

The Complete Teacher's Toolkit:

How to Support a Student-Led
Voter Registration Drive in Your
High School.



New York

Fall 2024 Edition



For more information:



visit thecivicscenter.org

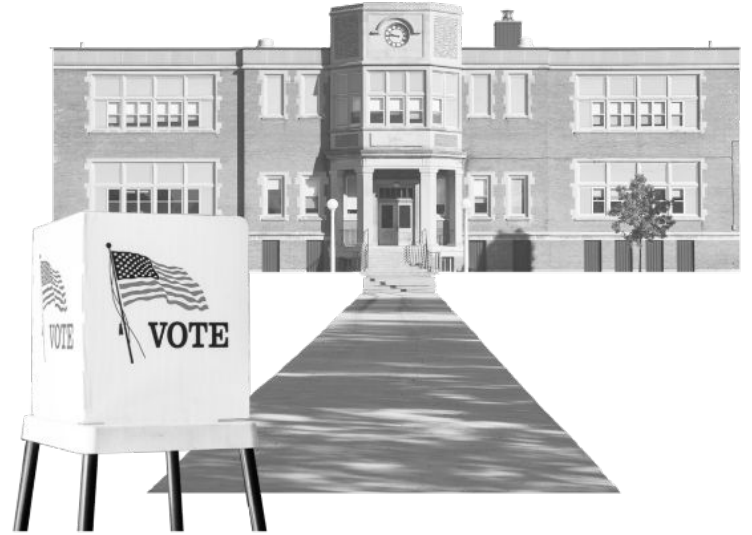


email info@thecivicscenter.org

*The Civics Center is a
nonpartisan project of
Community Partners, a
501(c)(3) organization.*

“No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline.”

– **Former U.N. Secretary, General Kofi Annan**



Welcome, Educators! I am Laura W. Brill, CEO and Founder of The Civics Center, and I am delighted to share this toolkit with you.



At The Civics Center, our mission is to make voter registration part of every high school in America. As an educator, you are the linchpin in this transformative process. Your influence extends far beyond the classroom, as you shape the minds and values of future leaders and citizens.

By guiding your students to appreciate how their lives intersect with public issues and how they can have an impact in their communities, you offer an entry point into a vital civic duty that fortifies the very foundation of our democracy.

If you've ever wondered about the obstacles that interfere with the ability of young people to register and vote, and if you have wanted to learn some practical tools for turning that around, this toolkit is for you.

This toolkit is designed to provide you with everything you need to support your students in this important endeavor. From step-by-step instructions to practical resources and

inspiring case studies, you will find comprehensive support to make voter registration drives successful in your school environment. Whether this is your first time facilitating such an event or you are looking to enhance your existing efforts, we are here to help.

Thank you for joining us and for your unwavering commitment to fostering civic engagement among young people. By encouraging students to participate in voter registration, you are instilling a sense of responsibility, empowerment, and community that will resonate throughout their lives. Together, we can ensure that every student understands the power of their voice and their vote, strengthening our democracy one school, one educator, and one student at a time.



Laura Brill
CEO & Founder



Instructions:

This toolkit has been designed to give you the tools and information you need to run a successful voter registration drive in your high school.

1. **How To Run A Drive: Teacher Edition** provides the steps and general tips on how to facilitate a student-led drive in your high school
2. **Run a Drive Workbook** provides the facts and the necessary worksheets to aid in organization



Keep an eye out for Student Checkpoints along the way, designating tasks for your students to manage.

Voter registration and drives are subject to different rules in different states. Specifics can change from time to time. This guide is meant to be general and informational. We encourage you and your students to reach out to local elections officials before you get started.

