



TALKING TO VOTERS

OVERVIEW

Step 1: Listen

This is key! Find out WHY the potential voter doesn't vote. (*"Do you mind if I ask why you aren't voting this time?"*) Listen with empathy and try not judge. What underlying values might their words be trying to express?

Step 2: Acknowledge

Acknowledge the reasons for not voting, even if you don't agree. Examples: *"I hear you...it can be a real hassle!"*, *"Yes, sometimes it feels like nothing ever changes."*

Step 3: Pivot

Pivot to solutions to counter the reasons why the person doesn't vote (see next page).

Step 4: Continue listening

While discussing your arguments, continue to listen, because the underlying reasons a person doesn't vote might not be given right away. And being heard might make them more open to hearing *you*.

Step 5: Don't get discouraged!

Keep in mind that it is hard to change someone's mind. Remember that we cannot persuade every person be a voter. But maybe some of what you said will have an impact in the future.

Step 6: Thank them

Thank the person, whatever the outcome. They took time out of their day to chat with you. Provide handouts, stickers, etc. as appropriate. If the person is going to vote, ask them to encourage voting among their friends and family through conversations and posts on social media. Maybe something you heard changed *your* perspective!

INITIATING THE CONVERSATION

During registration drives

"Hi, are you registered to vote?" Or, if you are in a place where registration is high:
"Hi, the election is coming up...is your voter information up to date?"

During get out the vote (GOTV)

"Hi, have you mailed in your ballot yet?" If the person looks suspicious of your motivations, emphasize the nonpartisan nature of our GOTV efforts: *"Hi, we're with the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization. We're here to promote democracy through voting, not to promote an agenda."*

TALKING TO VOTERS

COUNTERING COMMON ARGUMENTS

My vote doesn't make a difference.

- Sometimes elections are very close! A Virginia House of Delegates race ended in a tie, with more than 23,000 votes cast. The tie was broken by drawing a name out of a bowl. In fact, more than a dozen races have been decided by a single vote or ended in a tie over the last 20 years. Other examples: George W. Bush won the presidency because of 537 votes in Florida. Bernie Sanders won his first mayoral race by only 10 votes.
- Nothing will change if you don't vote! Your vote is your power. If you don't vote, you are giving your power to someone else.
- The only vote that doesn't count is the vote you don't make.

I'm too busy to vote / I don't have time to research the issues.

- You're in luck! Washington State's vote-by-mail makes voting as easy as possible. You have weeks to figure out your votes and fill out (from your favorite chair with coffee in hand!) and return your ballot.
- Don't have time to decide on all the issues or candidates? That's OK! Voting isn't a test; you don't need to vote for everything. Your Voter's Guide can give you some background for issues/candidates, but if that's still not enough, vote for candidates or issues that you DO have an opinion about. This is how you make your vote count!
- Ask a friend! We all have friends/relatives/coworkers who share much of our worldview...ask what they think about candidates and issues, and take that into consideration.

Politicians are all corrupt, so it's all the same.

- Sometimes that feels true; candidates are not perfect. Try to look past the flaws and vote for stances that more closely align with your values. The lesser of two evils is....less evil.

Nothing ever changes.

- Nothing will change if you don't vote! Your vote is your power. If you don't vote, you are giving your power to someone else.

I don't want jury duty.

- Do you have a Washington State driver's license or state ID? Then you are already in the jury pool.

DO REMAIN POSITIVE when chatting with potential voters.

DO NOT LECTURE OR SCOLD. People will stop listening if you nag.

VOTING MYTHS, BUSTED

Myth: I was incarcerated, so I can't vote.

For 2021: If you were convicted of a felony in Washington State, **your right to vote is restored** as long as you are not in prison or on community custody. However, **once your right is restored, you must re-register to vote in order to receive a ballot.**

NEW! Beginning January 2022: **Your right to vote is automatically restored** as soon as you no longer reside in a 24-hour-a-day corrections facility. Residents in community custody or work release will now be eligible to vote. Also, your right to vote will be restored *even if you have unpaid fines and court fees.* You will still need to re-register to vote in order to receive a ballot.

