



Chicago★Votes

Parade to the P★lls

Launch Packet

2024

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2024 Parade to the Polls™ program! Thank you for joining the citywide movement to increase youth voter turnout! It's no secret that young people are habitually excluded from the political process due to inactivity at the polls, especially during small, local elections. Chicago Votes wants to ensure students' first voting experience is fun, comfortable, and exciting.

What started as a small, after-school event at Mather High School in the Spring of 2014, has transformed into a full-fledged program that has engaged more than 20 high schools and taken over 5,000 young people to cast their first ballots. Let's continue to empower young people and create life-long voters by coordinating a celebratory trip to the polls this election season.

This packet outlines the essential steps to escort first-time, high school voters to the polls. Make sure to join the program chicagovotes.com/parade-to-the-polls and follow #ParadetothePolls on social media!

WHO IS CHICAGO VOTES

Chicago Votes is a non-partisan, non-profit organization building a more inclusive democracy by putting power in the hands of young Chicagoans. We're engaging and developing a new generation of leaders by opening the doors of government and politics to young people from all corners of the city. We're changing laws to make Chicago and Illinois a better place to be young, and in the process, we're making democracy fun.



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L[★]GISTICS GUIDE



STEP 1 : SELECT A DATE: ELECTION DAY IS MARCH 19TH

Early voting for the 2024 Primary Election is Monday, March 1st - Tuesday, March 19th. Choose any of these dates to host your event and let everyone know. This includes other educators that might be interested in participating, as well as your administration. They can help pull the event together!

* If you are planning your own parade, please note that anyone can vote at any of the 51 Early Vote Polling site places across the city, including on Election Day. *However, on Election Day, everyone ALSO has a polling place designated on their voter registration card.* We strongly advise planning a parade during early voting ONLY to allow all students to vote at the same location.



STEP 2 : PLAN YOUR PARADE

Parades are an opportunity to tailor an election celebration that fits your school culture. Some schools plan actual parades with a marching band and pep squad while others load students on buses and coordinate chants to inspire everyone into action. The location of the Early Vote Polling Place is the primary factor that affects the type of parade you can coordinate. Decide the type of celebration you would like to have.

NEW: Schools can support students to invite candidates for a student-led candidate forum.



STEP 3: GET YOUR STUDENTS REGISTERED

SAME DAY VOTER REGISTRATION

**Chicago Votes STRONGLY advises that transcripts are printed for every student attending your parade and that all students bring their school IDs with them to the polling place, even if they think they are already registered. This ensures that every student can take advantage of Same Day Voter Registration in the case of a registration error. There are many points in the registration process that can result in a discarded application. We ask that all schools participating take the necessary precautions to ensure none of your students are turned away from the polls due to their registration status.*

STEP 4: EDUCATE YOUR VOTERS

In order to be a part of the Chicago Votes Parade to the Polls™ program, each educator must commit to reviewing the ballot with their students before their event to ensure your students are prepared to make an educated decision at the polls. Please note that all materials provided to students must be nonpartisan.

Ballotready.org, thetriibe.com, Chicagovotes.com, injusticewatch.org

STEP 5: CONTACT YOUR POLLING PLACE

Make sure you contact your closest Early Vote Polling Place to ensure they are ready for the number of students attending your parade. Giving them a heads up will guarantee that they have enough materials and staff available to ensure that your students' first time voting experience is smooth and enjoyable.

*Many Early Vote Polling Places are Chicago Public Libraries with extra seating and services available for your students while they wait to vote.

**Chicago Votes has also worked to coordinate parades with marching bands that lead to libraries. Some librarians aren't a fan of marching bands. We can help with that.



STEP 6: ALERT THE (SOCIAL) MEDIA

Chicago Votes utilizes all major social media platforms to highlight our partners during the Parade to the Poll Season. Let students take over your school's socials and use the #ParadetothePoll, #(SchoolName)Votes, #ChicagoVotes, & #CPSCivicLife hashtags to join the narrative on social media. If your school has a phone policy please request special permission to allow students to use their phones during the event!

STEP 7: INVITE EVERYONE!

Make sure to invite community members, local officials, and community organizations to join you! A community that votes together, stays together. Let's prove together that Chicago really does vote and turn out our entire community this primary!

STEP 8: TAKE ACTION

The day of your event will be exciting and maybe a bit overwhelming. To make sure your day goes off without a hitch, consider the following pro tips:

GET CREATIVE!

Keep your students engaged during the entire event by creating posters, conducting interviews, or hosting a rally to allow students to lift their voices and empower one another while waiting to vote.

