

NORTHEASTERN VOTES

**A nonpartisan guide created by the Northeastern Votes Coalition
to support Northeastern faculty and staff in talking about voting
and democracy with their classes or campus communities**

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Introduction

We've compiled this guide to support you in helping Northeastern students across our campus network participate in the upcoming US November 2024 election. Providing registration, educational resources, and vote-by-mail information is a nonpartisan way to encourage participation in the electoral process.

This guide will walk you through the importance of the youth vote, the basics of voting, how to share voting information (with sample tools), how to encourage an informed vote, and additional resources for you, your department or your class.

Talking about voting in your classroom or in the campus community may be new to you. We recognize that at this moment of political and economic tensions, talking about voting may be daunting. However, we think these new challenges only stress the importance of civic participation. Know that you are in a powerful position to engage students in voting. **The research is clear that students are more likely to vote if someone close to them asks them to do so.** You can be that trusted resource to provide relevant information to students and empower them to become democratically engaged.

If you only have a moment, please ask your students to register, request their mail-in ballot, and vote; and let them know that the [Northeastern Votes Coalition](#) can support this journey.

What is Northeastern Votes?

[Northeastern Votes](#) is a nonpartisan coalition of students, faculty, and staff, supported by NU's [Community Service & Civic Engagement](#) team to promote voter registration, participation, and education among students.

Northeastern Votes partners with [TurboVote](#), a web-based tool designed to help students register to vote, request mail in ballots, get election reminders, check their registration status, and so much more.

As a coalition, we meet quarterly through the year with a goal of increasing democratic engagement across our campus network. We also train and empower students to serve as NU Votes Ambassadors to promote voter registration, education, and turnout across our network campuses.

Voting as a College Student

Northeastern has been recognized as one of the most civically engaged schools in the nation – we consistently vote at a higher rate than our peers. In 2020, 69% of eligible Northeastern students voted in the election compared to 66% across all colleges. Nevertheless, youth ages 18 to 29 lag other age groups. In both 2020 and 2022, this age group had the lowest turnout.

Voting at Northeastern

In 2020, Northeastern's voting rate was 69% – up from 57% in the 2016 presidential election. The registration rate was 81%. In 2018 our midterm voting rate was 43%, up from only 18% in the 2014 midterm election.

By Voting Method

In 2020, more than 50% of NU students voted by mail/absentee ballot. While some data is marked as unknown, only 4% of students voted in person.

Field of Study

In 2020, NU students in Public Administration and Social Service studies (81%) and Natural Resources and Conservation Studies (80%) topped the list of students casting a ballot. On the lower end of the voting rates was Legal Professions & Studies (60%) and Liberal Arts & Sciences (62%).

Why Don't Young People Vote?

While Northeastern students vote at higher rates than average college students, young people turn out to vote significantly less than older Americans. The four main reasons young people do not vote are:

- **They are not asked to vote:** Young people contacted by an organization, friend, or family are more likely to vote, but many are never contacted. Political campaigns rarely reach out to young people because they are not on public voter rolls.
- **Barriers exist for young people:** Young people need to register to vote when they turn 18 and again every time they move, which they do more frequently than older Americans.
- **They feel they do not know enough to vote:** Over 20% of young people say they think they do not know enough to vote. The lack of comprehensive civic education for young people limits their understanding of the electoral

process. Young people in particular are not keeping up with national political news at levels seen prior.

- **They're not interested in politics or feel their vote will not make a difference:** The newest generation, while committed to social justice, reports feeling apathetic to the political system and the candidates.

Why Should Young People Vote in the 2024 Election?

Even if the presidential race does not seem compelling to students on the fence about voting, there will be hundreds of seats in Congress up for grabs across the House of Representatives and Senate. There are also state-level, county-level, and municipal races that are decided on election day in all 50 states. In races in smaller districts, like cities and towns, elections are often decided by fewer votes and each vote carries more weight. Many states also feature ballot measures that allow their voters to directly decide on policies that could affect their life at home or at work. Somewhere on the ballot, there is a race or an issue that matters to each person voting. Casting a ballot is also a right for all citizens of age not available to people in many countries. Using that right to participate in the democratic process generates faith and civic passion.

