CIVIC INFLUENCERS™

PROJECT IDEAS, EXAMPLES, AND WALKTHROUGHS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

Here we have a collection of project ideas with walkthroughs on how they might be accomplished. This is not a comprehensive list of what you can do in your community but it can serve as a good starting place to identify the direction you want to head or help you come up with other ideas.

Due to the number of project examples in this document with thorough walkthrough it is best to navigate to sections you find of interest and view those. You will see we have sections for:

- Digital/Remote Projects
- Community Based Projects
- Structural Change Projects
  - Structural change in this context means there is an aim for the project to have a continuing impact after completion
- Peer Organizing Projects

You can also view project and activity ideas (without walkthroughs) in this **List of Project and Activity Ideas** document.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AN ACTIVITY AND A PROJECT

Over the course of the term we ask our fellows to complete three activities and a systemic change project. Due to the nature of our work the definitions of these can be a little fluid but here are some working definitions that can help in distinguishing between the two. If you ever have any questions or concerns please reach out to your respective State Organizer.

Activity - Individual actions, events, and engagements promoting civic engagement and/or contributing to the completion of your project. Activities can be incorporated into the development of your project or exist separately.

Systemic Change Project - Your long-term project over the course of the term (it can go beyond the term if one desires) aiming to have a larger and/or lasting impact.

DIGITAL/REMOTE PROJECT WALKTHROUGH EXAMPLES

Host an Online Info Session with Peers

Think about your first time voting or when you learned about a critical issue impacting your community. These moments can be confusing and frustrating, even if you spend time searching the internet for guidance. Hosting an online info session can help you and others in your community understand these important concepts and how to navigate them. It can also create space for you and your peers to organize, educate, and engage with each other.

Possible Topics:
- What to expect as a first time voter
- Nonpartisan profiles on the candidates running in your local election
- What to know about the issues and propositions on the ballot

Notes:
- Remember to remain nonpartisan while also allowing space for folks to share their experiences and ask questions.
- Use trusted and legitimate resources when gathering information and sharing with others
- Use helpful tools like examples, clear language and captions

1. Choose a Platform:
Select a reliable online platform for your info session. Options include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, or other video conferencing tools. Ensure the platform can accommodate the number of participants you expect.

2. Define the Purpose:
Determine the purpose of the info session. Are you sharing information about a specific topic, collaborating on a project, or simply discussing ideas? Clearly define the session's objective.

3. Set a Date and Time:
Choose a date and time that works for most participants. Consider different time zones if your peers are from various locations.

4. Create an Agenda:
Develop a structured agenda outlining the topics you'll cover, the time allocated for each, and any interactive elements such as Q&A sessions or discussions. Share the agenda with participants in advance.

5. Invite Participants:
Send out invitations to your peers with details about the info session, including the platform link, date, time, and agenda. Consider using calendar invites to help participants remember.

6. Prepare Content:
Gather the content you'll present, such as slides, documents, or visuals. Organize your content logically to support your agenda.

7. Test Technology:
Familiarize yourself with the chosen platform's features and test your audio, video, and screen-sharing capabilities. Make sure your peers are also comfortable with the platform.

8. Engage Participants:
During the session, actively engage participants by asking questions, encouraging discussions, and involving them in activities or polls related to the topic.

9. Present Content:
Share your content while speaking clearly and maintaining eye contact with the camera. Use visuals to enhance understanding and keep participants engaged.

10. Encourage Interaction:
Allocate time for questions and discussions. Use the platform's chat or Q&A features to collect questions and address them at appropriate intervals.

11. Manage Time:
Stick to the agenda and ensure that you're not rushing through topics or going over time. Respect participants' schedules.

12. Foster Inclusivity:
Encourage all participants to contribute. If you notice someone hasn't spoken, invite them to share their thoughts.

13. Summarize and Conclude:
Summarize the key points discussed and highlight any actionable steps that participants can take. Thank everyone for their participation.

14. Gather Feedback:
At the end of the session, ask participants for feedback on the content, format, and overall experience. This can help you improve future info sessions.

15. Share Resources:
If relevant, share any resources discussed during the session, such as presentation slides, documents, or links to further reading.

16. Follow Up:
Send a follow-up email to participants with a brief summary of the session, any shared resources, and a thank-you note for their participation.