**HAVE
QUESTIONS?**

Schedule a 1:1 with Charlotte, our Manager of Educator Development, or send an email to education@thecivicscenter.org



THE
CIVICS
CENTER



How to Run a Drive: Teacher Edition

The Civics Center helps high school teachers and their students run voter registration drives in school. We have seen through our work that peer-to-peer voter registration, especially among teens, is most effective. But adult support is key to success. **What do we mean by that? Who does what?**



YOU:

- **Build** administrative support
- **Incorporate** civic education into classroom curriculum using resources and tools provided by TCC
- **Connect** students with TCC for free trainings on running voter registration drives



YOUR STUDENTS:

- **Attend** free virtual trainings
- **Collaborate** with adults and peers to organize and promote their voter registration drive
- **Activate** peers by connecting voting to the issues that they care about
- **Register** their friends and classmates



THE CIVICS CENTER:

- **Provides** free training delivered by seasoned educators
- **Provides** free materials with our “Democracy in a Box” toolkit
- **Supports** students and teachers as they plan, execute, and conclude their voter registration drives

Follow our tried-and-true steps ahead to run a successful drive in your high school!

1 Team up with Students + Clubs



HEY! Want to run a voter registration drive in school?

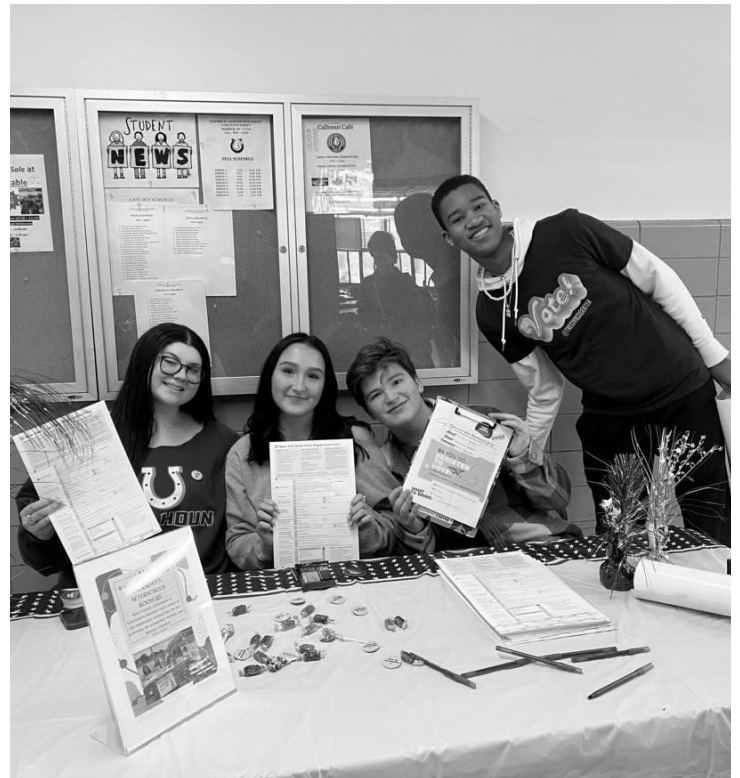
1. Identify Student Leaders

Don't know where to look? Often easiest within:

- Extracurricular Clubs
- Civics and/or Government Classes
- Student Government Association

2. Get Admin Support

Your school's administration is an essential partner! Work with them to identify the method(s) and date(s) that will ensure your drive is a success.



To

Subject

Dear **[Administrator's Name]**

I am working with [Student Group] to bring a student-led voter registration drive to our school. We are excited to bring this opportunity to our community because registering to vote is the first step to becoming an active and engaged citizen.

There's a nonpartisan organization called The Civics Center that can provide us with most of the materials and training required to conduct the drive. Before we start the planning process, we wanted to get permission and ask for any additional information about school or district policies that we need to be aware of.

Thank you for supporting our students as they engage in civic life and provide an important resource to our community.

Best, **[Name]**

EMAIL TEMPLATES HERE





3. Consider working with local partners

The Power of Collaboration

Claremont High School

"We incorporated [our drive] into lesson form with the help of the school administrators.... We also got support and funding from the Mt. Baldy League of Women Voters... We often forget that there are so many supportive people out there who are willing to help and make your drive more successful."



Schedule a 1:1 with us and we can help connect you to a nearby pro-democracy organization.

