children's defense fund action

Voter Action Guide

For students and youth



This resource was prepared by Children’s Defense Fund for use by Children’s Defense Fund Action as part of its "Voting Rights Are Children's Rights" campaign.

Ready to Lead. Ready to Vote.

Students and young people have always helped lead movements for change. Whether you're are in high school, attending college, participating in a youth program, working, or connected to your community in other ways, you can use your voice and relationships to make a difference. You can help your friends, classmates, coworkers, family members, and community get prepared to participate in upcoming elections.

The goal is simple: **Help people check their voter registration status, find their polling location, and sign up for election reminders.**



Use the Children's Defense Fund Action Voter Engagement Tool to get started:

https://cdf-action.vercel.app/

Scan the QR code or use the link to:

- Check your voter registration status
- Find your polling location
- Sign up for election reminders
- Register to vote or update your registration, if needed
- Access additional voting information

Why This Matters

Decisions made by elected leaders affect education, college affordability, jobs, healthcare, housing, community safety, economic opportunity, and many other issues that shape the lives of young people, children, and families.

Throughout history, students and young people have used their voices to challenge injustice, strengthen their communities, and lead movements for change. That leadership is still needed today.

The issues affecting your life and future are being discussed and decided every day. If students and young people are not part of those conversations, decisions will still be made, but your experiences, ideas, and priorities may not be represented.
Your voice matters. Your experiences matter. Your ideas matter.

You don’t not have to wait until you’re are older, hold a position, or have a title to make a difference. Every time you learn about an issue, speak up, organize, vote, or encourage someone else to participate, you help shape your community and the world you want to live in.

When young people participate, organize, and help others take action, they strengthen the power of their communities.

As you reach parents, caregivers, families, and other community members, remind them:

Vote with Children. Vote for Children.

This is a nonpartisan effort. It does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

Leadership Starts Now.

Leadership is not only a title or position. Leadership is using your voice, relationships, and actions to make a difference.

As a student or young person, you can lead by:

- Learning about issues that affect your life and community
- Using your voice to raise awareness
- Helping people access reliable information
- Encouraging friends, classmates, coworkers, and family members to participate
- Bringing people together around issues that matter
- Helping others prepare to vote and remain engaged
- Taking action in your school, campus, workplace, or community

Voting is one way to make your voice heard. Helping others participate is another way to lead.

Three Ways to Take Action

1. Share The Voter Tool

Share the voter engagement tool with people your age through the communication platforms you already use.

You can:

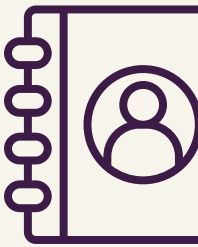
- Post the link or QR code on Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Threads, X, or Facebook
- Share it in GroupMe, school or campus organization chats, youth program networks, workplace chats, or other group messages
- Send it directly to friends, classmates, coworkers, and family members
- Ask people to repost or forward it to others in their networks

Encourage each person to take at least one action:

1. Check their voter registration status
2. Find their polling location
3. Sign up for election reminders



Three Ways to Take Action



2. Reach Out Directly

Personal outreach can motivate someone to act. Choose at least 10 people and send each person a direct text or message.

Start with friends, classmates, coworkers, siblings, cousins, and other people your age. Then expand your outreach to parents, caregivers, relatives, neighbors, and community members.

Don’t assume someone is already registered or prepared to vote. Invite the person to check.

Follow Up and Confirm

One of the most effective organizing practices is following up. After someone checks their voter registration status, finds their polling location, or signs up for election reminders, encourage them to let you know they completed the action.

You can send a follow-up message asking:
"Were you able to check your voter registration status? If so, text me back and let me know. If you're comfortable, send a screenshot showing you've completed the check."

The goal isn't not to collect personal voter information. The goal is to encourage accountability, celebrate participation, and help people take the next step toward being election ready.

This simple follow-up can also help you keep track of how many people you have successfully engaged.

Sample Text Messages

Sample Text Message 1

Hey! Are you ready to vote? You can use this tool to check your voter registration status, find your polling location, and set election reminders: Children's Defense Fund Action Voter Engagement Tool



Vote for Children. Vote with Children.

Sample Text Message 2

Quick voter check! Take a minute to make sure your registration information is current and find out where you vote: Check your voter information

When young people participate, young people lead.

Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead.

