

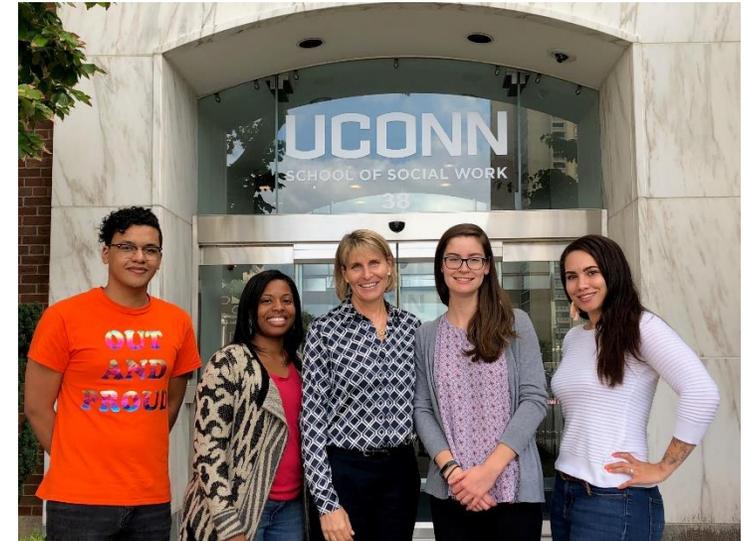
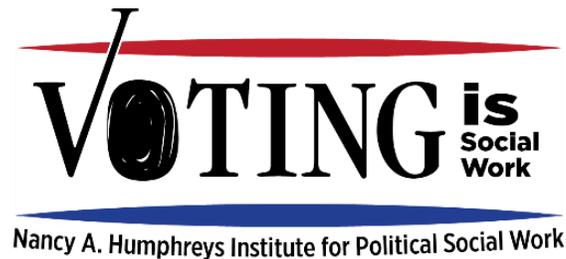
Voting as a social work intervention

UConn | SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

NANCY A. HUMPHREYS INSTITUTE FOR
POLITICAL SOCIAL WORK

Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work

Our Mission: To increase the political participation and power of all social workers and the communities we serve



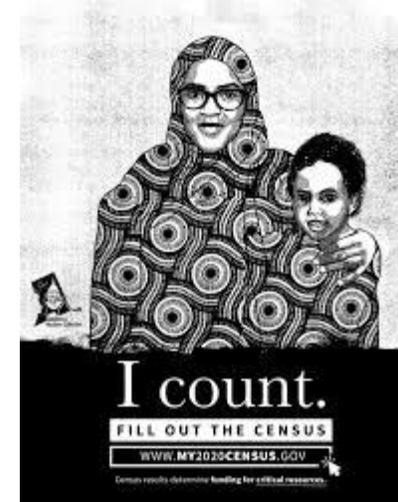
“Politics is social work with power”
Senator Barbara Mikulski, MSW



Representation and participation matter in a healthy, inclusive democracy

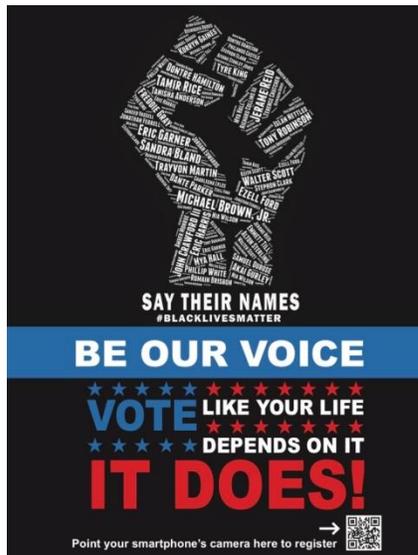
It is easier to spend a few months and some money electing the right people than to spend years and a lot of money trying to get the wrong people to do the right things.

—Senator Debbie Stabenow, MSW



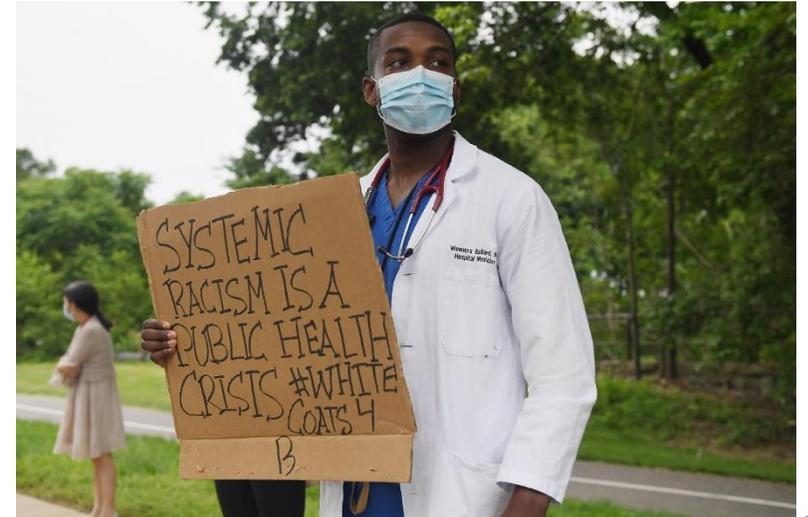
A Democracy in peril

- White supremacy and anti-Black racism were built into the foundation of our democracy and persist
- The pandemic has magnified the barriers is forcing many to choose between their health and their right to vote.
- All forms of disenfranchisement and suppression threaten the legitimacy of our democracy



