

#PREPFORTHEPOLLS TOOLKIT

YOUR GET OUT THE VOTE GUIDE ★ YOUR GET OUT THE VOTE GUIDE

Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) understands that voters across the country have a lot of questions leading up to the November election. Individuals want to know where to go to vote, how to make sure their votes are secure, how to make sure they have the right voting paperwork or IDs, how safe it is to vote by mail, how impactful their votes really are, and more.

It's critical that every eligible voter can get up, get out, and safely and confidently exercise their right to vote. To help with this effort, KZCF is launching #PrepforthePolls, a nonpartisan Get Out the Vote (GOTV)/voter engagement campaign. #PrepforthePolls is designed to address a lack of trust in government systems and elections, counter misinformation and concerns about the election process, and connect with often marginalized, disenfranchised and skeptical voters across Kalamazoo County to ensure their votes and voices matter. The goal is to prepare individuals to cast a ballot in November. **This toolkit is designed to assist with executing #PrepforthePolls activities and engagement.**

WHAT IS GET OUT THE VOTE?

GOTV is voter engagement work designed to increase voter turn out. Often, these are efforts that also help eligible voters understand their voting options, make a voting plan and successfully cast a ballot. Our #PrepforthePolls campaign seeks to ensure that people get out to vote by means providing accurate information, answering questions about the voting process, reducing barriers, and encouraging participation without endorsing or opposing any candidate or political party.

VOTER REGISTRATION

➔ AM I ELIGIBLE TO REGISTER?

To register to vote in the state of Michigan, you must be:

- ★ A United States citizen
- ★ A Michigan resident and a resident of your city or township for at least 30 days (by the time you vote)
- ★ At least 18 years of age (by the time you vote)
- ★ Not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison

➔ WHERE DO I REGISTER?

Michigan residents can register to vote online at mi.gov/vote, by mail or in person at their local clerk's office.

- ★ If it's more than 14 days before Election Day, you can register to vote in person at any of these places:
 - ★ Any Secretary of State branch office
 - ★ Your city, township or county clerk's office
 - ★ Any state agency that provides public assistance or services
 - ★ Any Armed Forces recruitment office
 - ★ Any voter-registration drives
- ★ Online and mail registration must be completed at least 15 days before Election Day. After that, voters must register in person at their local clerk's office with two forms of proof of residency, such as a utility bill, paycheck or Michigan driver's license or ID.

➔ VOTER REGISTRATION FAQs

★ VOTING DEADLINE

Eligible voters may register and vote until **8:00 p.m. on Election Day** at their clerk's office.

★ STUDENTS

Students attending school in Michigan, or Michigan residents attending school in another state, can register and vote. First, they must decide whether to register to vote at their school or their hometown address.

★ UNHOUSED CITIZENS

If a person is unhoused or experiencing housing instability, they can register to vote using the address of a shelter, park, or other location where they receive mail.

★ FELONIES & MISDEMEANORS

Michiganders with a felony or misdemeanor conviction who aren't currently in jail or prison can register to vote.

VOTING OPTIONS IN MICHIGAN

In Michigan, there are several ways you can exercise your right to vote and make the experience easy and safe. All of these options are available to any registered voter in the state.

➔ VOTE BY MAIL (ABSENTEE VOTING)

- ★ In Michigan, any eligible voter can vote by mail. You can request a ballot to vote by mail for any reason.
- ★ To vote by mail in Michigan, you can request a ballot by mail by visiting mi.gov/vote or visiting your local clerk's office in person.
- ★ Once you complete your vote-by-mail application/request, you can review the status at mi.gov/vote.
- ★ Ballots are mailed up to 40 days before an election. When the ballot arrives will depend on your local postal carrier.
- ★ **Once you receive your ballot and fill it out, you can return it in a few ways:**
 - ★ **By mail** (must be received by your local or County clerk's office by 8 p.m. on Election Day).
 - ★ **By dropbox** (the ballot must be in the drop box by 8 p.m. on Election Day).
 - ★ **At your local clerk's office** (must be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day)
 - ★ **In person at an early voting location** (the deadline is the end of the early voting period)

➔ VOTING EARLY

- ★ Early voting is available to voters across Michigan. For the 2026 election, this begins on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026, and ends on Sunday, Nov. 2, 2026.
- ★ **Early voting locations may not be the same places you might go to vote on Election Day**, and you may have more than one place available to vote early. It's important to check early voting locations at mi.gov/vote.

