



Youth Voter Summit

High School edition

June 8th, 2026





Who is The Civics Center?

The Civics Center is on a mission to make **voter registration** part of every **high school** in the US.

We are a nonpartisan non-profit.





Introductions

Who else is in the room?

Share your:

→ **Name**

→ **City/Town** and **School**

→ **Goals** for this Workshop

Agenda

Session #1: The Basics

Session #2: Improving Voter
Registration Drives Workshop

Lunch / Keynote Speaker:

Secretary of State Steve Simon

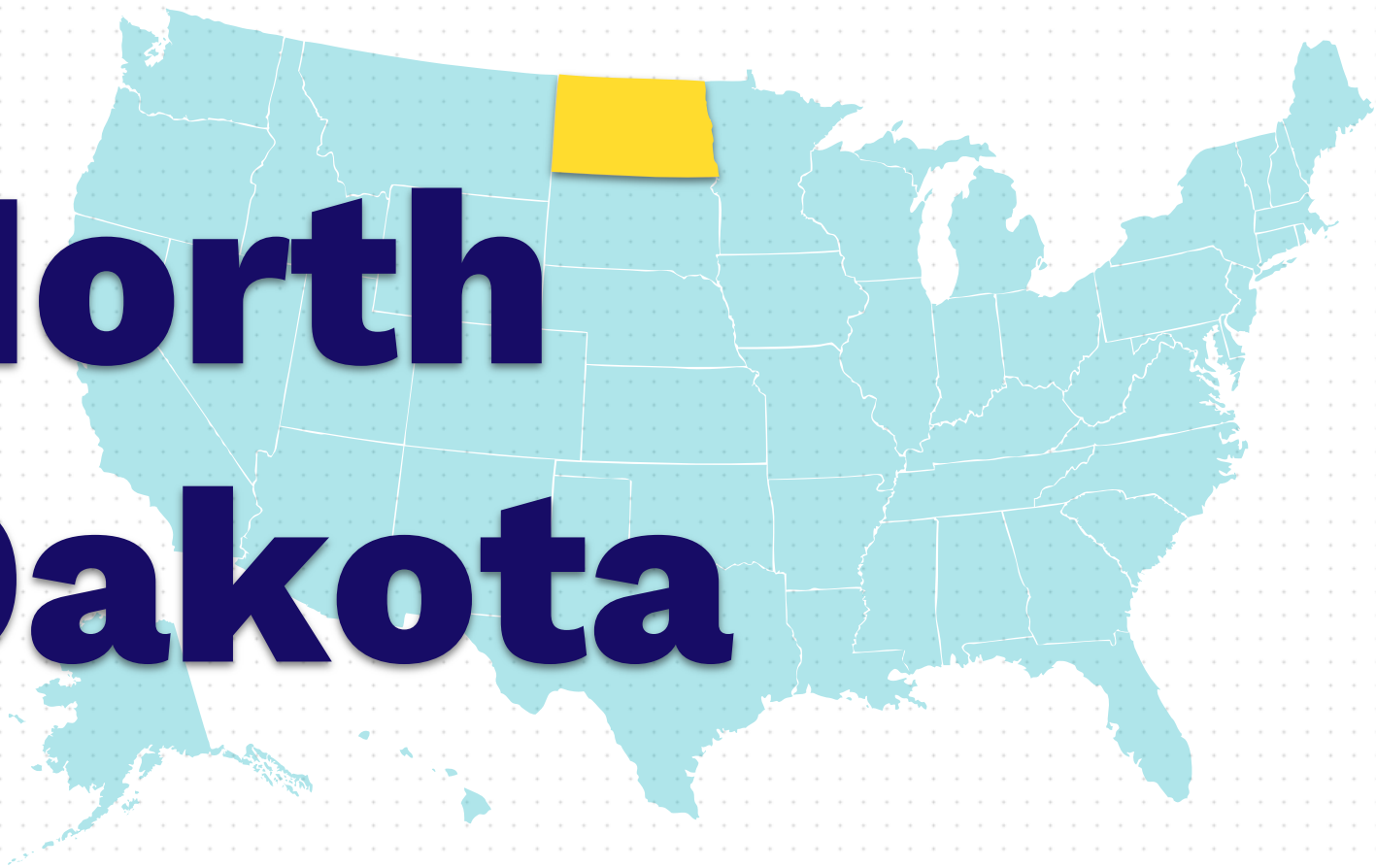
Session #3: Engaging your Peers

Session #4: Assets, Issues and
Actions for Change Workshop

Trivia Question #1

What is the only state
that does not require
voter registration?

North Dakota

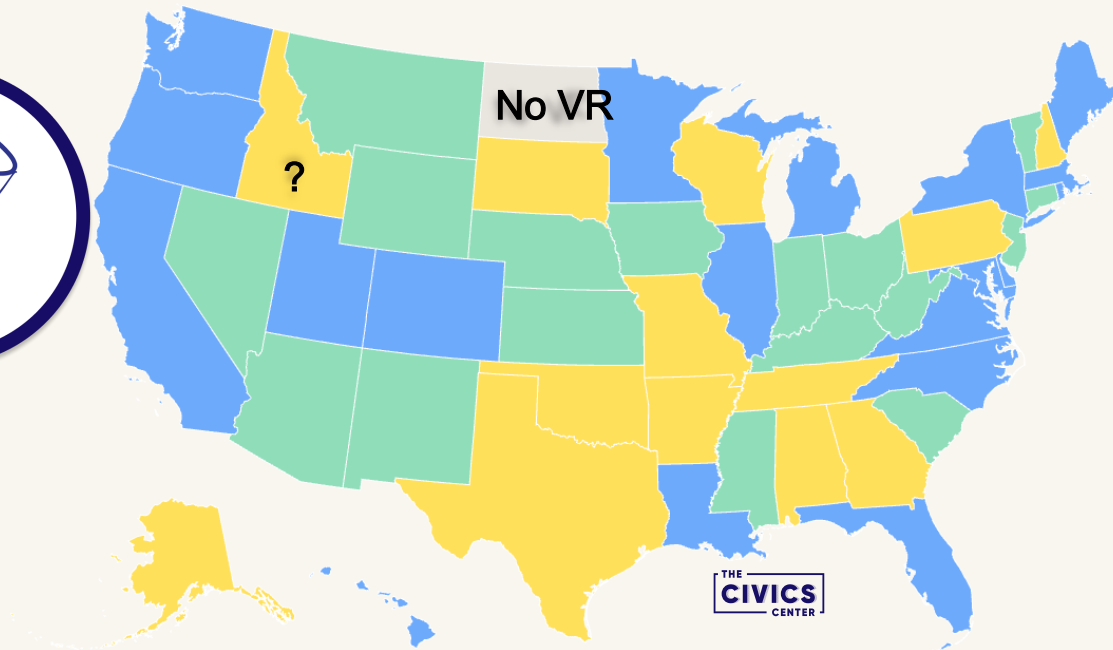
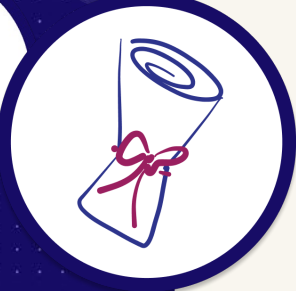


Trivia Question #2

In how many states can you
register to vote before
turning 18?