Turning Out the Student Vote

Step 1: Helping Students Overcome the Barriers to Voting

Ask Them. Students are more likely to vote when asked by someone they trust – like a professor or trusted advisor. Since youth often face barriers in the registration and voting processes, it is important that you also give them helpful information on how to register and vote. It is necessary to note that encouraging students to vote and giving them information on how to do so can and should be **nonpartisan**. We want to increase voter turnout for all our students, regardless of politics.

TurboVote

One campus tool, [TurboVote](#), can help with that. TurboVote is a paid service that allows students to check their voter registration status, register to vote if needed, and sign up for election reminders via email or text. TurboVote will send information and reminders for students to request their mail-in ballots.

Voting Abroad

For US Citizens, voting from abroad entails a different process. The safest way to vote from abroad is by completing the Federal Post Card Application and requesting your ballot be sent via email. Northeastern has partnered with Vote from Abroad to make this process easier. Students studying or working abroad should visit students.votefromabroad.org to a) register to vote if they haven't yet and b) complete the Federal Post Card application to request the ballot via email. Federal election ballots will be emailed 45 days before the election. Students are then required to complete and return their ballots. 33 states plus DC allow ballots to be returned by email or fax while other states require ballots to be returned by mail. <http://students.votefromabroad.org/> can tell students what rules are in effect for the US state where they are registered.

Understanding the Basics of Voting:

Voting in the United States can be confusing and is different for all fifty states. Since many voting-eligible Northeastern students are not studying in the city or state where they are from, it is important that they get information about how to cast a mail-in ballot or vote early. Luckily, we have several great systems to use. US-based voters all complete the same basic process to vote:

1. **Be eligible to vote:** All U.S. citizens age 18 or older are eligible to vote unless they have lost their right through felony conviction in certain states. [A state-by-state explanation of felony voting status can be found here.](#)

2. **Register to vote:** College students may choose to register at home or in their state of residence for college, but most choose to register in their home state. States have different deadlines, but some are as early as **October 6, 2024**. Students may either register via mail or online, depending on the state; some states may require identification information (like a driver's license or social security number) to register.
3. **Cast their Ballot:** Finally, voters must cast their ballot to complete the process.
 - a. **In-Person:** Students residing where they are registered to vote on election day can cast their ballot at their polling place during the hours set by their state.
 - b. **Early Voting:** Some jurisdictions allow individuals to vote shortly before election day at designated sites.
 - c. **Mail-in Ballot:** Many students will vote by absentee or mail-in ballot, a special type of ballot sent to voters who request it because they cannot vote in person. Once requested, the state where the student is registered will send their mail-in ballot to the address requested. Students must then complete the ballot, seal it in an envelope, and, in most states, affix a stamp to mail to their election official. Most ballots must be *postmarked* on Election Day to be counted. [Find each state's absentee/mail-in ballot deadline here.](#)

How to ask students to vote:

Below are a variety of tools you can use to help students register to vote and cast their ballot. Please share voting information as soon as possible to ensure students can register and/or request a mail-in ballot by appropriate deadlines. Asking more than once in multiple formats is an effective way to get the message out.

Tools for Encouraging Student Voting

Faculty Resources:

- **Include in Syllabus:** Some sample language can be found here:

Make a Voting Plan:

Are you ready to vote in the November 2024 election? Follow these simple steps to make your voting plan:

- *Check your voter registration status: You can check your voter registration status at <https://northeastern.turbovote.org/>.*
 - *Update your registration or register to vote: You can update your voter registration information or register to vote online at <https://northeastern.turbovote.org/>*
 - *Decide where and how you will vote: College students can vote in the state they permanently reside OR in the state where they are living for school. US voters can vote by mail, vote early in-person, or vote in-person on Election Day. More information about requesting and receiving a mail-in-ballot can be found at <https://northeastern.turbovote.org/>. If you are a US citizen abroad, you can request your ballot to be **sent to you via email** at students.votefromabroad.org. Contact nuvotes@northeastern.edu for more information.*
- **Send An Email/Canvas Announcement to your class:** Below are several sample emails you are welcome to use or customize as you see fit.

Start of the Semester (send by Friday, September 6th)

Subject: (Back) on Campus and Ready to Vote

Welcome (back) to Campus!

