



# **CATT COLLEGIATE CHALLENGE**

## Facilitator Guide

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**Paul D. Pate**

Iowa Secretary of State



## PAUL D. PATE IOWA SECRETARY OF STATE

Dear Civic Advocates and Campus Leaders,

Thank you for joining the Catt Collegiate Challenge. At a time when active civic participation is more essential than ever, your work to engage students in democratic processes underscores a powerful truth: our democracy is strongest when every person has the opportunity, the knowledge, and the encouragement to participate. By championing voter engagement on your campuses, you are not only advancing a core civic responsibility but also helping to build lifelong habits of informed participation that will shape our communities for decades to come.

The Catt Collegiate Challenge builds on the momentum created through our high school program and continues Carrie Chapman Catt's legacy of civic responsibility and empowerment. By participating, your institution helps ensure that young Iowans carry their civic habits forward as they enter and progress through their postsecondary experience.

Throughout the Challenge, our office will work closely with your campus to support voter registration, provide educational materials, and help expand opportunities for student participation. Your efforts, whether through events, outreach, or peer engagement, will contribute to a culture of civic involvement that strengthens both your campus community and our state as a whole.

As we embark on this important initiative together, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your dedication to promoting civic engagement among your students. Your leadership not only uplifts the values of the Catt Collegiate Challenge but also helps ensure that the next generation of Iowans is prepared to take an active role in shaping our democracy.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul D. Pate". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "D".



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# Catt Collegiate Challenge

The Catt Collegiate Challenge is a statewide initiative created by Iowa Secretary of State Paul D. Pate to increase student voter registration, civic education, and participation at Iowa's colleges and universities. Named in honor of Carrie Chapman Catt, an Iowa native and leader of the women's suffrage movement, the program seeks to carry forward her legacy of civic responsibility and empowerment.

The Challenge is open to all post-secondary institutions in Iowa, including community colleges, private institutions, and public universities. It promotes healthy competition among campuses to achieve the highest rates of student voter participation.



## Program Components

### Voter Registration Drives

Campuses are encouraged to organize and host on-campus voter registration drives throughout the year. These events help students learn about registration deadlines, election dates, and the voting process, whether in person or by mail.

### National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Participation

The Challenge supports and assists institutions in enrolling in NSLVE, which provides data to assess and improve student voting and civic engagement efforts on each campus.

### Voter Engagement Summit

Each year, participating schools are invited to attend the Voter Engagement Summit, a statewide event held annually, which brings together students, campus leaders, and election officials to exchange ideas, offer informational breakout sessions, and recognize outstanding voter engagement initiatives.



# How the Program Works

Iowa colleges and universities play a vital role in encouraging student civic participation. Iowa Code 48A.23(2) supports campus-based voter registration drives and outlines best practices for the proper handling and timely submission of registration materials.

The Catt Collegiate Challenge builds on this foundation by supporting campuses in making civic learning and voter engagement a meaningful part of student life through collaboration, shared data, and statewide partnership. Participating institutions agree to the following responsibilities:

## Institutional Responsibilities

### Participating campuses are expected to:

- Designate a campus coordinator or facilitator to serve as the primary liaison with the Iowa Secretary of State's Office, along with a backup contact on file.
- Collaborate with student groups, faculty, and administrators to organize voter registration drives, educational events, and campus-wide engagement initiatives.
- Join and participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement to collect and analyze campus-specific data on student registration and voter turnout.
- Attend the Voter Engagement Summit and encourage campus representatives and students to attend the statewide event.
- Submit engagement activities and NSLVE reports to the Iowa Secretary of State's Office to help evaluate progress and recognize outstanding participation.

### **Iowa Code 48A.23(2)**

*All postsecondary schools, including but not limited to colleges, universities, and trade and technical schools which receive state funding, shall offer the opportunity to register to vote to each student at least once each year. Students shall be provided with the federal voter registration form or the Iowa voter registration form, as applicable.*



# What is the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)?

The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) is administered by the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education (IDHE) at Tufts University. It provides participating campuses with confidential reports detailing their students' voter registration and turnout rates, based on student enrollment and public voting records.

## NSLVE Campus Reports

Participating institutions receive a confidential NSLVE campus report with estimates of student voter registration, voting rates, and the percentage of registered students who voted. Data is broken down by age, class level, field of study, and, when provided, by race/ethnicity and gender.

Reports are typically available 12–14 months after a general election, based on the release of certified state voting records and enrollment data. When enrolling in NSLVE, institutions designate three report recipients: the president or chancellor, institutional research/assessment leadership, and one additional contact. Faculty and staff may request access through these offices or by contacting [nslve@tufts.edu](mailto:nslve@tufts.edu).

NSLVE data is used to assess student civic engagement, identify equity gaps, support instruction, inform accreditation and evaluation efforts, and guide campus-wide strategies to strengthen democratic participation.

# NSLVE Participation

## 1 **NSLVE Enrollment**

Schools must enroll in NSLVE by completing the official participation authorization form and emailing a signed copy to [NSLVE@tufts.edu](mailto:NSLVE@tufts.edu).

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## 2 **Catt Collegiate Challenge Enrollment**

After enrollment, institutions must send confirmation of participation to [cattaward@sos.iowa.gov](mailto:cattaward@sos.iowa.gov).

