

How do I research the candidates and the issues on my ballot?

- To find which candidates will be on your ballot, visit the site below and follow the steps carefully.
 1. Ballotpedia https://ballotpedia.org/Sample_Ballot_Lookup
 2. Enter your home address
 3. Select election day
 4. You will find the list of candidates who will appear on your ballot.
 5. Select a candidate to view bios, platforms, brief voting record notes, and link to campaign website

How do I find out where to go to vote?

- To find your local precinct visit the site below and follow the steps carefully.
 1. Vote.org <https://www.vote.org/polling-place-locator/> (you have to jump through a lot of hoops to read carefully)
 2. Select State. If you are not a state resident, you cannot view information. This example is for Florida. It is likely other states follow a similar protocol.
 3. You will be redirected to your state's website
 4. You will see your registration information. Select link for "ballot and precinct information" at the bottom of the page.
 5. Select "upcoming elections" at the top of the page
 6. All upcoming election days will appear with the date of election day, last day to register, early voting start and end dates, and the address of your precinct. You can also select

the option to request a mail ballot. As elections get close you will be able to view a sample ballot.

What should I say when I contact my representatives to comment on an issue?

The following is a generic script for how to speak to your representatives in government. It may be adapted to a letter or email form by replacing the word “calling” with “writing”. You will almost always be in conversation with a staff member whose job it is to hear your concerns, so be specific and educate yourself on your topic, whether that is pipeline construction, justice violations, accepting money from fossil fuel companies, endorsing a candidate or bill etc.

There are several key elements that you should include:

- Your name
- Your affiliation
- If you are calling a local politician, state your address (optional)
- Who you are a constituent of/ the rep you are calling
- The topic you are calling about
- Why you care about the issue
- Why they should listen to your concerns
- A call to action for your representative

Hello. I would like to speak with the individual in your office who hears public comment.

(You may be speaking to this person or they may transfer you.)

My name is _____ and I am calling with/ I am a student at (If you are part of an organization or institution) _____. I live at (your address) _____ and I am a constituent of _____. I would like to make a comment to senator/congressman/governor _____ about (Name your issue) _____. I am very concerned about this issue because (explain why this is important) _____. I urge senator/congressman/governor _____ to take action on this issue by (your call to action)_____.

(They may ask where to send a response)

Please send a response to my email at _____ or by phone at _____. Thank you and have a good day.

How can I be proactive against voter suppression?

Your vote is powerful, and those fearful will try to suppress it. Here are tips to actively fight against the tedious loopholes and rules they will try to use to dock you.

- Voter ID
 - In the past elections, many states have used being extremely particular about the type of identification required to halt the process of voting for many. Each state has different laws and requirements. Below is a link to look up your state's requirements.
 - <https://www.vote.org/voter-id-laws/>
- Voter Purging
 - Every year, millions are purged from voting on small technicalities (address or name change for example). Use the link below to

make sure you are still registered to vote and prevent any last minute stress.

- <https://verify.vote.org/>
- Voter Registration
 - Each state has different requirements to register. Additionally, some let you do it online. Use the link below to find out what your state needs and the easiest way for you to register!
 - <https://vote.gov/>

I'm Native American, what are my voting rights?

- Know your voting rights:
 - Don't be blindsided at the polls, know your voting rights. Below is the ACLU's handy guide for you. While states will have some differences (use resources above) this is the general voting guidebook. It covers anything from protecting voters who are non-english speakers and/or have a disability all the way to something as simple as what to bring to the polls. It also has a whole section on identifying when someone is illegally infringing on your right to vote and what to do if it happens to you.
 - <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights/#someone-is-interfering-with-my-right-to-vote>
- Native American Voters:
 - In the 2018 election several states tried to prohibit your right to vote, including changing their laws last minute. While your communities pulled together to fight for your right to vote, it further exposed an ongoing oppression of your people. Now more than ever, Indigenous voices are needed in this country. Let's put a stop the suppression of Indigenous voters.

- The Native American Rights Fund created a voting rights coalition. Below is a link for how Natives can approach voter suppression on a Tribal government level, through your communities and what an individual can do.
- https://vote.narf.org/?_ga=2.160451192.494574639.1590467632-160906808.1590467632

How do I talk to the press?

Being able to accurately demonstrate your message to the media is a critical aspect of building a movement. The press is hugely influential in conveying public opinion to policymakers, it can sway the opinions of people who otherwise would not be inclined to join your fight, and it can inform potential partners of your work.

- KNOW YOUR MESSAGE:
 - Press will be less inclined to speak with you if you seem uncertain as to the message you're trying to convey.
 - Communicate with your allies: make sure you are united in your messaging.
 - Always have a short blurb in the back of your mind that describes your work, so you can discuss, if asked.
- KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE:
 - Even though you are talking WITH a reporter, you are talking TO the public.
 - Don't get lost in the non-essential details: people are reading/watching your interviews to learn about the underlying issue, and not about the statistics that defend your argument.
 - Make sure your language is not overly complex (think of simple, plain english ways to say complex ideas).

- If possible, think of ways you can convey your message in a way that others can associate with.
- Other tips:
 - If you have first-hand experience or an emotional story that ties you to your messaging, USE IT!
 - Control the reporter, as opposed to them controlling you: a reporter may disagree with you and try to ask leading questions that can back you into a corner. Remember that you have control over what you say.
 - Remember that a sound bite may be extracted from your interview; watch what you say and don't say anything potentially controversial, because it can be misconstrued in the media.
 - Be polite! Journalists are an important part of displaying your messaging, so it's good to build solid relationships with them.
 - Practice on your own time.
 - If you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, be honest. Don't try to fabricate an answer, because it will look much worse if you are wrong.
 - Don't overtalk: when you finish answering a question, don't keep talking to try to fill the silences.
 - Speak slowly and clearly.

How can I lobby?

Oftentimes, people have the most success enacting tangible change when it's through legislation, but this can be difficult if you are not an elected official. It's important to understand how to lobby and have discussions with politicians about what steps they can take to help in your efforts. *Before*

engaging in lobbying, do some research on your legal standing as an organization, and make sure you are permitted to lobby.

- KNOW WHO TO CONTACT:
 - When you begin, contact politicians who have not yet sponsored legislation, but who have expressed willingness to cooperate with your cause.
 - When reaching out to the offices, call and ask for the contact information of the scheduler. They are in charge of scheduling meetings for the politician, so you will have the most luck here.
 - It's much easier to find common ground with a politician if you, or someone you are lobbying with, is a constituent of their district.
- KNOW YOUR TACTICS:
 - It's much easier to lobby for an existing bill that aligns with your interests, as opposed to attempting to start from scratch.
 - Before going into a meeting, do some preliminary research on your politician (i.e. have they cooperated with your cause in the past, did they have any experiences that would prime them to support your cause, etc.).
 - Develop your primary ask: you should go into the meeting with one main goal, and focus on this. If they are unwilling to agree to this ask, have a few secondary asks.
 - Make sure you fully understand the substance of your ask. You want to be able to answer any questions that may come up.
- KNOW HOW TO STRUCTURE THE MEETING:
 - When you begin your meeting, ask how much time you have for the meeting. You want to be respectful of their time. Consistently monitor time throughout the meeting.

- Begin by thanking them for something positive they've done. This will hopefully give them a positive opinion of you and make them more inclined to agree with you.
- Remember, this is a CONVERSATION. Don't be nervous, and remember that they are only human!
- TAKE NOTES during the meeting. It's important to have a record of their stances, so when you lobby them again in the future, you have a reference point.
- Follow up after the meeting, reminding them if they have agreed to support legislation, sending them helpful materials, etc.