As you get ready to rock the semester, make sure you are ready to rock the polls, too! As you know, there is a big national election coming up this November and getting ready now will ensure you are ready to vote. To be prepared, make sure you have a plan to vote:

- *Check your voter registration status: You can check your voter registration status at [Northeastern's TurboVote site](https://northeastern.turbovote.org/).*
- *Update your registration or register to vote: You can update your voter registration information or register to vote online at [Northeastern's TurboVote site](https://northeastern.turbovote.org/).*

- *Decide where and how you will vote: US voters can vote by mail, vote early in-person, or vote in-person on Election Day. To request a mail in ballot for your state, visit <https://northeastern.turbovote.org/>. If you are a US citizen abroad, you can request your ballot via EMAIL at students.votefromabroad.org.*
- *Review your sample ballot: There are several places you can view a sample ballot. Visit [Vote411](#) or [BallotReady](#) to view a sample ballot where you live.*
- *Not eligible to vote? Or looking to get more involved? We encourage you to get involved by [joining the Northeastern Votes Coalition](#) or apply for our student leadership role: [Northeastern Votes Ambassador](#) -applications are due Sunday, September 8th.*

Questions? Contact me to get your questions answered and help you prepare for Election Day!

Happy voting!

[Faculty/Staff/Office Name]

—

Celebrate Voter Registration Day (Send on Tuesday, September 17th)

Subject: National Voter Registration Day

Students,

Today Northeastern is celebrating National Voter Registration Day across our network. This is a friendly reminder to register to vote or check to confirm your registration. You can use [Northeastern's TurboVote site](#) to do both!

You should also be learning about what is on your ballot -there are many national, state and city-wide races in addition to the US President, and these individuals shape policies that impact you, your families, your town, and your state. Use [Vote 411](#) to learn who is on your ballot and what issues they care about!

There will be locations across multiple campuses today to register to vote and pick up some voter swag. To find out where we'll be, follow us on Instagram [@northeasternvotes](#).

If you need any help registering to vote, email us at nuvotes@northeastern.edu. If you are ineligible to vote, but would like to be involved, we have plenty of ways to do so. Anyone can join our NU Votes Coalition. Finally, save the date for Voter Education Week October 7th-11th.

Best,

[Faculty/Staff/Office Name]

Voter Education Week & Mail-In Vote Reminder (Send by Monday, October 7th)

Subject: Voter Education Week & Reminder to Submit Your Ballot!

Students, Staff & Faculty,

Welcome to National Voter Education Week. We are offering a variety of programming throughout this week. Follow our [NU Votes Instagram](#) to check out our detailed schedule of events.

NU Votes also reminds you to submit your mail-in ballot on time! Depending on the state in which you are casting your ballot, you may need to return your ballot before or on Election Day. [You can find a state-by-state guide on when your mail-in ballot is due here.](#) We have stamps and envelopes to help you easily return your ballot.

Questions? Don't hesitate to reach out to nuvotes@northeastern.edu to help you prepare for Election Day!

Best,

[Faculty/Staff/Office Name]

Election Day Reminder (Send on Tuesday, November 5th)

Subject: Election Day is Here

Students, Staff & Faculty,

Today is the LAST day to make your voice heard for this election cycle. Poll hours for our campus locations are below. There will be an Election Night Watch Party on the Boston campus tonight. Check out our Instagram for more details.

California 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Florida 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Maine 6 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Massachusetts 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

North Carolina 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Virginia 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Washington Varies - 8 p.m.

Remember: if you are in line to vote before your polling station closes, you are still allowed to vote!

For more information on voting procedures, or if you run into difficulties accessing the ballot, you can use <https://866ourvote.org/> or call or text 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) to speak with a trained Election Protection volunteer.

Happy Election Day!

[Faculty/Staff/Office Name]

- **Request an NU Votes Ambassador Presentation:**

Our trained team of Voting Ambassadors are available to lead a 15-to-20-minute presentation entitled Voting 101 virtually or in person. We are currently recruiting Ambassadors across all campus locations and will do our best to honor your request for an in-person or virtual presentation. Please complete [this form](#) to make your request.