Sample Text Message 3

Our generation has a voice and the power to use it. Check your voter registration status, find your polling location, and sign up for election reminders here: Get election ready

After you check, send this to three friends.

Sample Text Message 4
I'm helping people in my network get ready for the upcoming election. Will you take a minute to check your voter registration status and polling location? Use the voter engagement tool

Vote for Children. Vote with Children.

Sample Text Message 5
Voting decisions affect children, families, and our communities. Check your voter information and help someone else do the same: Access the voter engagement tool

Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead.

Sample Text Message 6
Hey! Were you able to check your voter registration status using the voter tool? If you completed it, text me back and let me know. If you're comfortable, send a screenshot confirming you checked. Then share the tool with three friends.

Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead.



Three Ways to Take Action

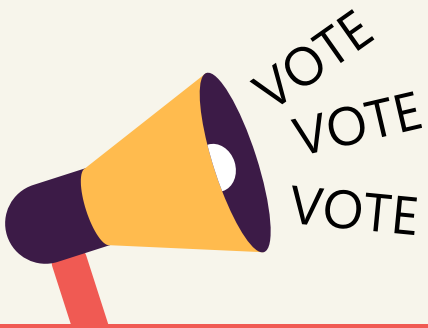
3. Organize a Quick Outreach

You don't need to organize a large event to make a difference. Look for places and moments where people are already gathering.

Where to organize an outreach event:

School and College Campus Outreach
Consider organizing outreach during:

- Homecoming activities
- Sporting events and tailgates
- Student organization meetings
- School or campus programs and festivals
- Residence hall activities
- Student center or student union gatherings
- Cafeteria or common-area outreach
- School or campus tabling events
- Events in the surrounding community





Community and Workplace Outreach

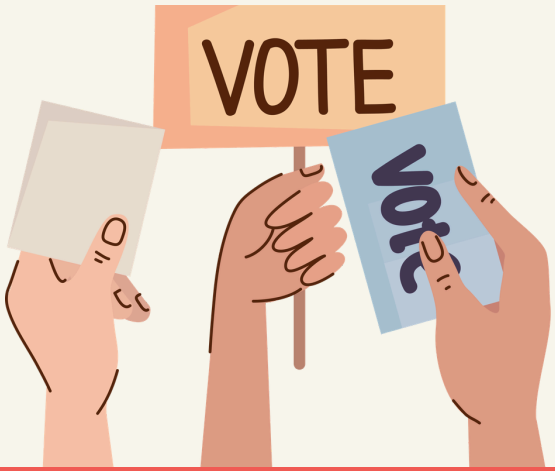


Consider sharing the tool through:

- Personal and family networks
- Neighborhood and community events
- Youth programs and gatherings
- Workforce development programs
- Workplaces and coworker networks
- Faith community activities
- Community centers
- Local organizations
- Social media and group messages
- Places where students and young people regularly gather

Keep the existing permission reminder immediately after these lists.

Before conducting an in-person action, make sure you have any permission required by the campus, organization, property owner, or event organizer.



How to Lead a Quick Action

A voter action can be completed in approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Before the Action

- Test the voter engagement link and QR code
- Make sure the QR code opens the correct page
- Decide how you will display or share the QR code
- Charge your phone or device
- Identify someone who can help participants who experience difficulty
- Obtain permission before tabling or conducting outreach at an event

During the Action

Step 1: Introduce the Action

You can say:

"Students and young people have the power to shape what happens in our schools, campuses, workplaces, communities, and country. The decisions made today will affect our opportunities and our future. That's why it's important for young people to stay informed, use our voices, and help others participate.

Today, we're helping people get ready to participate by checking their voter registration status, finding their polling location, and signing up for election reminders. Even if you are not yet eligible to vote, you can help someone else get ready. It only takes a few minutes.

Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead."

Step 2: Share the Tool

Ask participants to scan the QR code or open the Children's Defense Fund Action Voter Engagement Tool.

Step 3: Invite Participants to Take Action

Encourage participants to:

1. Check their voter registration status
2. Review their voter information
3. Find their polling location
4. Sign up for election reminders
5. Register or update their registration if necessary

Allow each participant to complete the process privately. No one should be asked to share personal registration information or how the person plans to vote.

Step 4: Expand the Reach

After participants finish, ask each person to share the tool with three friends, classmates, relatives, or community members.

Ask participants to follow up with at least one person they contacted and encourage them to confirm they completed the voter registration check, found their polling location, or signed up for election reminders.