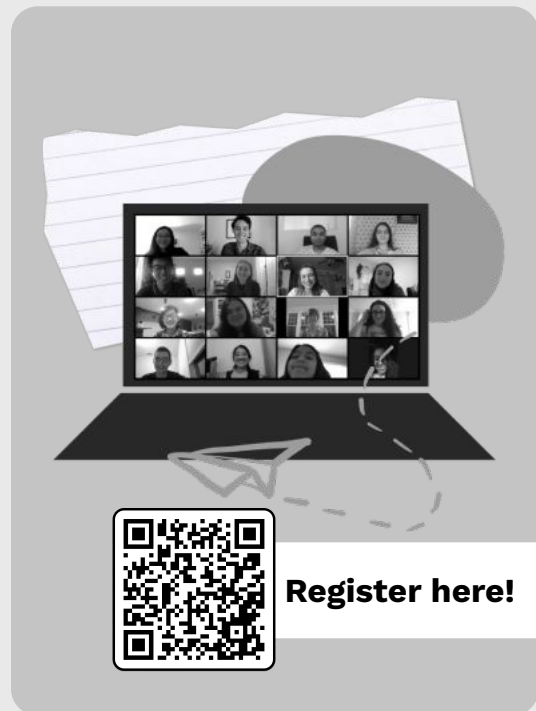


STUDENT CHECKPOINT #1

Attend a 1-hour → Run a Drive Workshop

Students will learn how to design a drive that fits your school structure and schedule.

- Learn **best practices** for school drives
- Study **examples of strategies** used at schools across the country
- Receive support in developing the **team and timeline** to accomplish the drive
- Gain **access to helpful materials** including a free Democracy in a Box toolkit, custom URL for online voter registration and more



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2 Start Planning



STUDENT CHECKPOINT #2

REQUEST HERE →



→ **Request Materials,
Strategize, and
Set a Date**

What is a common timeline for planning and executing a drive?

The timeline for organizing a voter registration drive will vary based on the context, upcoming elections and infrastructure of your school. Here's a timeline that TCC has found is a helpful place to start:

One Month Out ([page 8](#))

- Get Administrator buy-in/permission and pick a drive strategy
- Identify Student Leaders
- Set a date and request materials
- Contact local municipal clerks/election officials to obtain forms and troubleshoot
- Start filling out your Drive Action Plan

Two Weeks Out ([page 9](#))

- Prepare students by assigning responsibilities
- Begin promotion!

One Week Out ([page 10](#))

- Inform families through letters and emails
- Confirm with local partners that they will be attending and what their role will be
- Gather necessary materials for the day of the drive



What type of Drive should we do?

Homeroom/Advisory Presentations:

Visit every homeroom/advisory with eligible students to provide a brief presentation developed by your students. Use the decks in this [folder](#) as a guide; also included is a template to build out your school-specific deck.

Pro: *easiest way to reach every eligible student without taking instructional time*

Con: *getting ALL teachers on board, students often miss this period, sometimes mixed grade level, time is limited*

Classroom Presentations:

Identify a class/classes that ALL eligible students take (often English). Work with the Department Chair to coordinate getting 30 min of time. Follow the same steps as homeroom/advisory strategy.

Pro: *reaches all students, more time*

Con: *getting buy in from teacher team, takes instructional time*

School-Wide Events:

Set up tables in the library, lunchroom, sports events, plays, and events surrounding graduation.