- **Faculty-Led Lecture:**

Devote time in your lecture to talk about voting. We have prepared slides that can be used for this purpose. Fill out this [Collaboration & Support form](#) to receive these slides and talking points.

- **Voter Swag Kit**

We'll have a Voting Ambassador deliver a swag kit directly to your class or can mail a kit to another campus. The kits include 'I registered to vote' stickers, 'I voted' stickers, blank envelopes, postage stamps, NU Votes markers and more. Fill out our [Collaboration & Support form](#) here to request your kit.

Staff Resources:

- **Email or Newsletter Language:**

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If you need any help registering to vote, email us at nuvotes@northeastern.edu. If you are ineligible to vote, but would like to be involved, we have plenty of ways to

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For more information on voting procedures, or if you run into difficulties accessing the ballot, you can use <https://866ourvote.org/> or call or text 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) to speak with a trained Election Protection volunteer.

Happy Election Day!

[Faculty/Staff/Office Name]

- **Join our Teams page**

We will be sharing content and updates regularly on our [NU Votes teams page](#). Any staff, faculty or students are welcome to [join](#) to receive regular updates from us.

- **Promote Civic Participant on Instagram**

Follow [Northeastern Votes on Instagram](#) where we will be sharing quite a bit of content between now and the election. We encourage you to follow us and share content on your organization's page.

- **Request an NU Votes Ambassador Presentation**

Our trained team of Voting Ambassadors are available to lead a 15–20-minute presentation entitled “Voting 101” virtually or in-person. We are currently recruiting Ambassadors across all campus locations and will do our best to honor your request for an in-person or virtual presentation. Please complete [this form](#) to make your request.

- **Host a Voter Registration Day Event (9.17.24)**

Northeastern Votes is celebrating Voter Registration Day on Tuesday, September 17th. There will be voter registration stations set up across multiple campuses. Follow our Instagram to find the most up-to-date locations. If you would like to host an event on Tuesday, September 17th, complete our [Collaboration & Support form](#) to let us know.

Tools for Creating Active and Knowledgeable Voters

Faculty Resources

Step 2: Encouraging Active and Knowledgeable Voters

Many students do not vote because they feel they are not knowledgeable enough to do so. Voting in the United States is logistically and practically complex. There are thousands of races around the country at the local, state, and federal levels, making it difficult for new voters to make an educated vote. The following are helpful ways to talk to students about voting in a way that will encourage them to empower themselves to learn the process and cast a ballot they are proud of:

- **[Host a Voter Education Week Event \(10.7-10.11.24\)](#)**

Northeastern Votes is celebrating national Voter Education Week from Monday, October 7th- Friday, October 11th. If you would like to host an event, please complete our [Collaboration & Support form](#). As long as the event is nonpartisan, we can advertise it for you! We may be also able to offer additional support in the form of voter swag or a staff member or student ambassador to help ensure the event runs smoothly.

- **Encourage students to participate as poll workers or poll monitors.**

Northeastern Votes collaborates with the City of Boston Elections Commission in Boston and PowerthePolls nationally to recruit poll workers, and Common Cause MA to recruit poll monitors.

Poll Workers: Poll workers play an important role in ensuring elections run smoothly and every vote is counted. This is often a paid position.

City of Boston Poll Workers: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/election/how-apply-become-poll-worker>

Power the Polls: National effort to recruit poll workers:
<https://www.powerthepolls.org/>

Poll Monitors: Poll monitors are generally volunteers helping to protect voting and ensure there is no voter suppression at the polls. These roles are voluntary roles and are generally a shorter time commitment than a poll worker. Learn more and [apply here](#).

- **Emphasize voter education for students.**
 - Remind students: you do not need to know everything about every candidate or every race on the ballot to vote.
 - American citizens over the age of 18 have a right to cast a ballot, whether they are knowledgeable on all the issues or not.
 - Nonpartisan resources for people to learn about the candidates and issues up and down the ballot can be found at the end of this document.
- **Connect election issues and outcomes to classroom material.**
 - Discussions or writing assignments focused on relevant political issues to the course can allow students to better understand the impact of elections.
 - Examples include:
 - Assigning research into media coverage of past elections teaches both media literacy skills and research skills.
 - Analysis of candidates' websites not only into how they differ on issues, but their rhetorical differences and how they use those to connect with voters.
 - Explaining the effects of election outcomes in lectures. For instance: what pieces of legislation were signed with a new President or Congressional majority in place? How did the direction of the country change?
 - Discussion prompts for students to research political issues relevant to the course can help them understand the impact the 2024 election may have on that issue.
- **Encourage students to keep up to date with current affairs**
 - Directing students to a variety of respected news sources helps keep people informed on what's new not just in the election cycle, but around the country and world.
- **Foster substantive discussions in the classroom about voting, elections, and their impact.**
 - Supervise respectful conversations in class that get students with different political viewpoints to feel comfortable participating.

