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Make a plan. It's time to vote.

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Voting should be easy in our country, but many people face barriers. Nonprofits can help. Research proves that when charitable organizations encourage voting – on a nonpartisan basis – people vote at significantly higher levels than if nonprofits sat on the sidelines and did nothing. When nonprofits encourage people to vote, by, for instance holding registration drives, providing information on where to vote, hosting candidate forums, and more, it's not an empty “feel good” activity. It truly makes a difference when people know they matter.

In this spirit, the National Council of Nonprofits offers the following tips on getting each individual voter ready and able to vote this season. It all comes down to having a voting plan and acting on it.

Here's how:

1. **Check your registration and/or register to vote.** [Deadlines to register](#) to vote are closing in many states so **check your registration TODAY** (like, right now. Stop reading and check your registration). [NonprofitVOTE](#) and [Vote411.org](#) have easy, nonpartisan step-by-step online resources to check your individual registration in your state.
2. **Find out your voting period and dates.** More than half the states have [Early Voting options](#) and many more have in-person absentee voting or all-mail voting. Check out if you could be voting right now or within the next few days.

The [State Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Guides](#) have links to your official election offices and open voting dates. Don't see your state? Check out NCN and Nonprofit VOTE's [Nonprofit Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Guide](#) for links to resources in your state.

3. **Locate a nearby ballot box.** For mail-in or absentee voting, many states now offer safe, easily-accessible ballot boxes across voting precincts. Check your state or local official election office website for maps of where to locate one near you. Some may be walkable from your front door.
4. **Determine transportation for in-person voting.** Do you know where your voting precinct is located? Do you need a ride or to take public transportation? Can you carpool and make it a voting party with friends? Do you or someone you are voting with have a physical disability to consider during transportation? You may want to visit your polling place in advance to map out a route to get to the door. Some ride-sharing apps like [Lyft](#) and [Uber](#) have announced free and discounted rides to the polls.



5. **Find out whether you have time off to vote.** Nonprofit employers should consider offering civic engagement policies to employees, such as paid time off to vote and to serve as poll workers. If you are not in a leadership position, offer the [Nonprofit Staff Vote](#) campaign to your employer. Feel free to use the [National Council of Nonprofits' policy as a template](#) to adapt for your organization.
6. **Be an informed voter by researching candidates and ballot measures.** View [your ballot on Ballotpedia](#) to know how many candidates and ballot measures you have to consider. Take the opportunity to read through each candidates' positions and stances by checking their websites and resources. Determine the pros and cons of each ballot measure and how they each affect you, your family, and your community. And [Don't Forget the Bottom of the Ballot!](#) as "local races often have an out-sized impact on our everyday lives."
7. **Share your plan.** You've gone this far; be sure to share your plan with your friends and family. Explaining the process makes voting more accessible for everyone.
8. **VOTE!** Cast your ballot to have your voice be heard.

It's up to us to make our own voting plans and invite as many people as possible to join us in doing the same.

The time is now. Go vote.