➔ VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

- ★ If you're voting on Election Day, you must go in person to your polling place. It's important that you check for your early voting location at mi.gov/vote.
- ★ If you're voting in person, bring a photo ID with you. However, if you don't have a photo ID, you can still vote. You'll be asked to sign a short document that affirms your identity.
- ★ Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. local time. If you're in line before the polls close, but the lines are long, don't worry! You're still allowed to vote!

2026

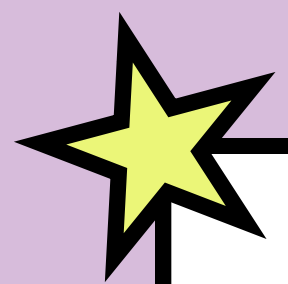
KEY ELECTION DATES & DEADLINES



**TUESDAY
SEPT. 15**

National Voter Registration Day

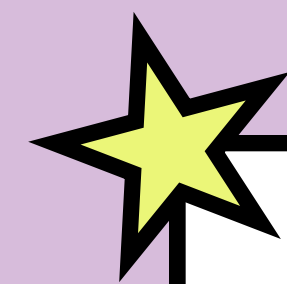
This is a nationally coordinated effort that seeks to register voters across the U.S.



**OCT. 5 TO
OCT. 9**

National Voter Education Week

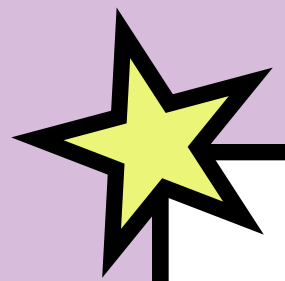
This national campaign seeks to create opportunities for voters to learn how to register, make a plan and cast a ballot.



**MONDAY
OCT. 19**

Last Day for Online/ Email Registration

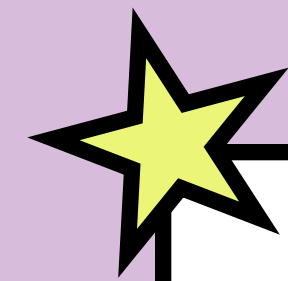
After this date, voters must register in person with proof of residency.



**OCT. 2 TO
NOV. 1**

General Statewide Early Voting Period

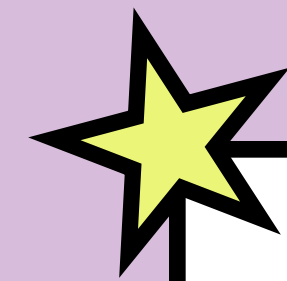
Voters should check with their clerk or the mi.gov/vote for local sites and hours.



**MONDAY
NOV. 2
4:00 P.M.**

General In-Person Absentee Request

After this deadline, voters generally vote at their polling place on Election Day unless they're registering or updating their registration at the clerk's office.



**TUESDAY
NOV. 3**

Statewide General Election

Polls are open from **7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.** local time.

