



WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

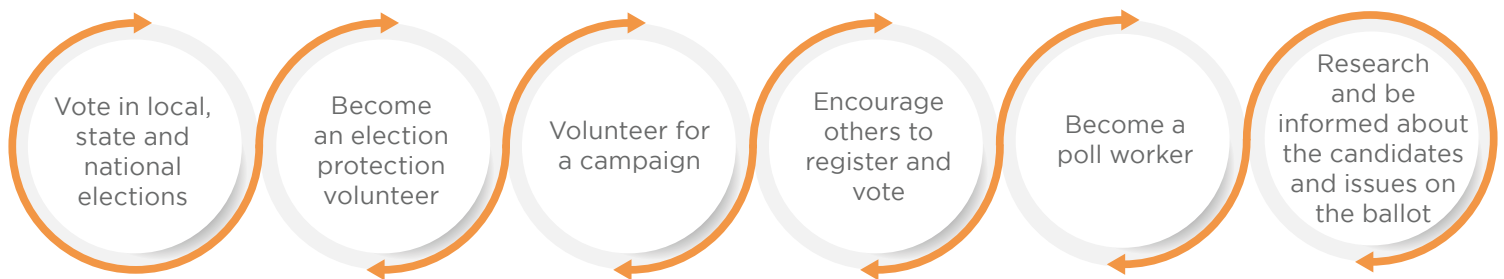
From a local school board to a nation's president – the people elected to public office have a significant impact on the decisions that affect our lives and the lives of others. And while national elections often yield higher turnouts, local elections are of equal importance. These elections determine the decisions that are made where we live.

Voting represents an individual's ability to participate in a democratic process. It includes all aspects of the political process, from participating in national, state and local elections to supporting efforts that increase engagement in these elections.

Feeling indifferent and perhaps detached from politics can be a common theme, especially in young people. At times, we don't understand the power we hold and the significant change we can create.

Speaking up by doing our civic duty of voting can bring transformation bigger than ourselves and elevates the truths we hold most dear. Exercising your right to vote with responsibility is the most critical and influential power you have to support what matters most to you. Every vote matters. Act in support of what you believe in.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS



FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT VOTING



1. Make a plan to vote. Don't wait for election day to figure out when you will vote. If your community offers early voting, consider taking advantage of this opportunity. If you must vote on election day, make a plan in advance so you're able to get to the polls before they close or so you don't find yourself in a position to have to leave the line before casting your ballot.



2. Bring a friend. If you're worried about the lines being long, go to the polls with a family member, neighbor or friend who's eligible to vote in your precinct. Having someone with you can help pass the time.



3. Support what you care about. If you're passionate about a particular issue or candidate, getting involved in a campaign is a great way to support these interests. Similarly, if you're interested in supporting the democratic process, becoming a poll worker or election protection volunteer are meaningful ways to be more engaged.



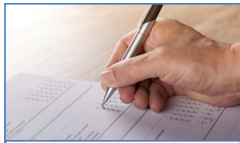
4. Encourage others to vote. Sometimes people need encouragement to vote. Sharing why voting matters to you can be just what someone needs to head to the polls.



5. Voting is a privilege. Many people around the world are not eligible to vote based on gender, race, ethnicity and religion. Even when you have the right to vote, eligible voters may face restrictive policies that make it difficult for them to vote. Cherish your rights and execute your right!



TAKE A DEEPER DIVE AND LEARN MORE



[Register to Vote](#) in the United States



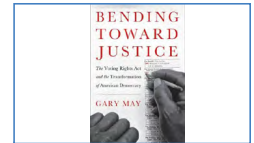
Explore unbiased information about local and national candidates and elected officials at [Vote Smart](#)



Find out how to [Become a Poll Worker](#) in your community



WATCH: [There's No Such Thing as Not Voting](#) (TEDx Talk)



BOOK: [Bending Toward Justice: The Voting Rights Act and the Transformation of American Democracy](#) by Gary May

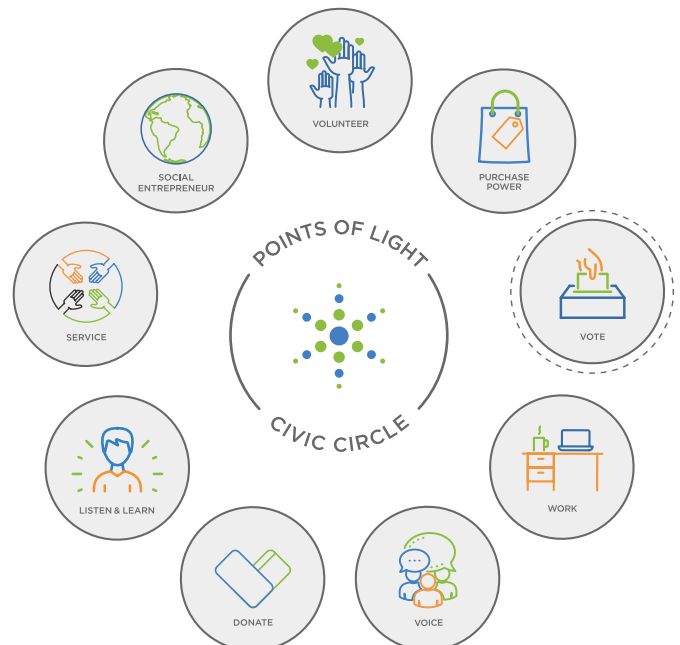
THINK ABOUT IT...



- Do you vote in all elections, including local ones? Why or why not?
- If you don't vote consistently in elections, what are the barriers that influence this?
- What other aspects of the democratic process interest you? How have you or would you like to get more involved?
- How would you influence others to vote or play another role in the democratic process?

WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?

- Learn about the local/state/national issues and candidates.
- Get registered and VOTE!
- Encourage others to get registered and vote.
- Vote is just one activity in the Points of Light Civic Circle that you can use to lead and lend support to causes you care about. To learn more, visit <https://pointsoflight.org/civicle/>.



These resources are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by Points of Light of any of the products, services or opinions. Points of Light bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content. If there are questions or concerns about the inclusion of a particular resource, please contact info@pointsoflight.org.

The *Civic Circle* represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life.