



2026–2028 CIVIC AND VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACTION PLAN



SACRAMENTO STATE



Sacramento State's Civic & Voter Empowerment Action Plan

OVERVIEW

Sacramento State's 2026–2028 Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan provides a framework for coordinating the University's civic and voter engagement efforts over the next two academic years. The plan documents current campus efforts, identifies opportunities for continued growth, establishes short- and long-term goals, and outlines planned activities designed to support civic learning and participation across the University.

Developed in collaboration with the Civic and Voter Engagement Coalition (CVEC), the plan is intended to serve as both a guide for implementation and a tool for evaluating progress as Sacramento State continues to strengthen its campus-wide approach to civic engagement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
Executive Summary	3
Leadership	4
Institutional Commitment & Leadership Support	6
Landscape	8
Campus Findings.....	9
Reflection	11
Goals.....	14
<i>Short-Term Goals</i>	14
<i>Long-Term Goals</i>	16
Event Requirements	17
<i>Academic Year 2026–2027</i>	17
<i>Academic Year 2027–2028</i>	18
Reporting & Evaluation	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sacramento State is committed to preparing students to become informed, engaged, and active members of their communities. Civic and community engagement is an established University priority and an important part of Sacramento State's responsibility as the Capital's University. The University's approach to community engagement emphasizes preparing educated and engaged community members, strengthening democratic values and civic responsibility, and building meaningful partnerships that contribute to the public good. Building upon this institutional commitment, the 2026–2028 Civic and Voter Engagement Action Plan establishes a coordinated, campus-wide approach to expanding civic education, voter registration and participation, and opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with their communities and the democratic process.

Central to this action plan is the recognition that civic engagement extends beyond voting. Sacramento State serves students with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including students who may not currently be eligible to vote. For that reason, the University has intentionally developed its civic engagement messaging, programming, partnerships, and events to ensure that all students can see themselves as participants in civic life. From inclusive campaign slogans and educational resources to events focused on civic education, community involvement, advocacy, and service, our efforts emphasize that every student can contribute to their community. While voter registration and participation remain important components of this work, the broader goal is to equip students with the knowledge, resources, and opportunities to remain civically engaged regardless of their voting eligibility.

The 2026–2028 Civic and Voter Engagement Action Plan was led by Sacramento State's Civic and Voter Engagement Coordinator out of the Office of External Relations under the University President and is supported in its implementation by the Civic and Voter Engagement Coalition, a cross-campus collaborative composed of students, faculty, and staff representing diverse areas of the University. This structure allows Sacramento State to approach civic and voter engagement strategically, intentionally, and collaboratively while drawing upon the expertise and reach of partners throughout campus. Through this plan, Sacramento State aims to double student voter registration from its 2024 baseline of 3.6% by 2028, strengthen sustained civic participation across the University, and advance Sacramento State's goal of establishing itself as California's flagship university for civic engagement—reflecting its distinctive role and responsibility as the Capital's University.

LEADERSHIP

Sacramento State's Civic and Voter Engagement Coalition (CVEC) for the 2026–2028 cycle was established during summer 2026 as a strategic, cross-campus collaborative designed to support the University's civic and voter engagement efforts. The Coalition held its first meeting on August 27, 2026, and plans to convene approximately two to three times each semester. Working in partnership with the Civic and Voter Engagement Coordinator, the CVEC serves as an advisory and collaborative space where members share campus updates, brainstorm strategies and programming, identify opportunities for partnership, and provide guidance and resources that strengthen the University's overall civic engagement efforts.

Membership in the Coalition was developed intentionally to bring together students, faculty, and staff representing different areas of the University and a range of perspectives, expertise, institutional knowledge, and campus and community connections. While not every member is expected to participate directly in the implementation of events or initiatives, members play an important role in advising the work, connecting efforts to relevant resources and partners, identifying opportunities within their respective areas, and supporting a coordinated campus-wide approach. This structure allows the University to draw upon the extensive experience of individuals who have contributed to civic and voter engagement efforts both at Sacramento State and within the broader community.