***Registering to vote before you're old enough to vote is
called **pre-registration*****

49!



Pre-18 Registration Laws

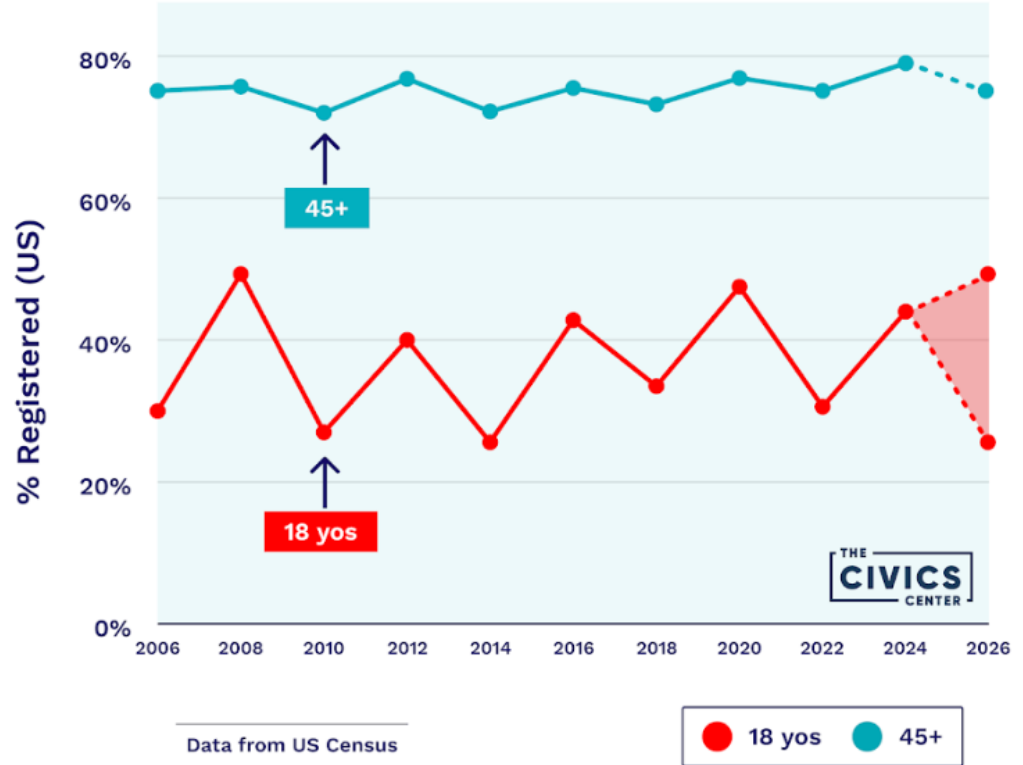
- **50% of U.S. teens:** Preregistration starts at age 16 or earlier
- **20% more teens:** States that allow at least one year to register before the first election but do not start at age 16
- **Remaining 30%:** States with shorter preregistration periods; most have time to register in senior year

Trivia Question #3

What percent of 18 year olds registered to vote in 2024?

- a. Less than 25%
- b. 25-50%
- c. 50-75%
- d. More than 75%

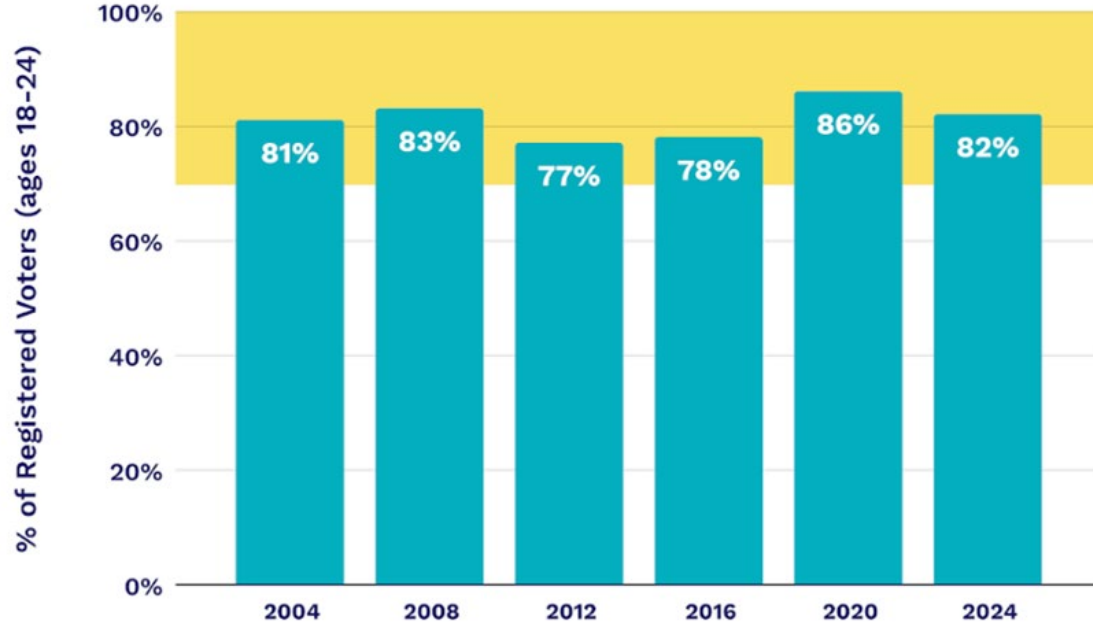
The **youngest**
voters
consistently
have the
lowest
registration
rates



Trivia Question #4

Of those registered, what percent of 18 yo's voted?

- a. Less than 25%
- b. 25-50%
- c. 50-75%
- d. More than 75%



Data from US Census



...but they
Turnout when
they are
Registered

In every presidential election from 2004 to 2024, **more than 75%** of registered 18- to 24-year-olds voted.

Trivia Question #5

Is **Minnesota** doing **better**, the **same** or **worse** at youth voter registration than the national average?

