



2022-2024 Civic Action Plan  
May 31, 2022

**Executive Summary:**

The MSU Civic Action Plan for 2022-2024 was developed by the members of the MSUvote Campus and Community Coalition. MSUvote is a non-partisan campus and community coalition with the mission of increasing the number of registered student voters, educating students on candidates and issues, and bolstering student participation on Election Day. The MSU Civic Action Plan was developed with input from MSU faculty, staff, and students representing the following colleges/departments/organizations and community partners:

- Associated Student of Michigan State University (ASMSU), MSU's Student Government
- City of East Lansing, Clerk's Office
- College of Communication Arts & Sciences
- College of Education, Department of Teacher Preparation
- College of Human Medicine
- College of Law
- College of Social Sciences, Political Science Department
- Council of Graduate Students
- Government Relations
- Institute of Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR)
- League of Women Voters
- PIRGIM Campus Action
- Spartan Athletics, Department of Student-Athlete Development and Support Services
- Student Life and Engagement, Department of Residence Education and Housing Services (do we need to add Community Engaged Learning and Student & Community Relations)
- University Outreach & Engagement

MSUvote has existed for over 25 years. Sharing a strong and effective partnership with the Michigan Secretary of State, East Lansing City Clerk, and the Ingham County Clerk, the coalition is active with the Campus Vote Project, Students Learn Students Vote, All In Democracy Challenge, Ask Every Student, and Vote Early and other national partners. MSUvote has been engaged with the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) for the past 8 years.

Working closely with all 17 degree-granting colleges that comprise Michigan State University and with several Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) MSUvote assures that democratic engagement is core to the student experience. MSUvote coordinates with and receives support from the MSU Board of Trustees, MSU Office of the President, the MSU Office of the Provost, the Council of Deans, MSU Athletics, the Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU), the MSU Public Radio Station

89FM – WDBM, the Council of Graduate Students, University Outreach & Engagement and Student Life and Engagement. The coalition actively collaborates with colleagues at other universities through engagement with the Big Ten Voting challenge.

Student Interns and Fellows play a key role in setting MSUvote goals and institutional voting, as well as implementing projects to meet those goals. Students are represented equally in the coalition and play lead roles on multiple initiatives. Our coalition is led by co-chairs, Renee Brown, Director of the Center for Community Engaged Learning and Suchitra Webster, Director of Student and Community Relations.

The MSU Civic Action Plan will be implemented during the 2022-2023 academic year and will impact all students (residential, international, undergraduate, graduate, and online). This plan was developed to expand the existing efforts of MSUvote to be more inclusive and with a focus on student democratic engagement and civic skills building.

Michigan State University's Civic Action Plan is aligned with the MSU Strategic Plan around themes of Student Success and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The MSU Civic Action plan aligns with the university's objectives of providing an excellent educational experience for all students one that prepares them for postgraduate success and increases proactive engagement with historically underrepresented and underserved communities based on partnership and mutual learning.

### **Leadership:**

The members of the MSUvote Campus and Community Coalition facilitated by the coalition co-chairs, serve as the leaders for the implementation of this plan. In the upcoming year, the following steps will be taken to expand leadership representation, elevate the university's commitment to democratic engagement, and provide succession planning:

1. Recruit representatives from each college, key departments, and diverse student groups to join the coalition
2. Establish an Executive Committee of University Leaders (Deans, Assistant/Associate Vice Presidents and Provosts, Board of Trustee Members...) to assure institutional guidance, support, resources, and staffing for these efforts
3. Develop a subcommittee structure to support the goals of this plan in effort to better engage coalition members and build a network of leaders for future iterations of MSUvote.
4. Invite additional clerk's offices (for communities beyond East Lansing) to join the coalition

MSUvote will continue to build relationships and opportunities with national student voting organizations including NSLVE, the All In Democracy Challenge, the Voter Friendly Campus Initiative, the Jewish Student Voter Engagement Project, Campus Vote Project, and Civic Holidays Organization. The purpose of these ongoing partnerships is to provide national networks of learning, create fellowships for students, and develop programs that advance this work.

MSUvote offers student internships and fellowships each year. This will continue during the 2022-2023 academic year. In addition to Campus Vote Project Fellowships MSUvote interns, there will be two new fellowships offered in partnership with the Jewish Student Voter Engagement Project. Student fellows and interns are supervised by the coalition's co-chairs. MSUvote interns will continue to assist with website management, social media, and events.

The MSUvote Coalition will meet twice a month from August-December 2022 with subcommittees meeting in between full coalition meetings. The coalition will resume a monthly meeting schedule through the remainder of the year. The newly formed executive committee is expected to meet twice annually.

### **Commitment and Landscape:**

Michigan State University has demonstrated a commitment to student voter engagement by designating the part-time effort of 2 campus directors to facilitate the MSUvote Campus and Community Coalition. Additionally, the Associate Provost for University Outreach & Engagement (UOE) has allocated funding to support student interns to support the coalition. The university is a long-standing partner with the National Study of Student Learning & Voter Engagement. The Associate Provost for UOE serves as the MSU Research Designee for our NSLVE Partnership.

