

# Civic and Voter Empowerment Resource Guide

---

by *Alex Kappus, Ph.D.*

*UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement*

As demonstrated in my research, [Cultivating a Culture of Civic Engagement and Democratic Learning: Examining Institutional Responses to the California Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act \(A.B. 963\)](#), third-party organizations and resources can make a significant difference in the lives of faculty and staff members leading civic and voter empowerment work. These organizations provide critical guidance, support, funding, and professional development.

## 1.1 Navigating Third-Party Resources and Organizations

Over the past decade, the number of organizations in the civic and voter empowerment space has grown exponentially. The long list of organizations and resources can be overwhelming. Consider the following four steps for reviewing third-party organizations to support your efforts.

1. The first resource any college or university leader should consider are the internal strengths and capacities at their own institution. Faculty members, the library, student affairs, and a host of other departments can provide local support for your work.
2. Next, and specific to voter engagement, leaders should consult resources and guidance offered by the U.S. Department of Education (i.e. the 2024 [Toolkit for the Promotion of Voter Participation for Students](#)) as well as their state's Secretary of State office. Seek resources from your local election offices. This will ensure alignment with state and local specific guidelines and resources and facilitate opportunities for partnership-building. They may also maintain a list of trusted third-party organizations your state relies upon.
3. Then, consider utilizing free tools and resources made available by some organizations below. Explore action planning resources and funding to support student leaders, and tap into research to continue to inform and advance the work on your campus.

4. Finally, your campus can consider more formal partnerships with trusted third-party organizations to leverage their support, expertise, and sometimes funding. Some of these partnerships may exist on your campus and you are not even aware!

### 1.2 Curated Resource Guide

The following list of organizations and resources, informed by recommendations from participants of my study, is organized by category. The descriptions include direct language from the organization's websites and were edited slightly to make the list as concise as possible.

#### 1.2.1 Campus-Focused Civic and Voter Engagement Organizations

- **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge:** A nonpartisan initiative of Civic Nation committed to increasing college student voting rates nationwide. ALL IN was instrumental to the participants of the study, specifically in supporting action planning (resources [here](#)).
- **Andrew Goodman Foundation:** Their *Vote Everywhere* program is a national, nonpartisan, civic engagement program that provides extensive training, resources, as well as a peer network to support its Andrew Goodman Ambassadors.
- **Bringing Theory to Practice (BT2P):** Seeks to advance the core purposes of college: holistic learning, preparation for meaningful work and democratic citizenship, contribution to community wellbeing, and the flourishing of the whole person.
- **Campus Compact:** Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 1,000 colleges and universities—representing some 6 million students—who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education. Extensive resources available.
- **Campus Vote Project (CVP):** Helps college students work with administrators and local election officials to make the process of voting easier and overcome barriers students face. Their [Democracy Fellows Program](#) offers a paid part-time opportunity for college students to gain training and support peer-led work on campus. Several other key efforts: [HBCU Legacy Initiative](#), [Hispanic/Latino Voter Toolkit](#), and [Student Voting Network](#).
- **CIRCLE:** Tufts Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement is a nonpartisan, independent research organization focused on youth civic engagement.
- **Civic Holidays:** Nonpartisan days of action that strengthen and celebrate democracy.
- **Civic Influencers:** Nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to inspiring young people to make their voices heard—and their votes count.

- **Institute for Citizens & Scholars:** Developing citizens who are civically well-informed, productively engaged for the common good, and hopeful about the future.
- **Institute for Democracy in Higher Education (IDHE):** Housed at AAC&U, IDHE provides colleges and universities with the resources and support to prepare students to confront the threats to democracy and to engage in the process of reinventing it.
- **UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement:** Resources on free speech and civic engagement prepared by Fellows of the Center.
- **National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE):** Offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates and, if interested, a closer examination of campus climate for political learning and engagement.
- **Rock the Vote:** For over 30 years, Rock the Vote has sought to build the political power of young people. Resources for students, and partnerships geared toward the corporate sector.
- **Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSV):** The national hub and largest nonpartisan network in the United States dedicated to increasing college student voter participation.
- **TurboVote:** Works with many colleges and universities to support voter registration.
- **Unify Challenge College Bowl:** A virtual intercollegiate event where thousands of students are paired into one-on-one political conversations across differences.
- **Vote By Design:** Nonpartisan civic learning resources to promote agency and action.
- **Voter Friendly Campus (VFC):** From CVP and NASPA, VFC helps institutions develop action plans and recognize campuses leading civic and electoral engagement.

