Opportunities for Engagement
Emory Votes Initiative | Fall 2020

Casting a ballot isn’t the only way to support a vibrant democracy. Consider
1. becoming a poll worker,
2. helping others vote another way, or
3. joining a student organization.

1. Poll Workers Needed

As longtime, older poll workers sit this year out, bright, young, fresh folks are urgently needed to fill the shortage setting up machines, checking voters in, etc., in Georgia and across the land. The more poll workers, the more polling places can stay open, which means the more quickly and safely people can vote. The training and long day of service may even net you a little cash.

Working the polls can only be done in person, of course. EVI cannot suggest what risks are worth your taking. Please consider whether this is a safe choice for you and those who live with you, and keep in mind any university policies about participating safely (sharing car rides is not recommended, for example). Read the Emory Wheel’s October 1 article about student poll workers.

In all states: Power the Polls directs you to poll worker information for any location. You can also find your state’s official poll worker information through the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

In Georgia: To be a general poll worker, you must be a citizen, age 16 and up, and apply in your county of residence. You do not have to be registered to vote there. Other details vary by county, including pay, which usually runs somewhere in the $100s. You will report bright and early to your assigned polling place (transportation necessary) to greet voters, check them in, help them use the electronic ballot-marking machines and deposit the paper printouts into scanners to be counted, cancel absentee ballots of people who decide to vote in person, keep voters socially distanced, or sanitize surfaces and cards.

Start by signing up at the state’s recruitment site, SecureVoteGA. Actual hiring will be done by your county, e.g., DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinnett. Some already have waiting lists. EVI also recommends going through an organization that can help train and place you and offer additional PPE:

- The ACLU of Georgia recommends signing up with both them and your county. The ACLU is working with counties statewide to recruit and assign poll workers, and it can
sometimes group teammates together to “adopt” a polling place. Put “Emory Votes Initiative” as your organization.

- New this year is the Georgia Youth Poll Work Project, created by recent GSU grad Evan Malbrough, with its Push for 5k initiative to recruit 5,000 student poll workers in the metro Atlanta area, as mentioned in the New York Times (and the Wheeler). Instagram: @ga_youth_pollworkers

NOTE: Georgia is also hiring poll tech workers, a.k.a. Election Day field service technicians. This specialized type of poll worker earns $400. You will get trained in advance to set up voting machines and troubleshoot during the day. (Components of Georgia’s new Dominion voting system include electronic poll books, ballot marking devices, printers, ballot scanners, cords, etc.) When you apply with the state (here), check the box for tech worker. Sign up for training with Dominion here. You must be 18+, a U.S. citizen, and have transportation to your assigned site, possibly in a neighboring county. You also need a reliable alarm clock to get there by 6 a.m. History has its eyes on you!

- This deck by Renard Sexton, Emory assistant professor of political science, fleshes out the local need for poll workers and the process of becoming one.

Working the polls in Georgia
A crucial contribution to a functioning democracy

Emory University, July 2020

2. Other Voting-Related Opportunities
Got time on Election Day or before? Help others vote. With face-to-face voter registration and canvassing on campus off the table, read on for other election-related volunteering ideas. For many of these, you do not need to be a citizen.

- Get trained to answer the Election Protection coalition’s nonpartisan voter hotline at 866ourvote and head off problems at the polls. Political parties may also run their own voter helplines.

- Be a poll watcher or monitor (not to be confused with a poll worker) through Election Protection’s Protect the Vote, Common Cause Georgia, or other nonpartisan or partisan efforts. Training required.

- Get out the vote in the larger community by phoning, texting, or writing postcards from home. There are many partisan and nonpartisan efforts out there. Some focus on particular communities, e.g., in Atlanta, the Center for Pan-Asian Community Services (CPACS) or the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO). GoVoteGA is a good starting point.

- Within the Emory community, share this Emory Votes Initiative website. Encourage others to sign up for TurboVote and register to vote, the sooner the better, or change or update their information. Help others figure out how to get and return absentee ballots.

- Get involved with the Georgia 55 Project, the brainchild of Emory MBA student Abigail Greene. Slogan: “Voting should be easy, fun, and delicious.” This local coalition of young citizens aims to help Atlanta-area voters register and vote early or absentee “through grassroots community and food-centric outreach methods, from providing absentee applications in food bank boxes to serving pizza to voters on election day.”
  - Their goal is to assist 10,000+ Atlanta-area voters with their early voting plans, “as well as bringing joy to thousands of voters in line during early voting and on Election Day.”
  - So far they have provided “3,300 mail-in voter kits in food bank boxes, created a comprehensive voter resources guide with easy digital tools to make a voting plan. We are also partnering with restaurants and community organizations across Atlanta to have signage helping voters make a voting plan, host pop-up voter assistance booths, and facilitate Election Day + Early Voting ‘line warming’ donations or participation.”
  - Opportunities as of late September included fully distanced yard sign deliveries, voter kit assembly, and chances to rally contacts to sponsor a restaurant for line warming donations, plus socially distanced volunteering at patio pop-up events.

To get involved: head to www.georgia55.org/get-involved, sign up for weekly newsletter to stay in the loop for new opportunities, and follow on Instagram @georgia55project. Individuals interested in a deeper commitment (5–10 hours/week) should reach out to abigail@georgia55.org.
• More possibilities:
  o Vote Riders helps people navigate voter ID requirements. Spread the Vote also helps folks who need ID get it.
  o On your evening walk at the end of Election Day, snap and upload pictures of your precinct’s publicly posted poll tapes. Protect Our Votes is organizing this Photo Finish effort in states including Georgia, Tennessee, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Connecticut.

3. Student Organizations

Civic engagement starts with taking part in your immediate community. Consider joining a student organization such as, for example:

**Emory College**
- APIDAA (Asian, Pacific Islander and Desir American Activists)
- Black Student Association
- College Republicans
- Hillel
- Latino Student Organization
- NAACP Emory
- Pi Sigma Alpha (political science honor society)
- Students for Justice in Palestine
- Young Americans for Freedom
- Young Democrats

**Oxford College**
- Oxford College Republicans
- OxFirst - first generation/low-income student group
- OxMUN
- OxPride
- Pre-Law Society
- Race- and ethnicity-based organizations: OLE (Organización de la Lengua Española), Black Student Alliance, African Caribbean Students Union, Asian Culture Club, Indian Cultural Exchange, Hindu Student Association, Chinese Student Association, Muslim Student Association, Korean American Student Association
- Turning Point USA
- Young Democrats