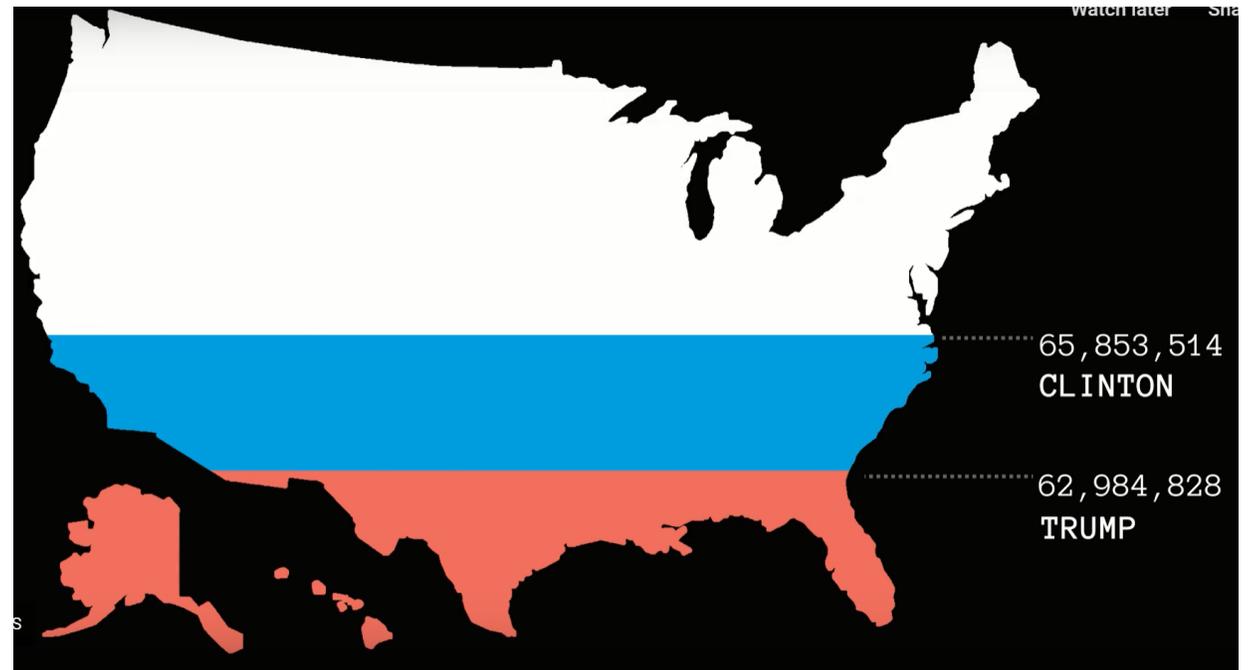
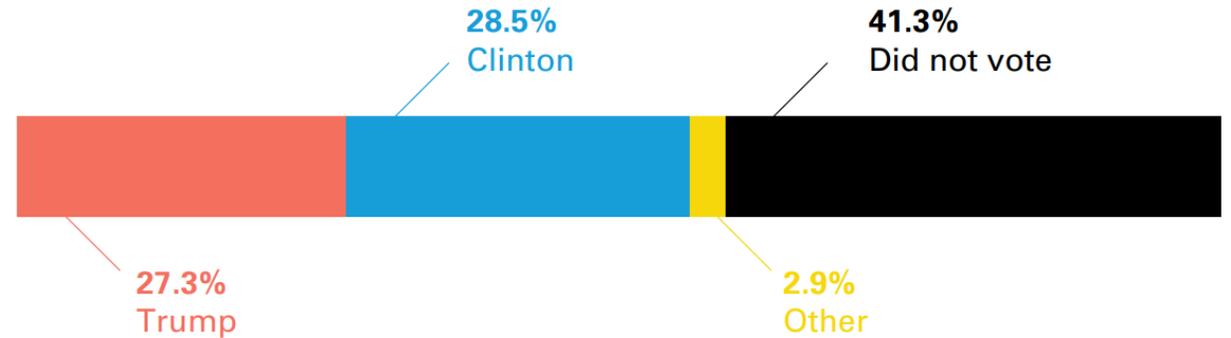
“The vote is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have.”

[John Robert Lewis \(February 21, 1940 - July 17, 2020\)](#)



The nonvote wins

- 100 million eligible age voters stayed home in 2016; 43% of the eligible electorate
- Nonvoters are more likely to be lower income, less educated, non-white, and unmarried
- Systemic barriers to voting feed engagement barriers and the myth that voting doesn't matter
- Turnout for state and local elections— where policies like policing are made-- is far lower



Knight Foundation: <https://the100million.org/>

The United States Election Project: <http://www.electproject.org/>



1. More accessible (more accountable)
2. Low turnout can mean those who vote or turn out votes get too much power *Primaries critical in one-party areas*
3. Local policy can lead national change.

Clean Water • Schools
Elections • Housing • Policing
Transportation • Roads • Trash

DETROIT MAYOR (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 590 of 590 (100.00%)

		Total	
Times Cast		102,311 / 469,139	21.81%

Candidate	Party	Total	
Mike Duggan		72,450	
Coleman A. Young II		28,164	
Total Votes		100,614	

		Total	
Unresolved Write-In		533	



Voting and Registration Rates

2018 Voting Rate

53.1%

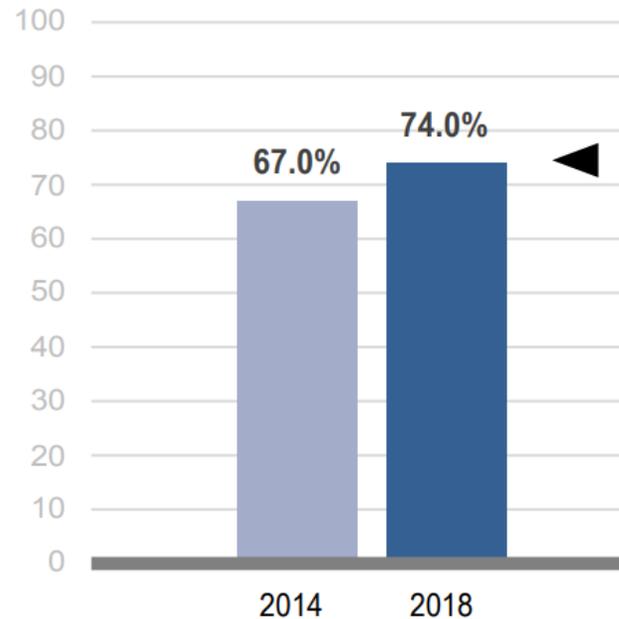
CHANGE
FROM 2014

+25.4

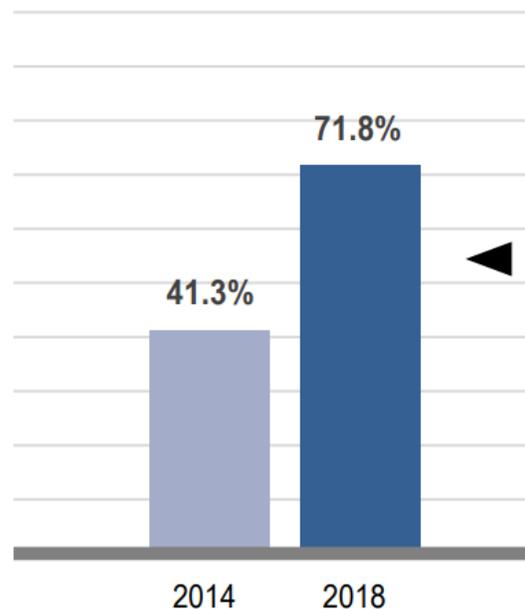
2018 VOTING RATE
FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