### 1.2.2 Professional Association Specific Resources

- **AAC&U Educating for Democracy:** AAC&U is a global organization dedicated to advancing the vitality and democratic purposes of undergraduate liberal education.
- **AASCU's American Democracy Project (ADP):** The organizing force for 300 colleges and universities, AASCU seeks to engage faculty and staff on this critical topic.
- **Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Meeting:** Joint conference annually for AASCU and NASPA – relevant for faculty, staff, and anyone interested in advancing civic learning and democratic engagement on college and university campuses.
- **College Civic Learning Coalition:** This coalition was created by higher education and policy organizations in response to the challenges facing democracy at home and abroad.
- **Frontiers of Democracy Conference:** Annual summer forum hosted by Tufts University's Tisch College of Civic Life.

### 1.2.3 Faculty-Specific Resources

- **APSA RAISE the Vote:** The American Political Science Association's Resources to Amplify and Increase Student Engagement is a nonpartisan effort to provide political science faculty with the tools needed to encourage student democratic engagement.
- **Deliberative Pedagogy Lab:** Committed to innovative teaching and learning for democratic engagement using the practice known as "deliberative pedagogy."
- **Engaged Scholars Initiative:** Through Campus Compact, the ESI is a one-year, cohort-based leadership & professional development program that supports faculty and staff in strengthening their community-engaged scholarship.
- **Faculty Network for Student Voting Rights:** An organization dedicated specifically to urging faculty members to play a role in student voting and civic engagement efforts.
- **Project Pericles:** Consortium of predominantly independent colleges and universities promoting civic engagement in areas including faculty and curriculum development.
- **Raise the Vote Campaign:** Through the American Political Science Association (APSA), this effort encourages political science faculty members to take a leading role.
- **Scholars Strategy Network:** Connecting journalists, policymakers, and civic leaders with America's top researchers to improve policy and strengthen democracy.
- **Strategies Balancing Neutrality and Support:** Short article on checking our political egos.
- **Student Vote Research Network:** Brings together academics, practitioners, and funders to generate actionable, data-driven insights to increase student voter participation.

### 1.2.4 Resources for Presidents and Cabinet Leaders

- The Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI) is partnering with Credo on [the 2024 Leadership Institute](#) program for cabinet-level leaders to learn about advancing free speech and inclusion through constructive dialogue practices.
- The Institute for Citizens & Scholars launched the [College Presidents for Civic Preparedness](#), a consortium bringing together college presidents across diverse institutions to advance free expression, civil discourse, and critical inquiry.
- Campus Compact invites Presidents to sign the "[Action Statement](#)" to affirm commitment to the public purposes of higher education and a promise to develop a Campus Civic Action Plan to realize those purposes more fully.

- [Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement](#) through the American Council on Education (ACE) to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

### 1.2.5 Community Voter Education and Engagement

- **100 Percent Democracy:** Initiative dedicated to the proposition that a representative democracy is only truly representative when everyone participates.
- **AAPD REV UP:** American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities. REV UP means “Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power!”
- **A Band of Voters:** A multi-cultural, multi-generational collective of activists, artists, filmmakers, and student leaders.
- **Citizen University:** Mission is to build a culture of powerful, responsible citizenship across the country.
- **Civic Nation:** Organization centers advancing civic engagement and inclusion.
- **Fair Elections Center:** National, nonpartisan voting rights and election reform 501(c)(3) organization. Excellent Resources: [State Voting Guides](#) and [Know Your Rights Guides](#)
- **iCivics:** A K-12 focused resource, but effective and engaging resources to develop the next generation of citizens.
- **Interfaith America:** Formerly the Interfaith Youth Corps – works with hundreds of colleges across the country to develop courses, programs, and campus-wide plans. The [IDEALS survey](#) explores a fundamental question: To what extent is the collegiate experience preparing students to be successful leaders in our religiously diverse society?
- **Kettering Foundation:** Organization dedicated to research and advocacy for democracy.
- **League of Women Voters (LWV):** A nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy.
- **Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL):** Largest study of student leadership, understanding the influences that shape socially responsible human development capacities and related outcomes. Institutions can enroll in study for a fee.
- **NAACP Youth and College Programs:** NAACP college chapters provide training and fine-tune leadership skills to support an increased level of social and political activism.
- **New Voters:** Organization focused on youth civic engagement in high schools.