- These discussions can be focused on the civic benefits of voting as opposed to the political ramifications.
 - For example: a classroom discussion about voting in the coming election could be about the benefits of casting a ballot in an election and increasing voter turnout in future elections. What are the benefits of voting? Why should people vote?

Staff Resources

- **Host a Voter Education Week Event (10.7-10.11.24)**

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Tools to Engage Non-Voters

Some students will be ineligible to vote for reasons like citizenship or age. Although unable to directly vote in the election, these students can still be a part of the political process by informing themselves on the issues or candidates. Resources like Ballotpedia can be helpful to show people what is on their area's ballot and start as a point of research. We are also encouraging all students to participate in Northeastern's Student Government Association annual elections as a way to help them understand they have a voice in the school's government.

- **Exercise your right to vote as a member of the Northeastern student body.**

Every student has the right to vote in annual student government elections, both undergraduate and graduate. Student government represents the ideas and goals of all Northeastern students.

- **Encourage students to participate as poll workers or poll monitors.**

Northeastern Votes collaborates with the City of Boston Elections Commission in Boston and PowerthePolls nationally to recruit poll workers, and Common Cause MA to recruit poll monitors.

Poll Workers: Poll workers play an important role in ensuring elections run smoothly and every vote is counted. This is often a paid position.

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Poll Monitors: Poll monitors are generally volunteers helping to protect voting and ensure there is no voter suppression at the polls. These roles are voluntary roles and are generally a shorter time commitment than a poll worker. Learn more and [apply here](#).

- **Get involved with Northeastern Votes**

We welcome all students to join our Coalition, either as a general member or a Student Ambassador. Email nuvotes@northeastern.edu to learn more about getting involved.

Additional Resources

Northeastern Specific Data and Resources

- [Northeastern TurboVote](#): Voter registration and absentee ballot request forms, reminders, and information on changes to the voting process where they are registered
- Northeastern All IN Plan Voter Engagement Plan submitted by Northeastern Votes, guiding our strategy for 2024
- [Northeastern NSLVE Report 2020: Provides NU specific data on the 2020 presidential election](#)
- [Northeastern's Recognition through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#)
- [Northeastern's Student Government Association website](#)

Voter Assistance Resources

- [Ballotpedia](#): Digital encyclopedia of American politics
- [Ballotready](#): Sample ballots and information on candidate platforms
- [Vote411.org](#): State-by-state guide to voting logistics as well as sample ballots and information on candidate platforms

Resources for Educators

- [All In Challenge & SLSV](#): All In's [Resource Hub](#) includes webinar series opportunities and campus engagement resources. SLSV offers a [Resource Library](#)
- [CIRCLE](#), Tufts University: Provides academic research on youth participation in democratic institutions, including extensive reports on turnout data and reasonings behind these projections.
- [Project Pericles Civic Engagement Resources Database](#): Resources developed by and for faculty members to embed civic education in courses
- [Science Rising](#): Additional resources for STEM professors and students
- [Scholars Strategy Network-Faculty Voting Toolkit](#): National membership organization of college-and-university-based researchers interested in improving policy and strengthening democracy

Additional Questions?

For more information, please reach out to Northeastern Votes at nuvotes@northeastern.edu

About the Authors

This guide was created by the Northeastern Votes Coalition, led by the Community Service & Civic Engagement (CSCE) team with input from numerous staff and faculty members, including the Center for Advancing Teaching & Learning Through Research (CATLR). The Education Innovation Operations team supported with design. NU Votes is grateful for GW Votes and the team at George Washington University's Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement & Public Service for graciously allowing us to use their faculty toolkit as a starting point.