17. Plan Future Sessions:
Based on feedback and the success of the info session, consider planning more sessions on related topics or expanding the scope of discussions.

Create a Digital and Live Database

Building a database focused towards helping others in their civic engagement requires dedication, attention to detail, and a commitment to accuracy. By providing a comprehensive and user-friendly resource, you can empower individuals to become informed and active participants in their democracy.

Possible Topics:
- Contact information for Representatives
- How representatives have voted on previous bills and legislation
- Current important bills and their progress in the state/federal legislature

1. Define Your Scope:
Decide whether your database will cover federal or state-level representatives and legislation. Consider which issues you want to focus on (e.g., environment, education, healthcare) and whether you're targeting a specific geographic area.

2. Choose a Platform:
Select a platform to build and host your database. Options include spreadsheet software (like Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel), a custom-built website with a database backend, or using a specialized database management system.

3. Gather Data:
Collect accurate and up-to-date information on representatives and legislation. You can source this information from official government websites, legislative databases, and non-profit organizations that track legislation.

4. Representative Information:
For each representative, gather their contact details (email, phone number, social media), committee assignments, office addresses, and links to their official websites.

5. Legislation Information:
For each bill, collect its title, summary, bill number, introduction date, current status, committee assignments, and links to related documents.

6. Create Data Fields:
In your chosen platform, create data fields to accommodate the collected information. Each representative and bill should have a separate entry with the relevant fields.

7. Organize the Data:
Establish a clear structure for your database. Consider using categories, tags, or filters to help users quickly find the information they're looking for. Organize representatives by chamber (House or Senate) and by state if applicable.

8. Regular Updates:
Legislative information changes frequently. Set up a schedule to regularly update your database with the latest information. You can automate this process if possible.

9. User-Friendly Interface:
If you're creating a website or using a platform that allows customization, design a user-friendly interface. Make it easy for users to search, filter, and navigate through the database.

10. Accessibility and Searchability:
Incorporate search functionality and filters that allow users to narrow down their queries based on location, issue, representative, or bill status.

11. Educational Resources:
Include resources on civic engagement, such as how to contact representatives effectively, understanding the legislative process, and how bills become law. This enhances the value of your database.

12. Privacy and Security:
Ensure that any personal data you collect (such as representatives' contact information) is used responsibly and securely. Clearly state your privacy policy.

13. User Engagement:
Encourage user engagement by allowing them to provide feedback on the database, suggest updates, and share their experiences.

14. Promote Your Database:
Spread the word about your database through social media, community groups, and relevant websites. Highlight the benefits of using your resource for civic engagement.

15. Feedback and Improvement:
Regularly seek feedback from users to identify areas for improvement. Use this feedback to enhance the functionality and usability of your database.

16. Collaboration:
Consider collaborating with other civic engagement organizations to expand the reach and impact of your database.

17. Educate Users:
Offer tutorials or guides on how to effectively use your database to contact representatives, track bills, and stay informed about legislative processes.

Create Digital Content on Voting or Related Social Justice Issues

Creating digital content on voting and social justice issues requires a combination of research, creativity, and empathy. By delivering informative, engaging, and actionable content, you can contribute to raising awareness and promoting positive change in your community and beyond.

Content Formats:
- Podcast
- Website
- Blog/Vlog
- Social Media Posts/Videos
- Online Zine

1. Understand Your Audience:
Define your target audience. Are you addressing young voters, a specific community, or the general public? Tailor your content to their interests, needs, and level of understanding.

2. Choose Your Platform:
Select the digital platform that aligns with your audience's preferences. Options include social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok), video-sharing platforms (YouTube, Vimeo), blogs, and podcasts.

3. Define Your Message:
Clearly articulate the message you want to convey. Whether it's about voter registration, understanding the voting process, or advocating for specific social justice issues, your message should be concise and impactful.

4. Research Thoroughly:
Gather accurate and up-to-date information on the topic. This will help you provide reliable content and answer potential questions from your audience.

5. Plan Your Content:
Create an outline or storyboard for your content. This could be in the form of a script for a video, a list of talking points for a podcast, or an outline for a blog post. Organize your content in a logical and coherent structure.

6. Create Engaging Visuals:
Use images, infographics, and videos to make your content visually appealing and easy to understand. Visuals can help simplify complex concepts and capture your audience's attention.

