



# YOU CAN DO THIS!

A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL AND  
COMMUNITY VOTER  
REGISTRATION DRIVES



If you've ever been to a big music festival, chances are you saw HeadCount volunteers registering people to vote. We're at over 1,000 live music events a year, promoting democratic participation and running nonpartisan voter registration drives. We have a lot of experience, but the truth is almost **anyone can register voters just about anywhere.**

It's easy and a great way to meet people. It does not require any particular expertise and has almost no cost.

The following is a simple guide to running a non-partisan voter registration drive at a school or in your community.

Follow these steps and you'll be registering voters in no time.

You can learn more about HeadCount, or volunteer with us at a concert, by visiting:

[www.HeadCount.org](http://www.HeadCount.org)

### ABOUT HEADCOUNT:

HeadCount is a 501(c)3 and 4945(f) organization with 15 years of nonpartisan voter registration at concerts and events. In our history we have registered nearly 500,000 voters, working with musicians ranging from JAY-Z to Pearl Jam. For the 2016 election alone we deployed at over 1,500 events and collected nearly 165,000 voter registration applications.



# 10 STEPS TO RUNNING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE AT YOUR SCHOOL

In the pages that follow, you'll find even more detail. Thank you!

- 1** If you're at a school, **alert administrators** of your intention to have a voter registration drive. Decide with them where it will be held (classrooms, the cafeteria, etc). For an office or any other private land, just alert whoever is in charge of the space.
- 2** **Decide if you'll use paper forms or go digital** (laptops/tablets/phones) to register voters. Note that driver's license or state ID is required for most online voter registration, and in some states, voters still need to print out forms, sign them in pen and mail them in. Some people find it easier and more effective to use the old-fashioned paper forms. But if you use paper, be extra sure that you're following all your state's guidelines.
- 3** **Review your state's guidelines** for running a voter registration drive [here](#). Some states require state-sponsored training or have other rules that require you to sign up with the election office. Also, learn your [state's rules](#) on allowing voters to "pre-register" before their 18th birthday.
- 4** **Check in with your state or local election office.** Give them a [call](#) to make sure everything you're planning is compliant with state law. Find out the voter registration deadlines, where to get voter registration forms, and where to mail or submit them.
- 5** **Drop us a note** at [VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org](mailto:VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org). If you're going digital, we'll send you a link that lets you track exactly how many people you register. If you're using paper, we'll help make sure you have everything you need.
- 6** Get friends to help. **Gather volunteers** so it's not all on your shoulders. It's more fun as team! Recruit Volunteers. Get some friends, classmates and neighbors to help lighten the load. Plus, it will make the experience that much more fun!
- 7** If you're using paper, **obtain voter registration forms.** You can get the federal form [here](#), or the state or local forms at post offices, libraries, or local election office. Also get a bunch of pens and clipboards. If you're going digital, gather up some laptops or tablets and bookmark the web address.
- 8** **Advertise and Publicize.** Create an event on Facebook and invite your friends. Make signs and banners. Make a morning news announcement at your school. Send a press release to your local paper. Get the principal to announce on the loudspeaker.
- 9** **REGISTER VOTERS.** Don't be shy about it. Stand in front of a classroom and tell everyone. Walk up to other people in your cafeteria and help them register. Put out free candy to put a smile on everyone's face. If you're using paper, double check every form to make sure they're completed properly (you'd be amazed how many people don't get registered because of incomplete or incorrect forms). Do not fill in missing information for anyone! Also make sure all the forms end up in one big envelope so nothing gets lost.
- 10** **Turn in forms** (if using paper). If you're not sure where to send them, contact HeadCount and we'll send you a postage-paid envelope. Then share your success story on social media and send us an email letting us know about your experience. If you are using the link we provided, we'll tell you how many you registered!

Questions? Contact [VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org](mailto:VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org)

# AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO RUNNING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE



Running a voter registration drive is quite easy. Whether led by students, teachers, business owners, parents or just concerned citizens, the only materials you need are some paper forms, pens, and clipboards. Or, a link to an online voter registration tool. With a little effort, and a few committed volunteers, you can potentially register hundreds of people at your school or in your community.

That said, you need to be very mindful of state laws, and extra careful to make sure all the forms end up in the right place. Here's an in-depth guide that tells you how to make sure your registration drive is successful and problem free.

## GETTING STARTED

Before you register your first voters, there are few steps to take. First, develop a basic plan of where and when you want to register voters. Will it be in a particular classroom, or the cafeteria? An office building, or a public place? During school hours or after school? Then, let teachers, school administrators, or property owners know your plans. Most schools or businesses will throw their support behind voter voter registration drives if they are well planned and nonpartisan.