- **News Literacy Project:** The News Literacy Project empowers educators to teach students the skills they need to be smart, active consumers of news and other information and engaged, informed participants in civic life.
- **Power the Polls:** A nonpartisan initiative to recruit the next generation of poll workers to ensure safe and fair elections for all voters.
- **States United Democracy Center:** A nonpartisan organization advancing free, fair, and secure elections.
- **Work Elections:** The Fair Elections Center started this project to improve election administration by broadening and diversifying the country's pool of poll workers.
- **United States Election Assistance Commission:** An independent, bipartisan commission whose mission is to help election officials improve the administration of elections and help Americans participate in the voting process.

### 1.2.6 Bridging the Partisan Divide on Campus

- **Braver Angels:** Program focused specifically on alleviating the partisan divide.
- **BridgeUSA:** Student-led chapters of an approach to bridging the partisan divide.
- **Disagree Better:** An initiative from the National Governors Association.
- **Issue One:** A cross-partisan political reform group to unite Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in the movement to fix our broken political system.
- **Unify America:** Mission is to shift American culture and national decision-making away from political fighting toward problem-solving, away from conflict toward consensus.
- **Starts with Us:** A movement to overcome toxic polarization & extremist thinking to solve our toughest problems.
- **National Issues Forums:** Nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums for the consideration of public policy issues.

### 1.2.7 Free Speech, Expression, and Inclusion

- **ACLU Speech on Campus FAQ:** Guide from the American Civil Liberties Union.
- **Bipartisan Policy Center:** Campus Free Expression: A New Roadmap
- **Campus Free Speech Guide:** Explore free speech & academic freedom at PEN America.
- **Campus Speech Modules:** Through the First Amendment Watch
- **Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression:** From the University of Chicago

- **Institute for Democracy and Higher Education (IDHE):** Facilitation Guide on Free Speech and Inclusion
- **UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement:** Resources on the First Amendment and Freedom of Expression in higher education.

### 1.2.8 Resources for Dialogue on Campus

- **Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI):** Comprehensive offerings for higher education.
- **Deliberative Dialogue resources:** Prepared by NASPA and the Kettering Foundation.
- **Dialogue to Change:** A model for dialogue from Everyday Democracy.
- **Difficult Conversations Lab:** Research and resources on navigating difficult conversations.
- **LivingRoom Conversations:** A facilitator guide on trust in elections.
- **National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation:** Resources for dialogue and deliberation.
- **National Institute for Civil Discourse:** Through the University of Arizona.
- **Sustained Dialogue Institute:** National program on dialogue.
- **University of Michigan Program on Intergroup Relations:** Focused on social group identity and intergroup relations. Offers trainings and support for building programs.

### 1.2.9 Podcasts

- **Civics 101 Podcast** (New Hampshire Public Radio)
- **Democracy Works** (Penn State College of Liberal Arts)
- **Keeping PACE with Kristen** (Philanthropy for Civic Engagement)
- **Pod-Cast Your Vote** (BadgersVote and the Andrew Goodman Foundation)
- **Politics is Everything** (Center for Politics at the University of Virginia)
- **Preamble** (Citizens & Scholars)
- **SpeechMatters** (UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement)
- **Student Affairs Now** (SA Now Productions)
- **SVNCast** (Student Voting Network)
- **The Context** (Kettering Foundation)
- **The Way Forward** (Bringing Theory to Practice)

### 1.2.10 2024-Specific Resources

- **2024 Election Preparation Guide** (Constructive Dialogue Institute-CDI)
- **2024 Toolkit for the Promotion of Voter Participation for Students** (Dept. of Education)
- **2024 Voter Education Workshops for College Teachers** (APSA)
- **24 Ways to Grow Voters** (CIRCLE)
- **A Leadership Handbook: Students Vote 2024** (ALL IN)

Additions or questions? Contact Alex at [Alex.Kappus@gmail.com](mailto:Alex.Kappus@gmail.com).