Get Out the Vote—and Protect It

Welcome

The 2022 elections are fast approaching and not only have we yet to fix many of the deep problems that we saw laid bare in our election systems in 2020, some states are actively trying to make them worse, with increased voter suppression and more. As science advocates, it’s not enough to push for science-based solutions to public health and environmental challenges—we also need to use science to protect, and sometimes even fix, our democracy so those solutions become more achievable.

Communities facing threats to their health and safety should be able to use the democratic process to address those threats. But marginalized communities across the United States have effectively been disenfranchised through laws and policies that make it harder for them to vote. When some voices are excluded from the process, it becomes easier to make decisions that serve narrow interests rather than the public good. To ensure science-based policies are used to protect our health and communities, we must advocate for democracy reform. And whether it’s by showing up to the polls or mailing in our ballots, voting is just one step in ensuring that we have a healthy and thriving democracy. Voting rights protections and fair elections do not just happen: we need to fight to make sure these are realities.

That’s why we’re grateful that you are joining the Union of Concerned Scientists, SACNAS, 500 Women Scientists, and Science Rising in this effort to increase voter registration and protect the vote. In this guide you will find three action opportunities, along with instructions and hands-on resources to participate.
Action 1
“Triple the Vote”

One easy way you can increase civic engagement with your friends, family, or in your community is by collecting vote tripling pledges.

Vote tripling pledges entail recruiting people to remind 3 friends to vote. They can “pledge” to remind three friends to vote by phone, text, social media, or in person. When they pledge to do this, you can take down their information, and then send them a reminder as it gets closer to Election Day.

There are main steps to every interaction you’ll have—
  A. Nail the greeting.
  B. Use a hard ask.
  C. Ensure that pledge cards are completed after each interaction so that you can follow-up and remind people afterwards.

Sample Script
“Hi, my name is [YOUR NAME] and I’m volunteering with [YOUR ORGANIZATION]. Can I steal 30 seconds of your time?

I’m voting because [YOUR REASON]. How about you? So we’re asking folks in [YOUR LOCATION] to think through who are three folks in the area we can count on you to remind to vote and then fill out this card.

Can you fill out this card right now and think through who you will remind?”

And remember, data is key! Always make sure to record their contact information & their friends’ names so that you can follow-up with them afterwards.

Every pledge is a win— even if the numbers seem small, they are powerful. If you’re interested in more resources on how to do this effectively or on a large scale, reach out to VoteRev (who popularized this tactic). VoteRev’s tool to “triple the vote”:
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w0VBblWKFLx2gtIwdpssyGqnOnXMFaX47JH6d3ZeqQc/edit
- https://www.voterev.org/

Pro-tip to make it stick
Set reminders in your calendar to reach out to those who you asked to “pledge to vote” in the immediate lead-up to the election to ensure they have their vote plan, and access to the resources they need to vote.

Take the next step--help organize your network to advocate for voting rights and protect fair elections
You are the most powerful person to influence other people in your networks to vote-- and help protect the vote. Check out this training and how-to guide on Effective One-on-One Meetings for Mobilizing People into Action for Voting Rights for getting people to vote and take action to protect voting rights.
Action 2
Run a Registration & Vote Plan Drive

Whether in person or running a virtual voter registration drive, there are many creative ways to help ensure that your friends, family, and others in your community are registered to vote. Here are a few steps to run a successful drive:

1. **Get the tools you need.**
   You can direct people to TurboVote to make sure they not only register to vote, but request a mail-in ballot and sign up for important election reminders— it’s a one-stop shop for getting involved in the election!

2. **Familiarize yourself with the deadlines and rules for your state**
   The US has a decentralized election system—that means elections are run by counties or cities, and election laws can vary from state to state. That’s why different states have different voter ID laws, and different laws about mail-in ballots, early voting, and so on. That’s why it’s imperative you use trusted resources to find election information. [Campus Voter Project’s state by-state guide](https://www.campusvoterproject.org/) on registration deadlines, requirements, and resources can be found here.

