The vast majority of Americans agree that participation in voting is important to being a good member of society. Yet, turnout in American elections consistently lags behind that of many other democracies.

Libraries are nonpartisan, but they are not indifferent. As institutions that provide access to information, resources, programs, and public spaces for all members of a community, libraries are cornerstones for civic engagement. With a long history of working with election officials and community leaders, libraries have an important role to play in ensuring that voters are prepared to participate in local, state, and national elections. What does that look like in practice?

Across the country, many libraries:

> provide information about voting and voter registration.
> offer services for voters and registrants, such as hosting polling places.
> convene candidate forums and debates.
> deliver resources and educational programs that increase civic and information literacy.

This guide provides information and examples of how libraries of any type, in any community, can meet their communities' needs for information related to voting and encourage full participation in our democratic processes.

GET STARTED

State and local voting laws vary considerably across the United States. Can your library host a voter registration event, polling location, or ballot drop-off site? It depends on your local laws.

This guide presents ideas that can be used by many types of libraries, but not every idea may be appropriate for your community. As best practice before undertaking activities related to voting, we recommend that you:

> check your local voting laws. A good place to start is Nonprofit Vote's state-by-state resource:

TIMELINE

Nationally, the United States general election will take place on November 5, 2024. In many places, important deadlines and activities take place well prior to November. There are many opportunities for libraries to inform and serve voters throughout the year. Here are some key deadlines that may apply in your state:

Election Day: November 5, 2024.

Primary elections: Many states will hold primary elections in early and mid-2024. To vote in these elections, voters must have met applicable registration deadlines and requirements.

Voter registration: Many states have deadlines to register to vote or update a voter registration (e.g. if a previously registered voter has moved, changed their name, or regained eligibility to vote). To vote in the 2024 general elections, these deadlines are generally in early October.

> **National Voter Registration Day** is a civic holiday that takes place on a Tuesday in September when many communities and organizations promote voter registration. ALA is pleased to partner with National Voter Registration Day to encourage libraries to support voter registration efforts in states where that is allowed. Sign-up to host voter registration at your library: **bit.ly/NVRD24-ALA.** Learn more at: **nationalvoterregistrationday.org**.

Absentee voting: In some places, there is a deadline to request an absentee or mail ballot if the voter will need one.

Early and mail-in voting: Many states offer some form of early, absentee, or mail-in voting, which begins in some places more than a month prior to Election Day.

Election Day: November 5, 2024.

Create Displays

Create a voter information hub in your library and publicize its availability to the community. Include information from local election agencies and nonpartisan organizations, and post key dates such as voter registration deadlines, primary elections, early voting, and general election.

Designate a kiosk or computer station where voters can confirm that they are registered to vote. Position near the voter information hub, if possible.

Create a voting timeline that includes major milestones in U.S. voting history, such as the drafting of the Constitution, ratification of the 19th Amendment, passage of the Voting Rights Act, and the change in voting age.

Build a display of books by candidates or books about voting, our democratic system, or major issues in the election.

Host In-Person or Virtual Events

If your state and local laws allow, host voter registration at the library.

In schools, oer voter registration during open houses or parent teacher conferences.

Host a candidate forum. Be sure that all candidates on the ballot are invited and a nonpartisan facilitator is selected.

Host a debate or forum about a local or national issue and include speakers on all sides of the issue.

Invite a local expert

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Community Conversations

ala.org/ltc > ALA's Libraries Transforming
Communities (LTC) website o ers a variety of free