

IMPACT SUMMARY

In an era of political disinformation and spin, voters struggle to find trustworthy information on where candidates stand, so they can make informed voting decisions. Facing one of the most consequential elections in U.S. history, how do we overcome the political mistrust that makes too many voters, especially young voters, stay home in cynical resignation?

[guides.vote](#) overcomes these challenges by creating and distributing nonpartisan [candidate guides](#) for America's most important elections, helping voters vote even if they dislike politics and the candidates. Concise, trustworthy and user-friendly, our guides highlight candidate positions on key issues, linking directly to credible sources. They help reluctant voters overcome political overload, misinformation, and cynicism, allowing them to rise above the myth that it's not worth voting because political candidates are "all the same, all part of a corrupt system."

Collaborating with our wonderful partners, guides.vote **distributed over 480,000 individual guides in 2022**, [for 46](#) of the most consequential races nationwide, plus 20 Spanish translations. In 2023, we focused on six important races, and **equaled the 280,000 printed guides we distributed in all of 2022**, plus had **nearly 100,000 online views**. Between the two years, **colleges with a total enrollment of 935,000** also posted enlarged guide versions [as banners and posters](#) in high-traffic locations. The guides traveled further as organizations sent them out on listservs, shared them on social media, and used them in canvasses, mailings, phone banks and text programs.

With your help, we hope to [produce up to 72 guides](#) for the most important 2024 races and distribute them to over 4 million voters. From the NAACP and Black Voters Matter alone, we already have commitments to distribute over 2 million guides. Black Voters Matter has gone from distributing 40,000 guides in 2020, to 200,000 in 2022, to 1.3 million this year.

Why Guides Matter

To help people overcome barriers and vote



Barriers:

Disinformation & Spin



Overload



Cynicism



Political Withdrawal



The Antidote:

Information that's Accessible, Transparent, and Nonpartisan



Makes clear differences and stakes

What Makes the Guides So Effective?

They're:

- **Independently researched and edited** by [veteran journalists](#) and editors use multiple sources, not just a candidate's website or survey responses.
- **Comprehensive.** Provide candidate positions on over a dozen issues, from abortion and climate change, to the legitimacy of Biden's election.
- **Accessible.** Side-by-side [print](#) and [interactive online](#) formats let voters easily compare candidate stands and understand the stakes. Our [Spanish translations](#) are often the only non-English guides for key races.
- **Nonpartisan.** Welcomed and distributed by colleges, universities and nonpartisan partners. Can reach voters who mistrust partisan appeals.