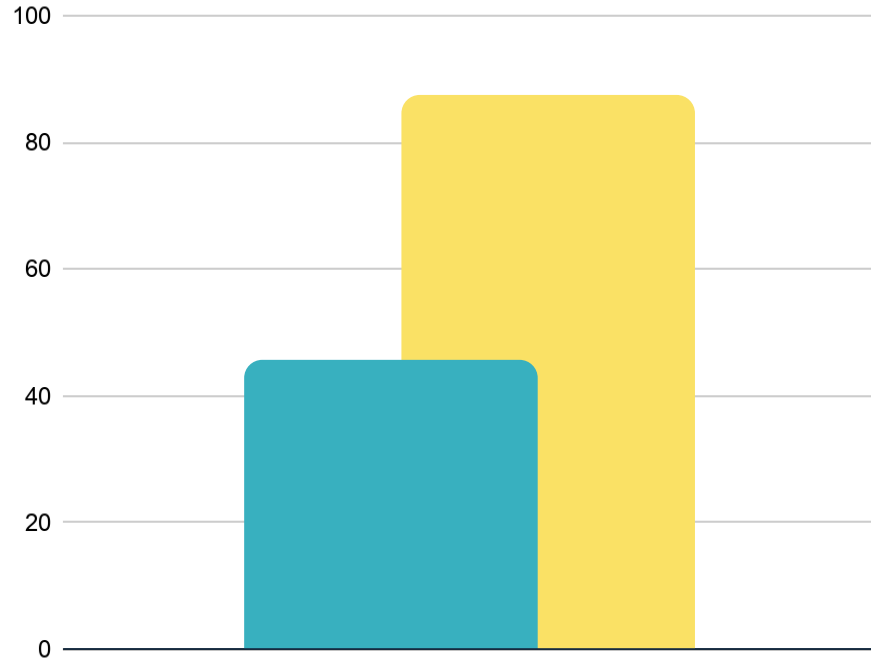


Registration Gap: Minnesota

as of November 1, 2025

- **41%** of 18 year olds registered to vote***
- **87%** of 45 to 79 year-olds registered to vote

Better! But we don't know how much better right now...



Sources: State voter file; US Census, American Community Survey.

Trivia Question #6

What were the **top five states** for **youth** voter turnout in **2024**? (18-29 in this case)

#1 MINNESOTA

#2 MAINE

#3 MICHIGAN

#4 COLORADO

#5 NORTH CAROLINA

56%

62%

58%

60%

56%

top
5

Nat. Average:
47%*

Trivia Question #7

What are the eligibility requirements for registering to vote in Minnesota?



(Pre)Registration Eligibility Requirements:

Minnesota

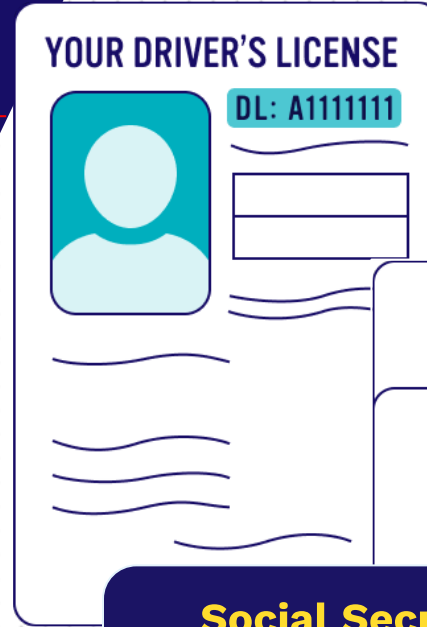
- 16 years old (can vote at 18)
- Are a United States citizen
- MN resident for at least 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction or under a court order revoking your right to vote

Trivia Question #8

True or **False**: You don't need a photo ID to register to vote in Minnesota

Identification Options

- MN-Issued ID#
- Last four digits of SSN#



**Driver's License or
Permit Number**
or MN-issued ID



**Social Security
Number**

*last four digits

Trivia Question #9

True or **False**: If you go to school in another state, you have to register and vote in that state

The Rule: Vote from the address that **you consider home**

You choose which address to use. Pay close attention to **deadlines** regardless of your choice

- Home State: Deadline to request an **Absentee Ballot**
- School's State: **Deadline to register**



The Basics:

Student-led Voter Registration Drive!



○ Build a **Team & Delegate** the work*

Find a teacher, administrator and additional students to collaborate with. Assign focus areas to students

○ **Schedule** your Drive

Pick a day, time and location for your drive that works with your school calendar.

Reserve needed materials (tables, chairs)

Coordinate with relevant school staff

○ **Advertise**

Create fliers, announcements and social media posts with the time, location and needed IDs

○ Create a **Day-of Plan***



How to Delegate

There are a lot of steps to running a successful drive, but collaborating with a team will help. A lot.

Assign one student to be in charge of each type of work



Logistics

When, where and what materials

Partnerships

In and outside of the school



Awareness

Get students hyped! And make sure they bring their ID...

Talk it Out:

→ When you think of a voter registration drive, what do you visualize?

Task: Identify **advantages** and **challenges** for each of the following drive types

Tabling at Lunch
or School Events



Classroom
Presentations



School
Assemblies





- ✓ **Session #1:** The Basics
- **Session #2:** Improving Voter Registration Drives
- **Session #3:** Engaging your Peers
- **Session #4:** Assets, Issues & Actions for Change Workshop