3. **Practice your pitch**
   Research shows that people are more likely to engage around elections when they are personally contacted by someone they know. Talking to your friends and family about registering to vote can make a big difference. Make it personal. Emphasize that voting is one of the foundational tools to fighting for the issues you care about. Here is a set of sample voter registration drive scripts and prep materials created by #STEMVotes.

4. **Ask them to make a plan to vote!**
   One simple way to increase voter turnout is to encourage people to make a plan to vote. Key components of an effective vote plan:

   * **Make it concrete:**
     - When will you vote?
     - How will you get there?
     - How will you prepare (what will you bring with you)?
   
   * **If voting by mail:**
     - Do you need to request a ballot, and if so do you know how?
     - When will you sit down to fill it out?
     - When and how will you mail it?
     - Do you need a stamp?

   [BallotReady.org](https://ballotready.org/) offers voter plan and guides and you can even print, or have registrations email your choices to bring to the polls. And if you want to reach out to more people to support them getting to the polls, consider [https://votefwd.org/](https://votefwd.org/).
Don’t be afraid to get creative! Here are two examples of creative approaches to run drives:

- **Organize a voter registration couch party**: When We All Vote has successfully registered thousands of voters during their “couch parties,” and have a checklist for how you can organize your own.

- **Party at the Mailbox**: Baltimore Votes and Black Girls Vote partnered to send party boxes to households to help them make voting by mail feel like a fun community event. Instead of t-shirts and snacks, you could send stickers and a personalized note to your friends and family, along with the forms needed to register and request a mail-in ballot (some stamps would help too). You could do an all-virtual version by sending an email that includes a video from you about why it matters that people are registered to vote, along with a fun playlist people can listen to while they fill out the forms online.

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<tr>
<th>Whether Tripling the Vote or Running a Registration Drive, don’t forget to equip your friends and community with the tools they need to combat disinformation!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An onslaught of disinformation is being used to confuse and demoralize voters and obstruct free and fair elections. As you register people and support casting their ballots, make sure you also equip them with the guidance and tools they need to inoculate themselves and their families from disinformation. Four tools to help:</td>
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<td>- (toolkit) <a href="#">How to Counter Disinformation in Your Community</a></td>
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<td>- (postcard) <a href="#">The Dos and Don’ts of Refuting Lies &amp; Attacks</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>- (trainer toolbox) <a href="#">Science Rising’s ready-to-use slidedeck</a> to inoculate your community against disinformation. It’s adaptable and includes a detailed trainer script for ease.</td>
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<td>- Videos, blogs, and more can be found at <a href="#">act.ucsusa.org/DisinfoDefense</a></td>
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**Action 3: Sign up to be a poll watcher or worker**

Given the continued ramp up in state-level voter suppression laws and politically motivated disinformation and violence, we must pull out all the stops to protect the voting rights of people like you, your family members, and communities throughout the country.

Join our partner, the [Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights](#), in the country’s election protection efforts. You can learn more about how you and fellow advocates can volunteer to assist people at the polls or help with their voter assistance call centers here: [https://electionprotection.wetheaction.org/](https://electionprotection.wetheaction.org/)

You can also contact your local elections administration office and see what you can do to help as a poll worker or in another volunteer role to ensure your local elections are resourced and transparent.
Additional Educational Resources about the role of Science & Democracy

- “The Shared Fate of Science and Democracy” (blog)
- “Scientists must get involved in democracy reform” (blog)
- “Channel Your Outrage about the January 6th Insurrection into Action” (blog)
- Building a Healthier Democracy: The Link between Voting Rights and Environmental Justice (report)
- “How Digital Disinformation Targets Voters” (podcast with Shireen Mitchell)
- “Voter Suppression: We Can Fight (and Win) Fair Elections” (podcast with Adrienne Jones)
- Science and Civics Guide (tool)
- “500WS guide to supporting democracy through elections” (guide)