Multiplying Our Impact



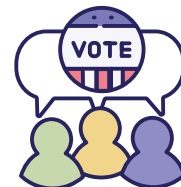
Direct reach



Distribution by partners



Reprints and links



Voter-to-voter sharing

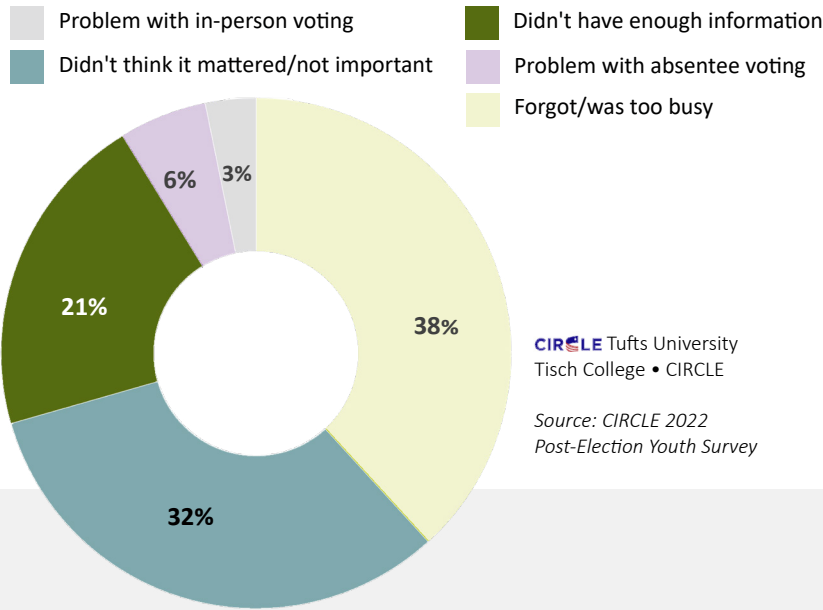
We distribute our guides through [a broad range of partners](#), including Ben & Jerry's, Black Voters Matter, Civics Center, Common Cause, Do Something, HeadCount, Mi Familia Vota, the NAACP, Nonprofit VOTE, Oxfam, Patagonia, Third Act, Vote Early Day, US Vote Foundation, VoteRiders, Vote.org, Vote America, Vote Forward, and Working America, plus our fiscal sponsor Youth Service America. Campus partners include Andrew Goodman Foundation, Campus Vote Project, Rise, the student PIRGS and individual colleges. Media partners include All Sides, MTV, Teen Vogue, and the affiliates of States Newsroom (they had 150 million views last year and have committed to run our Presidential guide).

Our guides amplify our partners' powerful work as they email the guides or send links to their members, reprint or link to them on their websites, use them in texting and phone campaigns and distribute printed guides through canvassing, mailings and tabling. They let us build on their relationships of trust and provide "boots on the ground" for person-to-person reach.

Our guides are particularly useful for those, like young voters, who mistrust politics in general or feel they don't know enough to participate. In the highly respected **Harvard Institute of Politics survey of 18-29-year-olds**, **63% of those on the fence about voting in 2024** and **68% of overall respondents** said that **nonpartisan guides would help them vote**. Among youth who didn't vote in 2022, **53% said** it was because they **didn't have enough information or didn't think their votes mattered**. Given high negative approval ratings of **both Biden and Trump**, our guides will be particularly important to engage reluctant voters.

Youth Who Didn't Vote in 2022 Cited Lack of Time, Information, Other Barriers

Among youth (ages 18-29) who reported not voting in 2022, the percentage who cited each reason as the primary reason



Background

An independent project since March 2022, guides.vote builds on 10 years of guides produced by a previous nonprofit organization to engage college students. These guides were the favorite resource of campus partners, who said they made a major difference in helping students decide not just which candidates to support, but **whether to vote at all**. guides.vote has expanded the guides' reach far beyond the campus gates.

Our guides are produced by **a stellar team** of researchers, writers, and editors, who've worked for publications including *Business Week*, *Time*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor* and *Congressional Quarterly*. **The guides don't just quote campaign websites or candidates' misleading rhetoric**—for instance, saying one thing in a primary and another in the general election. **Instead, they cover the broad picture of candidates' actions and stands, from social posts and media interviews, to their actions in elected office**. Because our guides link to credible sources, they also teach media literacy and let readers follow up to understand issues and positions. Partners say no other guides are comparable.

“ Thank you for making available the guides we were able to utilize in 2022 and 2023. Our partners were grateful for the resources, as they were easy to read and quick to distribute at events leading up to the election. Look forward to working together in 2024 ”

—Alethea Bonello, Deputy Field Director, Black Voters Matter Fund

2022 IMPACT

From our March 2022 launch through the Georgia Senate runoff, we distributed our guides through a growing range of impactful partnerships—to colleges but also well beyond:

- guides.vote produced [46 nonpartisan guides](#) in English and Spanish, targeting [20 states](#) with the closest and most consequential races. We created Senate, Governor and Secretary of State guides, plus a national guide to [U.S. House races](#), a guide to the election’s potential impact on the [Supreme Court](#) and a resource on [Detecting Disinformation](#).
- Our website had 143,000 unique visitors. More than 60,000 people read our guides on the [NAACP site](#). Other groups that posted our guides on their sites ranged from the student paper of Wisconsin’s [Madison Area Technical College](#) to media outlets like [Teen Vogue](#). The NAACP promoted us on social media, encouraged their state and local affiliates to print and distribute the guides, and highlighted us in their Election Day email.
- Partners distributed 280,000 printed guides, including Black Voters Matter (200,000, after distributing 40,000 in the 2020 Georgia Senate runoff), Arizona Student Association (40,000) and Mi Familia Vota (10,000).
- We distributed guides printed as [large-format banners](#) to campuses with a combined enrollment of 525,000 students, placing them in front of student unions, major academic buildings and dorms. Administrators, faculty and students at these and other schools distributed the guides through campus email, posted them on campus websites, linked to them on social media and printed them out for tabling and classroom use.
- We engaged young content creators to create [26 TikTok and Instagram videos reaching 787,000 people](#). Our favorites include the ones by [Angel Jimenez](#), [Ryze Hendricks](#), and [Ana Saia](#).



Georgia Senate Runoff 2022 guide showcasing accessible side-by-side format



NAACP website reprinting our guides

“As a trusted messenger, NAACP provided these nonpartisan guides to our network of over 2 million members, volunteers, social media activists and partners. Carefully and transparently sourced, they’re useful for everyone”

—Phaedra Jackson, Field Director NAACP

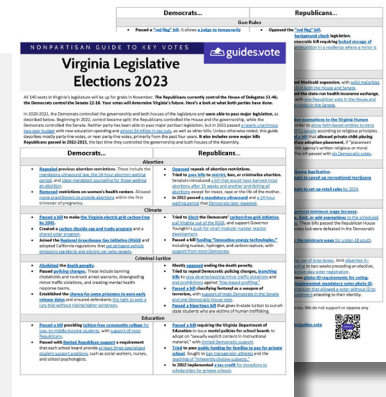
2023 IMPACT:

Broadening and Deepening Our Reach

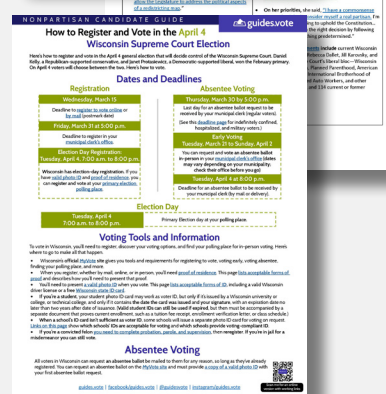
We followed our successful 2022 by targeting the half dozen most impactful 2023 races—for [Wisconsin](#) and [Pennsylvania](#) Supreme Court, [Virginia legislature](#), [Kentucky](#) and [Mississippi](#) governor, plus a Ohio initiative [that tried to limit citizen initiatives](#). These were intrinsically important races. They also allowed us to expand the partnerships that are crucial to our distribution, both by bringing in new partners and taking our 2022 collaborations to a higher level. And they let us test new approaches for [2024](#).

[Wisconsin's Supreme Court race](#) was [a case study](#) in what we can do in a single state with sufficient resources.

- Campus and community partners distributed over 84,000 printed copies of our guide.
- Schools posted our guides as banners and posters at 19 college campuses with a combined enrollment of 190,000 students.
- Our digital ads reached 61,000 students, and we emailed 14,500 faculty, many of whom distributed guides in their classes. Campus newspapers also linked to our guides and campus libraries included them in their election resource lists.
- We accomplished this in part by coaching student Fellows from Campus Vote Project and Andrew Goodman Foundation on how to distribute our guides. Both groups circulated our 2022 guides via email, but are now doing far more, as is the student group Rise, which distributed our guides to every dorm room at UW-Madison.
- Community partners distributing our printed guides included Black Voters Matter (through neighborhood canvasses and at a Milwaukee Bucks game, plus reprinting our social posts), NAACP, Souls to the Polls, and individual African American churches. NAACP also printed their own copies of our guide and ran it on their website.