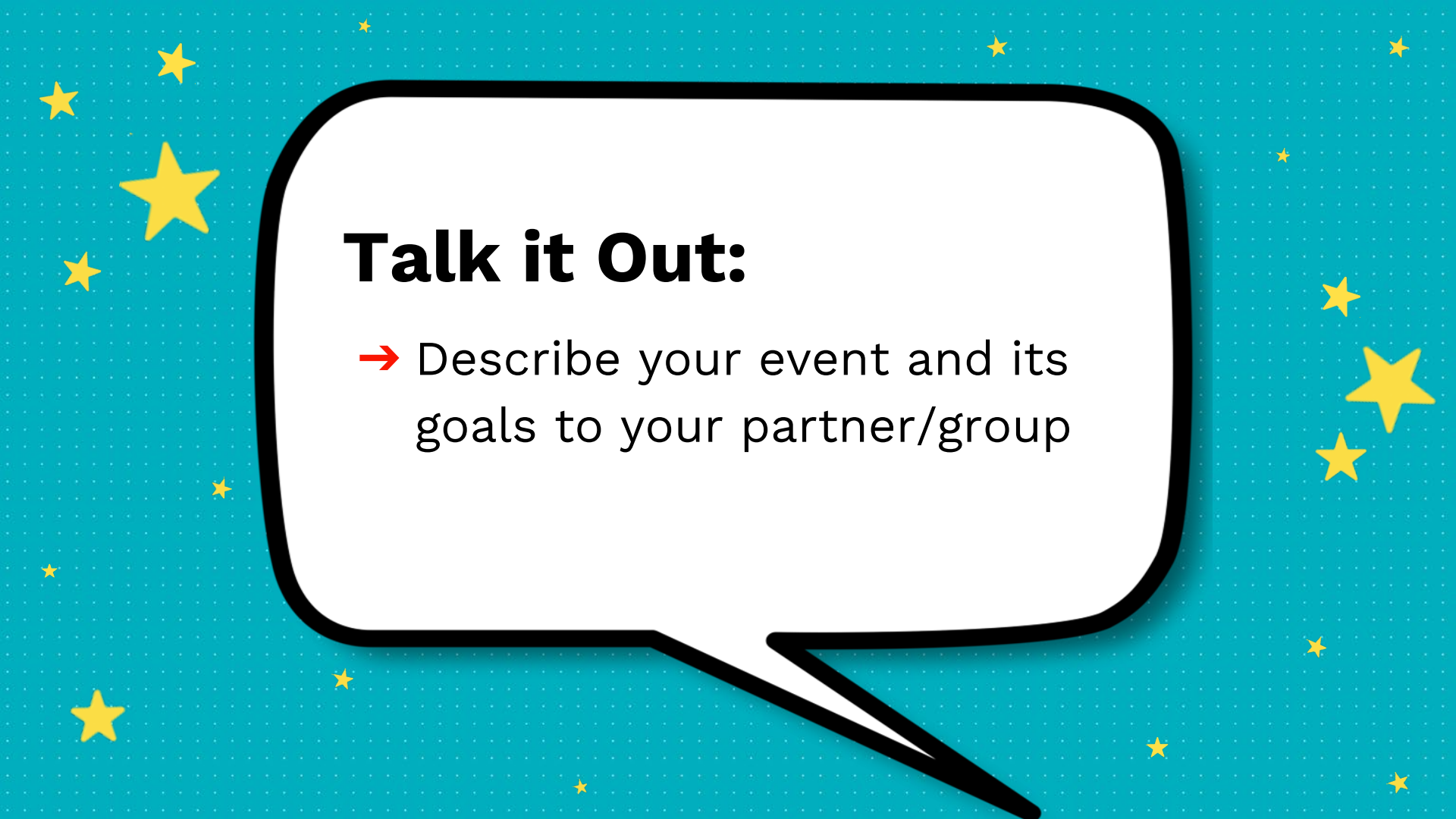
Civic: of or relating to a citizen, a city, citizenship, or community affairs*

- What does this look like in reality?
- When people say “civic engagement” what are they talking about?
- What are some examples of civic action or events?

1. Choose a **civic action** (*voter registration drive, awareness raising campaign, protest, etc*) that you've **done or seen at your school**
2. Identify the **goals** of the action:
 - ↳ What problem being addressed?
 - ↳ Why was this approach used to address the problem?
3. Describe the event in as much detail as you can recall

** be prepared to discuss **





Talk it Out:

→ Describe your event and its goals to your partner/group

Talk it Out:

- Describe the successes of your event
- Describe the challenges you faced

Talk it Out:

→ Identify one part of the process that was particularly stressful, or you feel you went ok, but could improve

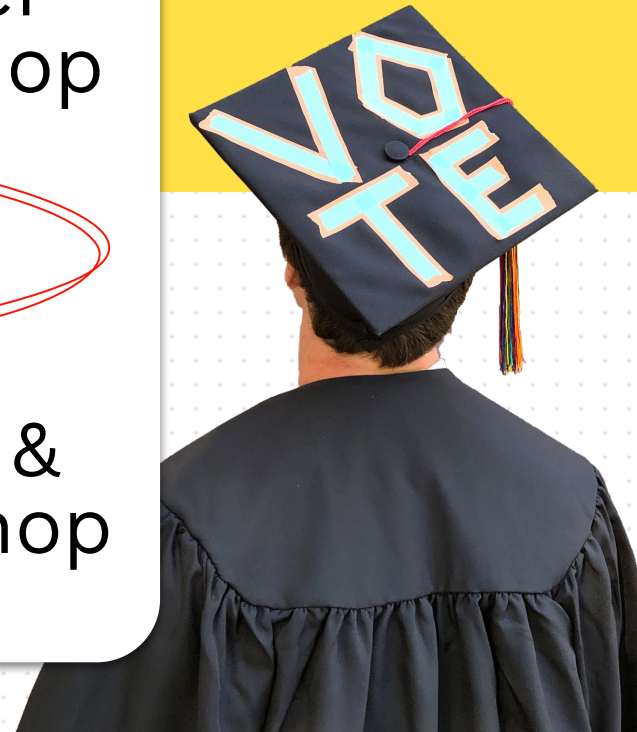
There are always
**opportunities for
improvement** when
running drives and
participating in
civic events





1. Developing authentic **messaging** for your audience
2. Teaching the **technical aspects** of voter registration and/or voting in Minnesota
3. Designing an **Inclusive Drive**

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1. Define
2. How do your definitions **compare** to Webster's?
3. What are the **similarities?**
Differences?

Political

VS. Partisan

of or relating to government, a government, or the conduct of government

a firm adherent (*somebody that strongly supports*) to a party, faction, cause, or person

When you talk about the **government**, you're having a **political conversation**

When you're **advocating** for specific person/party, you're having a **partisan conversation**