You do not lose the right to vote for a misdemeanor conviction or a conviction in juvenile court.

Myth: Voter fraud is a big problem in the US.

No! This is one of the most dangerous mis-truths that puts our democracy at risk. Interest groups with partisan agendas who don't want a diverse voting population to weigh in at the ballot box are content to perpetuate this false story. What is true is that a 2014 study from Loyola Law School found only thirty-one incidents of voter fraud out of hundreds of millions of votes cast since 2000.

Myth: Presidential elections are the only ones that matter.

False! Local politicians and the policies they set have a real impact on your day-to-day life. We vote for initiatives and elect school boards, mayors, prosecutors, judges, state and national representatives and more during midterm (non-presidential) elections. Do you care about what's taught at your local schools? How much money your local libraries and parks receive? Whether your local Public Works builds more infrastructure for pedestrians, cars, and bicyclists? Which crimes are prosecuted? These issues, or the people who decide them, can be on the ballot in any election, not just in the years with presidential elections.

Myth: If you are homeless, you are not allowed to vote.

Not true! Washington State law provides that an eligible voter registration applicant who hasn't got a traditional residential address can still vote, will be assigned to a precinct based on the "identifiable location" provided, and will receive the correct ballot based on that location. An "identifiable location" is anywhere the voter currently considers his or her residence, perhaps the location where they spend most of their time, or where they sleep at night. If the location given is a description, such as a specific bridge or park, they may choose a street address closest to the location indicated by the voter. Again, this may simply be a location where they currently spend most of their time. A voter as such with a nontraditional address must also provide a valid mailing address, where the person receives their mail, like Coffee Oasis, a church, or USPS "General Delivery" with a specific post office address. The post office will hold any mail for 30 days, and then discard, or return to sender. Further questions or need more help? Contact the Kitsap County Auditor's Office at (360) 337-7128.

From SPLConcampus.org:

"Voting is an essential part of our democracy, and we can't allow myths and misconceptions to shut us up—or shut us out of the decisions that shape our nation. Check your registration today, and make a plan to vote in the next election."

TALKING TO . . .

YOUNG VOTERS

Do you know who votes in the greatest numbers? People over 55. **You wouldn't let your grandparents pick out your clothes, your food, or your music...why would you let them decide your future?** Voting is about the power to affect real change in the issues that you care about.



Voting can be fun when you get together with your friends to discuss the candidates and issues. Go to a pub for a "Beer and Ballots" gathering (if you are old enough), or how about hosting a "Donuts and Democracy" party? Discuss, then vote! Afterwards, you can drop off ballots in a drop box or mailbox (postage is free).



Imagine this scenario: you are in traffic behind a car covered in bumper stickers that tout beliefs completely the opposite of your beliefs. **Realize that this person will be voting in the next election...don't let their opinions and vote outweigh yours.** Picture that vehicle when you drop off your ballot, and smile!

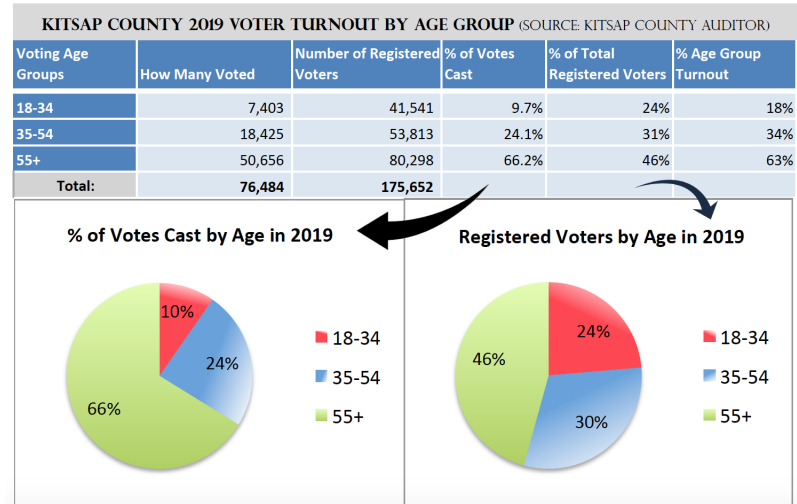


YOU can be part of the solution to getting the youth vote higher. Get your friends and peers to register to vote at VoteWA.gov...it's simple and quick!