Virginia Legislative Elections 2023 Guide



Wisconsin Supreme Court Race 2023 Non-partisan Voters Guide

“ Without exception, every campus I visited and every student I talked with appreciated the guides. This is the exact kind of resource that our students want and need. ”

—Noah Foster, 2023 Campus Vote Project Wisconsin Assistant Director

We used the rest of 2023 to continue building momentum. Here's more of what we accomplished in our six total races, including Wisconsin:

- Driven by partner canvasses, we equaled the **280,000 printed guides we'd distributed in 2022**. For 2024, we're hoping to distribute **3 million printed guides and a half million online**.
- We distributed guides as large-format banners to **schools with an enrollment of 410,000 students**. We'd have exceeded our 2022 reach had Ohio colleges been in session.
- Counting partner repostings, we had nearly **100,000 online views**.
- Black Voters Matter and NAACP distributed 145,000 printed guides between them. The NAACP continued posting guides [on their website](#). And both committed to full 2024 co-branding. Ohio's NAACP President said our guides played a critical role in overcoming the cynicism of young Black men.



Banner and printed guides at Wisconsin's Carroll University



Wisconsin Supreme Court Guide as banner

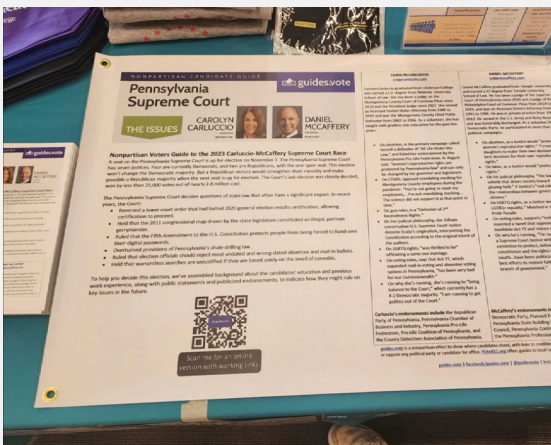


Wisconsin Supreme Court Election social media ad

- Campus Vote Project and Andrew Goodman Foundation continued their stepped-up engagement as we joined calls with their Pennsylvania and Virginia Fellows. Rise distributed 15,000 Pennsylvania Supreme Court guides at the state's four largest universities. We continued to get [excellent responses](#) from individual campuses.
- Vote Forward, a new national partner, linked to our Wisconsin guide in 300,000 volunteer-written nonpartisan letters, then sent 177,000 letters linking to our Virginia guide. Their randomized controlled trials found that merely linking to our guides increased voter participation, and they're exploring a spring 2024 test with our actual guides, as is Voter Participation Center.
- Other new national partners included A. Philip Randolph Institute, Civics Center, Common Cause, the Lawyer's Committee (all the major voter-engagement groups use their 866-OurVote hotline), Public Citizen, Third Act, U.S. Vote Foundation, Vote America and MTV. When We All Vote is considering linking to us in their 2024 texting and email campaigns.



Northampton Community College
Bethlehem PA 2023



Banner and printed guides at Northampton
Community College Bethlehem PA 2023

- Existing partners increasing their commitment included Nonprofit VOTE highlighting our guides in a major election emailing, Vote Early Day featuring them in their voter education resources, and Center for Common Ground integrating them into Virginia texting and phone banking efforts that reached over 300,000 people. Vote.org integrated our guides into their chatbot and will link to them in 2024 texting and possibly email campaigns.
- We also added new local groups including Cleveland Votes, the Wisconsin League of Women Voters, Souls to the Polls Milwaukee, Pennsylvania Alliance Foundation, New Pennsylvania Project, the Virginia Civic Engagement Table and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. The City of Philadelphia created a replicable model by printing and distributing our Pennsylvania Supreme Court guide through their youth programs.