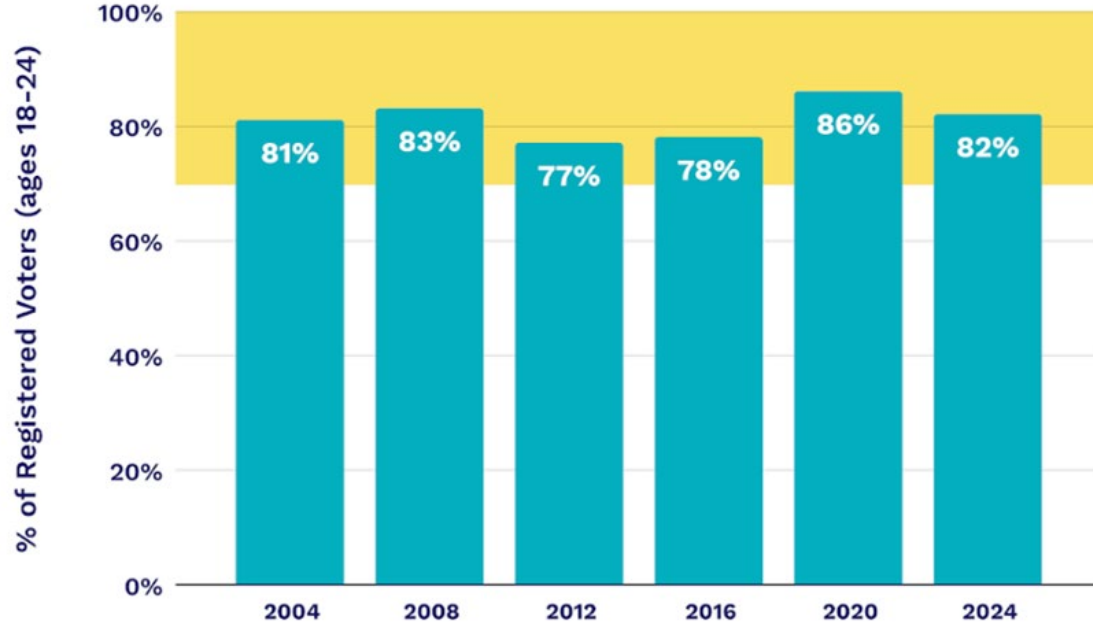
“Young people
don't vote
because they
just don't care.
It doesn't
matter to them.”

Directions:

1. Read the Quote
2. Write down your **initial reactions**
3. Write down any **questions** you have
4. **Who** do you think said this?
5. Do you **agree** or **disagree**? Why?

Talk it Out:

→ Why do you think this is such a common belief amongst people of all ages?



Data from US Census



We know the **trend**, we don't know the **cause** of it

Address logistical barriers AND help young people connect with elections so they're in the system and show up

**Young people
have opinions.**

They care.

- 1. Connect** opinions to elections
- 2. Complicate** the belief that their vote doesn't matter
- 3. Counter** polarization using approaches tools that reduce the risk of defensiveness

How **comfortable** are you at
engaging in **political**
conversations with your **peers**?



Productive Political Conversations

In order to get young people to fully participate in civic life, we have to help them make connections, which requires political conversations.

These tools can help keep those conversations productive



Self Reflection

Center Values

**Normalize verifying
information**

Keep it Local*

Before you start a conversation, make sure you know what you're bringing to it

Don't prepare every response possible.

Instead identify your:

1. Biases
2. Triggers
3. Non-negotiables
4. Conversation style

Find the values at the center of a peer's opinion, even if you disagree

- Productive starting point in disagreements
- Can complicate your own understanding of the issue
- Builds some trust

Values List

- Freedom
- Diversity
- Cooperation
- Equality
- Security
- Self-reliance
- Stability
- Democracy

1

Rank the list of values in order from most important to least important

2

Compare with neighbors. Notice similarities and differences.

3

Look for the source of disagreements.

4

Discuss: Could any of these values create tension?

Clarifying Language

Misinformation: Incorrect information, but it's not created/shared with the intent to cause harm

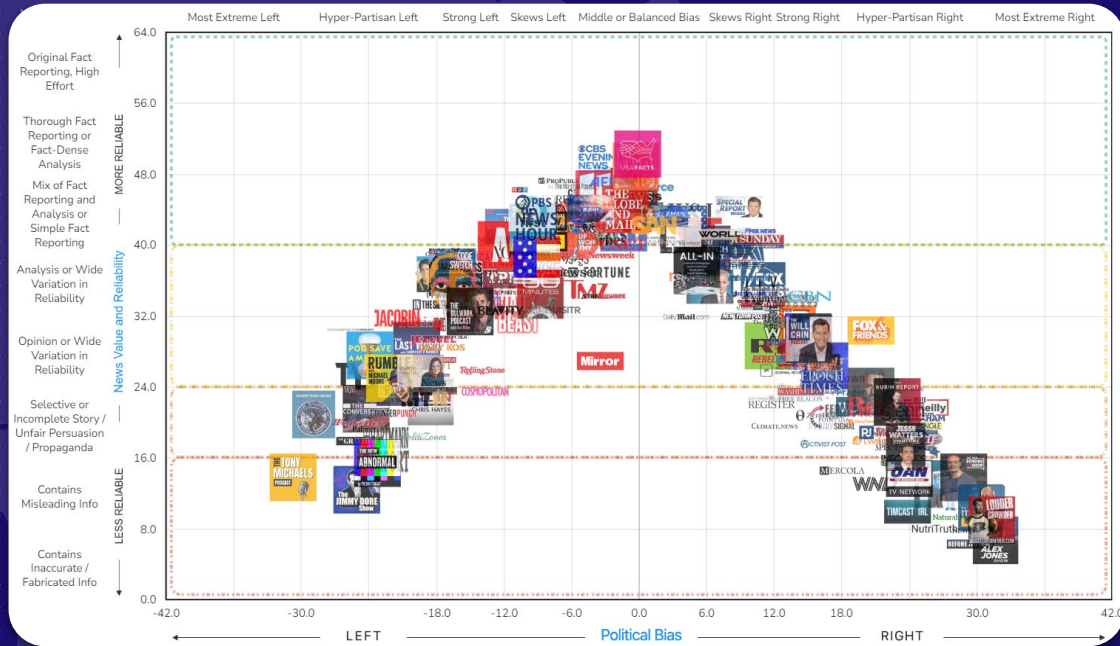
Disinformation: Incorrect information created/shared with intent to cause harm

Malinformation: Information based on fact but used out of context with intent to mislead, harm or manipulate.



