



# MICHIGAN YOUTH VOTING GUIDE

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2024

# About This Guide

Created by the Council of Michigan Foundations

The Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) leads, strengthens and supports Michigan's community of philanthropy by emboldening and equipping CMF members in the relentless pursuit of equitable systems and inclusive diversity, fortifying the field through public policy action, fostering the growth of current and future philanthropy leaders and advancing exemplary philanthropic practices and field expertise. CMF is a national leader in engaging and developing the skills and voices of youth in philanthropy and within their communities. [Learn more](#) about youth philanthropy at CMF.

## Youth Programs at CMF



Across Michigan, young people ages 12-21 serve on youth advisory councils (YACs). The YACs engage in leadership development and community service and review and allocate grant dollars to local nonprofits. The Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project (MCFYP) is the statewide youth philanthropy council, made up of youth who lead youth programming at CMF, including the annual Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference.



Learning to Give (LTG) is a program of CMF that serves youth leaders, philanthropic organizations, educators, families and other partners to educate, equip and empower all Michigan youth with philanthropy knowledge, skills and experience. [www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org)

## Why is civic engagement important?

To maintain a healthy and equitable society – a civil society - citizens must work together for the good of all, each taking on responsibilities and roles to stay engaged. This may include voting, learning about issues, speaking up against injustice and volunteering. Civil society is balanced by government, business and philanthropy. Everyone can use their time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony to make a change or be a positive influence for the good of all through philanthropy, a key form of civic engagement.

# Michigan Voter Information

## For Young Voters

### Why should I vote?

Your voice matters whether you are voting or encouraging others to vote. It may sometimes seem like the presidential election is the only one that matters, but your voice is just as important locally. In a democracy, people choose their leaders, from city mayor to county judge to the president of the United States. These leaders make decisions on behalf of the people they represent, including you! Citizens should have a say in who leads them and the issues that matter to their community, and that's why we vote.

### What's the timeline for voting?

- 1 Make sure you're registered to vote. You may register six months before you turn 18. You can register at the [Michigan Voter Information Center](#).
- 2 Find your polling location at the [Michigan Voter Index](#) website.
- 3 Watch for different types of elections happening. Municipal elections decide local leaders, and midterm elections decide the composition of Congress through voting on both House and Senate seats. Primary elections decide which delegates will be moving on in larger elections for each party - both in state and federal elections. For Michigan election dates, visit [Ballotpedia](#).
- 4 If you won't be near your polling place on Election Day, you can vote with an absentee ballot through the mail. Michigan uses a request-required mail-in ballot. You can request one to be sent to your residence at [Michigan's Absentee Registration site](#), but be sure to do so before the deadline.

### Why should I tell my friends to vote?

Talking to friends about voting may lead to better representation of diverse perspectives. Your ties and testimony (connecting people and speaking up) contribute to civic talks and critical thinking during election season. You can serve those around you by listening to different points of view, being an informed citizen and engaging in civic conversations with openness and respect.

# Preparing for Election Season

## Checklist



### **Stay informed on issues and candidates.**

Research the issues during election season and talk about the choices with a variety of people. Seek out reliable and fair news sources (and double check their accuracy) so you can decide what is important to you based on your values. Try this Common Sense Media [“Young Voters Guide to Social Media and the News”](#) or this Learning to Give guide for [Media Literacy](#).



### **Review the ballot.**

You may or may not be aware of every candidate and proposal that will be on your ballot. Before visiting the polls, familiarize yourself with what your ballot will look like and the writing of the proposals using websites like [Ballotpedia](#).



### **Talk to someone who has voted before.**

Ask a parent, guardian or adult you know well to share what it’s like to vote in person and/or using an absentee ballot. Learning from these individuals’ experiences will help you understand what to expect when you vote.









### **Solidify your own values.**

Media can be overwhelming, especially during election season with different campaigns and topics being publicized. Take time to examine your values and beliefs by discussing topics with friends and family. Research how your ideas align with the ideas of candidates. It is also important to take breaks if the news or pressure to act causes anxiety or becomes overwhelming.

# Be Civically Engaged

Every Day

## How can I take civic action?

-  Support your family and friends by seeking accurate information together. Discuss challenging issues first with people you trust to understand facts and opinions.
-  Practice having critical conversations by listening to other opinions with an open mind. You can share your opinions and respect other viewpoints even if you don't agree.
-  Uplift issues you are passionate about through social media. Share facts with integrity.
-  Participate in a campaign by volunteering. You can help people register to vote or sign up for an absentee ballot. Young people can volunteer at polling sites, or you can encourage voters to get to their polling sites on election day.
-  You can make advocacy posters about issues or about the importance of voting.
-  Learn about representation on your local school board, courts and city council. Discover whether elected people in your community represent the diversity of the communities they serve.