CREATING A VOTING PLAN

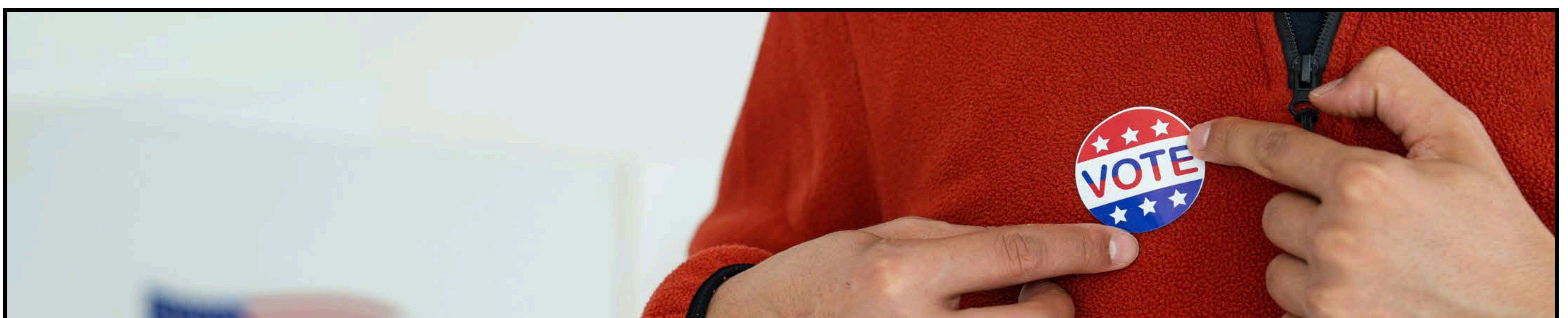
➔ RESEARCHING YOUR BALLOT

Many organizations and the State of Michigan provide voters with information about what they'll find on their ballots. Those running for elected office or the proposals on the ballot will impact everything from housing and childcare to health care and taxes (and much more). To ensure the person or issue you vote for is aligned with your views, needs or plans for the future, you need to research what's on your ballot. Researching your ballot before you vote can also make the voting process easier and less confusing.

- ★ Michigan voters can review a sample ballot before voting to make informed decisions. You can visit mi.gov/vote, the Michigan Voter Information Center, and your city or township clerk to review a sample ballot.
- ★ For candidate or issue research, use nonpartisan sources like those outlined in this toolkit **Resources List** or review issue campaign and candidates' own websites, materials and public statements.

➔ SELECTING YOUR VOTING OPTION

- ★ Before you cast a ballot, make sure to confirm your registration status and current address.
- ★ Consider your schedule, transportation options, safety concerns, accessibility needs, etc., when thinking about how you'll vote. Some voting options may be a better fit or provide more flexibility based on your needs.
 - ★ If you're voting by mail, make sure to identify locations for dropping off your ballot or sending it via the mail.
 - ★ If you're voting in person, voting early or voting on Election Day, make sure to identify your polling location. Remember, these may be different depending on when you vote.
 - ★ If you're voting in person, make sure to bring your photo ID if you have it available. Voters without ID may sign an affidavit and vote a regular ballot.





CREATING A VOTING PLAN CONTINUED

➔ REMINDERS

- ★ **You can** use a Voter Assist Terminal or another person if you need additional accessibility support or assistance when voting in person.
 - ★ **You can't** bring your employer or officers of a labor union to assist you.
- ★ **You can** bring a voter guide with you to the polls.
 - ★ **You can't** bring campaign flyers and other information from candidates.
- ★ **You can** bring a language interpreter with you to the polls.
 - ★ **You can't** bring your employer or officers of a labor union to assist you.
- ★ **You can** take a selfie outside of the voting area.
 - ★ **You can't** take selfies or other photos within the voting area.
- ★ If your candidate has dropped out, you haven't received a ballot in the mail or you've made an error on your ballot, **you can** "spoil" or get a new ballot ahead of Election Day by visiting your local clerk's office.
 - ★ **You can't** change your vote once your ballot has gone through a tabulation machine.

VOTER INTIMIDATION & MISINFORMATION

Elections are critical, high-stakes events for every citizen and resident in the United States. At every level of government, your vote determines how public money is spent, which businesses or industries are regulated, how we connect with other people and countries, and who has access to certain rights and civic power.

Because elections are so important, some have tried and continue to try to prevent people from voting altogether. These efforts include spreading false information, creating fear around the voting process, and even intimidating or harassing people at the polls.

VOTER INTIMIDATION MIGHT LOOK LIKE:

- ★ Someone taking photos or videos of people in line at a voting location without permission
- ★ Someone who's not an identified poll worker asking you or others personal questions or asking to see personal documents.
- ★ Someone who's blocking or preventing people from accessing a polling location or drop-box
- ★ Someone who threatens you or others with law enforcement or legal action if you go out and vote.