7. Develop Compelling Narratives:
Craft stories or examples that resonate with your audience. Personal anecdotes, case studies, or real-life scenarios can make your content relatable and memorable.

8. Use Clear Language:
Avoid jargon and technical terms. Use simple and accessible language to ensure your content is easily understood by a broad audience.

9. Incorporate Interactivity:
Engage your audience through interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, and call-to-action buttons. This encourages active participation and helps reinforce key points.

10. Provide Actionable Steps:
Give your audience clear and actionable steps they can take. Whether it's registering to vote, contacting their representatives, or joining advocacy groups, provide guidance on how to get involved.

11. Utilize Social Media Effectively:
Tailor your content to each social media platform's format and audience. Use relevant hashtags to increase visibility, and engage with comments and messages to foster conversation.

12. Be Inclusive and Respectful:
Address a diverse range of perspectives and ensure that your content is inclusive and respectful of different backgrounds and opinions.

13. Collaborate and Amplify:
Collaborate with influencers, activists, or organizations working on similar issues. Cross-promotion can help you reach a wider audience and lend credibility to your content.

14. Schedule and Promote:
Plan a content schedule to maintain consistency. Use social media scheduling tools to post at optimal times, and promote your content across different platforms.

15. Monitor and Analyze:
Track the performance of your content using analytics tools provided by the platforms. Understand what's working well and adjust your approach accordingly.

16. Engage with Feedback:
Respond to comments, messages, and feedback from your audience. Engagement builds a sense of community and trust.

17. Stay Updated:
Keep up with the latest developments in voting rights and social justice issues. Update your content to reflect any changes or new information.

Online Town Halls / Interviews with Local Elected Officials or Public Figures

1. Define Your Purpose and Goals:
Determine the purpose of the event. Are you aiming to inform the public, address specific issues, or promote engagement? Set clear goals to guide your planning.

2. Choose the Format:
Decide whether the event will be a town hall-style Q&A, an interview, a panel discussion, or a combination of formats. This will dictate the structure of the event and how you engage with participants.

3. Select the Platform:
Choose a reliable and user-friendly online platform for hosting the event. Popular options include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and Webex. Make sure the platform can accommodate your expected number of participants and offers interactive features like Q&A, polls, and chat.

4. Identify and Invite Speakers:
Contact the local elected officials, public figures, or subject matter experts you want to participate. Clearly outline the event's purpose, format, date, and time. Ensure they have the necessary technology and are comfortable with the online format.

5. Plan the Agenda:
Create a detailed agenda that includes the event's structure, timings for each segment, and the topics to be discussed. Share this agenda with the speakers and the audience in advance.

6. Promote the Event:
Use various channels to promote the event. Utilize social media, community websites, local newspapers, and email newsletters to reach your target audience. Create visually appealing graphics or posters to attract attention.

7. Set Up Technical Details:
Familiarize yourself with the chosen platform's features and settings. Test the audio and video quality, and ensure that the speakers have a stable internet connection, proper lighting, and a quiet environment.

8. Prepare Questions:
Prepare a list of questions to guide the discussion. Include a mix of general questions about the topic, as well as specific questions related to the participants' roles or expertise.

9. Design Interaction Channels:
Utilize the platform's interactive features. Incorporate Q&A sessions where participants can ask questions in real-time. Polls can gather opinions and insights, and the chat function can be used for comments and engagement.

10. Rehearse:
Conduct a rehearsal with your speakers to ensure everyone is comfortable with the platform, knows the agenda, and understands their roles. This will help iron out any technical or logistical issues in advance.

11. Host the Event:
On the day of the event, start on time and follow the agenda. Introduce the participants, outline the rules for engagement (like muting when not speaking), and moderate the discussion to ensure it stays on track.

12. Engage the Audience:
Encourage participants to ask questions using the Q&A feature or chat. Address a variety of viewpoints and ensure that the conversation remains respectful and inclusive.

13. Record the Event:
Record the event so that you can share it later with those who couldn't attend live. This can also serve as a valuable resource for future reference.

14. Follow Up:
Send a thank-you email to the speakers, participants, and volunteers who helped organize the event. Share any relevant resources, links, or materials discussed during the event.

15. Gather Feedback:
Collect feedback from both participants and speakers to understand what went well and where improvements can be made. This feedback will be crucial for planning future events.