THE ONLY VOTE THAT DOESN'T COUNT IS THE VOTE YOU DON'T MAKE.

THE YOUTH VOTE



Voters under 35 are a quarter of registered voters in Kitsap, but they made only 10% of the vote in 2019. That's a small piece of political pie! Younger voters could have a much bigger influence on candidates and issues that matter to them if they vote. And who doesn't like a bigger slice of pie?

WHY DON'T YOUNG PEOPLE VOTE?

- Lack of confidence. "Whenever young people are surveyed, there is a significant lack of knowledge about how exactly the government works, and, therefore, how their vote actually matters," said the director of group that studies youth civic and political participation. A survey of working-class youth found that nearly 20 percent of young people said they don't think they know enough to be able to vote. (source: npr.org)
- Young people don't think voting is an effective way to change society.
- They have major misconceptions about voting (e.g. the false belief that a DUI means they can't vote).

MTYH: THE YOUNG DON'T VOTE DUE TO LAZINESS OR APATHY

They do care –and express passion about issues such as climate, rising tuition costs, basic human rights. etc. Young voters just do not believe that political leaders understand the issues that affect them the most. Still, voting remains the primary way that people of all age groups can make their voices heard. Throughout history, young people have driven social change. Now is the time for that change to be about voter participation and connecting with the political process.

RESEARCH SHOWS...

The gold standard to get people to vote is to talk with them, face-to-face. It's most influential with people you know. But canvassing is also effective, or even just striking up a conversation with the person next to you in line.

Messages about "being a voter," rather than just "voting," increase registration and turnout in state and national elections. Make "Be a Voter" your new catch phrase!

IT'S TIME TO BE A



"Research has shown the **biggest and most persistent difference between who votes and who doesn't is education and economics.** Class is a more accurate predictor of voting behavior than race, ethnicity, gender or any other demographic factor... nearly 80 percent of high-income earners vote, compared to barely 50 percent of low-income Americans." (source: npr.org)

Some of the more **common reasons given for not voting:** lack of time to research, which leads to "fear of making a mistake"; a feeling of disconnect with the political process ("nothing changes", "my vote doesn't make a difference").

RESOURCES FOR VOTERS

VoteWA.gov

For Washington State voters. Register to vote, change your address, check your ballot status, see your voter's guide. It's easy to do on a phone!

Vote411.org

Voter registration and ballot information for anywhere in America.

LWV-Kitsap.org

Our local League site has links to important dates, current events in Kitsap, and recordings of Voter Forums, where people running for local offices get asked questions by an audience.

FIGHTING APATHY

Many of the common reasons for not voting fall under the umbrella of apathy ("Why bother?" and "My vote doesn't count.") and its cousin, despair ("Nothing ever changes", "It's all rigged", "The system overrules what people want").

We've addressed some of this earlier in the document. But here are a few more talking points:

- Powerful forces are trying to divide us, spread confusion, and sow incorrect information in order to suppress the vote. Don't let the trolls win...vote!
- More unites us than divides us. We're all Americans, and the most patriotic and American thing that most of us can do is VOTE.
- If you aren't voting, then who is? When you don't vote, other voters are deciding *your* future, not you. **Be a voter!**
- Voters can "unrig" the system by engaging each other in voter participation. Talk with peers, friends, and family to help clarify what matters for the future, who you think should be "hired" into leadership, and which issues should be supported. YOU can make it happen, but only if you vote, and encourage everyone you know to vote as well. Yes, it's work, but it's work worth doing, because nothing will change if we keep doing nothing.

IF YOU WANT
YOUR VOICE HEARD, YOU
HAVE TO **VOTE**

This document was created by the League of Women Voters of Kitsap. Many of the talking points are generic and apply to any voter. However, laws referenced apply to those of Washington State (e.g. registering homeless voters, felon voting rights, etc.). If talking to voters from other states, you should check the Secretary of State website for that state.