

Voting Squad Starter Guide



WHEN WE ALL
VOTE

Imagine what is possible if we all made our voices heard in every election. **To make this a reality, we need to work together.**

Let's get started.

The Voting Squad Volunteer Program:

YOU are the best person to have a conversation with your friends, family, neighbors, classmates, and colleagues about registering and getting out to vote. They trust you, they know you, and each conversation you have with someone you know is more effective than hearing from any other messenger.

What Is A Voting Squad & Squad Captain?

A Voting Squad is a volunteer team of at least 3 people that works together to help register friends, family, neighbors, coworkers—any eligible voter in your community.

Every Squad needs a Captain. Voting Squad Captains are volunteer leaders that build and lead the team, and commit and hold the group accountable for completing one action every month. As a Voting Squad Captain, you will have opportunities to:

- Join exclusive trainings and briefings
- Get access to coaching, tools, and resources to build your own squad
- Be a part of a nationwide community of highly motivated organizers working to make sure that everyone participates in our democracy

About When We All Vote:

When We All Vote is a non-partisan organization on a mission to help all eligible voters register and get ready to vote. We believe that we can all make a difference in our democracy by inspiring every American to make their voice heard at the ballot box. The work begins in our communities: neighbor to neighbor and friend to friend, we can start a conversation about our rights and responsibilities in shaping our democracy. When We All Vote is a 501(c)(3) organization and does not support any candidates, parties, or take a particular position on issues.

As a When We All Vote Voting Squad Captain, you are taking the initiative to organize your friends, family, and community around getting registered and ready to vote. THANK YOU!

In This Guide You'll Find:

1. How to Build & Sustain your Voting Squad, including:
 - Squad roles & responsibilities;
 - Timeline with key action dates;
 - Sample meeting agenda for your initial squad meetup
2. Voter Registration Best Practices: Learn more about the dos and don'ts of voter registration.
3. Sharing your Success: Helping us measure and celebrate our collective impact.
4. Next Steps and Resources: Here's a one-stop-shop to get the answers to your questions.

1. Building & Sustaining Your Squad

Getting Started:

As a Captain, your squad is yours to shape. Each squad will look and operate a little differently, and that's okay! You might recruit squad members that all know each other well or you might bring together individuals from different parts of your life who have never met. The important thing is that you assemble a group of people who are excited about helping more people participate in our democracy and can commit to taking action together on a regular basis. Every squad should take time to get to know each other, set goals and norms together, and have fun!

Roles & Responsibilities:

Squad Captain

Takes responsibility for assembling a team and making sure the team is clear on goals and next steps.

All captains should:

- Recruit at least three members to their Voting Squad
- Communicate regularly with squad members
- Join a monthly call or webinar with When We All Vote staff
- Lead and oversee the execution of monthly actions & help register voters at weall.vote/mysquadvotes
- Report back to When We All Vote regularly to help us measure your impact at weall.vote/squadreport
- Join The Voting Squad Captains online community on Facebook: fb.com/groups/votingsquadcaptains

Squad Member

Committed volunteers who own specific responsibilities, which are based on needs and might vary from project to project.

All squad members should:

- Take action with their squad at least once a month throughout 2020
- Join The Voting Squad online community on Facebook: fb.com/groups/whenweallvote

Recruiting Squad Members:

Use this worksheet to brainstorm who you can reach out to about joining your Voting Squad.

My Friends (e.g. Classmates, teammates):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Community groups I'm a part of (E.g. PTA, church, sorority):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My Family (E.g. nieces/nephews, cousins):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Timeline:

Every month, When We All Vote squads will focus on reaching out to key parts of our communities and networks. On every monthly call, we will discuss these events and how your Voting Squad can get involved.

A tentative calendar of key activities is below:

November-December Holiday Voter Registration

January Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Action and Service

February Faith & Workplace: Register your colleagues at work or at your place of worship.

March Call Your Girlfriends and register your friends.

April Register your neighbors.

May & June School Graduations & Celebrations: Register family and friends as you celebrate important milestones.

July Celebrate our Democracy on the 4th by registering voters.

August Back to School: Get students and parents registered to vote.