39.1%

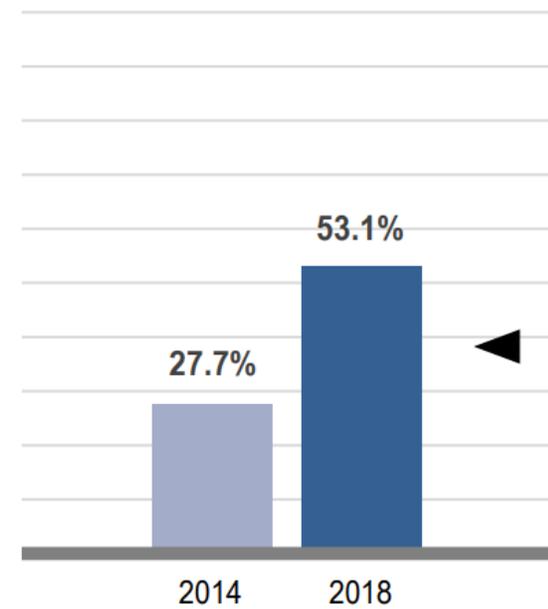
Registration Rate



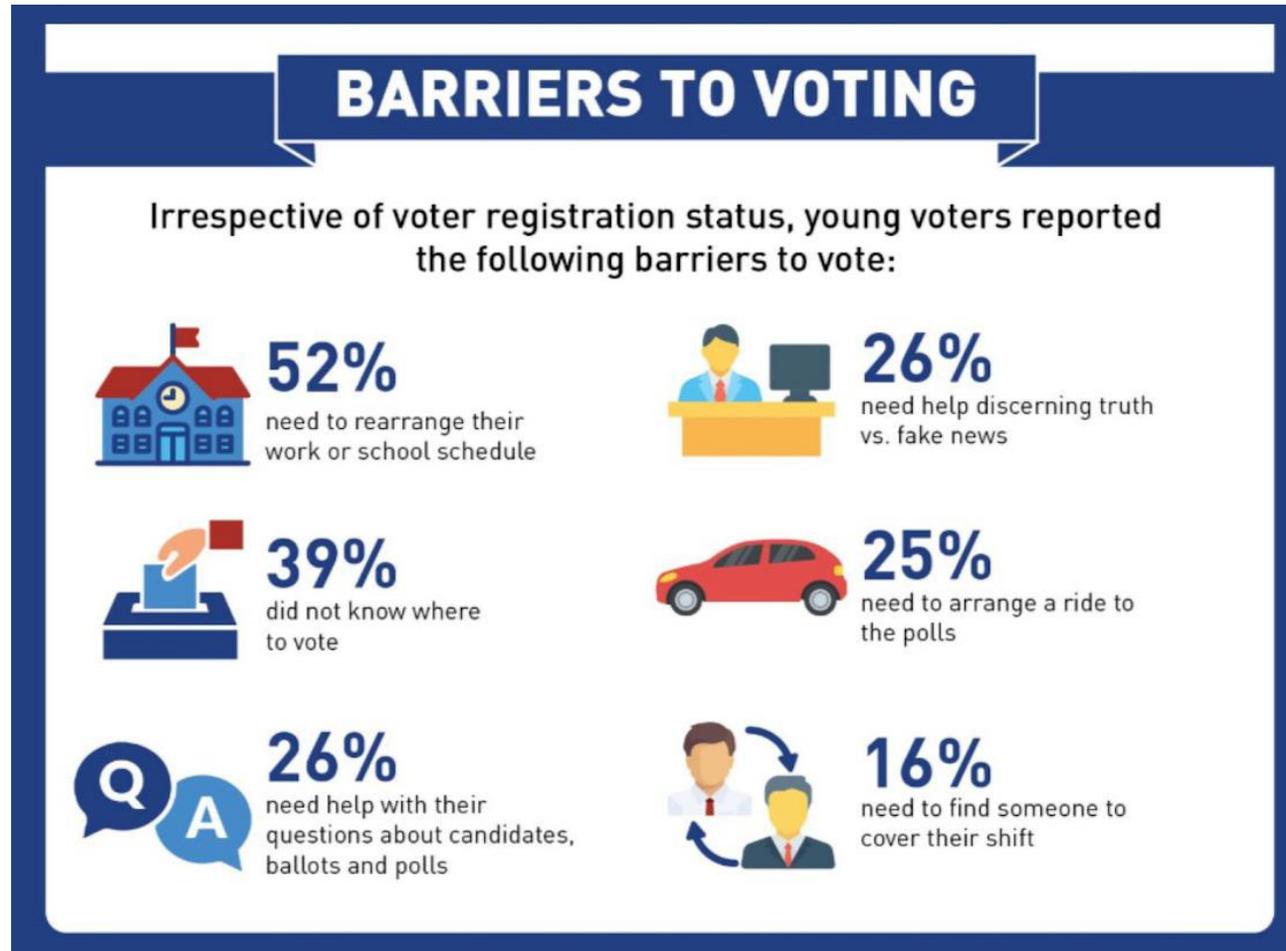
Voting Rate of
Registered Students



Voting Rate



Engagement barriers... social workers can do this!



Structural barriers that limit participation and support the intentional myth that voting doesn't matter

- **Confusing and complicated rules**, deadlines and processes;
- **Suppression tactics** include: felony voting laws, strict voter ID rules, purging voter lists, challenging student registrations, reducing poll locations, strict absentee rules, allegations of voter fraud, etc.
- **“Gerrymandering”** is the process drawing districts so maximize political power. Creates “safe” districts which contributes to divided politics, weakens centrist candidates and suppresses turnout when “vote doesn’t matter.”