Coalition membership may evolve throughout the 2026–2028 action plan period as University roles, responsibilities, and availability change. When a member is no longer able to serve, the University will seek, when feasible, continued representation from the respective department, division, student group, or campus area to maintain the Coalition's broad, cross-campus perspective and continuity.

COALITION CHAIR

Office of External Relations/Division of the President

Karen Carrillo, External Relations Manager

CAMPUS DEPARTMENTS

University Marketing & Communications/Hornet Heartbeat

Sydney Megan Daniels, Manager for Student Engagement and Media

Associated Students Inc

Morgaine Wilkins-Dean, Civic Engagement Coordinator

Residential Life

Dailin James Brown, Residential Advisor

Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence

Nicki Croly, Associate Vice President for Campus Life/Senior Director for Student Organizations and Leadership

Community Engagement Center

Noel Mora, Community Partnership Coordinator

Department of Political Science

Jaime Jackson, Associate Professor

Student At-Large –Jamarie C., Political Science Major & Chicano Studies Minor

The Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan was developed by the coalition chair and reviewed collaboratively by the coalition during its second semester meeting. The Coalition provided an opportunity for cross-campus representatives to review the plan and offer feedback informed by their respective areas of expertise and experience. The final action plan has been fully endorsed by University leadership, reinforcing Sacramento State's institutional commitment to advancing civic and voter engagement as a University priority.



Institutional Commitment and Leadership Support

Sacramento State and its University leadership maintain a strong commitment to civic learning, community engagement, and participation in the democratic process. As California's Capital University, Sacramento State recognizes its distinctive role in preparing students for meaningful participation in their communities. This commitment is reflected in the University's 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, which identifies **Dedicated Community Involvement** as one of its six institutional imperatives and includes a goal of developing students and employees who can effectively engage in local and global communities.

Civic learning is also integrated into Sacramento State's **academic curriculum and General Education offerings**, providing students with opportunities to develop knowledge of government, democratic institutions, political participation, representation, and civic life as part of their academic experience. Political Science courses such as **POLS 1: Essentials**

of Government introduce students to federal, state, and local government and the ways individuals can participate within those systems, while **POLS 10: The Meaning of Government** encourages students to examine fundamental questions surrounding government, freedom, authority, power, and political responsibility. Upper-division offerings further deepen this learning. **POLS 113: American Political Thought** examines ideas central to the development of American political traditions and fulfills requirements related to the U.S. Constitution and California state and local government. **POLS 163: Introduction to Black Politics in the U.S.** examines the political experiences of Black Americans.

The University complements this classroom-based learning with **experiential opportunities that connect students directly with public service, government, policymaking, and civic leadership**. Sacramento State is home to the Sacramento Semester Program, an immersive academic and internship experience open to undergraduate students throughout the CSU system that provides firsthand exposure to California's policymaking environment. Sacramento State is also home to the nationally recognized **Capital Fellows Programs**, which provide participants with year-long, paid experiences working within California's Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches. Together, these programs demonstrate how Sacramento State's location in the state capital can serve as a pathway from academic civic learning to practical experience in public service and government.

This institutional commitment is further supported by University leadership. Since assuming the presidency in 2023, **President Luke Wood has supported Sacramento State's civic and voter engagement initiatives**. During the development of the 2026–2028 Civic and Voter Engagement Coalition, President Wood provided a signed letter of support recognizing the importance of this work and encouraging campus participation. His office also approved Sacramento State's sponsorship of CalCenter's **Capitol Backyard Party**, a statewide gathering focused on youth leadership, nonpartisan voter participation, and sustained civic action. President Wood has also supported community engagement more broadly during his tenure, including implementation of the University's strategic priorities around community involvement.

Together, Sacramento State's **curriculum, experiential learning opportunities, civic and voter engagement programming, community partnerships, and leadership support** demonstrate an institutional approach to civic engagement that extends beyond individual election cycles and beyond voting alone. By embedding civic learning within academics while also creating opportunities for students to apply that knowledge through public service, community engagement, and democratic participation, Sacramento State reinforces civic engagement as an ongoing component of the University's educational mission.