We are presenting information for nonpartisan voter registration drives. In order to stay in clear legal compliance we encourage you to make sure your drive is nonpartisan. This means that you (and your volunteer team) can't support, coordinate or endorse any candidate, party, or campaign in connection with your voter registration drive. You must accept applications from all prospective voters regardless of their political views or support for a candidate or party.

Next big decision: digital vs. paper.

- Advantages of digital: HeadCount can send you a link that lets you track how many voters you have registered. There are fewer rules you have to worry about following and the software will make sure everything is filled out fully. You also don't have to mail anything and it saves paper.
- Disadvantages of digital: Not every state has online voter registration; some states still require you to print out a form, sign it, and mail it. Applicants generally need a drivers license or state-issued ID to register completely online.
- Advantages of using paper forms: You can watch people complete the form to ensure they complete it. This can be more effective than sending folks to a link and hoping they fill it out.
- Disadvantages of using paper forms: You'll be responsible for protecting people's personal info while you have the forms. Then, you'll need to mail them to the correct address and be in full compliance with every state law.

Another way to think of it: when you use paper, you are actively assisting someone registering to vote. When you use digital, they are essentially responsible for getting registered themselves.

If you're having trouble deciding, you may want to look at whether your state has true online voter registration at all. The ones listed below still require you to print out a form after filling it out online, sign it, and then mail it in. If someone doesn't have a printer, or forgets to mail it, they might never get registered.

These are states that require a signature on a printed form:

<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>Maine</b>	<b>Michigan</b>
<b>Mississippi</b>	<b>Missouri</b>	<b>Montana</b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>Oklahoma</b>
<b>South Dakota</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>Wyoming</b>

## CHECKING STATE DEADLINES AND RULES

You need to find out the voter registration deadlines for your state. Just click on your state [here](#). We recommend holding your voter registration drive at least two weeks before any deadline. Pay careful attention to primary elections, as those deadlines happen at very different times from state to state.

Another thing you'll want to know is whether you can register voters before their 18th birthday. Check out your state [here](#) to find out the regulations in your state. Most allow you to pre-register if you will be 18 on or before your next election, and some allow you to pre-register as young as 16.

[If you're reading this on a printed document or can't click the link, all the URLs are printed at the very end.]

The next step is to get familiar with your state's laws regarding voter registration drives. If you're going digital, there's probably not much to worry about, but it's still good to check. If you're using paper, you need to take this part very seriously. Check out your state's information from Fair Elections Legal Network [here](#). Then call your state or local election office. Let them know what you are planning to do and they'll inform you of any guidelines or state laws to consider.

You can find the phone number for your state election office [here](#) on the HeadCount.org website. Here's what you want to ask:

- Are any special trainings, requirements or paperwork needed for doing a voter registration drive? [It's only a few states, but if you run a drive without going through that process you might be breaking the law!]
- What's the best way to get voter registration forms?
- Where should you send forms once they're completed?
- What's the the deadline for submitting them?

No matter where you live, you should make this call. But be especially careful if you are from Florida, Colorado, or Texas, which have some of the most stringent regulations.

Once you've done all that, please e-mail us at [VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org](mailto:VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org). If you're doing online voter registration, we'll send you a special link that allows you to track how many people you register. If you're using paper forms, we'll make sure you have the correct information about where to send them and when. We can also handle the forms on your behalf, and send you a pre-paid envelope for that purpose.

## HOW TO STAGE A DIGITAL OR ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

If you're staging an online voter registration drive, the most important thing you need is a link to an online voter registration tool. You can always use:

[www.HeadCount.org](http://www.HeadCount.org) or [www.HeadCount.org/RegisterToVote](http://www.HeadCount.org/RegisterToVote)

You can also use a dedicated link we send you so you can find out exactly how many you register. Just email us at [VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org](mailto:VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org) to request your own link.

Then, share your link with everyone you know on social media, by email and text. Keep posting, tweeting, texting, and sharing.

Here are a few tips for getting the link seen by as many people as possible:

- Use simple text like "You can register to vote at this link if you'll be 18 by the next election." Or write something more personal about why you think it's important.



- Always include your link prominently. Make sure it's clear to everyone that they can click on it and register. Ask people to share it.
- Post a selfie with the link, and write a few personal words about why you're doing a voter registration drive. It will get lots of love!
- Post your link on group pages or online community pages.
- Ask everyone you know to share the link, especially anyone with a lot of Facebook friends or Twitter followers. That can include local businesses, non-profit organizations, anyone!
- If you tag @HeadCountOrg in your posts, we'll re-tweet, and maybe some celebrities will too!
- You can also send your link via text message.