Waiting to Vote

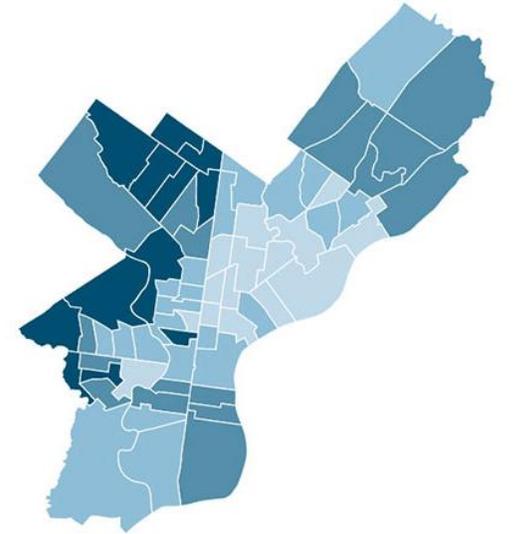
Racial Disparities in Election Day Experiences

By Hannah Klain, Kevin Morris, Max Feldman, and Rebecca Ayala
With a foreword by Myrna Pérez PUBLISHED JUNE 3, 2020

Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law

Voting central to social work's mission, professional mandate and impact

- **Social determinant of health.** Individuals and communities who vote are better off.
- **Human right.** Systemic barriers, voter suppression, felony disenfranchisement & gerrymandering designed by and for people in power
- **Empowerment practice.** Voting is an act of power, individually and collectively.



Elected officials and candidates pay attention to people and communities that vote.

Ballard, Hoyt & Pachucki, 2018; Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement [CIRCLE], 2011; Kansas Health Foundation, Civic Health Index, 2016; Klar & Kasser, 2009; Leighley & Nagler, 2013; Martin, 2003; Martin & Claibourn, 2013; National Conference on Citizenship, Civic Health & Unemployment, 2011; Sanders, 2001.

VotingIsSocialWork.org for citations

Voting as a social work intervention

Micro: Individuals need easy ways to register, information about how/when/where to vote, information on candidates and the encouragement to vote

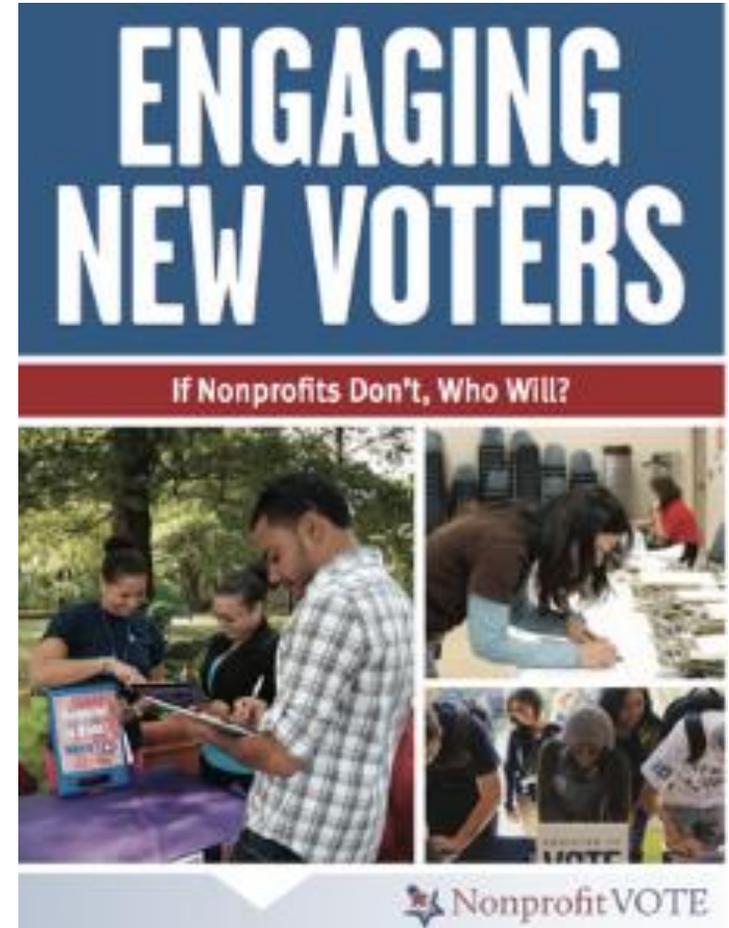
Mezzo -- community: Voting leads to collective power in communities; relational and social behavior

Macro--fixing the systemic barriers: Voting is different in all 50 states; collective narrative that voting doesn't matter and/or rigged; Advocate for voting rights and access; participate as election officials, poll workers and poll monitors.



Why don't more organizations encourage people to vote?

- Concerns about partisanship, violating rules and/or funding loss
- Too busy
- Discomfort with politics
- Lack of training
- Don't see voting as form of empowerment
- Don't know that it's legal (and in some cases required by law)



The Role of Clinical Social Workers on Voter Engagement Efforts



Cheryl Aguilar, LICSW, LCSW-C
Founding Director & Therapist
Hope Center for Wellness

National Association of Social Workers
Mental Health Specialty Section Committee Member

Congressional Research Institute for Social Work
Policy
Board Member

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THE ROLE OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS on Voter Engagement Efforts

CHERYL AGUILAR, LICSW, LCSW-C

Social workers are at the forefront of issues that affect community members from all walks of life. Whether engaged in micro, mezzo, or macro work or in academia, social workers move the needle to help individuals, groups, and communities rise above their challenges and toward desired goals.

The diverse force of social workers in the United States touches every possible societal problem—from addressing homelessness to behavioral challenges, to environmental issues to immigration, to health disparities to poverty, and on and on.

Although social workers interact with society at all levels, there has been a documented lack of voter engagement efforts from social workers and the agencies that employ them, particularly among social workers in micro practice, due to factors such as perceiving voter engagement work separate from their micro sphere (Abramovitz et al., 2019).

This article explores common misconceptions that may prevent clinical social workers from active voter engagement work within or outside of their individual and agency-level practices. It presents ideas on how clinical social workers can ethically participate in voter engagement efforts while honoring clients' self-determination and agency and attending to limitations within their roles and practice.

