



National Civic Action: Promote the Vote Instructions for Girl Scouts

What should the future look like? Who should lead us as we work to bring it to life? That's up to you—but only if you vote! Voting is the process by which people cast ballots to choose leaders or decide on important issues. It's a way to show what you believe in and make sure your voice counts. You might not be old enough to vote—*yet*—but you're never too young to learn about this process and to get your friends, family, and community involved.

That's what Promote the Vote is all about. When you join in, you'll encourage potential voters to go to the ballot box. You'll show them how and when to register to vote, where to find key information, how to inform themselves on candidates and issues, how to make a voting plan, and more. Simple steps and easy-to-follow templates guide you through the process. Promote the Vote with Girl Scouts and help shape your tomorrow—today!

Getting Started

Before you Promote the Vote in your community, make sure you're up to speed on the voting processes in your state and know the dates of any upcoming elections in your city or town. [VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org) is a great place to start.

Using VOTE411, you can:

- Learn about state-specific **elections, deadlines, and rules**
- **Register to vote** or **check your registration**
- Request an **absentee ballot**
- Learn what's on your ballot in an **upcoming election**
- Look up and/or **contact your election officials** about issues you care about

Once you've explored the site, it's time to share your knowledge! Tell your friends and family about this great resource and make sure they know when and where to vote.

Promote the Vote is a nonpolitical and nonpartisan initiative designed to increase civic participation. As tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organizations, GSUSA and Girl Scout councils cannot take sides in elections or support or oppose any political candidates. Promote the Vote materials should not be used to target a particular political party or individuals on any one side of an issue. The focus should be on encouraging everyone, regardless of political party, affiliation, or beliefs, to participate in the democratic process. These materials were produced in partnership with League of Women Voters Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan organization that works to register and provide voters with election information through its election resource [VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org)

How to Promote the Vote

All Girl Scouts can Promote the Vote. If you're a U.S. citizen age 18 or above, you can vote yourself. Even if you can't vote, you can encourage and help others to vote—and you can spread the word too! Here's what to do:

1. Register to vote.

- You must be at least 18 years old to vote, and you must register first. If you're at least 16 years old, check your state's age requirements for voting registration. Some states allow residents who are 16 or 17 to pre-register. If you pre-register, you're automatically registered to vote once you turn 18.
- Register to vote at [VOTE411](#). Depending on your state's voter registration rules, this site can help you to:
 - **Register online.** Online registration is available in most states plus the District of Columbia.
 - **Find a registration form.** You can fill out a voter registration form online, print the completed form, and mail it to your election office. If you don't have a printer at home, try your local library or copy store. Remember to sign the form before mailing it in.
 - **Find guidance.** Learn the requirements for states and territories with different registration procedures.

2. Make a plan to vote.

Did you know that people are more likely to vote if they've made a voting plan? For instance, some people plan to show up in person on Election Day. Others might choose to visit an early voting location. Still others would rather use a mail-in or absentee ballot. It doesn't really matter what you choose—it's all about making the choice in advance! So, decide how you're going to vote, or help someone else get ready using [VOTE411's Make a Plan to Vote](#) tools:

- **Check upcoming elections and deadlines in your area.** State rules, election dates, and deadlines for voter registration change often. Use this [state map tool](#) to learn about upcoming important dates. Share the information with family and friends.
- **Learn about early voting options in your area.** Many states offer absentee voting, mail-in voting, or in-person early voting options. Find out what [your state allows](#).

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- **Explore your Election Day options.** Find out where you can vote in person and what you need to bring with you on Election Day or to early voting by entering your address [here](#).
- **Research what's going to be on your ballot.** Use VOTE411's [ballot guide tool](#) to prepare before you vote. Learn where candidates running for office in your area stand on the issues and research any measures on your ballot. *Note: VOTE411's nonpartisan ballot guides go live four to six weeks before an election. If your guide is not yet live, check back closer to your election date.*
- **Share your plans.** Share your plans with friends and family. Then encourage them to share their own voting plans with others.

Remember: Not everyone has consistent access to the internet and technology. Make sure you provide a phone number for people to call and get the information they need. Find phone numbers for your local election officials [here](#).

3. Spread the word.

Use one (or more!) of these ideas to inspire friends and family to register and make their own plan to vote:

- **Send a message.** Using the [letter and email templates](#) in this document as a guide, write a letter or send an email to friends and family encouraging them to vote. Tell them why voting is important to you. Explain the steps needed to register and make a voting plan.
- **Set up a phone bank.** Using the [phone script and text message templates](#) in this document as a guide, call or text your friends and family. Ask them if they're registered to vote and if they have a voting plan. If not, tell them why you think it's important to vote, then share how they can register and make a voting plan. (You could even rally your Girl Scout troop and host a virtual phone bank party!)
- **Post on social media.** Write a post about why it's important to vote. You can use these [examples](#) or come up with your own. Provide links that will help people to register and make their plan to vote. If you don't have a personal social media account, ask a parent or caregiver if you can use theirs.
- **Make a sign.** Make a yard sign or a window poster reminding your neighbors to vote. Keep it simple and straightforward. "Remember to Vote" or even just "Vote" will do the trick! Add the election date, if you like.

- **Go virtual.** Host a virtual event via your favorite social media platform or create and post a video. Make sure to get permission from an adult first. Share why voting is important to you, provide some key information about upcoming elections, and encourage others to vote.

Remember: Check out these [templates](#) for letters, emails, phone calls, text messages, and social media posts to help you get started. Don't forget to include the where, when, and how using the instructions and links given here. Spread the word – and do your part to Promote the Vote!