**If you experience or witness voter intimidation,
call the Election Protection Hotline at **866.OUR.VOTE**
(**866.687.8683**), find a poll worker or contact your local
clerk's office as soon as possible.**

SOCIAL MEDIA MATERIALS

→ ACCOUNTS TO TAG

★ @CASTMIVOTE

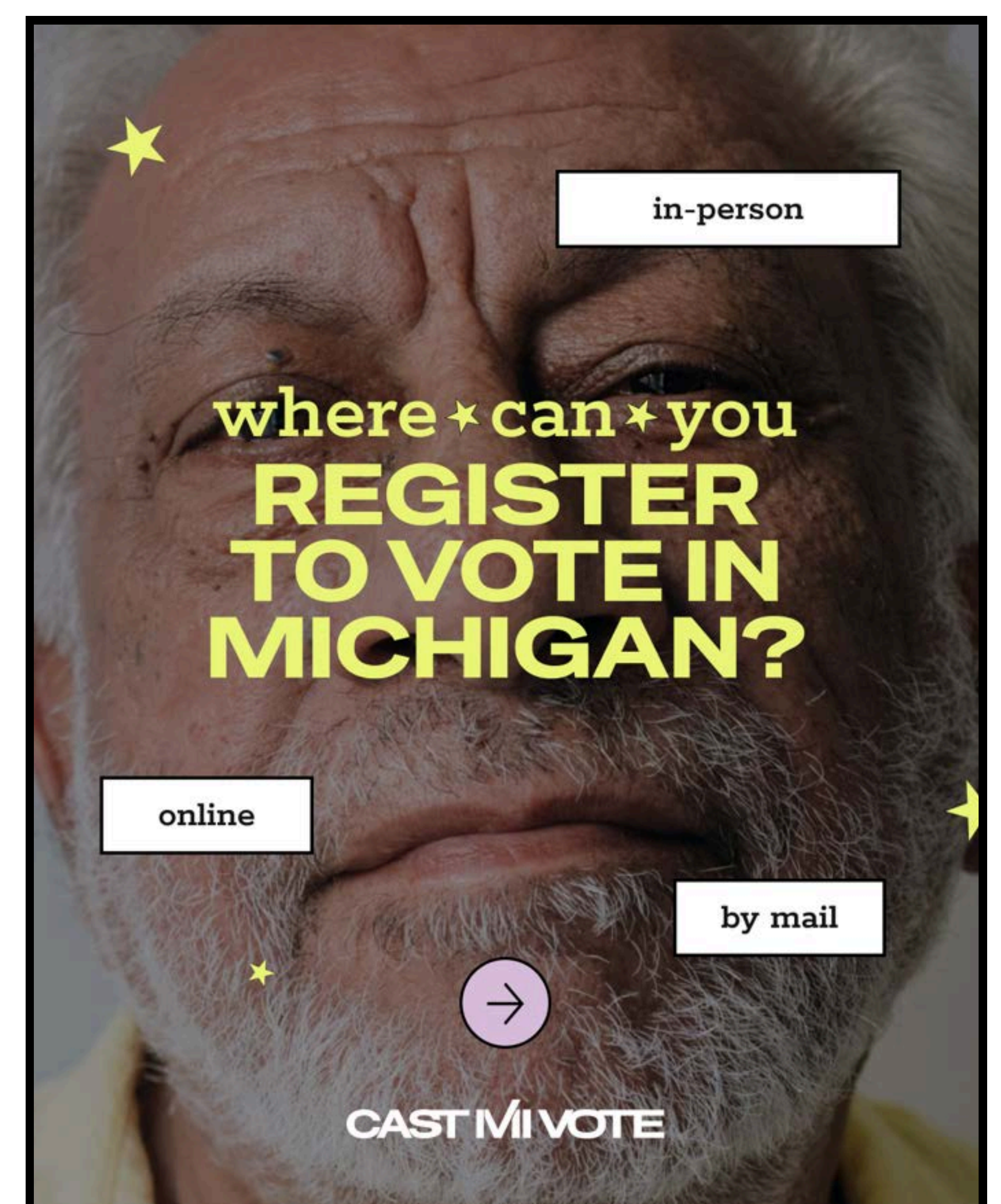
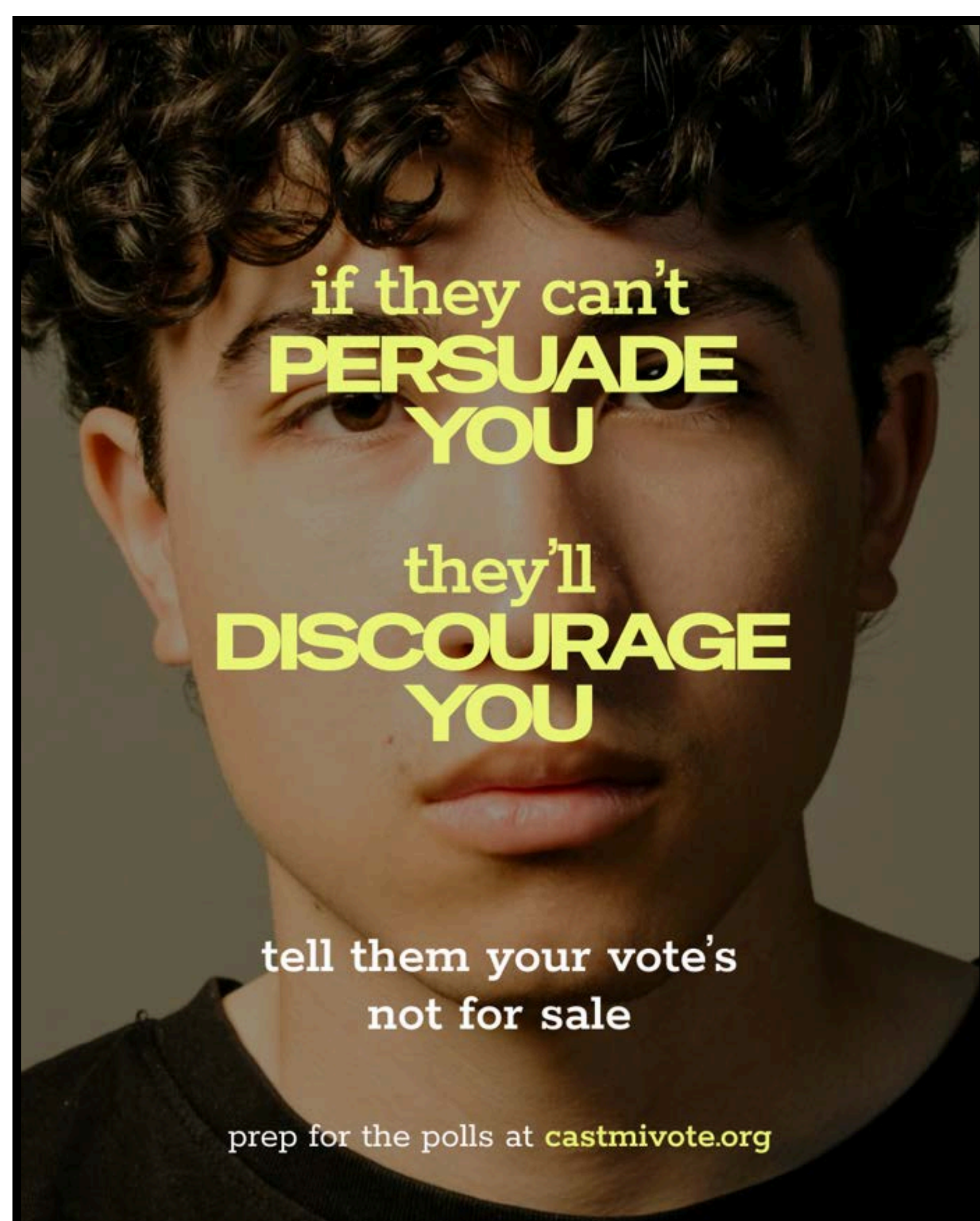
→ CAPTIONS