Landscape

CAMPUS DEMOGRAPHICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the Spring 2026 census, Sacramento State has a diverse student population of approximately 30,239 students with the following demographic breakdown:

Male Students - 13,172 44%	White - 6,692 22%
Female Students - 16,624 55%	Asian - 6,100 20%
First Generation Students - 8,261 27%	Black - 2,232 7%
Undergrad Students - 27,732 92%	Two or more races - 2,053 7%
Graduate Students - 2,507 8%	In State - 29,508 98%
International (by ethnicity) - 594 2%	Out of State - 244 1%
Pacific Islander - 266 1%	International (by location) - 486 2%
American Indian - 85 0%	Unknown - 1,154 4%
Hispanic/Latino - 11,063 37%	

Below is our campus's civic engagement data as of October 1, 2026, highlighting the number of students who registered to vote and completed a College Student Voting Plan. College Student Voting Plans were first made available during the 2026 election cycle.

2020 – 1,767

2022 – 346

2024 – 1,138

2026 – *In progress* 19 voter registrations, 23 Voting Plan Submissions

Campus Findings

STRENGTHS

- **Nationally recognized commitment to community engagement.** In 2026, Sacramento State earned the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement for the fourth time since 2010, recognizing the University's sustained, institution-wide commitment to community engagement. Sacramento State students contribute more than 914,000 hours of community work annually, supported by extensive community partnerships. This established culture provides a strong foundation for expanding civic and voter engagement efforts.
- **Sacramento State's location provides unique opportunities for civic learning.** As California's Capital University, Sacramento State is positioned near state government, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community partners, creating opportunities to connect students directly with government, public service, policymaking, and community leadership.
- **A diverse student population creates opportunities for inclusive civic engagement.** Sacramento State serves students from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. This diversity creates opportunities to develop civic engagement programming that reflects different communities, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Existing voter engagement efforts provide a foundation to build upon.** Previous voter registration activity demonstrates that Sacramento State already has infrastructure and campus participation surrounding voter registration. Rather than building a civic engagement strategy from the ground up, the University can strengthen, coordinate, and expand existing efforts.
- **Civic engagement extends beyond voter registration.** Existing community engagement, academic programs, service opportunities, and partnerships provide pathways for connecting voter engagement with civic education, community service, advocacy, leadership development, and other forms of civic participation.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Increase consistency in voter registration efforts across election cycles.** Available campus data shows substantial variation in voter registration activity across election years. Additional analysis can help identify factors contributing to these differences and establish more consistent voter registration and education strategies across election cycles.
- **Expand engagement with students who are not eligible to vote.** Civic engagement efforts should intentionally include students who may not be eligible to participate in U.S. elections. Programming can emphasize community service, advocacy, civic education, leadership development, public meetings, and other forms of participation so that civic engagement is not defined solely through voting.
- **Standardize and streamline voter registration efforts.** Voter registration efforts across campus are not always coordinated through the University's designated voter registration link and materials, particularly when external organizations or campus partners conduct independent outreach. Establishing a consistent process for sharing and using the University's designated registration resources would help ensure campus voter registration activity is accurately attributed and captured through the California Secretary of State's tracking mechanisms.
- **Strengthen data collection and assessment.** Voter registration totals provide an important measure of engagement but do not fully capture the breadth of student civic participation or identify which student populations are being reached. Developing consistent measures for voter education, event participation, civic learning, community engagement, and other forms of civic participation would allow the University to evaluate its reach, identify gaps, and assess progress over time.
- **Develop year-round civic engagement opportunities.** Expanding programming outside major election periods can reinforce civic engagement as an ongoing part of the student experience rather than something primarily associated with election seasons.
- **Create intentional strategies for reaching Sacramento State's diverse student communities.** Outreach should consider how students' backgrounds, experiences, and familiarity with government and civic institutions may shape how they access and participate in civic engagement opportunities.



