Girl Scouts Give Back: National Civic Action – Promote the Vote

Instructions to Promote the Vote

Many people in your community may not know how or when to register to vote—and through Promote the Vote, you’ll play an important role in helping them do just that! Use the following steps and outreach templates to encourage your friends and family to get out to vote!

Promote the Vote is a nonpolitical and nonpartisan initiative designed to increase civic participation. As tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organizations, GSUSA and Girl Scout councils cannot take sides in elections or support or oppose any political candidates. Promote the Vote materials should not be used to target a particular political party or individuals on any one side of an issue. The focus should be on encouraging everyone, regardless of political party, affiliation, or beliefs, to participate in the democratic process.

Online Resources

A number of websites make it easy to find information on voting, registration, and more. We recommend using one of these to get started:

- Vote.gov
- Vote411.org
- NonprofitVOTE.org/voting-in-your-state
- VoteAmerica.com

Once you’ve explored these sites, decide which one you’ll share with friends and family to help them find their information.

How to Promote the Vote

1. Register to vote.

You must be at least 18 years old to vote, but you have to register first.

If you are at least 16 years old, check your state’s age requirements for voting registration. Some states allow residents who are 16 or older to "pre-register." If you pre-register, you’re automatically registered to vote once you turn 18.

- Register to vote at vote.gov. Depending on your state’s voter registration rules, this site can help you:
2. Make a plan to vote.

Did you know that people are more likely to vote if they’ve made a plan? That could mean voting in person on Election Day, during an early voting period, or by mail-in or absentee ballot. You can help someone with their plan by sharing important details like:

- How to find their polling place.
- State-specific guidelines. These might include options that are being made available as a result of COVID-19. Therefore, they might be new to even experienced voters. These might offer info about:
  - How to vote early in your state.
  - How to request an absentee/mail-in ballot.
    - Absentee ballots are available for voters who are unable to vote in person on Election Day due to certain circumstances. Some states allow voters to vote by mail for any reason. Share a trusted website with family and friends so they can find their state’s guidelines and deadlines regarding absentee/mail-in ballots.

Remember: not everyone has consistent access to the internet and technology. Make sure you have a phone number people can call to get the information they need. Here you can find a phone number to each state’s election commission office.

- Check deadlines early. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, states’ rules and deadlines for absentee or early in-person voting may change this year. Encourage your family and friends to check their state’s deadlines well before November 3.

3. How to spread the word.

Use one (or more!) of these ideas to inspire friends and family to register and make a plan to vote:

- Write a letter or send an email—send a personalized message to friends and family, encouraging them to vote. Tell them why voting is important to you and provide the steps they need to take to register and make their plan to vote.

- Post on social media—write a post about why it’s important to vote, and provide helpful links for people to register and make their plan to vote. You can post from your personal
account, or if you don’t have your own, ask your parent or caregiver if you can post on theirs.

- Make a yard sign—keep it simple and straightforward! Make a sign asking your neighbors to vote.

- Phone bank—call or text your friends and family and ask them if they’re registered to vote and have a plan. If not, tell them why you think it’s important to vote and share how they can register and make their plan to vote. (You can even rally your troop and host a Zoom phone bank party!)

- Host a virtual event (via Facebook Live or Instagram), or create a video to share why voting is important to you and encourage others to vote.

  Don’t forget to include the where, when, and how using the instructions and links above.