Step 5: Close the Action

You can say: *"Getting ready to vote is one way we prepare to lead. Thank you for taking action and helping other people in your network do the same. Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead."*

When speaking with parents, caregivers, and families, you can add: *"The decisions made by elected leaders shape the lives of children and families. Vote for Children. Vote with Children."*

Social Media Post Starters

Personalize these messages so they sound like you. And remember to include the QR Code or the link to the CDF Action Voter Engagement Tool, found on page four of the voter guide.

Post 1
Are you ready to vote?
Take a minute to check your voter registration status, find your polling location, and sign up for election reminders.
Get election ready **[INSERT VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOL LINK OR QR CODE]**
Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead.
#VotingRightsAreChildrensRights

Post 2
Our generation has a voice and the power to lead.
Check your voter registration status today and share this tool with three friends.
Access the voter engagement tool **[INSERT VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOL LINK OR QR CODE]**
Ready to Vote. Ready to Lead.

Post 3

Students and young people are not waiting for change. We are helping create it. Our voices matter. Our communities matter. Our future matters. Check your voter registration status, find your polling location, and help someone else get ready to participate:
[INSERT VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOL LINK OR QR CODE]
#ReadyToVoteReadyToLead
#YoungPeopleLead
#VotingRightsAreChildrensRights

Post 4

You check your grades.
You check your messages.
You check your account.
Have you checked your voter registration status?
Check your voter information **[INSERT VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOL LINK OR QR CODE]**
#ReadyToVoteReadyToLead

Post 5

Leadership means helping your community get informed, prepared, and ready to participate.
Check your voter registration status, find your polling location, and set election reminders.
Get started **[INSERT VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOL LINK OR QR CODE]**
#ReadyToVoteReadyToLead

Post 6

Elections affect our schools, families, and communities.
Get ready to use your voice and help someone else get ready too:
Use the voter engagement tool **[INSERT VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOL LINK OR QR CODE]**
Vote for Children. Vote with Children.
#VoteForChildren

Recommended Hashtags

When posting online, use one or more of these hashtags to connect your content with the broader campaign and encourage other students and young people to take action.

Primary Hashtags

- #ReadyToVoteReadyToLead
- #VotingRightsAreChildrensRights

Student & Youth Leadership Hashtags

- #YoungPeopleLead
- #YouthVoiceYouthPower

Community Impact Hashtag

- #VoteWithChildren
- #VoteForChildren



Take the Ready to Lead Challenge

Start with people you already know and trust, including friends, classmates, teammates, roommates, coworkers, family members, and others in your network. Leadership begins with relationships.

Commit to completing these actions:

- Share the voter engagement tool on social media at least three times.
- Send the link directly to at least 10 people.
- Have at least three personal conversations about why voting and civic participation matter to students and young people.
- If you are not yet eligible to vote, check when you will become eligible and help at least one eligible person get election ready.
- Encourage at least five people to check their registration status.
- Encourage at least five people to find their polling location.
- Encourage people in your network to sign up for election reminders.
- Follow up with at least five people after your initial outreach and ask whether they completed an action using the voter engagement tool.

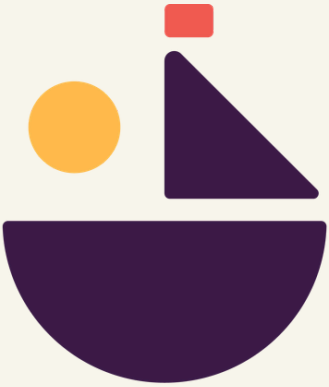
Commit to completing these actions:

- Ask people you contacted to text you back once they have checked their voter registration status, found their polling location, or signed up for election reminders. If they're are comfortable, invite them to share a screenshot confirming they completed the action.
- Help at least one person who needs assistance using the tool.
- Ask each person you reach to share the tool with three more people.
- Follow up with at least five people and confirm they checked their voter registration status, found their polling location, or signed up for election reminders.
- Invite at least one person to join you in reaching others and becoming Ready to Vote and Ready to Lead.

READY TO VOTE. READY TO LEAD.

Vote for Children. Vote with Children.

The voter engagement activity is nonpartisan and doesn't not support or oppose any candidate, political party, or campaign. Voting and registration requirements vary by state. Participants should follow the official information and applicable state processes provided through the voter engagement tool.



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