Reflection

During the past two academic years, beginning in fall 2024, Sacramento State implemented and supported a variety of civic and voter engagement initiatives across campus. These efforts demonstrate the University's existing commitment to voter education, accessible participation, and civic engagement while also identifying opportunities for greater coordination, consistency, and year-round programming. The following examples highlight a few of our University's key efforts.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Voter-Registration Information for Students with Disabilities (2024)

Sacramento State's Disability Access Center (DAC) provides a dedicated voter registration resource page for students with disabilities. Resources include links to register or re-register to vote, update an address, check voter registration status, locate voting resources, and access additional information from state and local election agencies and disability advocacy organizations. DAC also offers direct assistance to students who need support completing voter registration information. In 2024, the page included election-specific registration information and helped connect students with available voting resources, demonstrating an existing effort to make voter engagement information more accessible to students with disabilities.

Asian American Pacific Islander Policy Summit — Engaging Our Communities: Beyond the Ballot Box (2024)

Sacramento State hosted a statewide summit focused on increasing civic engagement among Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. Approximately 500 participants discussed voter participation, combating disinformation, improving political representation, and ensuring AAPI voices are included in decisions involving health care, education, and the economy.

A Guide to Election Week (2024)

Sacramento State's Project for an Informed Electorate hosted a nonpartisan Initiative Explainer to help California voters understand the ten propositions on the November 2024 ballot. In partnership with the Legislative Analyst's Office and Sacramento Public Library, the event provided clear explanations of each measure, campaign information, and an opportunity for audience questions. The program was part of Sac State's broader efforts to promote voter education, civic participation, and access to reliable election information.

Multicultural Education Conference (2025)

The 31st Multicultural Education Conference, hosted by Sacramento State's College of Education, brought together students, educators, faculty, alumni, and community members to explore social justice, inclusion, healing, and equity in education. The April 12, 2025, conference included keynote presentations, interactive workshops, sponsored sessions, and discussions focused on strengthening schools and communities.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate that civic engagement was already occurring across Sacramento State through multiple departments, programs, and partnerships. However, these activities were not always connected through a centralized campus-wide civic and voter engagement strategy or consistently assessed through shared measures.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Strengthen campus-wide coordination and communication

Civic and voter engagement efforts take place across multiple areas of the University, with departments independently developing programming for their respective communities. While this autonomy supports responsive and relevant engagement, there is not currently a consistent process for sharing planned efforts across campus or with the Civic and Voter Engagement Coordinator. Creating greater visibility and coordination would encourage collaboration, reduce duplication, maximize campus resources, and contribute to a more cohesive University-wide approach.

Expand awareness and accessibility of civic engagement opportunities

Sacramento State offers a variety of civic engagement programs, resources, and opportunities, but students may encounter them through different departments, platforms, and communication channels. Creating clearer pathways for students to find and participate in these opportunities can broaden awareness, strengthen connections between programs, and help ensure civic engagement is visible and accessible across the student experience.

Engagement should be sustained beyond election cycles

While elections provide important opportunities for voter education and participation, civic engagement should remain visible throughout the academic year. Year-round programming can help establish civic learning and participation as an ongoing part of the Sacramento State student experience.

Strengthen assessment of civic engagement efforts

Voter registration and election participation provide important measures of engagement, but they do not capture the full range of ways students participate in civic life. Developing consistent methods to track program participation, civic learning, community engagement, and the reach of campus efforts would provide a more complete picture of impact and help inform future strategies.



Goals

SHORT-TERM (2026-2028)

Goal 1: Double Student Voter Registration Growth from the 2024 Baseline of 3.6% by November 2028

Strategies:

- Establish annual voter registration campaigns around National Voter Registration Day, Voter Education Week, and major election deadlines.
- Increase voter registration opportunities at high-traffic campus events, tabling activities, and student programs.
- Partner with Associated Students Inc. (ASI), the student organizations, academic departments, resource centers, and other campus partners to expand peer-to-peer voter registration outreach.
- Use Sac State-specific voter registration QR codes and other tracking methods to measure registrations generated through University efforts.
- Develop targeted outreach informed by available voter registration data to identify and address gaps in student registration.
- Incorporate voter registration information into existing campus communications and digital platforms.

