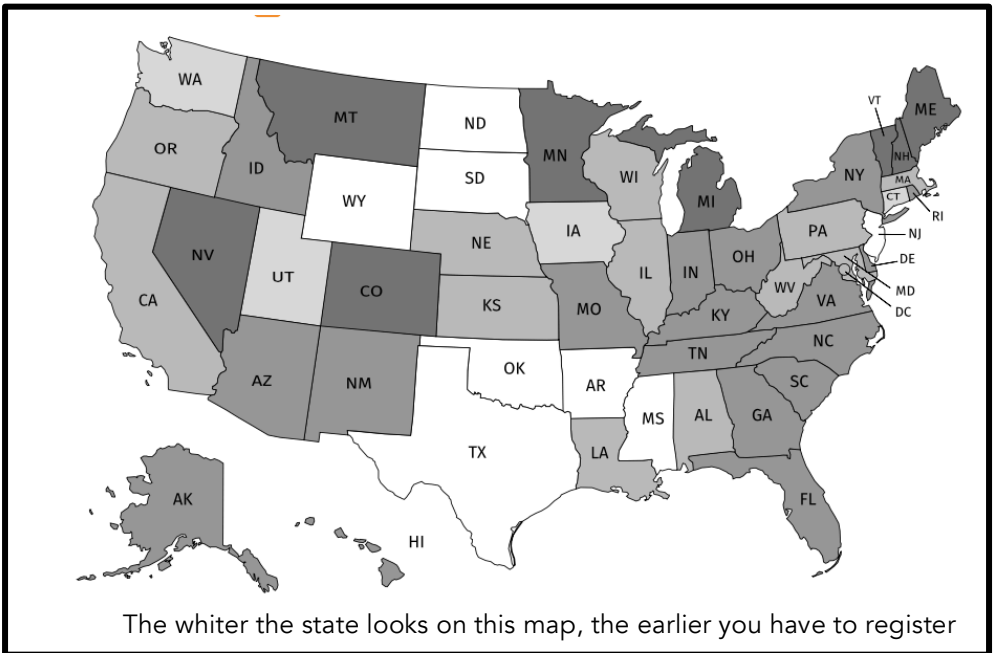
- Find the website where you can register to vote.
- What kind of I.D. do you need to bring (if any)?
- How do you request a mail-in ballot (sometimes called an absentee ballot)?
- Does your county have early voting before election day?
- Can you vote if you're in jail or prison? Can you vote after you've served your time?

1) REGISTER TO VOTE

If you will be 18 years old by November 3 and are a citizen of the US, you can vote in the next election.*

Some states make you register **WAY** before the election. In some states, you have register at least one month in advance.

Some states let you register any day, including the day of the election.



**True for most people, Check your state's specific rules.*

If you've never registered to vote, register today!

*Right now!
Don't wait!*

In most states,
you can register to vote online.

Here are two **reliable websites** where you can check whether you're registered. They'll link you to pages where you can register to vote:

vote.org

nass.org/can-i-vote

Keep a copy of the confirmation after you register.

PRO TIP

Once you're registered, **come back once a week to double check**. While officials do have to keep the voter rolls accurate and up-to-date, in some places they're purging them in ways that are dishonest and undemocratic.



2) SIGN UP TO VOTE BY MAIL

Voting by mail will probably be the **safest way for you to vote** this year. It will protect you from COVID-19, and you'll avoid long lines on November 3.