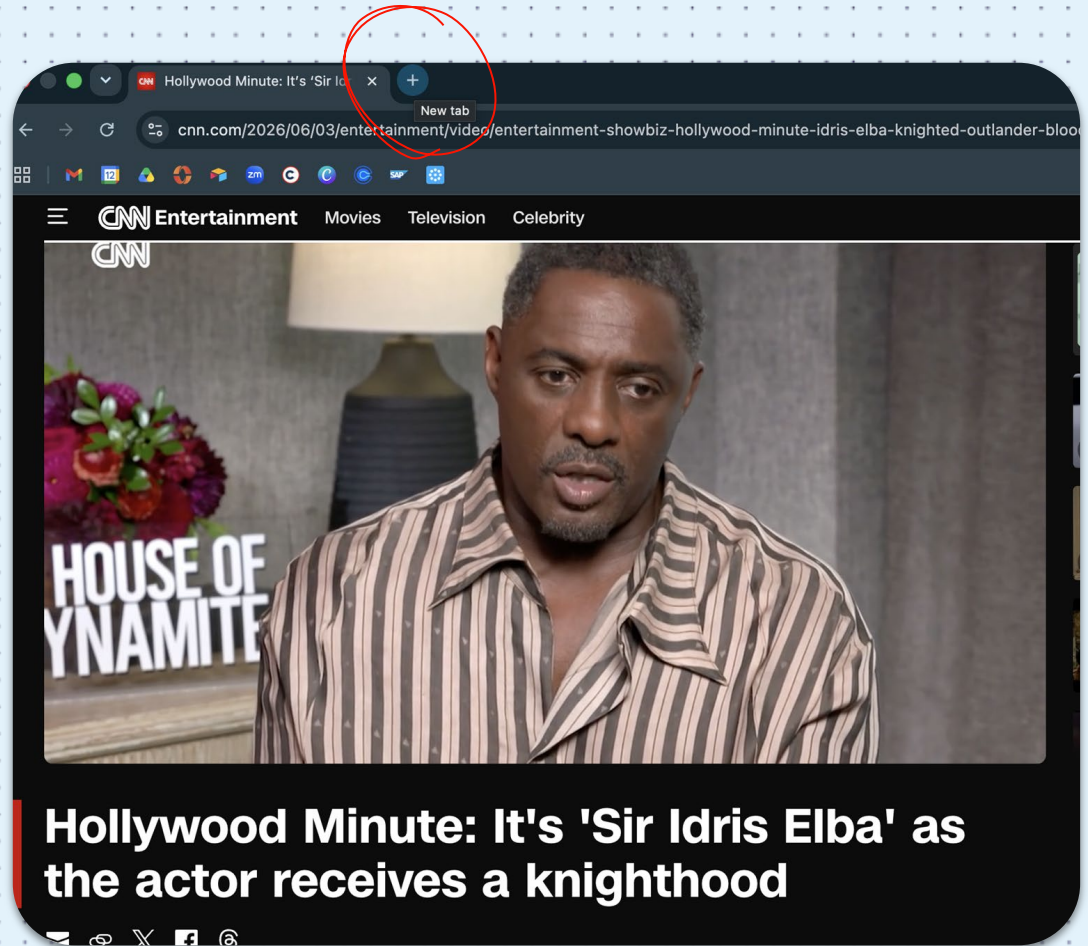
Talk it Out:

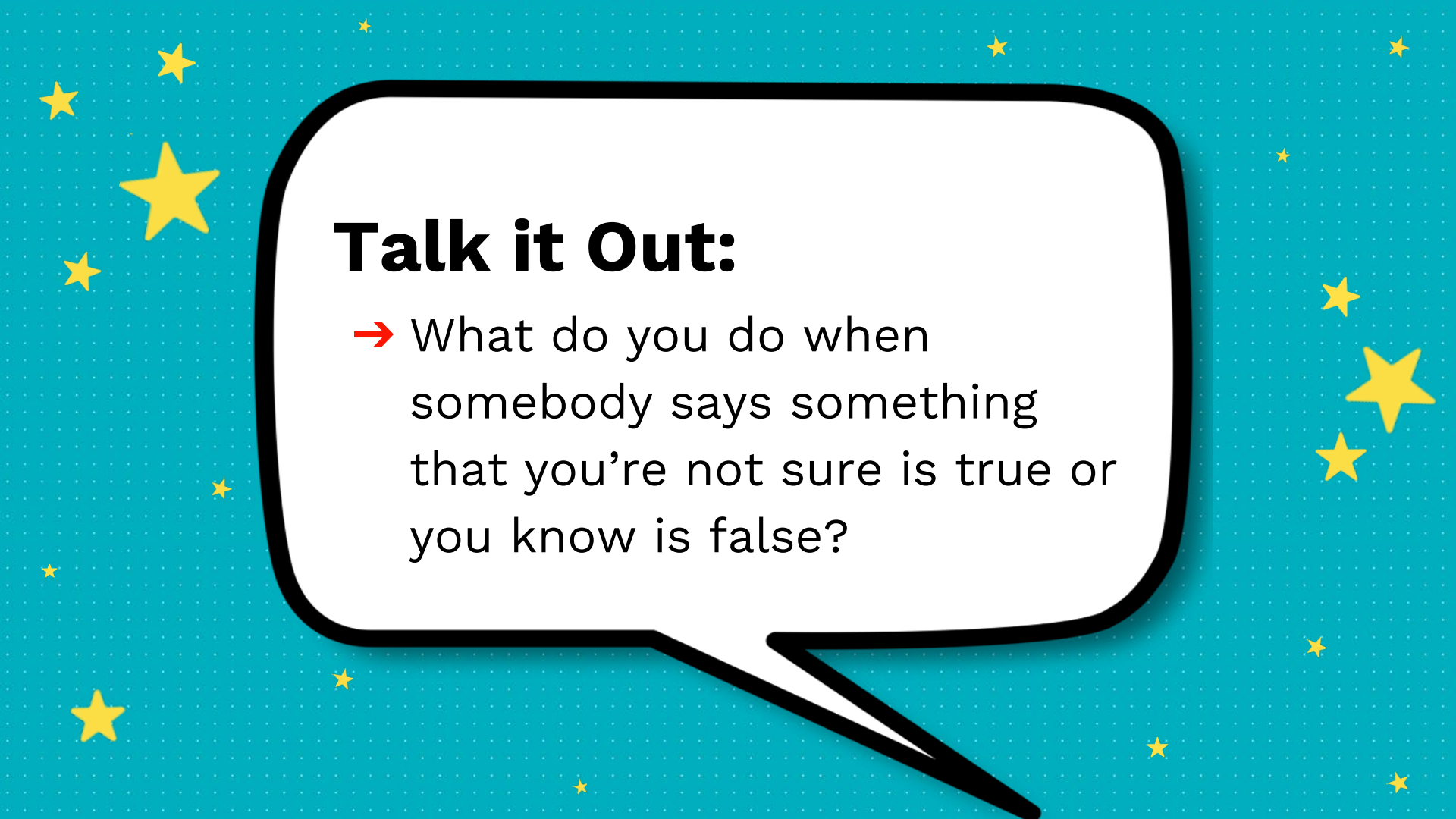
→ Where do you get most of
your new information from?
BE HONEST!



You can't
avoid **biased**
information
so name and
manage it

Read
Laterally
*(open a new tab, see
what others are saying)*





Talk it Out:

→ What do you do when somebody says something that you're not sure is true or you know is false?