COMMUNITY BASED PROJECT WALKTHROUGHS

#1, Advocating on local issues.

Advocacy can look like many different things but the goal is to communicate information about an issue and try to generate action on it. So you will need to think about what the issue you are focusing on is and who has the ability to take action on it.

Often our local or state level representatives have power over the issues impacting us and they can be much more accessible than federal level representatives. Typically the ways to reach them are during open meetings, city council meetings, during an appointment with the representative, phone or email, and more depending on the individual.

Also, remember there is power in numbers. Bringing out friends, family, fellow community members, etc. to speak on how these issues are impacting them can help show this is something important to the locale, not just something one individual cares about.

There are a lot of other ways to advocate on an issue but a few solid additional options are running an informational campaign, organizing community events/protests/speeches on the issue, and coalition building to build momentum and action on an issue.

Informational campaigns can look many different ways as well but here are a few examples. One is running a digital campaign, trying to raise awareness online (often through social media) using various kinds of content and sharing ways of getting involved. There are also more analog options like flyering relevant areas, leaving literature at local businesses, canvassing a community of the issue, etc.

Holding events to advocate on an issue is a great option as well. The type of event(s) can vary but try to pick something that you think will be relevant and impactful. Organizing protests is a good option, just think about a few things when doing so. You want a location folks can get to and that will be noticeable for your target. You'll need to look into the permitting process to make sure everything is legal. And, you'll need a number of resources like a power source, speakers (people and the equipment), signs/literature, and potentially food/water. Other types of events can range from panel discussions, town halls, speaker focused, media focused (like

showing a documentary), arts focused (visual and/or music artists, or a workshop), and generally anything else you can think of. Each type of event carriers it's own needs but generally speaking you will need to work out where it will be, who will be leading/speaking, when it'll occur, who your target audience is and how you'll get them to come, how you will promote the event, and what material resources will you need.

Coalition building is also a great thing to incorporate into any of these examples or other ideas you come up with. Coalition building in this context would be trying to bring in an organization(s) and other individual(s) to help organize, come up with, and lead whatever advocacy actions you are taking. You can also do the alternative of joining in on campaigns that already have momentum or are starting up.

#2, Remote and social media campaigns

Organizing remotely can look like many different things but the most common is a focused issue campaign with a specific goal and call to action for the audience. Try to focus on issues relevant to your locale or state as these are what impact folks day-to-day lives, they're more tangible and easier to imagine having an impact on. Your focus can be many different things; increasing youth voter turnout/civic engagement in your state/district, fighting the destruction of a local greenspace, trying to get a polling location in a community, support/opposition for a specific piece of legislation, etc. Try to focus on what you see as important for your wider community, achievable to have an impact on (small or large), and that you care about.

Once you have a focus there are a couple things you'll want to think about; how is this impacting our state/region/community, how will you reach folks in your state/region/community, what can someone do about it (writing/calling legislators, attending city council meetings and speaking on the issue, signing a petition that will be presented to a specific audience, etc.), and what achievable outcome are you hoping to have.

The goal outcome should act as a guiding measure for many of the previously listed questions. You want everything you are working on to potentially contribute to our desired outcome. It won't be a linear path necessarily as some actions, posts, etc. can fall flat or have unintended effects, don't feel discouraged if these occur. When something doesn't end up contributing to your aim try to evaluate what parts worked, what didn't, what was within your control, and how you would have done things differently with the benefit of hindsight. Also, keep your goal attainable, it can still be ambitious but it is best to focus on something you can see yourself achieving as it will make it easier to stay motivated, create clear messaging, and to have an impact.

Reaching folks can be one of the more daunting parts of that list, one of the more accessible ways to do it is through a social media campaign. Social media can be difficult but there are a few best practices for this kind of campaign, one big suggestion is try to get other organizations in the area or focused on the same issue to signal boost your campaign. This can be a great way to get things off the ground or to build momentum. Also, choose which platform(s) you're on consciously and develop a bit of an understanding on how their algorithm works. Different platforms have different audiences (TikTok skews younger, Twitter can be a bit wonkier, etc.) so choose which ones might match your target audience. Different platforms also

prefer certain practices and types of posting so do a bit of research. But, a few examples are Instagram prefers images with faces, reels posting, and less is generally more with your number of posts. Twitter is good for more frequent posting but use fewer hashtags and try to keep text a bit more concise. Civic Influencers does have a **Social Media Toolkit** available (also located in our **Digital Storytelling Toolkit**), but these platforms are always changing so try to look up info from a variety of sources. Another option for reaching folks remotely is just direct outreach through phone, email, DMs, etc. This is best if you're being a bit more strategic about who's support you want and is easier if you have an established network in these kinds of spaces.