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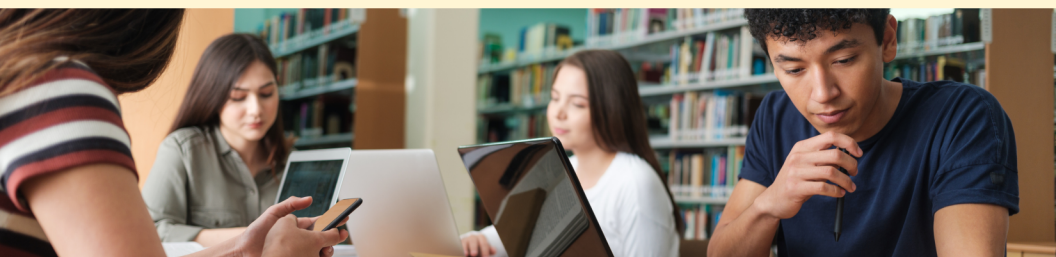
## 3 **Reporting & Recognition**

Following each even-year election, participating schools will receive an NSLVE report approximately 12 to 14 months after Election Day.

A copy of the report must be submitted to the Secretary of State's Office to verify eligibility for recognition.

## **Catt Collegiate Challenge Recognition**

Once reports are received by the Secretary of State's Office, the participating institution with the highest student voter turnout rate will be awarded the Catt Collegiate Challenge Trophy, recognizing its outstanding commitment to civic engagement and democratic participation.



# Iowa Voter Registration Options

To register to vote in the state of Iowa, three different options are available, each designed to make the process accessible and convenient.



## **Online Voter Registration:**

A fast and convenient way to register using a computer or mobile device. Requires a valid Iowa driver's license or non-operator ID.



## **Physical Voter Registration Form:**

A paper form that can be completed and submitted by mail or delivered in person to the local county auditor. Ideal for individuals who prefer a non-digital option.



## **Election Day Voter Registration:**

Allows eligible voters to register at their polling place on Election Day. Appropriate identification and proof of residence must be in hand to complete the process.

# National Mail Voter Registration

For individuals with a primary residence in a different state, such as college students, they can use the National Mail Voter Registration Form to register to vote.

The National Mail Voter Registration Form can be used to register U.S. citizens to vote, update registration information due to a name or address change, or to register with a political party. Individuals **MUST** follow the state-specific instructions listed for their state.

## Registration Specifics and Guidelines

Please refer to the enclosed Voter Registration Drive Checklist for detailed instructions and guidelines on each type of registration, as well as best practices for completing and submitting the forms.





# Voter Registration Drives

The Iowa Secretary of State's office will partner with participating institutions to support and host voter registration drives on campus.

Get started:

- Contact the Iowa Secretary of State's office to schedule your event at [cattaward@sos.iowa.gov](mailto:cattaward@sos.iowa.gov).
- Identify a campus location with high student traffic (e.g., student union, dining hall).
- Promote the event through student media and social platforms.
- Provide students with accurate information about registration eligibility and deadlines.
- Submit completed forms in compliance with Iowa election laws.

## Non-Partisan Commitment

As a government agency, the Iowa Secretary of State's Office encourages programs to remain non-partisan. All events, communications, and materials should remain neutral regarding candidates or political parties. The sole purpose is to increase informed voter participation.

## Secretary of State's Involvement

The office shall provide Catt Collegiate Challenge participants with:

- Official voter registration forms, both state and federal, as well as other tabling materials.
- Publicity and outreach best practices.
- Voter registration form submission assistance.

*For information on where to sign up and access to virtual materials, please refer to our website, [sos.iowa.gov/students/catt-collegiate-challenge](https://sos.iowa.gov/students/catt-collegiate-challenge)*





# General FAQs

## **If I am already registered to vote, do I have to register to vote before each election?**

No. Once you have registered to vote, you do not have to register to vote before each election. However, if you have moved or changed your name, you must update your voter registration.

## **What if I'm going to college in the fall and want to vote in my hometown election?**

You can download an Absentee Ballot Request Form at [voterready.iowa.gov](http://voterready.iowa.gov). A ballot can be mailed to you! If you decide to vote absentee by mail, make sure you return your request form at least 15 days before Election Day and follow the provided instructions for returning your ballot correctly and on time. Please note that college students may register and vote in either their college town or hometown, but NOT both.

## **How do I determine my residence for voter registration purposes?**

A residence for voting purposes is where the voter's home is located. A business or any other non-residential property cannot be used for voter registration purposes unless that place is a primary, nighttime residence for the voter. Unhoused individuals are residents of the place where they usually sleep. The voter can only declare one residence for voter registration purposes. There is no restriction on how long a voter has to live somewhere before it can become a residence for voting purposes.

## **What if I can't go to my polling place on Election Day? Does that mean I can't vote?**

Visit [voterready.iowa.gov](http://voterready.iowa.gov) to download an Absentee Ballot Request Form. If requesting by mail, the request must be received by the County Auditor's Office 15 days before Election Day. You may also request and cast an absentee ballot in person at the Auditor's Office until the day before the election. Contact your County Auditor for their early voting schedule.



**Website:**

[sos.iowa.gov/students/catt-collegiate-challenge](https://sos.iowa.gov/students/catt-collegiate-challenge)

**Email:**

[cattaward@sos.iowa.gov](mailto:cattaward@sos.iowa.gov)