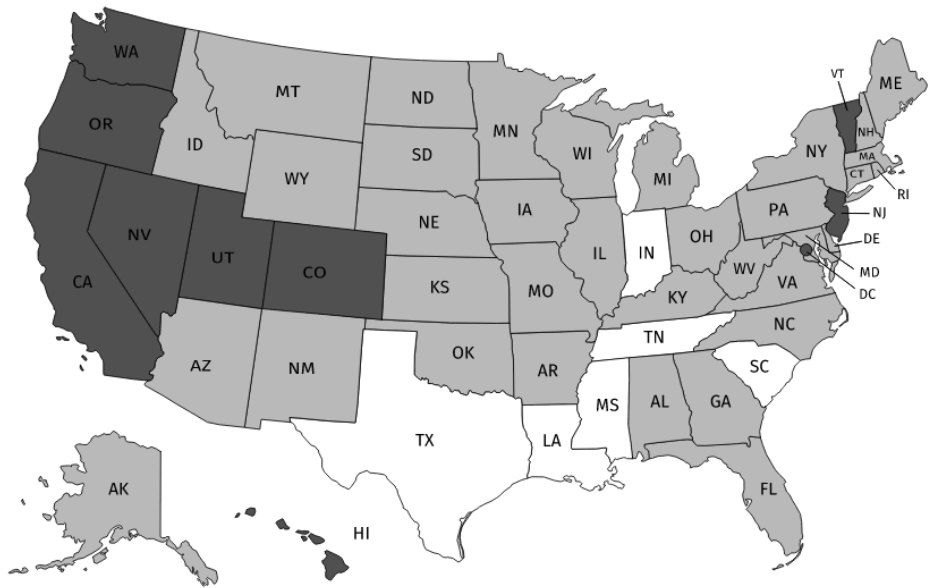
Also called "*absentee voting*"

In most states, you have to request an absentee (mail-in) ballot in advance, usually online. When you get your ballot, follow ALL the instructions and fill it out completely. Don't forget to sign it!

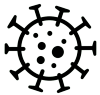
In some states, your ballot has to be POSTMARKED by Nov 3 in order to be counted. In some states it has to be DELIVERED by Nov 3.

PRO TIPS

- ✓ Mail in your ballot AS SOON AS YOU CAN
- ✓ Mail your ballot AT A POST OFFICE (don't leave it in the outgoing mail at home or in one of those freestanding blue boxes)
- ✓ Mail your ballot at a post office in a rich neighborhood where lots of white people live
- ✓ Find out if your state offers special boxes where you can drop your ballot



Dark shading: everyone will be sent a mail-in ballot automatically
Gray shading: easy to sign up to get a mail-in ballot (usually online)
No shading: you have to explain WHY you want to vote by mail
 (and there's a limited list of acceptable reasons why)



Because of COVID-19, the rules for voting by mail may change between now and the election. For up-to-date info about your state, visit [vote.org](https://www.vote.org).

3) FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE

Even if you plan to vote by mail! This will be your fallback plan in case you have a problem with your absentee ballot.

Your polling place might also be called

- ✓ Polling location
- ✓ Polling station
- ✓ Polling precinct
- ✓ Vote center

If you vote in person, you'll probably do it in a **polling place** located in the neighborhood where you live. A few states* may use **vote centers** that allow any voter to cast their vote at any center.

PRO TIP

Find out if you can vote early. If you can, you won't have to stand in line on November 3. Early voting locations are often different from your regular polling place.

*Arizona, Arkansas, C
Nevada, New Mexico



→ vote.org/polling-place-locator

Two or three days before the election, **double-check** the **address** of your polling place. Some polling places may change at the last minute.



California, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa (for some elections), Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Wyoming

4) RESEARCH THE CANDIDATES

THIS IS THE FUN PART

Decide which candidates you want to win

Get the facts! Here's a list of **good websites** with **reliable information** about the candidates. These sites are **nonpartisan**. They won't tell you who to vote for. They'll tell you what the candidates stand for and let you decide.

vote411.org

League of Women Voters

voterguide.rockthevote.org

Rock the Vote

opensecrets.org

Center for Responsive Politics

justfacts.votesmart.org

Vote Smart

There's a lot more going on this year than just the race for president. You might get to vote for

- ✓ Senate
- ✓ House of Representatives
- ✓ Governor
- ✓ State Senate
- ✓ State House (or State Assembly)
- ✓ Mayor
- ✓ County Commission
- ✓ City Council
- ✓ School Board
- ✓ Judge
- ✓ Initiatives (also called Propositions or Referendums)

Set aside time to research the candidates and issues. (But you don't have to vote in ALL the races.)

Social media is not safe for democracy. Sure, you can find some good info there. But a lot of bad people are using social to spread lies. **DO NOT RELY ON THESE TO DECIDE WHO TO VOTE FOR:**



5) PREPARE FOR ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 3

Take the day off from work if you can.
Get to your polling place as early as possible.
Make friends while you stand in line.



If you didn't vote by mail or vote early, be prepared to stand in line for a long time. Make an adventure of it!