STEP 9: DEBRIEF WITH STUDENTS

Don't let civic learning end at the polls. Keep the participatory energy flowing by inviting a local, grassroots, community organization to help your students debrief their experience and learn about community-based issue campaigns and initiatives they can plug into after their parade. Involve non-voting students by encouraging them to share their thoughts as well!




STEP 10: REPORT BACK!

Make sure to fill out the debrief survey linked below to let us and Social Science and Service Learning know about your experience and report how many students you took to the polls!

CHECKLIST

- ☒ Select a date during Early Voting:
Early Voting Polling Place Location:
Date Selected:
Time Selected:
- ☐ Notify your school administration: Let everyone know that you will be taking your students on a voting field trip.
- ☐ Invite other educators: Invite other classes for a larger impact! Make sure to include the civic classes if you are not a civics educator.
- ☐ Distribute permission slips to allow students to leave the building for the trip.
- ☐ Create your schedule: Need help? Make a voting plan with your students.
- ☐ Register all eligible students to vote!
- ☐ Educate your voters: Make sure your students are ready to make informed decision at the polls.
- ☐ Contact your Early Vote Polling Place: Notify your Early Vote Polling Place of the number of students attending and when you plan to arrive.





☐ Alert the (social) Media: Use the following Hashtags: #ChicagoVotes #ParadetothePolls, #(YourSchool)Votes, #CPSCivicLife, #EngageCPS, #CPSCivics

☐ Take Action: Print all attending students' transcripts & require they bring their CPS ID with them to the polling place.

**Optional: Invite community members, local elected officials, and community organizations to vote with you!*

***Optional: Distribution roles (Ex: Photographer, chant lead, student liaison at the poll).*

☐ Debrief the Experience

**Optional: Invite a local community organization to debrief your students' experience and plug into local initiatives outside of school.*

☐ Report Back! Fill out the Debrief form after your event!

FEBRUARY 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1 1:1 TEACHER SUPPORT | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 1:1 TEACHER SUPPORT | 6 1:1 TEACHER SUPPORT | 7 1:1 TEACHER SUPPORT | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 PAPER VOTER REG DEADLINE | 20 | 21 | 22 1:1 TEACHER SUPPORT | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | |

print-a-calendar.com

MARCH 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | EARLY VOTING STARTS | | | | | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | EARLY VOTING | | | | | |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| EARLY VOTING | | | | | | |
| | | ELECTION DAY! | | | | |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | | | | | | |
| 31 | | | | | | |

ELECTION RESOURCES



ELECTION DATES

Stay ahead of registration, absentee ballot, and voting deadlines by visiting the Chicago Board of Elections website below!

chicagoelections.gov



BALLOT RESOURCES

Have your students preview and complete ballots ahead of time for easy election day selections at ballotready.org



ELECTION PROTECTION

Did one of your students get turned away at the polls? Did something fishy happen at your early vote polling place? The election protection hotline is available at 1-800-OUR-VOTE.

GENERAL RESURCES

STUDENT ROLES

Some students may not be eligible to vote due to age or immigration status. That doesn't mean they shouldn't be involved! Find below some general roles/activities that ineligible students can hold to make your event unique!



HYPE CAPTAINS

Have a great squad that will ensure that people are hype and having fun! Lead the Parade to the Poll™ with fun chants/songs!



ELECTION PROTECTION CAPTAINS

Have a student, or a group of students, be in charge of standing up for the voting rights of their peers. They will be the point people if election protection needs to be called. The hotline is available at 1-800-OUR-VOTE.



CREATIVE CAPTAINS

Have your students be creative and dream up ways to integrate art and culture into your school's parade! Some examples include: setting up an open mic before the parade for students to share their election-based art, inviting the school's drumline and/or dance/cheer squad to lead you to the polls, or coordinating an "I

Vote Because" poster-making party for students to bring along with them to the polling place!

PLANNING SUPPORT

Need some extra help prepping your voters and planning your event? Join an office session with Chicago Votes! Please note that you are NOT committing to the entire timeframes below. A Chicago Votes staff person will follow up with you to confirm a time that works for you!

OFFICE HOURS (1:1 TEACHER SUPPORT ZOOM/CALLS)



THURSDAY, FEB. 1ST: BETWEEN 5-7PM
REGISTER HERE



MONDAY, FEB. 5TH:
8-10AM: REGISTER HERE
5-7PM: REGISTER HERE



WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7TH:
8-10AM: REGISTER HERE



THURSDAY, FEB. 22:
5-7PM: RSVP HERE

Email alex@chicagivotes.com to reserve your office hours session with Chicago Votes. Office hours are scheduled on request.

STUDENT VOTER PREP

Click or scan to download Chicago Votes 2024 Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) Activities



BUILD YOUR BALLOT

Review the issues and candidates on the ballot, review ballot resources, and event complete a sample ballot for the 2024 Primary elections.