Goal 2: Integrate Voter Registration and Civic Engagement Education into the Student Housing Experience

Strategies:

- Incorporate voter registration and voter address-update information into move-in communications and early-semester programming for residential students.
- Partner with University Housing Services and residential staff to identify opportunities for voter education within the residential experience.
- Provide accessible voter registration materials, QR codes, election information, and civic engagement resources within residential communities.
- Host at least one voter education or civic engagement program in student housing during major election cycles
- Educate students about the importance of updating their voter registration address when moving to or from campus.

Goal 3: Expand Civic Engagement Opportunities for Students Who Are Not Eligible to Vote

Strategies:

- Ensure campus messaging consistently communicates that civic engagement extends beyond voting and that all students can participate in civic life.
- Offer programming focused on community service, civic education, advocacy, public service, leadership development, and other forms of civic participation.
- Partner with campus departments and organizations that serve students who may face barriers to electoral participation to identify inclusive engagement opportunities.
- Highlight existing Sac State opportunities, including community engagement, public service, internships, and civic leadership programs.
- Incorporate inclusive language into voter and civic engagement campaigns so programming does not unintentionally exclude students who cannot vote.
- Include at least one non-electoral civic engagement opportunity within major civic and voter engagement campaigns.

Goal 4: Strengthen the Civic and Voter Engagement Coalition as a Sustainable Campus Structure

Strategies:

- Convene the Coalition approximately two to three times each semester to share updates, identify needs, brainstorm strategies, and assess progress.
- Maintain intentional representation from key academic, student affairs, administrative, and student areas across campus.
- Seek replacement representatives when members transition out of their roles to preserve representation and institutional continuity.
- Establish clear roles for the Coalition as an advisory, collaborative, and resource-sharing body, recognizing that not every member will directly implement programming.
- Review progress toward the 2026–2028 Civic and Voter Engagement Action Plan with the Coalition and use findings to inform future strategies.

LONG-TERM (2026-2031)

Goal 5: Establish Sacramento State as a Statewide Leader in Collegiate Civic Engagement

Strategies:

- Position Sacramento State, as California's Capital University, as a model for comprehensive civic and voter engagement within the CSU system and across California.
- Share successful programs, strategies, and resources with other CSU campuses and higher education partners.
- Expand partnerships with state, local, nonprofit, and community organizations that provide students with opportunities for civic learning and participation.
- Seek statewide and national recognition for Sacramento State's civic engagement efforts.

Goal 6: Earn Recognition as California University and College Ballot Bowl Champion

Strategies:

- Develop a long-term strategy for Sacramento State to become the overall College Ballot Bowl Champion.
- Increase both the number and percentage of students registering or updating their voter registration through Secretary of State-tracked resources.
- Incorporate the Secretary of State's student voting-plan tool into campus outreach during Ballot Bowl election cycles.
- Continue strengthening Sac State's Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan based on data, assessment, and lessons learned from each election cycle.
- Use campus-wide partnerships, student organizations, housing, academic programs, and peer-to-peer outreach to build participation across all Ballot Bowl components.

Goal 7: Build a Culture of Civic Engagement Beyond Voting

Strategies:

- Establish civic engagement as a recognizable part of the Sacramento State student experience.
- Expand opportunities for students who are not eligible to vote to participate through public service, community engagement, advocacy, civic education, and leadership.
- Increase awareness of existing pathways such as Sacramento Semester, Capital Fellows, community-engaged learning, internships, and service opportunities.
- Maintain year-round civic programming during both election and non-election years.

EVENT REQUIREMENTS

Plans for the Academic Year 2026-2027

Fall 2026

Below we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life during the 2026-2027 academic year. Some plans are already in action.