- In corporate progress, Ben & Jerry's committed to cover the costs of printing at least several hundred thousand 2024 guides for Black Voters Matter and will also run digital ads. Patagonia distributed guides to all their employees, and is exploring cash funding plus distributing guides through their email lists, website and stores.
- We've also made more media progress. Our Pennsylvania Supreme Court guide ran in [Spanish](#) and [English](#) in one of the largest Spanish-language papers in the state, a model for other Spanish papers. The Kentucky Lantern, an online newsroom affiliated with the national network [States Newsroom](#), ran [our Kentucky Governor guide](#) and three local Kentucky newspapers reprinted it. Ten of their affiliates linked to our guides in 2022, and they're considering running full guides on all their sites in 2024.

That's serious progress for an organization just a little over a year-and-a-half old. But our ripples extend still further. Individuals pass on our guides through email and social media. Teachers use them in classrooms. Postcard mailings from groups we'd never heard of linked to our Wisconsin guide, and copies got posted on lampposts all over Madison. Our reach is far greater than we can track.

2024 IMPACT:

Highlighting the Stakes to Overcome Cynicism

Because voters, and particularly young voters, **strongly [disapprove of both Biden and Trump](#)**, **our guides can play a vital role in helping them understand crucial differences between the two.** [In 2024](#) we'll update our [2020 presidential guide](#), our [national guide to U.S. House races](#), and our guides to [detecting disinformation](#) and to [the election and the Supreme Court](#). We'll produce guides for the most salient Senate, Governor, state legislature and state Supreme Court races in Arizona, Florida, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and West Virginia. Based on funding, we'll also hire the researchers, writers and editors needed to include up to 22 individual close U.S. House races, particularly in states like California and New York which aren't presidential battlegrounds.

Meanwhile, our outreach team will work with new and existing partners to take their guide distribution to the next level, as they integrate them into their voter engagement efforts. As examples to replicate, Black Voters Matter and the NAACP have committed to distribute over two million printed copies between them. We're also approaching new national nonprofits and corporations that should be highly receptive, but don't yet know our guides exist.

For key local groups, we're developing additional partner prospect lists, identifying 400 groups to approach so far and continuing to add more, like an Ohio network that just committed to 100,000 copies. We're targeting advocacy groups but also service-oriented nonprofits, like YMCAs, United Ways and Boys & Girls Clubs, disability groups (for the visually impaired, we created [audio versions](#) of our VA legislature and PA Supreme Court guides), interfaith groups, libraries and municipal governments.

To complement our print and digital partner distribution, we're developing exciting new online initiatives like expanding our 2022 [TikTok campaign](#) that reached **787,000 people**. Since we'll already have done the research, we're particularly interested in using social networks to distribute the candidate positions that we've found. We're also compiling lists of major influencers and national and local media partners that can help promote our guides.

THE RESOURCES WE NEED

After our successful first two years, we're **raising \$1,500,000** for 2024, to conduct the **vastly expanded guide creation and reach** that will let us **meet the election's urgency and opportunities**.

Our [2024 budget](#) will support:

- Additional editorial, research and writing staff to produce up to [72 guides](#)
- Additional outreach staff, letting us engage more distribution partners: campuses, national and local nonprofits, corporations, online influencers and media outlets.
- Printing 3-4 million hard copies of the guides for partners to distribute, plus 500 guides as large-format banners. A **bequest of \$400,000** in business-to-business barter credits saves us 30% on printing.
- Complementary approaches to our partner distribution, like expanding our TikTok campaign, doing major emailings to faculty and placing guides as paid inserts or digital ads in campus newspapers, and posters on campus kiosks.

As you can see from our [wonderful testimonials](#), our guides have already made a major impact on voters. **With enough resources, we hope to reach 4 million voters, and potentially more.**

Donations to our project are tax deductible through our 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor, Youth Service America, with instructions to donate [here](#).

Please contact Managing Director [Payge Hardy](#) to schedule a conversation.