Try to keep your content/engagement clear, concise, and good quality. You want folks to know what the issue is, why they should care, and what they can do about it. Spending time on presentation is important, if something looks messy or confusing folks will be less likely to engage with it or read your text. **Canva** can be helpful for visual designs and social media content.

When reaching out to folks it is good to have a call to action. You have already got them caring about something through your post/email/etc. and they might want to know what to do next. Try to keep the actions easily accessible or at least mention one that is such as emailing their representatives with a pre-scripted email, sharing a post or telling others about a piece of info, signing an online petition, and more. From the folks willing to do the easily accessible option you can try to pull for more intensive engagements like an in-person action/event, helping form an organization, helping with your current campaign, and more.

CIVIC INFLUENCERS™

#3, Organizing a town hall event with local representatives or candidates.

Often folks do not have the opportunity to meet with, hear from, or interact with their local representatives/candidates (and often town hall type events only occur around election cycles). Creating the opportunity can be meaningful and impactful for your community.

Pulling the event off does take a bit of planning and resources, partnering with other individuals or organizations can greatly help to make things a bit easier. When organizing the event you'll need to consider a number of things.

When would you hold this event? What time of the week might be best for the target audience of this event as well as what date might be available for the representatives/candidates and the venue.

Where will you hold this event? Finding local community focused spaces can be a great place to start looking as they are more accessible, usually have space for meetings and smaller events, and often supportive of events like this. Community centers, libraries, and local organizations can all be great places to ask around.

Who are you hoping will come speak? You may want a single representative, all the candidates running for a specific office, representatives at a certain level of government or who hold offices relevant to particular local issues, etc. Once you have an idea of who you'd like to attend you'll need to reach out to the representatives/candidates to find out if they are willing and able to come to an event of this type and when might work for them.

You'll need to identify what resources you may still need and find them. Does the library have enough chairs? If not, can you borrow some from another space? Do you want other organizations there who are tabling? There are many of these questions you can ask depending on specific circumstances.

Lastly, you need to think about how to promote the event. There are many ways to do so; you can have other organizations share with their networks, flyer a relevant area, leave info in local businesses, promote on social media,

share at other events, etc. Do what you think will be the most effective for turning out your target audience and is personally accessible.

#4, Building (and sharing) an informational resource for your community.

Often folks don't have the time, resources, energy, etc. to put time into researching candidates, their representatives, ballot measures, local issues, etc. Putting together the information in a clear, non-partisan, and accessible way can be a great resource. The focus of the piece you are developing can vary greatly but try to build it around what you think might be beneficial for your community. (**Canva** can be a great resource for designing it)

When sharing it out you should take a similar approach as well. Think about how to best reach your community, this may be through a podcast, video series, flyering, social media, distributing at events/meetings, leaving stacks at local businesses, etc. Take whatever approach you think is best for others and accessible for you.

#5, Getting election day off in your workplace.

This project may not be feasible in every workspace, it is dependent on the industry, company culture, and flexibility of the owner/operator.

This begins with building the support of your co-workers to show your employer that there is the desire for this to occur. Petitions can be an accessible option to show support and online petitions allow for easier sharing.

After being able to generate a show of support, discussions with management need to occur to determine if this is possible and, if it is, what measures need to be taken to avoid disruptions to the business. If management opposes the ideas avoid conflict and try to come up with alternatives such as an extended break for co-workers to go vote if they choose to do so or allowing the workday to be optional so those who do want to vote can take the time to do so and those that choose not to or have already voted can still come in to work.

#6, Organizing transportation on election day

Transportation to and from the polls is a common barrier to voting for folks. Organizing transportation for them can be incredibly impactful, and is a project that is very scalable as you can work on this yourself, bring in others with vehicles, or try to partner with other organizations or businesses to help with transportation.