Pro: *easiest to organize, can feel celebratory*

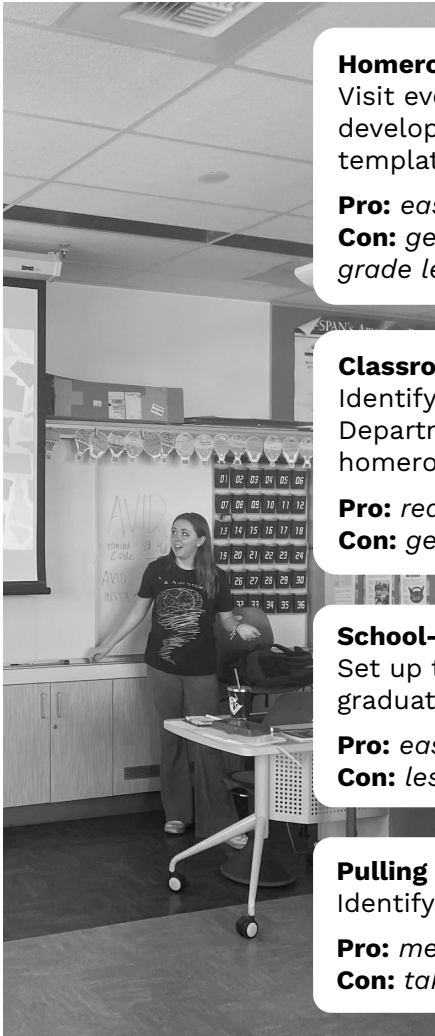
Con: *less methodical way to reach all eligible students, time of contact is shorter*

Pulling Students:

Identify and work with students one-on-one as they become eligible to register

Pro: *methodical way to ensure reaching every student*

Con: *takes huge admin buy-in and organization, doesn't allow for student leadership*



STUDENT CHECKPOINT #3

ONLINE WORKSHEET →



Submit your → Drive Action Plan

So we can better support your students along the way

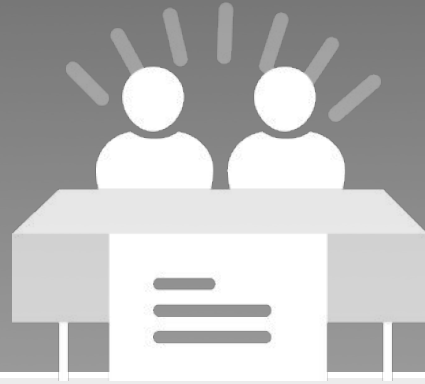
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3 Put it in Action



With your Drive Action Plan completed and drive registered, now it's time to put it in action. Use these checkpoints to ensure a smooth roll out.

TWO WEEKS OUT

1. Prepare students

How can you utilize the strengths and assets of your students? It is important to tap into students' strengths in running drives. Regardless of their skill or interest there is a role for them to play. Some student leadership roles TCC has found meaningful are:



Director of Communication:

Get the word out in the school, creating social media posts & tagging relevant clubs or school accounts, post flyers around the school, presenting at assemblies or on morning announcements! Support post-drive survey.



Logistics Director:

Make sure the materials are ready 3 days before the drive, let participants know what their roles are. If it's an in-class drive, inform volunteers of when and where they'll present. Support post-drive survey and arrange to promptly submit any collected forms to election agencies.



Lead Community Organizer:

Recruit volunteers from the school and community to support efforts leading up to and on the day of the event. See our Resource list for suggestions. Point of contact with TCC. Communication with faculty advisor and administration. Collect materials at the end of the drive. Submit post-drive survey.

2. Promote your drive

Social media, posters, announcements, assemblies, student newspaper, emails to community. Remind students to bring ID or SSN. Trust students when it comes to advertising, they are experts!



STUDENT CHECKPOINT #4

Posters/Insta Templates



→ Promote your Drive with our free templates

ONE WEEK OUT

1. Communicate with Families and Partners

- **Inform families through letters and emails:** Articulate WHY the registration drive is important and list the proper identification that students will need to bring to register
- **Confirm with partners** that they will be attending and what their role will be

To

Subject

Dear **[Parent or Guardian]**,

My name is [Name] and I am working with a group of students to organize a nonpartisan voter registration drive at our school!

We are excited to bring this opportunity to our community because registering to vote is the first step to becoming an active and engaged citizen. We are writing to inform you so you can support your student in taking this step.

Here is what you need to know:

[Date / Time / Location]

[Appropriate Identification]

[Eligibility Requirements]

[Where to go for Questions]

Thank you for supporting your child in registering to vote!

Best,

[Name]

EMAIL TEMPLATES HERE



2. Gather Materials + Consider Logistics

By registering your drive you will receive The Civics Center's Democracy in a Box which includes materials to promote your drive: stickers, candy, clipboards, pens, flyers, posters, Voter ID info cards and more.