September National Voter Registration Week of Action

October & November Voting Celebrations: Party with Purpose

Squad Kickoff Meeting:

Now that you've assembled your squad, it is time to meet up and get excited! Your squad will work together to organize friends, family, and community around getting registered and ready to vote.

Great organizers build power by bringing people together. Meeting regularly will help you and your squad collectively plan and strategize to create a deliberate and thought-out approach to voter registration in your local community. As a note, these DO NOT have to be in-person, and can also take place via phone/skype, etc. Follow this guide to plan your first Voting Squad meeting.

Goals

Your initial squad meeting should have the following goals in mind:

- Build relationships together as a new squad.
- Provide space to share as a group why this squad is passionate about voter registration.
- Begin planning squad's voter registration activities for 2020.



Sample Agenda For Kickoff Meeting

This is a suggestion! Feel free to update or modify as needed.

Squad Arrive and Mingle

Welcome and Introduction (15 min)

Introduce yourself and thank everyone for coming! Have your guests introduce themselves—this can just be their name as they can share more about themselves later on during the meeting.

Share Your Story (5 min)

Take a couple minutes to share your own story and why you feel called to do voter registration in your community. Sharing stories is a great way to build relationships with guests in a new context. It's a good time to talk about the urgency of the moment and the importance of voter participation in a personal way.

Hear From Your Squad (25 min)

Use this opportunity to ask your guests to share their stories. This gathering will be a great chance to brainstorm and discuss ways of registering and engaging new voters in your community.

Open Up the Discussion (25-30 min)

This type of organizing might be completely new to some group members, and may be familiar to others—either way this is a great time to build relationships by discussing your community and the work ahead.

Here are a few questions to help you focus your conversation:

- What are the norms to set for your meeting?
 - “Norms” are basic (but necessary!) meeting guidelines, like “We won’t speak while someone else is talking.” If everyone understands these norms up-front, it’s easier to guide your conversation back to them and make sure your meeting ends productively.
- Why do you want to do this work?
- Why is voting important to you?
- What would be different in our community if everyone voted?

Plan Your First Action (15-20 min)

Your voting squad’s first big action as a group is to use [INSERT MONTHLY ACTION HERE] and to register folks you know to vote and update their registration. We’ve provided a toolkit to give you the resources you need. Together as a group, plan what you’ll need in order to execute this well.

Next Steps and Close (10 min)

These meetings are about personal interactions and developing relationships. Decide when will this group will meet again. What actions will you all take between now and that meeting? How will this group stay in touch and up to date?

2. Voter Registration Best Practices

Every month we will focus on reaching out to key parts of our communities and networks to help people get registered and informed about upcoming election deadlines. Below you will find guidelines, quick tips, and additional resources on how to help register voters. Each month we'll be in touch with specific guidance and support.

Just remember that no matter where you are, you can always direct people to weall.vote/mysquadvotes to register or start the voter registration process from their computer or mobile device.

On our website, depending on where people live, they may be able to:

1. Complete the voter registration process online;
2. Start the voter registration process online, and have to download & print their application to be mailed in, or if access to a printer is an issue;
3. Request that their application form be mailed to them, so that they can sign and drop it in the mail.

Best Practices:

Expectations

Don't get discouraged if you don't have dozens of people approaching you to register to vote. If someone refuses to participate, be kind and thank them for listening. Stay positive!

Have a conversation

Registering to vote can be an intimidating process to some, so be sure to have a genuine conversation with potential participants. Ask questions and listen actively to their answers.

Stay on message

You're not telling them who to vote for, which political party to support, or suggesting that they vote for or against particular policy issues. You're helping people gain access to participate in our democracy. It's a positive way to celebrate civic engagement and build long-lasting relationships within your community.

Follow up and be persistent

"I'm already registered" is a common response. Ask follow up questions—many people need to be taken through this thought process:

- "Are you registered at your current address?"
- "Have you moved since you last registered?"
- "Have you changed your name since you last registered?"

Ask everyone to register

Be sure to include everyone when recruiting participants to register themselves to vote. Don't be afraid to have a respectful and engaging conversation.

Questions about your state's rules?

If you have questions about the rules in your state, there are several sites with detailed information in the resources section of this toolkit to help you navigate your state's specific laws.