If doing this by yourself make sure not to over-commit and only take on what you know you'll be able to do. Reach out to your larger community to see who might be in need of transportation and when on election day. Work to map out how you will go about transporting folks, keeping a list or spreadsheet of the order of folks and where you are picking them up from can be very helpful to keep track of things day of.

If bringing in friends, family, and/or other community members to help with transportation you'll want to make sure you make things as simple as possible for them so come election day things go smoothly. Again map out who you are getting from where to make a plan and then work out a list of when/where they are getting picked up, where the driver is going next (the polls or picking up another person), and their contact info so drivers can reach out to folks when they arrive or if there are any issues. If bringing in other organizations or a business is partnering you'll likely need to do the same as if it was a smaller group just at a larger scale, though some partners might want to take on aspects of the administrative duties themselve.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE PROJECT WALKTHROUGHS

Create a coalition/organization/club in your community or on your campus

Oftentimes, the first step toward addressing an issue is to find the people who believe in the same things you do. Building community not only allows you to establish a safe space for discussion, but also allows you to gather resources to take future steps! The first step will be to find a topic/issue/need to center your group around. Consider the following questions to help you get started:

- What are your long-term and short-term/immediate goals?
- What resources are available?
- What barriers might you face/already be facing?
- In what specific ways do you want your community to be strengthened by your project?
- Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help?
- Who are your opponents?
- Who can or will be affected by your project but may or may not support it?
- What tactics will you employ to create structural change?
- What do you need to know about your issue, that you don't know now?
- How will you find out the information? Who can help you find it?
- How will you describe the problem you are seeking to address, in the media and to the general public? What phrases will you use?
- How will you talk about your solution in the media and to the general public? What phrases will you use?

Here is an example of how to build coalition around a set goal:
- Goal: Increase voter turnout
- Ways to potentially employ campus/community-wide strategies to increase voter turnout long-term:
    - Advocating for a campus or community polling location (including early voting sites)
    - Establishing a strong relationship with your local board of elections office + attend their board meetings
    - Events with legislators - get to know the candidate
    - Creating "office hours" to help others learn voting processes in their area
    - Hosting a forum for voting questions and information

- Registering people to vote, and gathering their contact information so you can follow-up with them the week/day of voting and see if they need a ride to the polls
- Work with car services (Uber, Lyft, Zipcar, local taxi companies, etc.) or campus/community transportation to provide discounted or free rides to the polls
- Partner with student or local newspaper to share election and voting resources & information
- Creating a website with statewide voting laws and accessible information
- Having a dedicated resources page on your school's website for voting information/resources on campus
- Party at the polls with music, stickers, snacks, water, etc.
- Open discussion events for students to talk about voting related topics and issues they want to focus on
- Community forum on the effects of voting on your community
- Dinner with freshman to teach them more about voter engagement
- Surveys/polls/Q&As on social media to provide voter education
- Working with your school to make voter education a part of new student orientation
- Annual voter registration block party
- Semesterly class presentation on voting information
    - First Year Seminars
    - Meetings with athletic teams or campus clubs and organizations

Advocating on local issues and addressing an injustice in your community

Advocacy can look like many different things, but the ultimate goal is to communicate information about an issue and try to generate action on it. You will need to think about the issue you are focusing on, who has the ability to take action on it, and how to implement long-lasting structural changes. Here are some things to consider/remember in thinking about advocacy for structural changes:

- Often our local or state level representatives have power over the issues impacting us, and they can be much more accessible than federal level representatives. Typically the ways to reach them are during open meetings, city council meetings, attending local board of elections meetings, during an appointment with the representative, phone or email, and more depending on the individual.
- You also may be focusing on campus-based advocacy that requires identifying and meeting with campus administrators, faculty, and staff to implement institutional change through policies and culture.
- Remember there is power in numbers. Find out if/when there is public comment at local (and state!) meetings. Bringing out friends, family, fellow community members, etc. to speak on how these issues or policies are impacting them can help show this is something important to the locale, not just something one individual cares about.
- Coalition building is a great thing to incorporate into any of these examples or other ideas you come up with. Coalition building in this context would be trying to bring in an organization(s) and other individual(s) to help organize, come up with, and lead whatever advocacy actions you are taking. You can also do the alternative of joining in on campaigns that already have momentum or are starting up.
- There are a lot of other ways to advocate on an issue, but a few solid options are running an informational campaign, organizing community/campus events/protests/speeches on the issue, and coalition building to build momentum and action on an issue.
- Informational campaigns can look many different ways as well but here are a few examples. One is running a digital campaign, trying to raise awareness online, using various kinds of content, and sharing ways of getting involved. There are also more analog options like flyering relevant areas, leaving literature at local businesses or across campus, canvassing a community of the issue, etc.
- Holding events to advocate on an issue is a great option as well. The type of event(s) can vary, but try to pick something that you think will be relevant and