The Civics Center provides all drive organizers with a custom URL for online voter registration, allowing drive organizers to track how many of their peers register to vote online. Paper voter registration forms can often be downloaded or ordered from official state or local agencies.

How can we ensure that our drive is accessible for all students?

Reach out to the Special Education and Multilingual/ESL departments in your school to gauge the specific needs of your community. Check out thecivicscenter.org/accessibility for general guidance on accessible voter registration drives.



Drive Day(s)!

Remember to:

- Count Registrations
- Take Photos + Video
- Have fun :)

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4 Report Back



STUDENT CHECKPOINT #4

FORM HERE →



Complete your → Post Drive Report

Get credit for your drive! Upload photos from your drive, leave advice for future students running a drive, and submit a request for Community Service Certificates within one week after your drive.

Congratulations! You facilitated a voter registration drive! What's next?

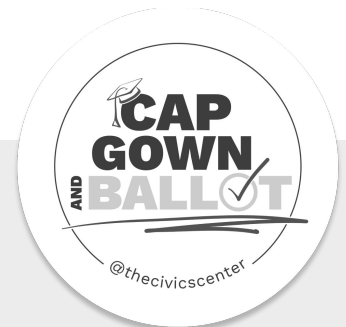
1. Start planning the next one!

We suggest running a drive twice a year to ensure that all students who are eligible have an opportunity before they graduate. We have found that it is easiest to activate and engage students by registering in the fall, leading up to elections. And then in late spring to ensure those that are eligible have an opportunity to register before leaving high school.



High School Voter Registration Week.

State voter registration deadlines can be as early as one month before Election Day. HSVRW falls before those deadlines, helping to build awareness of issues and candidates. It gives students an opportunity to plan drives and ensure their friends are registered and ready to make their voices heard on Election Day.



Cap, Gown, and Ballot.

A nation-wide effort to make graduation season synonymous with voter registration season. The Cap, Gown & Ballot campaign will give eligible high school seniors the opportunity to register to vote before graduation. This is our last chance to easily reach the roughly 40% of seniors who will not go on to college before the 2024 election.



Non-partisanship and the role of voter registration in high school

The Civics Center is a non-profit, non-partisan organization. We do not support or oppose any candidate or party, and at the same time, we are part of the wider effort to fight voter suppression and support democracy, which includes meaningful civic engagement and participation from all youth. We support high school students and educators who run drives or host awareness-building events in their schools and who commit to nonpartisanship.

The US Department of Education has issued official guidance promoting high school voter registration. The U.S. Constitution protects freedom of speech, which includes talking about voting and registering to vote. Many state constitutions have similar protections. State and local social studies standards and curricular requirements generally support or require teaching students about voting, and how and why to participate in democracy. Voter registration is part of that. For more on what every educator needs to know about high school voter registration, click here.

RESOURCES

Interested in staying up to date with the latest youth registration data?



Subscribe to our substack → substack.com/thecivicscenter

Check out these organizations creating high-level civic and voting education:



← **Scan for a curated list of resources** to supplement voter education in your classrooms.

- *Voting Logistics*
- *Supplementary Lesson Plans*
- *Data and Research*
- *Historical Context*
- *Classroom Culture*

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**THE
CIVICS
CENTER**

Run a Drive **Workbook**



Worksheets to aid in your drive planning.

Contents:

State Snapshot	The state of the youth vote in New York
Registration Rules	Registration laws to inform your drive
Drive Checklist	A handy checklist to guide your planning
Drive Script	Practice conversation for registering your peers
Calendar	Registration deadlines to inform your timeline