Check the weather and dress comfortably in layers (including your mask). Bring with you

- ✓ Form of identification required by your state
- ✓ Snacks
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Phone charger or backup battery
- ✓ Book or game – something to entertain yourself
- ✓ Chair or stool if you need it

Level up! Bring enough to share:

- ✓ More snacks
- ✓ WiFi hotspot
- ✓ Positive attitude

If they tell you you're not registered to vote and you know you are, ask to vote with a **provisional ballot**. Then contact your local elections agency and fight to have your vote counted.

PRO TIPS

Program the **Election Protection** number in your phone and call if you see anyone intimidating or harassing voters:

866-687-8683

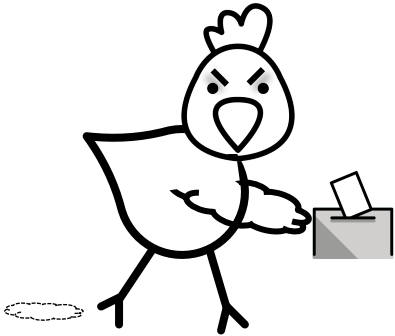


Load the **ACLU Mobile Justice app** on your phone and have it ready, in case you see uniformed officials interfering with voting. Video is stored directly on ACLU servers.

A special note

If you are...

- Person of color
- Working class
- Young
- Student
- Immigrant
- Child of immigrant(s)
- Resident of a neighborhood where a lot of folks like this live



...there are people actively working **right now** to stop you from voting.

This is called voter suppression. It's totally illegal, unfair, and undemocratic.

The best way to beat voter suppression is to **register and vote**, despite all the obstacles they put in your way.

A very good way to be an **ally** to people who face voter suppression is to fight for their right to vote by donating time and money to voting rights organizations like **Election Protection, League of Women Voters, Black Voters Matter, Voto Latino, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, and ACLU.**

Organize a voting posse with your friends

- ✓ Register to vote together
- ✓ Request a mail-in (absentee) ballot together
- ✓ Help each other research the candidates
- ✓ Share information about the candidates you like
- ✓ Mail in your absentee ballots on the same day
- ✓ If you vote in person at different polling places, stay in touch with each other by text or phone on election day
- ✓ Hold a virtual party to watch the election returns
- ✓ Celebrate when your candidates win



Even online, democracy works better when you bring friends

A few jargon terms you might run into while getting ready to vote

Absentee Ballot a ballot sent to you that allows you to vote by mail; also called a **mail-in ballot**.

Ballot the paper or electronic document where you mark your choices

Candidate a person who seeks to be elected

Election the process of selecting people for public office through voting

Franchise the constitutional right to vote

Polling Places the locations where votes are cast in an election

Precinct a subdivision within a county, town, or city for elections; each precinct is usually served by one polling place

Register to sign up formally to be on the official list of voters

Secretary of State the state-level official who's usually the chief elections official in that state

Vote to express a choice in an election through a ballot

Voter Suppression the effort to sway the outcome of an election by systematically and unfairly preventing certain groups of people from voting

Vote in the 2020 election

Then engage in democracy in all these ways...

- Vote in every election
- Call or write to your elected officials
- Take a group to meet with an elected official
- Speak your mind at a town hall meeting
- Participate in a protest
- Volunteer for a local government commission or committee
- Donate your time or money to good candidates for public office
- Phone bank for good candidates
- Join a letter writing campaign to get out the vote
- Run for public office
- Volunteer to help register voters
- Donate to voting rights groups
- Sign up to work the polls on election day

Top five voting facts

Election day is November 3, 2020

No one can change this because *it's in the Constitution!* You might be able to vote early or vote by mail, but election day will still be the same.

You cannot vote online

Not in any state or city. If anyone tells you that you can, they are lying to you.

Earlier is better

Whether you're voting by mail (absentee) or in person, the earlier you do it, the easier it will be for you and everyone else.

Vote by mail rules are changing

Because of COVID-19, many states are changing the rules for absentee voting (vote by mail). Visit [vote.org](https://www.vote.org) for the most up-to-date info.

If you are in line before the polls close, you have the right to vote

Stay in line until you have cast your ballot. Don't let anyone turn you away.