- impactful. Organizing protests is a good option, just think about a few things when doing so. You want a location folks can get to and that will be noticeable for your target. You'll need to look into the permitting process to make sure everything is legal. And, you'll need a number of resources like a power source, speakers (people and the equipment), signs/literature, and potentially food/water. Other types of events can range from panel discussions, town halls, speaker focused, media focused (like showing a documentary), arts focused (visual and/or music artists, or a workshop), and generally anything else you can think of. Each type of event carries its own needs, but generally speaking you will need to work out where it will be, who will be leading/speaking, when it'll occur, who your target audience is and how you'll get them to come, how you will promote the event, and what material resources will you need.

Time Off to Vote

You can create a structural change project around advocating for Time Off to Vote on your campus or community!

For context, in a Civic Influencers' national survey, 71% of respondents felt that giving youth time off to vote is the most important way to increase youth voter turnout. States across the country are working to undo decades of progress through things like stricter voter-ID laws and the closing of polling stations. These policies put young voters—and especially those from historically marginalized communities—squarely in the crosshairs.

One way we can fight back is by ensuring Time Off to Vote!

What does Time Off to Vote mean, exactly?

1. It takes place annually (either nationally or on the state level).

2. It happens around Election day and/or the early voting period.

3. It's acknowledged through time off from school and/or work.

4. It is honored by allowing people time and support to engage in civic activities such as voting, serving as poll workers, and volunteering in their communities.

There's a lot of hard work being done to ensure that TOTV becomes national law. However, this work can also happen at state and local levels, at businesses, and on college campuses through your work. Here are some things to consider in working on an TOTV long-term project:

-   Reach out to any stakeholders, professors, officials, etc. who can help discuss with you your idea in relation to the area you are in
-   Think about what EDAH would look like on your campus or community. Is it getting classes off that day? Is it lobbying to make it a local/state/federal holiday? Does it look like getting the day off at your workplace? Who could you talk to, and how can you get started?
-   This project may not be feasible in every workspace, it is dependent on the industry, company culture, and flexibility of the owner/operator. This begins with building the support of your co-workers to show your employer that there is the desire for this to occur. Petitions can be an accessible option to show support and online petitions allow for easier sharing.

- After being able to generate a show of support, discussions with management need to occur to determine if this is possible and, if it is, what measures need to be taken to avoid disruptions to the business. If management opposes the ideas avoid conflict and try to come up with alternatives such as an extended break for co-workers to go vote if they choose to do so or allowing the workday to be optional so those who do want to vote can take the time to do so and those that choose not to or have already voted can still come in to work.

Want to learn more about how to advocate for Time Off to Vote? Check out our **TOTV webpage** for steps resources.

PEER ORGANIZING PROJECT WALKTHROUGHS
Advocating on local issues

Advocacy can look like many different things but the goal is to communicate information about an issue and try to generate action on it. So you will need to think about what the issue you are focusing on is and who has the ability to take action on it.

Often our local or state level representatives have power over the issues impacting us and they can be much more accessible than federal level representatives. Typically the ways to reach them are during open meetings, city council meetings, during an appointment with the representative, phone or email, and more depending on the individual.

Also, remember there is power in numbers. Bringing out friends, family, fellow community members, etc. to speak on how these issues are impacting them can help show this is something important to the locale, not just something one individual cares about.

There are a lot of other ways to advocate on an issue but a few solid additional options are running an informational campaign, organizing community events/protests/speeches on the issue, and coalition building to build momentum and action on an issue.

Informational campaigns can look many different ways as well but here are a few examples. One is running a digital campaign, trying to raise awareness online (often through social media) using various kinds of content and sharing ways of getting involved. There are also more analog options like flyering relevant areas, leaving literature at local businesses, canvassing a community of the issue, etc.