If you don't want to use a photo, we created a "Register to Vote" graphic you can use with any social media post. You can also use the image for any signs you make to put up around school or your community. If this instruction manual was emailed to you by HeadCount, we included that graphic as an attachment. If not, email us and we'll send it your way.

Now, that's how to do it all from your phone, tablet, or computer. But the best voter registration drives also involve some face-to-face interactions. So if you're doing your drive at school, get some laptops or tablets and make it easy for everyone by letting them fill out the form there. Then you can register people one-by-one and see them through the entire process.

## **RUNNING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE WITH PAPER FORMS**

If you're working with paper, you'll need voter registration forms. Local forms, pre-printed with the address of your county election office, are sometimes available at post offices or the Department of Motor Vehicles. Some are postage-paid, which means you can just drop them in the mail once completed. When you talk to your state or local election office, they should be able to tell you the best and proper way to get these forms.

Another option is using the "federal form." It's allowed in all but three states [New Hampshire, Wyoming and North Dakota]. You can download that form and instructions [here](#). The advantage is that you can photocopy the blank form, and use for multiple states. If you decide to use this form you will need to print copies of page 4 for individual registrations. If using the federal form, make sure you check your state specific requirements and/or oath, and share with applicants prior to signing in box 9. Then make sure you are mailing them to the correct election office. HeadCount can help you with this, just email us at [VoterRegDrives@headcount.org](mailto:VoterRegDrives@headcount.org).

Once people have filled out voter registration forms, be sure to collect them and keep in one envelope. Then mail the forms the very next day to your state or local registrar, or use the pre-paid envelope HeadCount provided. If you lose forms, or are late in submitting them, someone won't get to vote and you could be subject to civil or criminal penalty. No joke!

Note: Most states prefer that you use the state or local form, not the federal one. But it is totally legal and acceptable to use the federal form. Also be aware that Texas does not allow the mailing of voter registration forms by anyone other than the individual applicant who completed the form. Bulk forms must be collected and dropped off in person by an individual who has been deputized by the state, and only for an individual county.

## **IDEAS FOR SUCCESSFUL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES:**

The best voter registration drives are a team effort. When students, teachers, and administrators work together, or employees and managers, everything works better.

At your school you can:

- Register students in a classroom, the cafeteria, or at a sporting event
- Do a brief presentation in a classroom. The more classes you hit, the more voters you'll register. Then hand out forms and collect them once filled out. [This approach is extremely effective!]
- Invite everyone to register, including cafeteria workers, security staff, everyone!
- Recruit friends to help. If you're using paper forms, each person should have their own clipboard [or two] with voter registration forms.

- Put up signs around school or the office; ask for an announcement on the loudspeaker or group email.
- Alert local press. Voter registration at schools is a feel-good story!

If for some reason you can't do your drive on school grounds, here are some other options:

- Host a voter reg party at your house, invite everyone who is turning 18 soon or is already of age
- Register people on your laptop at a local coffee shop, park, or community event
- Go to any big office and register all the employees
- Register your coworkers, friends, or neighbors anywhere it makes sense

The key with all of this is DON'T BE SHY!. If you have paper forms on a clipboard, walk around and approach people asking if they'd like to register. Don't wait for anyone to come to you! Remember, a warm smile and eye contact is a great way to start!



## RESOURCES:

**State-by-state deadlines and information:** [www.HeadCount.org/voter-info/](http://www.HeadCount.org/voter-info/)

**State rules on pre-registration for voters under 18:** [www.HeadCount.org/think-youre-young-register/](http://www.HeadCount.org/think-youre-young-register/)

**Fair Elections Legal Network State Guide:** [fairelectionsnetwork.com/state-guides/](http://fairelectionsnetwork.com/state-guides/)

**State election office websites and phone numbers:** [www.HeadCount.org/verify-voter-registration/](http://www.HeadCount.org/verify-voter-registration/)

**Federal Voter Registration Form:** [www.eac.gov/assets/1/6/Federal\\_Voter\\_Registration\\_9-21-17\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/6/Federal_Voter_Registration_9-21-17_ENG.pdf)

**HeadCount Online Voter Registration:** [www.HeadCount.org/registertovote](http://www.HeadCount.org/registertovote)

## QUESTIONS?

Get in touch at [VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org](mailto:VoterRegDrives@HeadCount.org). We want you to have great success and are happy to help provide any information we can.

We hope that you LOVE this project and feel EMPOWERED by your actions and voice. And if you want to do more voter registration, join HeadCount at a concert near you. Visit [HeadCount.org/volunteer](http://HeadCount.org/volunteer). We'd love to continue to work with you to register voters, and of course, see live music!

**Thank You!**