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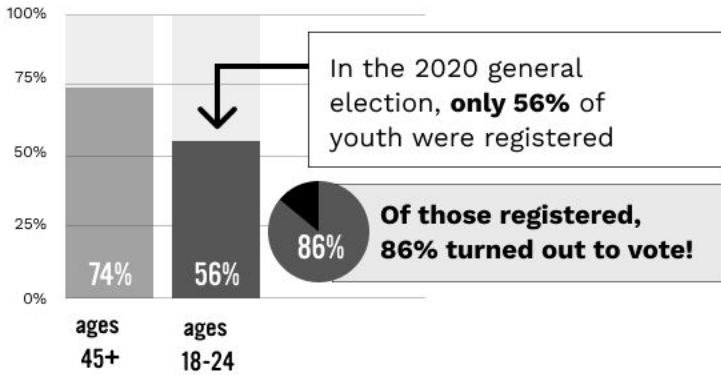
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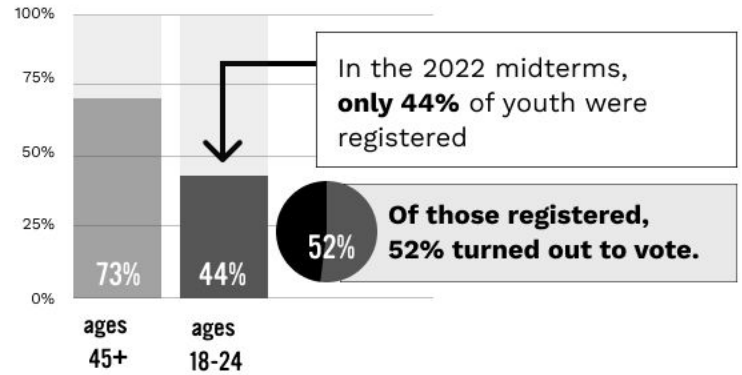
241,515

young people turn 18 every year¹

2020 General Election



2022 Midterm



When Can Teens Register to Vote?

50% of US teens live in states where they are allowed to preregister to vote as soon as they turn 16.

THE RULE:

New York is one of 19 states in which eligible teens can **preregister as soon as they turn 16**. The preregistration law went into effect in 2020, and its use has been growing over time.

IN PRACTICE:

Youth voter registration rates have been much lower in NYC than in the state as a whole. In 2023, online voter registration became available without the need to have a driver's license, creating a real opportunity to reach youth in higher numbers.

In 2023, New York State passed S1733, which requires the adoption of policies that promote student voter registration. For registration rules in all 50 states, please visit [The Civics Center](#) (map and state summaries)

New York has had House races rank in CIRCLE's Youth Electoral Significance index in both 2022 and 2024³

Only

39%

of the State's 18-year-olds have a driver's license.

1,2





NEW YORK LAW SUPPORTS HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION: New York Election Law § 5-507 requires school boards to have policies promoting voter registration. The policies must include schools giving access to application forms during the school year, providing assistance to students in filling them out, and informing students about state requirements. The state’s Social Studies Framework supports teaching students the mechanics of registering to vote.

TO VOTE/REGISTER YOU MUST BE...

1. **US Citizen**
2. **16 years old** (can vote at age 18)
3. **NY resident** 30 days prior to Next Election
4. Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
5. Not ruled incompetent by a court
6. Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.

ID INFO FOR FILLING OUT THE FORM

New Yorkers can register **online without a driver’s license or state ID**. There are different portals, depending on where you live and whether you do have a state ID. Students will need the last 4 digits of their social security number or another approved form of identification if they do not have a state ID. Check links to the right.

To register using a **paper form** at your drive:

1. Students with a **driver’s license** or state ID will have to provide this number on the voter registration form;
2. Students without a driver’s license or state ID, but with a **social security number** will have to fill in the last four digits of their social security number.
3. A student who has one of the above numbers but forgets it on the day of the drive, or who does not have either, should **take a form home** to complete when they have the information in front of them.

METHODS OF REGISTERING:

1. Online
 - NY City Residents without a state ID: <https://e-register.vote.nyc/>
 - Outside of 5 Boroughs, without state ID: <https://elections.ny.gov/>
 - Residents with DMV ID: <https://thecivicscenter.org/hellovoters>
2. Printable mail-in forms in Spanish and English are here: <https://elections.ny.gov/voter-registration-process>

DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING:

The registration deadline is 10 days before Election Day. For the Nov. 2024 election, this date is Saturday, **Oct. 26, 2024**, for online, mail-in, and in-person registration. Paper forms must be **received by county election offices** by this date, and **postmarked by Oct. 21, 2024**.