2026 Slogan: Stingers Up! Voices Out!

Summary: For the 2026 Midterm Election, the Coalition Chair presented several slogan options to help establish a unified brand for Sacramento State's civic and voter engagement efforts across events, promotional materials, stickers, and other campaign initiatives. Coalition members provided feedback on the proposed slogans, with an emphasis on selecting a message that encouraged civic involvement beyond voting and was inclusive of the entire Sac State community, regardless of voter eligibility. Based on this feedback, a final slogan was selected to guide the 2026 campaign.

Voter Registration Day Fair (September 15, 2026)

Summary: To kick off the 2026 Midterm Election season, Sacramento State hosted a Voter Registration Day Fair that brought together campus and community organizations, including ASI, the League of Women Voters, and the Students Vote Project. Participating organizations provided students with voter registration resources, election information, and opportunities to learn about different ways to become civically engaged both on campus and in their communities.

Design Sac State's Next "I Voted" Sticker Contest (September 14 - October 9)

Summary: The purpose of the "I Voted" Sticker Design Contest is to build early awareness and excitement around the upcoming election while creating an inclusive opportunity for all students to engage in the civic process. Students may submit original sticker designs, and the broader student body will vote for their preferred design, creating a small-scale voting experience that encourages participation and familiarizes students with casting a vote. The selected design will be printed and distributed at Sac State's on-campus Vote Center. This initiative also ensures that students who may not be eligible to vote in an official election can still meaningfully participate in campus civic engagement efforts.

Voter Education Week (October 5 - 9)

Summary: Voter Education Week will bring together departments across campus and external nonpartisan organizations to offer a week of events designed to educate and engage students across different campus communities. Programming will include a voter registration drive hosted by ASI, a Community Engagement Resource Fair, "Café y Civics", focused on civic involvement beyond election season, and "Popcorn & Polls" with Student Housing to help students better understand what will appear on the ballot. Together, these events provide students with accessible opportunities to learn about voting, civic participation, and ways to remain engaged in their communities.

Greek & Clubs Civic Social Media Competition (October 1- November 3)

Summary: To strategically expand voter awareness through peer-to-peer outreach, Greek organizations and student clubs will be invited to participate in a social media competition for the opportunity to earn a cash prize for their organization. Participants will create two posts: one following guidelines provided by the California Secretary of State and evaluated based on reel views, and a second creative post highlighting Sac State's Vote Center information, including dates, hours, and location. The most creative submission will be selected by the campus civic engagement coalition. This initiative leverages student organizations and their networks to broaden the reach of accurate, nonpartisan election information across campus.

Buzz to the Ballot – Election Day (November 3)

Summary: "Buzz to Ballot" will help increase awareness and accessibility of Sac State's on-campus Vote Center leading up to Election Day. Campaign materials will provide students with clear information on where they can vote in person or drop off their ballot. On Election Day, the initiative will also provide golf cart transportation across campus to help students conveniently reach the Vote Center, reducing transportation barriers and making voting more accessible.

Plans for the Academic Year 2027-2028

National Voter Registration Day (2027)

Summary: Continue annual voter registration programming using lessons and participation data from the 2026 campaign.

Civic Engagement Resource Fair (October 2027)

Summary: The Civic Engagement Resource Fair (CERF) connects Sacramento State students with local organizations that promote community service, social justice, and civic participation. Each year, CERF brings together nonprofits, advocacy groups, and campus partners to share volunteer opportunities and encourage active engagement in the Sacramento community.

Civic Engagement Programming (2027-28)

Summary: Continue year-round civic learning opportunities focused on participation beyond elections, including programming accessible to students who are ineligible to vote.

Statewide Primary Election Programming (2028)

Summary: Coordinate voter education, registration, and election-information programming within the 30-day period preceding California's 2028 statewide primary election.

REPORTING & EVALUATION

Prior to submission to the California State Secretary, this Action Plan has been reviewed and evaluated by Sac State's Civic and Voter Empowerment Coalition and campus administration.

This Action Plan will be shared externally on the Sac State website.

Feedback will be collected, evaluated, and measured against our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data to identify areas for improvement each academic year.



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