★ *"The November election is coming up. If you're eligible to vote, now is a good time to check your registration, decide how you want to vote, and make sure you know the deadlines. Let's check your registration and build a voting plan!"*

→ HASHTAGS

★ #PREPFORTHEPOLLS ★ #CASTMIVOTE

→ GRAPHICS [Download Here](#)



HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE?

➔ TEXT, EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

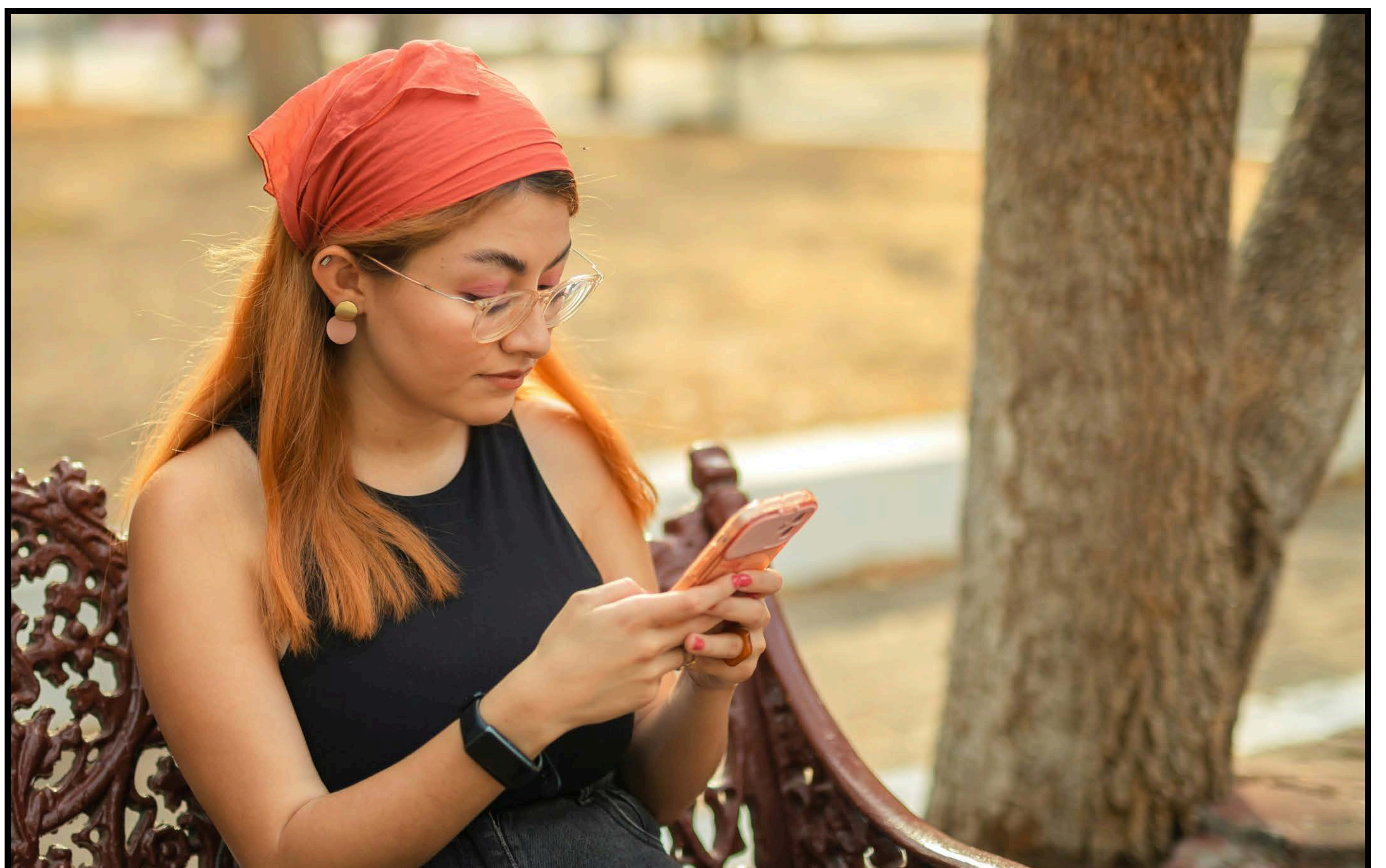
Media and digital communications are shaping the way people engage with elections, politics and their communities. You can fight misinformation generated online by including accurate and verified information in digital spaces. You can send a mass text to your active group chats, email your coworkers and leadership teams, repost voter information to your social media platforms and more.

➔ REMIND YOUR NETWORKS

Peer-to-peer communication and organizing are powerful tools for getting people out to the polls. Studies have shown even modest interventions — like a quick reminder in a friend group, short presentation during a meeting or a note in an email can have measurable effects on voting, especially when combined with follow-up support and accessible resources. Be the trusted voice in your networks and encourage others to register and build a voting plan.

➔ EVENTS, TOOLS AND GATHERINGS

Use meetings and gatherings to build collective voting plans. Include nonpartisan voter guides and materials at events you host or in your office spaces. Have a car or extra bus pass? Use that to help someone get to their voting location. Many of us are connected to various community spaces or have access to resources that can help others meet their voting needs. Consider what you have available to assist your community and get the word out on what you are able to support.