Let's begin by defining the term *clinical social work*.

NASW defines *clinical social work* as "a specialty practice area of social work which focuses on the assessment,



HOPE
 CENTER FOR WELLNESS

Nonpartisan voter engagement is legal, ethical and professional and in some cases, mandated by law.

Nonprofits may conduct nonpartisan voter engagement activities designed to educate the public and help them participate in elections.

A 501(c)(3) MAY NOT:

- Make an endorsement
- Donate money or resources
- Rate/rank candidates on their positions

Organizations who sign people up for federal benefits may be required by law to provide voter registration opportunity (see 1993 Voter Registration Act).

For more information on staying nonpartisan, go to:

Votingissocialwork.org



DO'S AND DON'TS OF STAYING NONPARTISAN



REGISTER voters

EDUCATE voters about the voting process (when, where and how to vote)

SHARE nonpartisan guides and information on the candidates

HOST a candidate forum. *All candidates must be invited but not all have to attend*

ENCOURAGE people to vote!



Endorse or oppose candidates or campaigns

Contribute, as an agency, to a candidate's campaign or party

Rate or rank candidates

Invite only selected candidates or parties to your agency or event

DISCOURAGE people from voting!

Incorporating Voter Engagement into Field Education: Example Practice Activities

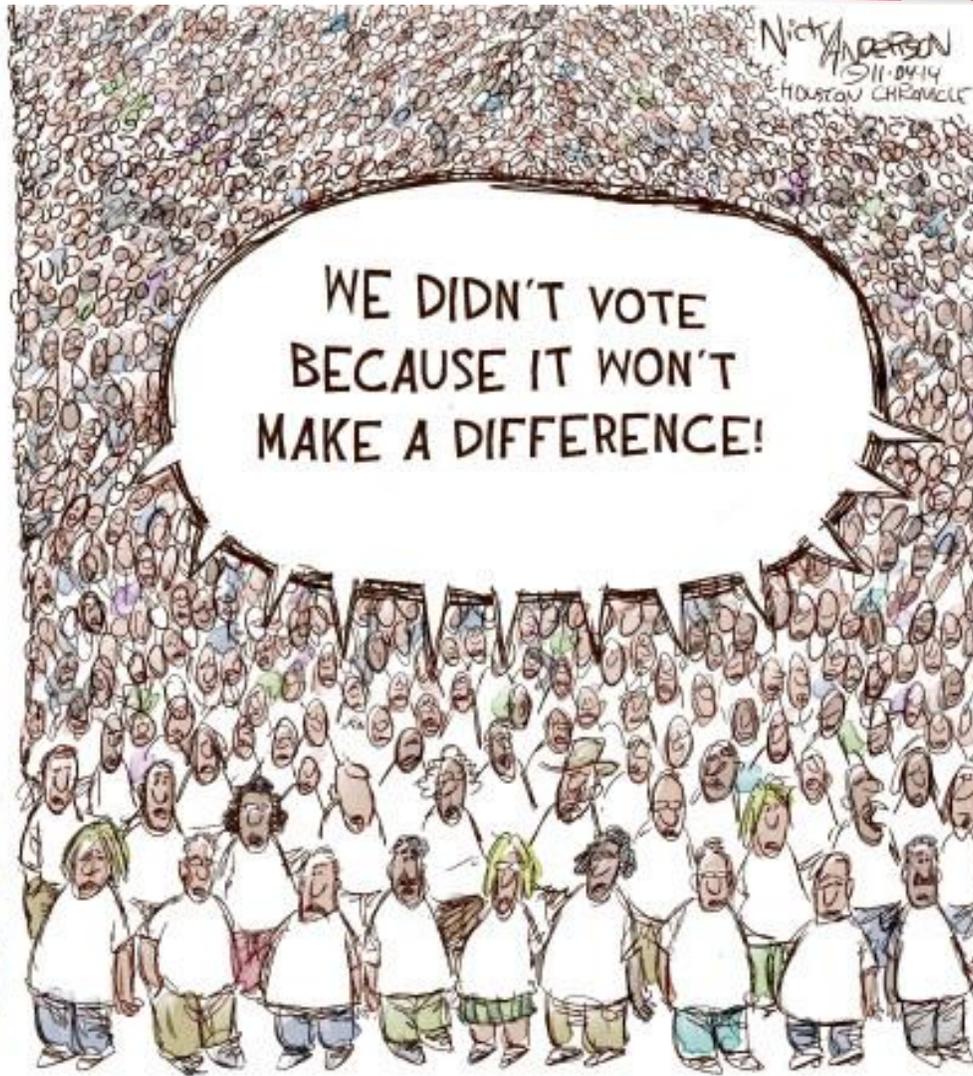
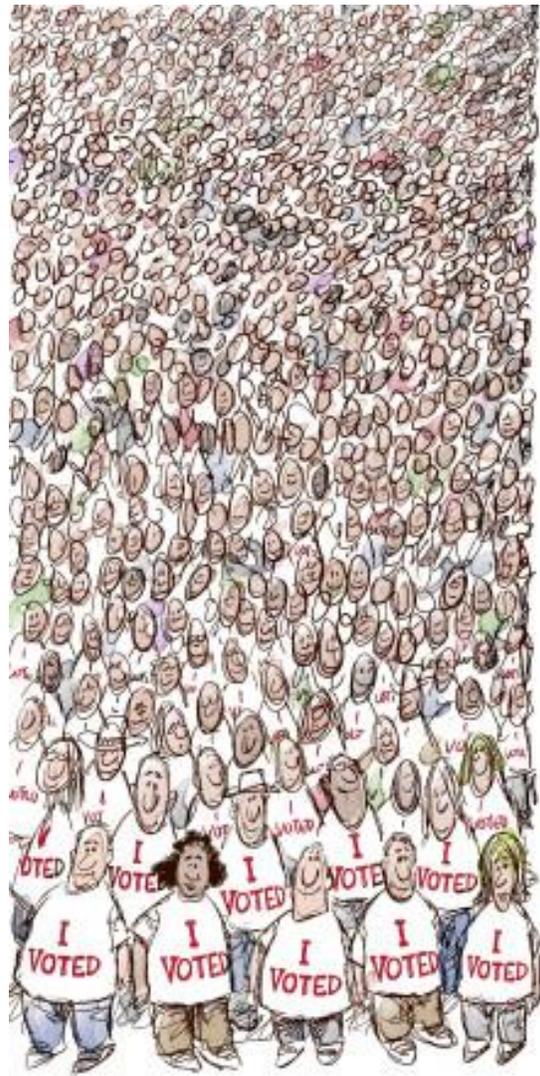
The Nine Competencies:

- C1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
- C2: Engage diversity and difference in practice
- C3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
- C4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
- C5: Engage in policy practice
- C6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- C7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- C8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- C9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Example Practice Activity	Alignment with core competencies								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
Research allowable nonpartisan voter activities for 501(c)(3) organizations and/or requirements for nonprofits in the 1993 National Voter Registration Act.	✓		✓		✓				
Discuss ethical implications of not supporting clients and communities to vote in social work practice	✓	✓	✓						
Share information on voting and elections with clients, staff and/or communities	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Integrate voter registration into agency services (e.g., add question to intake form)	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Assess the differential impact of voting policies on diverse populations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Run voter registration drive at agency or event		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	

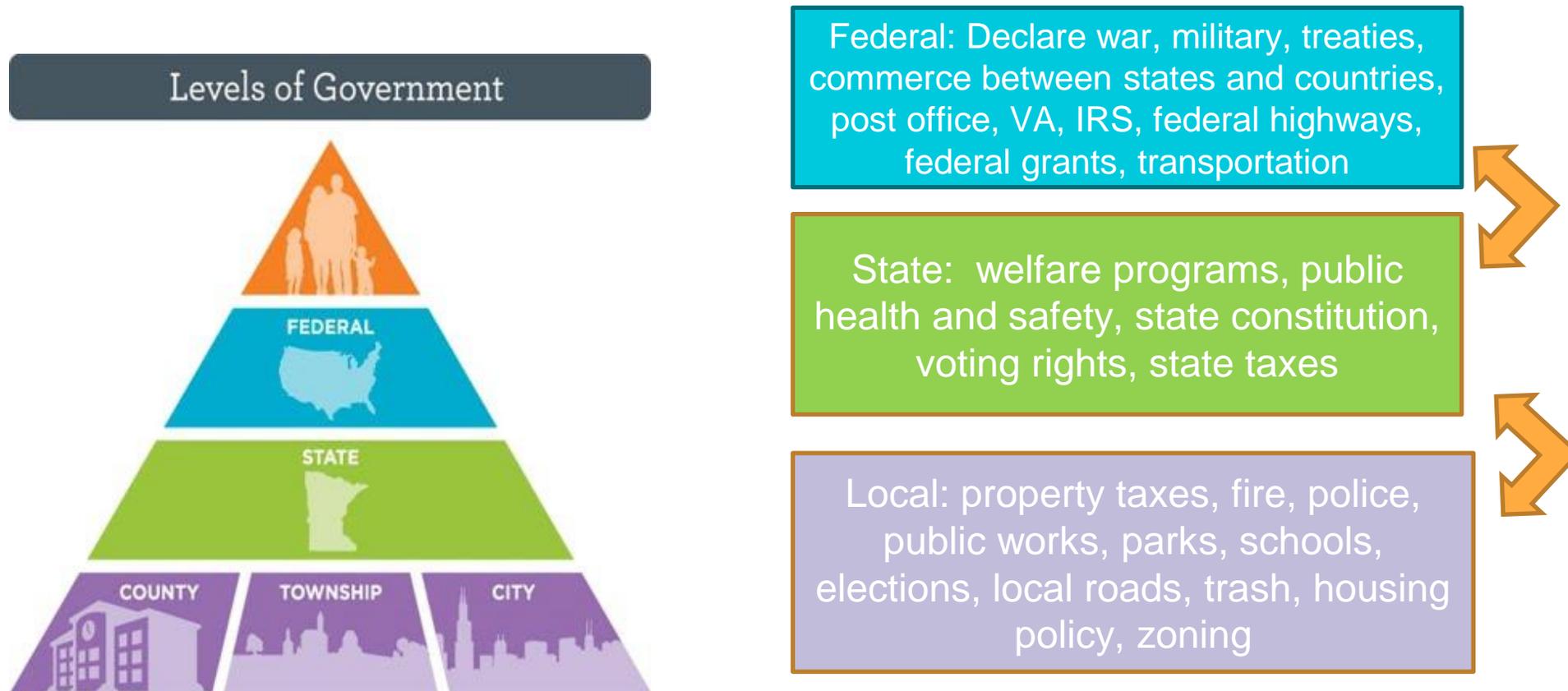
Example Practice Activity	Alignment with core competencies								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
Invite elected officials to agency for meetings or forum focused on advancing human rights issues			✓		✓				
Help people with a prior felony conviction to register and vote (if eligible in your state) through public awareness and individual outreach in service delivery		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Implement/change/advocate for voter engagement activity policy in field agency or community			✓		✓				
Promote the importance of Census 2020 in your agency and/or community			✓			✓			
Assess political power of community through voter turnout statistics by district				✓		✓	✓		
Partner with the census task force in your region/town				✓		✓	✓	✓	
Identify elected officials on the local, state, and federal level. Share contact list with agency staff and/or clients	✓		✓		✓				
Train clients/staff on advocacy, government systems, and the importance of voting			✓		✓	✓		✓	
Use supervision to discuss and determine what policies may deter voter turnout			✓		✓	✓	✓		
Use supervision to discuss and determine strategies to engage organizations and communities in voting					✓	✓			
Encourage clients to participate in the census						✓		✓	
Use strategic planning objectives to measure effectiveness of agency voter registration drives					✓				✓
Identify measurable outcomes of voter pledge card drives (e.g. compare against public records)					✓				✓

Voting activities connect to all 9 CSWE core competencies and connect micro and macro practice



What do we need to know to feel more comfortable engaging?

Levels of government – generally who can help you?