KEY RESOURCES...

1. [New York County Board Roster](#)
2. [NYC Bar Association model HSVR policy, program, and answers to FAQs](#)
3. [List of school board legally required policies](#)
4. [Acceptable IDs in New York](#)

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Drive Checklist



Instructions: New York registration laws are tricky! Use this checklist to make sure your drive is set up for success.

CREATE A TEAM

- Find a staff member** in your school to partner with.
- Get permission** from a school administrator.
- Find additional students** to help run the drive and assign roles.

Staff Member: _____

School Administrator: _____

Student Organizer Roles:

Logistics Director: _____

Director of Communication: _____

Community Organizer: _____

Additional Students/Partner Clubs: _____

SCHEDULE YOUR DRIVE

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

The last day to register in New York before the 2024 General Election is October 26th, with a postmark deadline of October 21st.

TIP: Join schools around the nation and plan your drive during Voter Registration Week, Sept. 23rd-27th

- When** will your drive be held?
- Where** will your drive be held?

MAKE A PLAN

Who will be the Logistics Director? Name: _____

- Identify** a Drive Strategy. Circle all that apply:

In-class Presentation

School-wide event

School day tabling

Field Trip

Other

- Identify** students to attend “Run a Drive” Trainings
- Identify** and gather necessary supplies including registration forms, laptops and tables

Who will be the Director of Communications? Name: _____

- Create** a plan to promote your drive. Circle all that apply:

Social Media

School Website

School-wide announcement

School Newspaper

In-class announcements

Other

- Create** a plan to advertise the required identification so that all eligible students have the opportunity to register

Who will be the Community Organizer? Name: _____

- Create** a schedule so that there are students available to cover each part of the drive
- Reach** out to your local elections official to let them know you’re doing a drive, and ask for any additional advice/requirements
- Reach out** to additional partners (like the The Civics Center!) to get additional materials and volunteers

REPORT BACK

Who will fill out the Post Drive Report? Name: _____



Drive Script



Instructions: Use your state’s registration laws to inform your Drive Script. Walk through potential conversations you may encounter at your drive. **TIP:** Practice with friends! Try to be prepared for all scenarios and questions.