MSU's student voting rates, as reported in the 2020 NSLVE Campus Report, improved 24.4% over the 2016 student voting rates. This increase marked the MSU student voting rate at 76.6% total for the 2020 election, a rate higher than the national average on college campuses and earning MSU the ***Most Improved Voting Rates*** recognition for the State of Michigan.

The efforts of MSUvote align with the mission of our institution:

Michigan State University, a member of the Association of American Universities and one of the top 100 research universities in the world, was founded in 1855. We are an inclusive, academic community known for our traditionally strong academic disciplines and professional programs, and our liberal arts foundation. Our cross- and interdisciplinary enterprises connect the sciences, humanities, and professions in practical, sustainable, and innovative ways to address society's rapidly changing needs. As a public, research-intensive, land-grant university funded in part by the state of Michigan, our mission is to advance knowledge and transform lives by:

- providing outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to promising, qualified students in order to prepare them to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders
- conducting research of the highest caliber that seeks to answer questions and create solutions in order to expand human understanding and make a positive difference, both locally and globally
- advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world

Further, one of MSU's key undergraduate learning goals is:

#### **Effective Citizenship**

The MSU graduate participates as a member of local, national, and global communities and has the capacity to lead in an increasingly interdependent world.

- Understands the structures of local, national, and global governance systems and acts effectively within those structures in both individual and collaborative ways.
- Applies knowledge and abilities to solve societal problems in ethical ways.

The Center for Community Engaged Learning promotes democratic engagement as a form of community-engaged learning. Students track their democratic engagement efforts in the MSU Civic Life App.

MSUvote partners with others across campus and in the community to offer civic engagement dialogues, candidate panels, registration drives, get out the vote efforts, voter guides, and more.

Academic Courses that specifically include civic/democratic engagement and election education have consistently been offered in the following academic colleges/departments/programs:

- First Year Writing
- Communications
- James Madison College
- Journalism
- Political Science

#### **Goals:**

##### ***Short Term-***

1. Secure funding for a full-time democratic engagement coordinator beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year
2. Secure institutional funding for annual operating expenses and programming beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year
3. Further formalize coalition and committee structures, including:
  - a. Seek representation from each college
  - b. Seek representation from Multicultural Student Organizations (<https://ocat.msu.edu/multicultural-student-organizations/>)
  - c. Seek representation from student faith organizations
  - d. Establish Subcommittees and Subcommittee Leaders to strengthen the MSUvote Coalition efforts and further plan for succession
  - e. Establish a strategic approach to increasing student voting rates from among identity groups and particular disciplines reported to vote at lower rates as consistently reported in the NSLVE
4. Host the 2022 Michigan Student Voter Summit with CVP and other state partners on the campus MSU

##### ***Long Term-***

- Establish Civic Holidays on campus as tradition supported by and promoted across campus each year
- Establish a campus expectation, set by the President and the Provost, that voter education must be included in all courses and programs with resource materials and support
- Establish voter registration practices in units/programs/procedures that impact the greatest number of students each year. Some examples include:
  - new student orientation
  - student ID office
  - library registration/checkout,

- fall welcome,
  - athletic events,
  - Including banners on student learning platforms
- Continue to increase student voting rates at MSU

**Strategy:**

MSU's democratic engagement efforts have been primarily focused on student voter registration, election education, and improving student voting rates for the last decade. Moving forward, the MSUvote Campus and Community Coalition strategy will be to build ongoing civic education efforts across campus in ways that are effective, embraced, supported, implemented, and sustained. These efforts are intended to be embedded in the classroom and in the co-curriculum. Success will require dedicated staff, a sustainable annual budget, a formalized structure with inclusive access points, and stated commitment and expectations from the leaders at the highest levels (President, Provost, and Board of Trustees) and leaders from across campus and within the greater community

**Evaluation:**

MSU has relied on the NSLVE Reports as our main form of evaluation. Nearly all national and regional voting partners including the All In Democracy Challenge, SLSV, CVP, and Big Ten Voting Challenge utilize the NSLVE to measure and evaluate the success of democratic and voter engagement on campuses.

The MSUvote Coalition will develop an expanded evaluation plan that assesses the effectiveness of the:

- New strategy of building ongoing civic education in the curriculum and co-curriculum
- Contributing to the Undergraduate Learning Goal of Effective Citizenship

The Center for Community Engaged Learning publishes the [Annual MSU Community Engaged Learning Index](#). Over the next 2-3 years, a plan for collecting additional democratic engagement data may be a part of the campuswide report.

MSU will be considering the possibility of renewing its Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement. In coordination with MSU- UOE, the MSUvote Coalition will work to offer useful data to support that effort.