Who represents you so you can get you the answers you need and deserve:

Position	Name		Number	Email	Term # and length
U.S. Senate	Chris Murphy	D	(860) 549-8463	www.murphy.senate.gov/contact	2 (6 yr)
U.S. Senate	Richard Blumenthal	D	(860) 258-6940	www.blumenthal.senate.gov/contact/	2 (6 yr)
U.S. Rep	Joe Courtney	D	860) 886-0139	courtney.house.gov/contact/email	7 (2 yr)
Governor	Ned Lamont	D	(860) 566-4840	https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/Contact/Email-Governor-Lamont	1 (4 yr)
State Senator	Paul Formica	R	1-800-842-1421	Paul.Formica@cga.ct.gov	3 (2 yr)
State Rep	Anthony Nolan	D	1-800-842-8267	Anthony.Nolan@cga.ct.gov	1 (2 yr)
Mayor	Michael Passero	D	(860) 447-5201	mpassero@ci.New-London.CT.US	2 (4 yr)
City Council	Efrain Dominguez, Jr. President	D	(860) 941-0134 (cell)	kbooker@newlondonct.org	

Know Your Elected Officials

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT	
1. What is the name of the city and county in which you live?	City: County:
2. Who has primary leadership for government in your city (most commonly called Mayor)?	Mayor:
3. What is the name of the local government that makes decisions for the town/city in which you live? <small>SEARCH HINTS: Go to your town/city official website (you can usually find it by searching: City State gov (e.g., Fairfield CA gov) DC residents: commoncause.org)</small>	Group name:
4. Some areas have both town/city and county governments. Do you have county level government? <small>SEARCH HINTS: Find your county the same way (e.g., San Diego County gov)</small>	County level government? Yes ____ No ____
5. Locate the Board of Education on your town/city website? How many people serve on the school board?	Number of elected school board members? ____
6. How many people in this group of elected officials represent your specific address? List the name(s) of the people that represent your district? Are their members voted on by the entire community (at large)? <small>SEARCH HINTS: Look for city/town/county government to find who represents you</small>	Number of officials: ____ At large members? ____ Representatives names: District: _____
STATE GOVERNMENT	
7. Who is the Governor of the state in which you live and what is her/his party affiliation? <small>SEARCH HINTS: Look for state gov (e.g., MD gov, Virginia gov) and Executive Branch</small>	Governor: Political party:
8. Who represents your address in your state Senate (your State Senator) and what is her/his party affiliation? <small>SEARCH HINTS: Commoncause.org, or search for state gov (e.g., MD gov, Virginia gov CT gov) and Legislative and find my senator/who represents me</small>	State Senator: Political party:
9. Who represents your address in your state House of Representatives (your State Representative or Legislator) and what is her/his party affiliation? <small>SEARCH HINTS: Same as above (find my representative)</small>	State Representative: Political party:

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PRACTICE! To give you confidence that they work for YOU!



TAKE ACTION: GOTV and GOTC

1) 4 days left!! Encourage people to respond to the census



Checking to make sure you are counted in the 2020 census. The census takes only 10 minutes to complete and ensures our community gets the funding, investment, and political power it deserves.

There are three ways to participate:

- 1. Go to my2020census.gov to respond online*
- 2. Call **844-330-2020 (English)** or **844-468-2020 (Spanish)***
- 3. Send in the form mailed to your home"*

Todos Contamos!



¿Por qué responder al Censo?

💰 **por su familia y nuestra comunidad.**

El censo es nuestra oportunidad de contribuir para que haya un mejor futuro en nuestra comunidad.

Los datos del censo determinan cómo se distribuyen los fondos federales en nuestras comunidades como: Medicaid, clínicas de salud, centros recreativos, construcción de carreteras, Vivienda Sección 8, programas de almuerzos, escolares, y mucho más.

¿Cómo participar en el censo?

- ✓ **En línea** a www.2020Census.gov/es
- ✓ **O llame 1-844-468-2020 (español) / 844-330-2020 (inglés)**
- ✓ **O Por correo**, llenar el formulario impreso que se envió a su hogar y devolverlo por correo postal

¿Mis respuestas al censo están seguras y a salvo?

La Oficina del Censo está obligada por ley a proteger toda la información personal que se recopile y a mantenerla en estricta confidencialidad. La Oficina del Censo puede usar sus respuestas solo para producir estadísticas. De hecho, cada uno de los empleados de la Oficina del Censo presta un juramento para proteger su información personal de por vida. Sus respuestas no se pueden usar para fines del cumplimiento de la ley o para determinar su elegibilidad personal para beneficios del gobierno.

Por ley, sus respuestas al censo no pueden ser usadas en su contra de ninguna manera por ninguna agencia del gobierno ni tribunal —ni por el FBI, ni CIA, ni DCF, ni DHS, ni ICE.

¿Todavía tienen preguntas?

Las personas pueden llamar al 877-EL-CENSO (877-352-3676) para más información o texto **censo** a 97779

[For resources and facts, go to \[votingissocialwork.org\]\(https://votingissocialwork.org\)](https://www.facebook.com/afcampadvocacy4kids/videos/3294367110603176)

<https://www.facebook.com/afcampadvocacy4kids/videos/3294367110603176>

2) Register voters!

- ✓ Paper forms
- ✓ Digitally... text link to online registration system in your state or use a platform like **Vot-ER (Turbovote)**
- ✓ Send links in zoom chats and include in your email

Tanya Rhodes Smith ([She/her](#))

Instructor in Residence, Director

Nancy A Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work

University of Connecticut School of Social Work

cell: 203/331-2032

"The vote is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have." [John Lewis \(February 21, 1940 - July 17, 2020\)](#)

* [Check your voter registration](#) * [Register to vote](#) * [Request an absentee ballot](#) * [Respond to the 2020 census!](#)



Hi Mary. With everything that's been going on, I'm reaching out to people to make sure they have everything they need to vote safely in November. You can register to vote or request an absentee ballot application by texting 'vote sw' to **34444**

3) Educate and Engage

Election Protection Hotline: **866-OUR-VOTE**; or
The Latino Protect the Vote Hotline: **888-VE-Y-VOTA**.