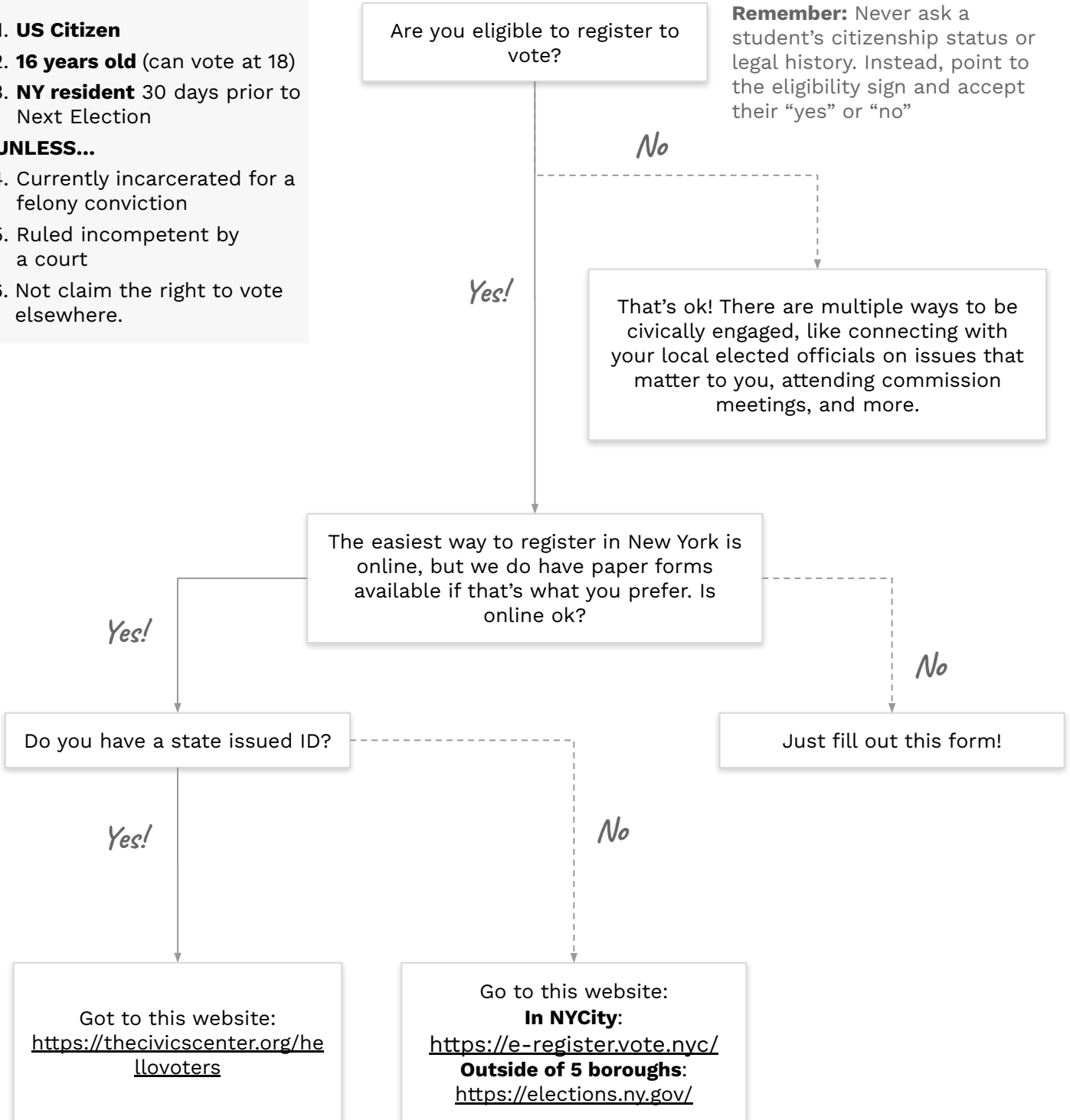
YOU CAN REGISTER TO VOTE IF YOU ARE...

1. **US Citizen**
2. **16 years old** (can vote at 18)
3. **NY resident** 30 days prior to Next Election

UNLESS...

4. Currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
5. Ruled incompetent by a court
6. Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.

Remember: Never ask a student’s citizenship status or legal history. Instead, point to the eligibility sign and accept their “yes” or “no”



Tip: Have both websites loaded on a laptop or tablet. Load the correct website based on their answers and your location



New York



Calendar

Fall 2024

Instructions: Research important registration deadlines and election dates in your state. Use this to map out your drive timeline.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
AUGUST						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SEPTEMBER						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION WEEK						
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
OCTOBER						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	POSTMARK DEADLINE					REGISTRATION DEADLINE!
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
REGISTRATION CLOSED						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
REGISTRATION CLOSED						
		ELECTION DAY!				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
NOVEMBER						

IMPORTANT DATES

September 23-27:
High School Voter Registration Week

October 21
Postmark Deadline

★ **October 26**
Last day to register before the general election

★ **November 5**
Election Day!

Same Day Registration? Y / (N)

Acknowledgements & Scope

We gratefully acknowledge the donations and volunteer efforts of thousands of supporters across the country. Without them, this work would not be possible. We thank the many educators across the country who have trained with us and who have supported voter registration drives in their high schools. This toolkit is a direct response to the questions they have posed and the needs they have expressed for resources to support their efforts.

Please note: The information contained herein is not legal advice and is for use only as a general guide. Voter registration and drives are subject to different rules in different states. Laws and interpretations change from time to time, and the summaries contained here are not intended to be comprehensive. This document should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a licensed legal professional, or state and local election officials familiar with voting and registration guidelines in your state. The Civics Center is not responsible for running or supervising your drive.

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