IN-PERSON GOTV SCRIPTS

Media and digital communications are shaping the way people engage with elections, politics and their communities. You can fight misinformation generated online by including accurate and verified information in digital spaces. You can send a mass text to your active group chats, email your coworkers and leadership teams, repost voter information to your social media platforms and more.

➔ STARTING THE CONVERSATION

“Hi, we’re sharing voting information as part of our #PrepforthePolls campaign. We just want to make sure every eligible Michigan voter has what they need to vote. Have you checked your registration or made a plan for how you’ll vote this year?”

➔ IF SOMEONE SAYS THEY’RE REGISTERED

“That’s great! The next step is making a voting plan. Do you know whether you want to vote by mail, vote early or vote on Election Day?”

➔ IF SOMEONE ISN’T SURE WHETHER THEY’RE REGISTERED

“No problem—many people aren’t sure, especially if they recently moved, changed their name, or are a new or student voter. You can check your registration at mi.gov/vote. Would you like to check together?”



IN-PERSON GOTV SCRIPTS

➔ IF SOMEONE SAYS THEY DON'T VOTE OR VOTING DOESN'T MATTER

★ *“The November election is coming up. If you’re eligible to vote, now is a good time to check your registration, decide how you want to vote, and make sure you know the deadlines. Let’s check your registration and build a voting plan!”*

★ *“But a small number of votes can affect things like [include issue/services/etc.]”*

★ *“But if your vote didn’t matter, some wouldn’t try to keep you from casting it. Keeping you from casting a vote can look like...”*

★ *Spreading false information about what documents you need to register to vote*

★ *Saying that ballot drop-boxes/mail-in ballots are not secure*

★ *Stationing law enforcement or other authorities at polling locations*

★ *Trying to pass laws Voter ID laws that make it harder to vote*

★ *Mass challenges to voter eligibility/frequent voter roll purges*

★ *Stripping the right to vote for people who are convicted of a crime and serving a jail/prison sentence*

➔ IF SOMEONE HAS A QUESTION YOU CAN'T ANSWER

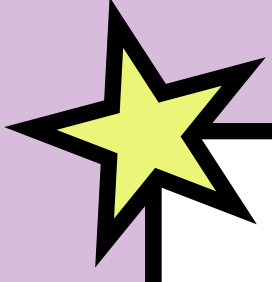
*“That’s an important question, and I want to make sure you get accurate information. Let’s check an official source together, like **mi.gov/vote** [or an additional resource from the Resources List].”*

GOTV RESOURCES



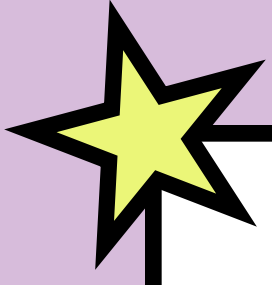
Michigan Voter Information Center

Use this resource to check registration statuses, view sample ballots, locate polling places, track absentee ballots, and identify early voting and drop box locations.



Michigan Secretary of State

Use this resource for reviewing official voting guidelines, absentee voting information, early voting information and election calendars.

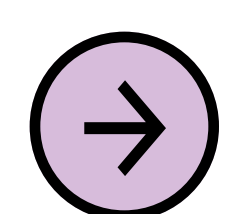


Local City or Township Clerk

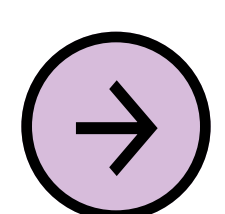
Information and administration on voter registration, absentee ballots, polling place details, drop boxes, and local election questions.



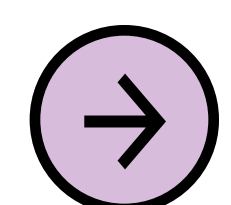
Nonpartisan/Nonprofit Voter Engagement Resources



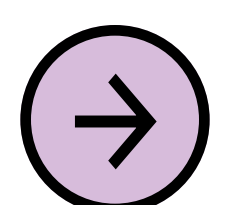
[Nonprofit VOTE](#)



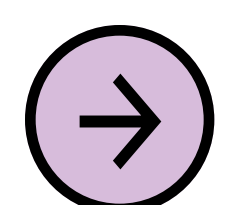
[Alliance for Justice/Bolder Advocacy Resource Page](#)



[MichiganVoting.Org](#)



[Ballotpedia](#)



[Vote411](#)