Volunteer Quick Tips, Dos And Don'ts:

Every state has different rules regarding voter registration and voter registration drives. Some states, for example, limit to what extent a person can directly assist another person with the registration process. So it's important that what you are doing is focused on directing people toward the resources they need to make sure they are registered to vote and that their voter registration information is accurate.

With that in mind, here are some general dos and don'ts:

Do

- Ask participants to use their own smartphone, tablet, or computer. You can lend the participant your smartphone, tablet, or computer to use if the participant does not have one available.
- Direct participants to weall.vote/mysquadvotes where they can register themselves to vote.
- Send people to their Secretary of State's website for any questions.
- Check your state's Secretary of State's website for voter registration deadlines.
- Always treat all participants equally if they are interested in registering to vote.
- Have fun!

Don't

- Don't ever assist participants in filling out or completing their voter registration form.
- Don't fill out any part of the form for them.
- Don't hit the submit button for them.
- Don't print forms for them.
- Don't use paper forms—following Rock the Vote's online process helps keep you on the right side of state laws.
- Don't take a paper form from anyone and offer to mail it or deliver it for them.
- Don't offer anything of value in exchange for asking people to register. That includes buttons, food, stickers or anything that would imply an incentive to register to vote.
- Don't try to answer voter registration questions yourself if you are unsure of the answer—do send people to your state's Secretary of State's website.
- Don't decline to lend your device to any participant or decline to direct any participant to whenweallvote.org based on their political party preference or any other factor.

3. Sharing your Success!

Tracking and Reporting

As you build your squad and start to help your friends, family and neighbors get registered and ready to vote, it is important that you share what you are doing and what you have planned. Please fill out this simple Report Back Form at weall.vote/squadreport to let us know what your plans are for your squad and how you are helping voters get registered. We want to learn about what is working so we can document our collective impact, share your successes, and identify opportunities to improve and better support your squad.

Please share your work and report back to us once a month using this Report Back Form.

Using social media to get the word out!

Social media is a great way to ensure you're capitalizing on the opportunity to send your message far and wide! To make an upcoming event a success, post on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat with quality pictures (or video!) that tell the story of your event and encourage others to do the same.

Helpful Tips for Social Media:

- **Use #WhenWeAllVote and TAG @WhenWeAllVote** so we can amplify your posts to help tell our movement's story.
- **Good quality photos and video make a difference.** You don't need to use a professional—high-quality iPhone and Android photos work great! [Here are some general directions.](#)
- **Consider having someone from your Squad own this role** to ensure that this is happening.

3. Next Steps and Resources

Register, register, register!

As a Voting Squad Captain, you know your friends, family and neighbors best. You can always use this voter registration link to help them get registered: weall.vote/mysquadvotes.

Don't forget to report back your monthly progress:

We want to learn about what is working so we can document our collective impact, share your successes, and identify opportunities to improve and better support your squad. Head to weall.vote/squadreport to fill out the quick form at the end of every month.

Join the online community:

- for Voting Squad Captains: fb.com/groups/votingsquadcaptains
- for all Voting Squad Members: fb.com/groups/whenweallvote

Stay in touch!

To stay up to date on the latest resources and updates, make sure you have signed up at whenweallvote.org/votingsquad and follow us on social media:

- **Instagram:** [@WhenWeAllVote](https://www.instagram.com/WhenWeAllVote) / **Twitter:** [@WhenWeAllVote](https://twitter.com/WhenWeAllVote) / **Facebook:** [@WhenWeAllVote](https://www.facebook.com/WhenWeAllVote)

Additional voter registration resources:

- **When We All Vote:** One-stop-shop for voting resources, getting registered, and check a voter's status
- **Rock the Vote:** Everything you need to get prepared to vote in your state
- **Fair Elections Center:** Guides that summarize important registration and voting information for each state
- **National Voter Registration Day:** Voter registration drive rules by state
- **US Vote Foundation:** Voter registration deadlines by state
- **US Vote Foundation:** Voting requirements and information by state
- **Nonprofit Vote:** Find your state and local election clerk offices and contact information

Questions?

If you have any questions about Voting Squads or When We All Vote, you can always reach out to us at volunteers@whenweallvote.org or post a message on the [Voting Squad Captain Facebook page](#) (our team checks it daily).