Holding events to advocate on an issue is a great option as well. The type of event(s) can vary but try to pick something that you think will be relevant and impactful. Organizing protests is a good option, just think about a few things when doing so. You want a location folks can get to and that will be noticeable for your target. You'll need to look into the permitting process to make sure everything is legal. And, you'll need a number of resources like a power source, speakers (people and the equipment), signs/literature, and potentially food/water. Other types of events can range from panel discussions, town halls, speaker focused, media focused (like

showing a documentary), arts focused (visual and/or music artists, or a workshop), and generally anything else you can think of. Each type of event carriers it's own needs but generally speaking you will need to work out where it will be, who will be leading/speaking, when it'll occur, who your target audience is and how you'll get them to come, how you will promote the event, and what material resources will you need.

Coalition building is also a great thing to incorporate into any of these examples or other ideas you come up with. Coalition building in this context would be trying to bring in an organization(s) and other individual(s) to help organize, come up with, and lead whatever advocacy actions you are taking. You can also do the alternative of joining in on campaigns that already have momentum or are starting up.

Organizing a town hall event with local representatives or candidates.

Often folks do not have the opportunity to meet with, hear from, or interact with their local representatives/candidates (and often town hall type events only occur around election cycles). Creating the opportunity can be meaningful and impactful for your community.

Pulling the event off does take a bit of planning and resources, partnering with other individuals or organizations can greatly help to make things a bit easier. When organizing the event you'll need to consider a number of things.

When would you hold this event? What time of the week might be best for the target audience of this event as well as what date might be available for the representatives/candidates and the venue.

Where will you hold this event? Finding local community focused spaces can be a great place to start looking as they are more accessible, usually have space for meetings and smaller events, and often supportive of events like this. Community centers, libraries, and local organizations can all be great places to ask around.

Who are you hoping will come speak? You may want a single representative, all the candidates running for a specific office, representatives at a certain level of government or who hold offices relevant to particular local issues, etc. Once you have an idea of who you'd like to attend you'll need to reach out to the representatives/candidates to find out if they are willing and able to come to an event of this type and when might work for them.

You'll need to identify what resources you may still need and find them. Does the library have enough chairs? If not, can you borrow some from another space? Do you want other organizations there who are tabling? There are many of these questions you can ask depending on specific circumstances.

Lastly, you need to think about how to promote the event. There are many ways to do so; you can have other organizations share with their networks, flyer a relevant area, leave info in local businesses, promote on social media, share at other events, etc. Do what you think will be the most effective for turning out your target audience and is personally accessible.

Organizing transportation on election day

Transportation to and from the polls is a common barrier to voting for folks. Organizing transportation for them can be incredibly impactful, and is a project that is very scalable as you can work on this yourself, bring in others with vehicles, or try to partner with other organizations or businesses to help with transportation.

If doing this by yourself make sure not to over-commit and only take on what you know you'll be able to do. Reach out to your larger community to see who might be in need of transportation and when on election day. Work to map out how you will go about transporting folks, keeping a list or spreadsheet of the order of folks and where you are picking them up from can be very helpful to keep track of things day of.

If bringing in friends, family, and/or other community members to help with transportation you'll want to make sure you make things as simple as possible for them so come election day things go smoothly. Again map out who you are getting from where to make a plan and then work out a list of when/where they are getting picked up, where the driver is going next (the polls or picking up another person), and their contact info so drivers can reach out to folks when they arrive or if there are any issues. If bringing in other organizations or a business is partnering you'll likely need to do the same as if it was a smaller group just at a larger scale, though some partners might want to take on aspects of the administrative duties themselves.

Advocating for a polling place on campus/community

An on-campus polling place is a powerful symbol of an institutional commitment to student voting by campus and local election officials, as well as a proven mechanism that increases students' access to the ballot box. Central on-campus polling places provide students, a population with unique needs, key accessibility, while also benefiting the disabled community and the wider college community. Research demonstrates that greater access to on-campus polling locations correlates with increased student voter turnout. While college students voted at a higher rate than youth voters in 2020, young people who did not vote cited lack of transportation and inconvenient locations as barriers that kept them from the polls.

ADDITIONAL IDEA RESOURCES

- **[Additional Project and Activity Ideas](#) (without walkthrough)**
- **[Grass Roots Organizations and Local Chapters](#)**
- **[Free Tools and Software](#)**