Self-Reflection

**Dealing with
mis/dis/mal
information can
be tricky in the
moment**

Model Best Practices

- List your sources in the moment “I heard on...”
- Invite peers to fact check you, especially when info is from socials/somebody else
- “I’ve heard that, but I understood it as...”

Ask Questions

- “Interesting, what’s your source on that?”



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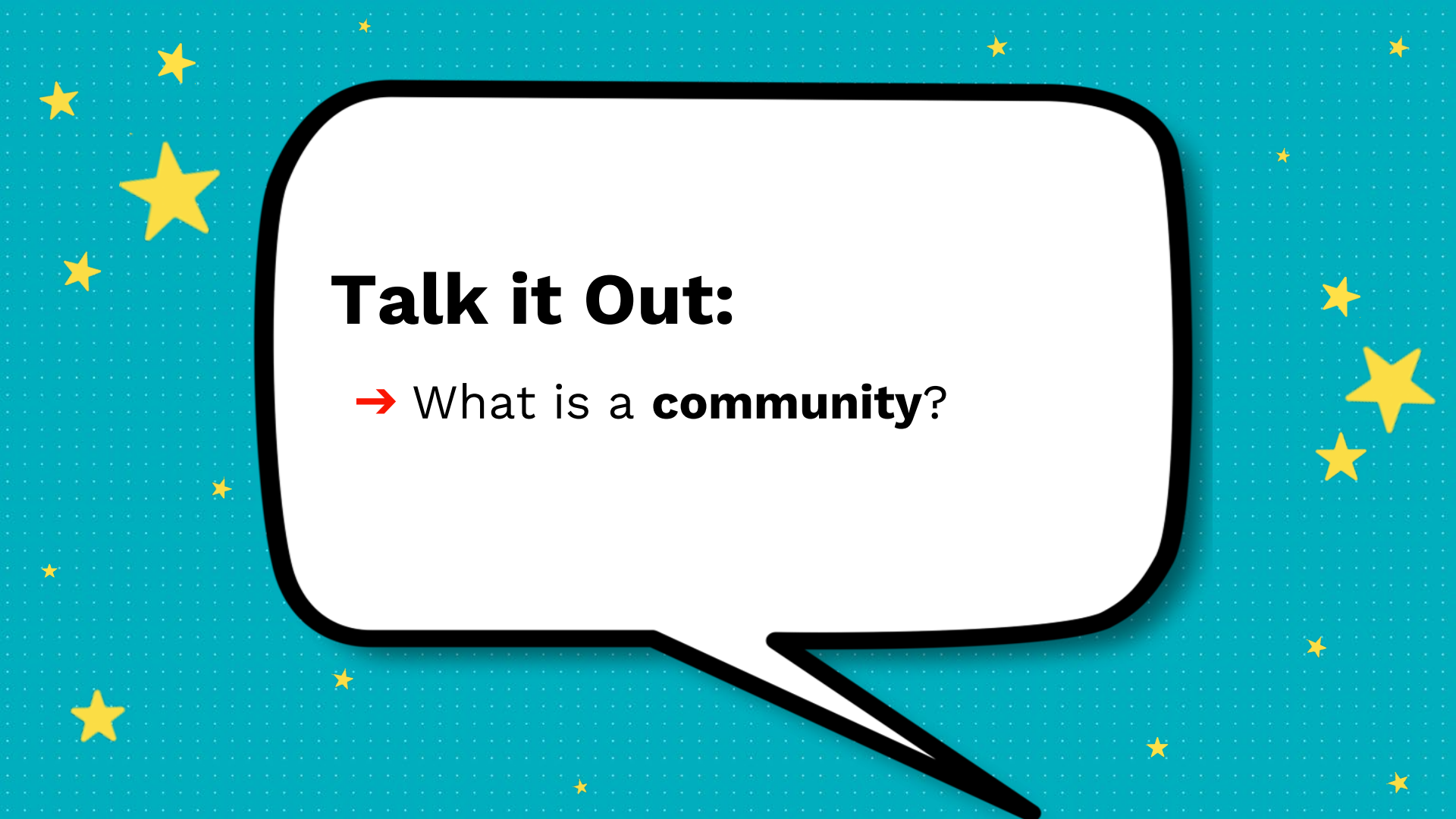
Talk it Out:

→ What is the actual purpose of governments?

At the most basic level, governments exist to manage communities

In the United States...

- Citizens choose **who** manages our communities through elections
- We have multiple options when we don't like how it's being managed
- Shifting focus from the person to how issues are managed *can* be more productive



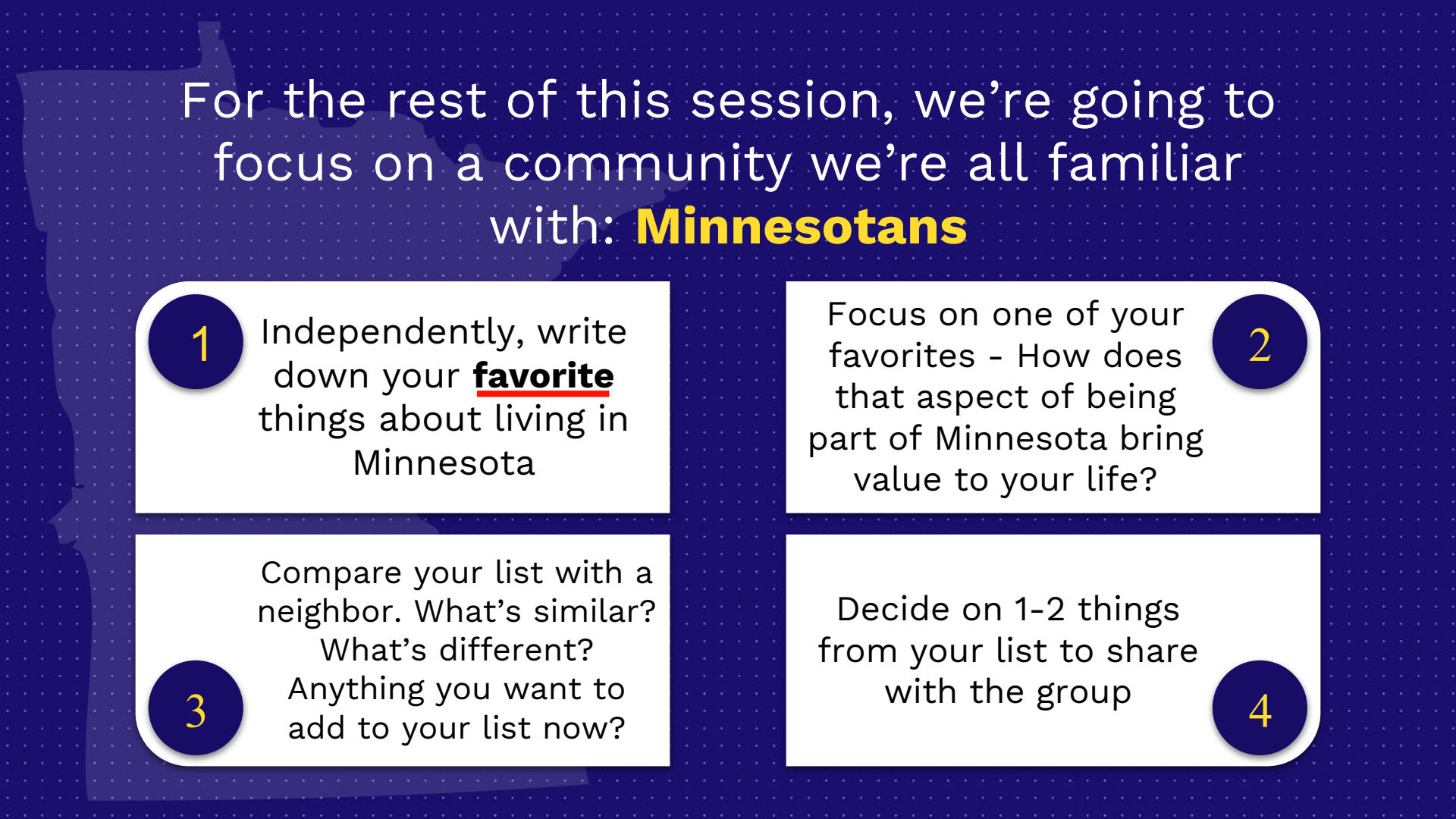
Talk it Out:

→ What is a **community**?

Community: a
unified body of
individuals*

- What does unity mean to you? What does it look like at your school?
- What **factors** could unify a body of individuals to create a community?
- What communities are you a member of?

* Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community> *



For the rest of this session, we're going to focus on a community we're all familiar with: **Minnesotans**

1

Independently, write down your **favorite** things about living in Minnesota

2

Focus on one of your favorites - How does that aspect of being part of Minnesota bring value to your life?

3

Compare your list with a neighbor. What's similar? What's different?
Anything you want to add to your list now?

4

Decide on 1-2 things from your list to share with the group

Rational

**Don't forget to
to celebrate
your shared
communities. In
fact, start there.**

**Starting with community
assets...**

- Reduces discomfort and defensiveness, gives time to **build trust**

For the rest of this session, we're going to focus on a community we're all familiar with: **Minnesotans**

1

With a Partner:
Choose one of the
assets we just
discussed.

3

Discuss: Could we use
any of those factors to
improve something in
our community that
isn't working?

2

Discuss: How do you
think that asset was
created? What
conditions or actions
allowed it to be possible?

Rational

**Don't forget to
to celebrate
your shared
communities. In
fact, start there.**

**Starting with community
assets...**

- Reduces discomfort and defensiveness, gives time to **build trust**
- Can demonstrate **effective strategies** for improving your community



For the rest of this session, we're going to
focus on a community we're all familiar
with: **Minnesotans**

1

Make a list of the
important **issues**
that impact you
and your
community

2

Compare your list with
a neighbor. Choose **two**
issues to add to the
group list.

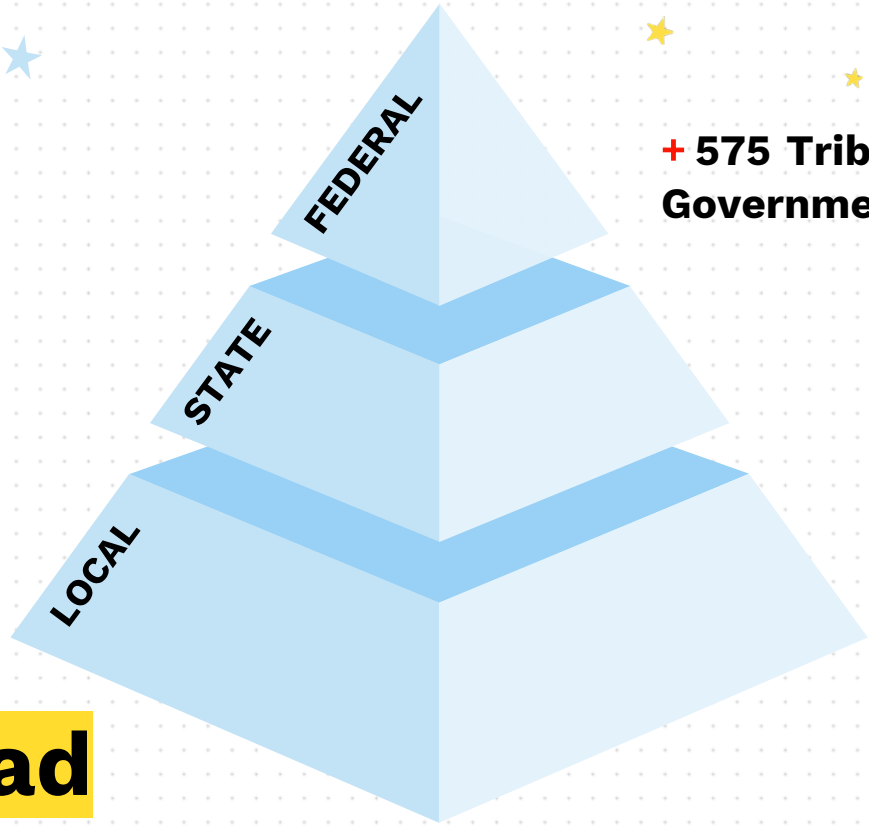
Vibe Check

Is the government currently
managing the issue in an effective
way?



**We often think
Federally**

Think Local Instead



**+ 575 Tribal
Governments**

Talk it Out:

- Think about the creation of the community assets you explored.
- Is there anything you can use from those community assets to improve the issue you focused on?



If you want the government to
manage the issues you care
about, **register early and vote**

Get into the
system so
candidates
**work for your
vote**

Vote for
candidates
that share your
**values &
priorities**

Remove
representatives
that are **not**
**meeting your
expectations**

Register Early & Vote

1. **Get into the system** so candidates know they need to work for your vote
2. **Vote** for candidates that share your values & priorities
3. **Hold the government accountable** by removing representatives that are not managing the issues you care about effectively



Young people are **not** apathetic.
Give them the **opportunity** to
prove it

For more information:



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*The Civics Center is a nonpartisan
project of Community Partners,
a 501(c)(3) organization.*