- **The power of information:**
 - ✓ When and where to vote (don't forget primaries!)
 - ✓ How to vote, including by absentee ballot
 - ✓ Who is on the ballot (copy of the ballot, links to candidate information, who represents them) and ballot issues
 - ✓ The rules for special populations such as those experiencing homelessness, with a felony conviction, a survivor of violence, residents in long-term care, etc.
 - ✓ Know the facts and dispel myths around voter fraud.
- **The power of being asked...**



4) Remind and promote all elections – federal, state and local

- Being a trusted voice amplifies your effect:
 - ✓ Text/call your networks
 - ✓ Post online – websites, social media, blogs, letters to the editor
 - ✓ Send email reminders, include in your email signature
 - ✓ Promote in waiting rooms, chat rooms, visible spaces
 - ✓ Encourage people to **make a plan** for voting

Hey Sarah! I am reaching out to make sure that your vote and your voice are counted this election! If you stay home, so does our power for change.

Make sure your registration is up to date by texting VOTE SW to 34444. You can also request an absentee ballot application!

Let me know if you have any questions! Tanya

5) Advocate for voting rights and access



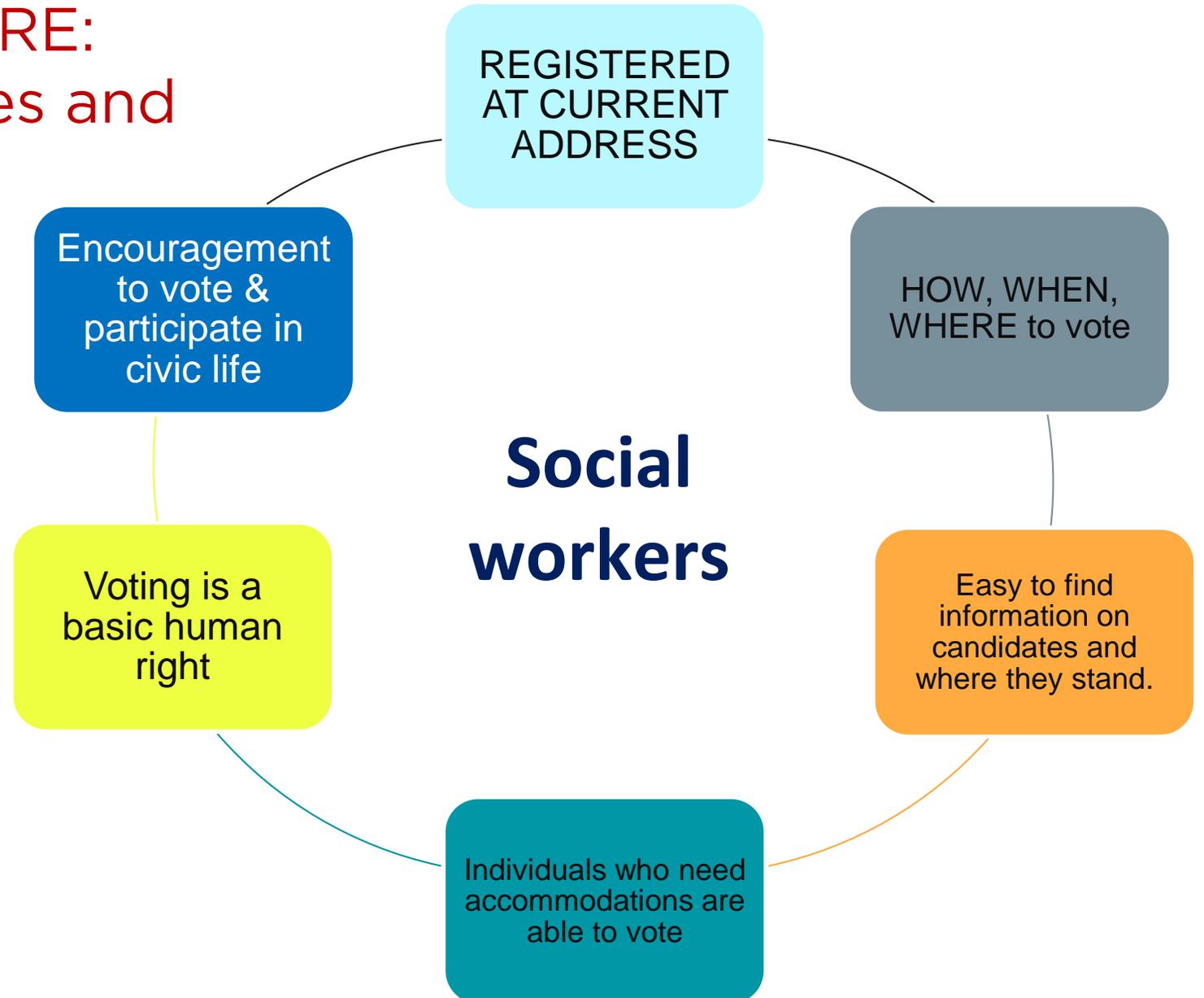
BRENNAN
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE

at New York University School of Law



6) CHANGE THE CULTURE: support clients, colleagues and communities to vote

- Health care settings
- Schools
- Clinics
- Shelters
- Libraries
- After school programs
- Day care
- Food pantries
- VAs



Simple tools in one place.

VotingIsSocialWork.org



Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work



The National Social Work Voter Mobilization Campaign

Our Vision

Social justice is a core principle of social work practice and calls for ensuring meaningful participation in decision making for all people. Voting is Social Work is a nonprofit nonpartisan organization that provides social work students and practitioners with the knowledge and tools to raise awareness about voting and to increase voting registration and participation. We do this work through our National Social Work Voter Mobilization Campaign which strives to integrate nonpartisan voter registration and engagement into social work education and practice.

Check your Voter
Registration!



Register to Vote!



Register Special
Populations



Order your Absentee
Ballot



State Specific
Resources

Social Work & Voter

Volunteer & Join!

More ways to get
involved!

Inclusive democracy, better outcomes

Social workers & agencies support voting as indicator of health



Social workers & agencies register voters & address barriers



Voter turnout increases



More candidates, more accountability, better leaders, better policy



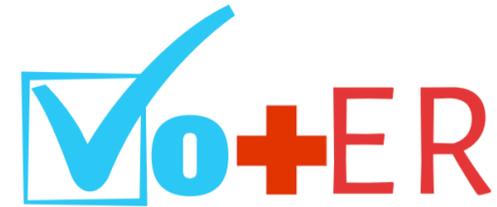
Better outcomes for communities



www.VotingIsSocialWork.org

VOTING is Social Work

Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work



Thank you!

For voting resources and information: go to www.VotingIsSocialWork.org or contact me directly

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